# Changing Views on Roman Funerary Rites

*A study of the transition to the inhumation burial ritual in the region of Tongres, Cologne, and Trier in the imperial period*

by **Tom de Rijk**

The image on the cover depicts the variability in funerary rites at a part of the Roman southwest cemetery of Tongres (after Vanvinckenroye 1984).

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# Preface

The change in burial rites in the Roman period in North-West Europe on the one hand seemed to have been extensively discussed, but on the other hand appeared to need much more comprehensive research using more recent theoretical insights and detailed studies based on the current state of archaeological research. And, although the apparent plethora of Roman funerary finds from the research region were frequently studied within the contexts of their excavations, they were left largely undiscussed in relation to each other. The subsequent dive in the deep body of archaeological literature often stranded on lost publications, while the theories for explaining the sea of Roman funerary materials appeared to be drifting on undercurrents in many occasions. So, on that account the process of writing a research master's thesis can probably be best described as a fairly paradoxical experience: a continual quest for answers, while only finding more questions.

This thesis research would not have been possible without the help of my supervisor Prof. dr. Theuws, to whom I owe a great debt of gratitude for helping me navigate through all these archaeological materials and literature, for checking my advancements, and for debating the interpretations of Roman funerary practices.

Lastly, I could not have done this without the helping hands of my family and friends, to whom I would like to express my gratitude. They supported me through and through, were there for me, and occasionally helped me by discussing my thesis and changed my views on the Roman funerary rites in the process.

# 1. Introduction

This research master thesis is about the transition from the cremation to the inhumation burial ritual in the region of Tongres, Cologne, and Trier (see figure 1) in the Roman imperial period (around the first to fourth century CE).
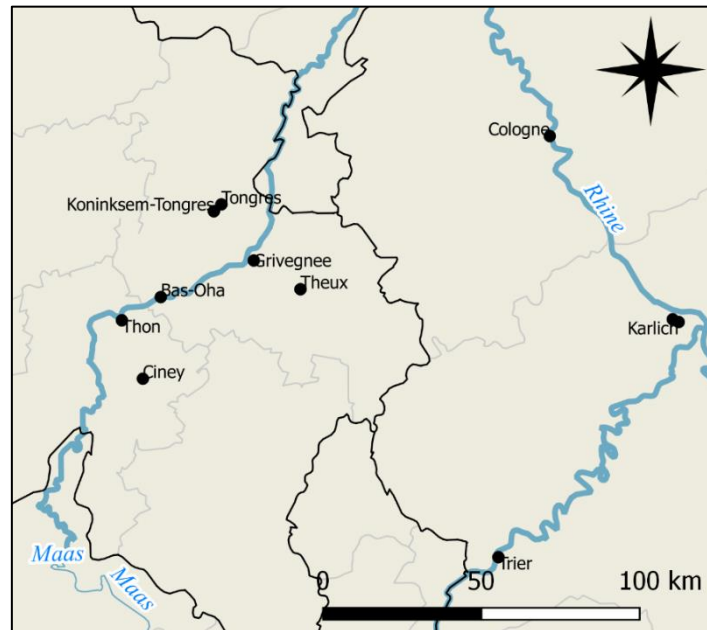


*Figure 1: A map of the research area (made using QGIS and www.naturalearthdata.com).*

In the early and middle Roman period it was customary to cremate people and bury the deceased's remains in an urn. This burial ritual of the Roman West changed when people were buried in inhumation graves with grave goods in the middle and late Roman period (starting around the end of the second century CE) (Theuws 2009, 283; Toynbee 1971, 34). In the late second and early third century CE inhumations began appearing in urban centres like Cologne and Tongres, but it took until the end of the third century CE for inhumations to become the dominant burial ritual in urban and rural contexts. This development in the transition to the inhumation burial ritual can be seen in the chart that was made by Van Doorselaer (1967, 51; Figure 2).

*Figure 2: A chart that shows the percentages of cremation and inhumation burial cemeteries per period for Gaul (after Van Doorselaer 1967, 51).*

Looking at these percentages in inhumation burial cemeteries in Gaul one might get the impression that inhumations were present as a minority burial practice in Gaul in each period up until 256 CE, and from then onwards became the common burial ritual. However, Figure 3 depicts the table with crematio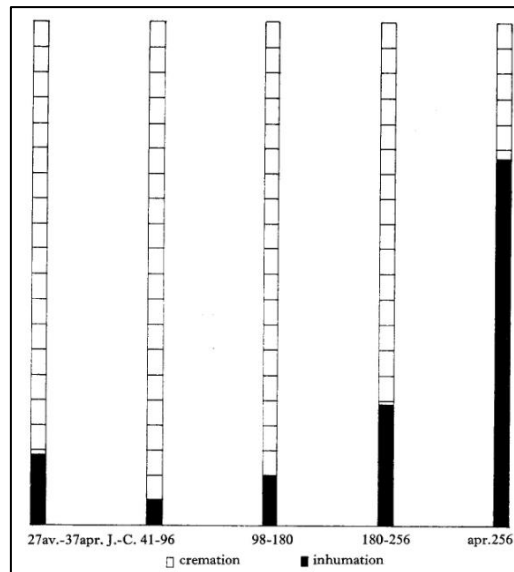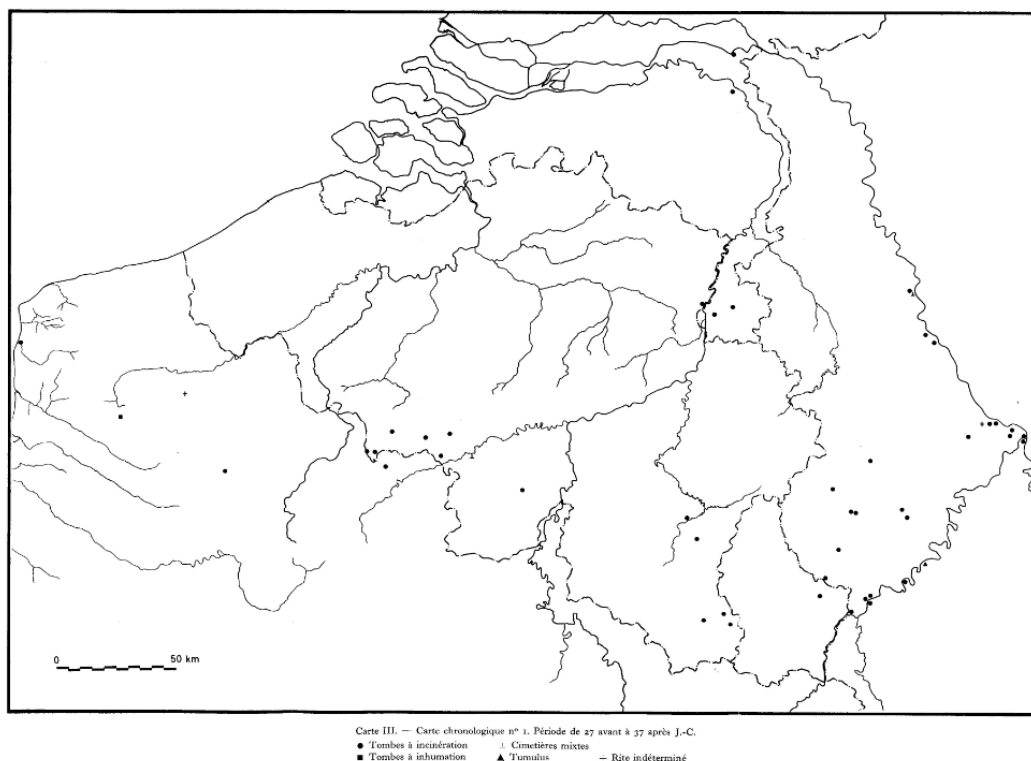n and inhumation burial cemeteries per period and country (on which the chart in Figure 2 was based) and this shows some nuances can be made to this statement.



*Période I :* Auguste-Tibère 27 avant J.-C.-37 après J.-C.

| | Belgique | France | Allemagne | Grand-Duché | Hollande | Total | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cimetières à incinération | 12 | 3 | 23 | 1 | 4 | 43 | 86 |
| Cimetières à inhumation | 1 | 5 | 1 | — | — | 7 | 14 |
| | 13 | 8 | 24 | 1 | 4 | 50 | |

*Période II :* Claude-Domitien 41-96

| | Belgique | France | Allemagne | Grand-Duché | Hollande | Total | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cimetières à incinération | 81 | 49 | 97 | 8 | 31 | 266 | 95 |
| Cimetières à inhumation | 2 | 11 | 1 | — | — | 14 | 5 |
| | 83 | 60 | 98 | 8 | 31 | 280 | |

*Période III :* Trajan-Marc Aurèle 98-180

| | Belgique | France | Allemagne | Grand-Duché | Hollande | Total | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cimetières à incinération | 204 | 76 | 101 | 5 | 55 | 441 | 90 |
| Cimetières à inhumation | 8 | 35 | 6 | 1 | — | 50 | 10 |
| | 212 | 111 | 107 | 6 | 55 | 491 | |

*Période IV :* Marc Aurèle-Invasions : 180-256

| | Belgique | France | Allemagne | Grand-Duché | Hollande | Total | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cimetières à incinération | 67 | 42 | 54 | 2 | 33 | 198 | 76 |
| Cimetières à inhumation | 11 | 30 | 18 | 1 | 2 | 62 | 24 |
| | 78 | 72 | 72 | 3 | 35 | 260 | |

*Période V :* Invasions-Fin de l'Empire : après 256

| | Belgique | France | Allemagne | Grand-Duché | Hollande | Total | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cimetière à incinération | 11 | 15 | 29 | 1 | 4 | 60 | 27 |
| Cimetières à inhumation | 28 | 83 | 44 | 1 | 6 | 162 | 73 |
| | 39 | 98 | 73 | 2 | 10 | 222 | |

*Figure 3: A table that shows the cremation and inhumation cemetery count per period and country (Van Doorselaer 1967, 30).*

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So, to nuance the view that inhumation burials were a small but ever-present minority burial ritual it can be remarked that this table is only a reflection of 'the percentage of cemeteries with inhumations in Gaul' and not of 'the average percentage of inhumation burials per cemetery in Gaul', meaning that not all cemeteries necessarily contained inhumations. While it is still plausible inhumations were a present minority burial ritual it is also possible some regions were even devoid of the inhumation burial ritual all together. Furthermore, most of the cemeteries with inhumation burials were located in France, while for instance the Netherlands and Luxembourg seemed to be both for quite some time lacking cemeteries with inhumations. However, more recent research on the Dutch coastal area near the *castellum* in Valkenburg did show the presence of 134 inhumations (next to 520 cremations), dating from roughly 40 to 200 CE (though these will not be discussed in further in this thesis, as they fall outside the research area) (Smits 2006, 6). Nevertheless, these figures do show a general increase in cemeteries with inhumations from the second half of the first century CE onwards and in almost all countries from this research area the majority of the cemeteries had inhumation burials around the second half of the third century CE (see figure 3 and figure 4).



Carte III. — Carte chronologique nº 1. Période de 27 avant à 37 après J.-C.
● Tombes à incinération ⸬ Cimetières mixtes
■ Tombes à inhumation ▲ Tumulus — Rite indéterminé

Carte IV. — Carte chronologique n° 2. Période de 41 à 96 après J.-C.
● Tombes à incinération    ▲ Tumulus
■ Tombes à inhumation      + Rite indéterminé
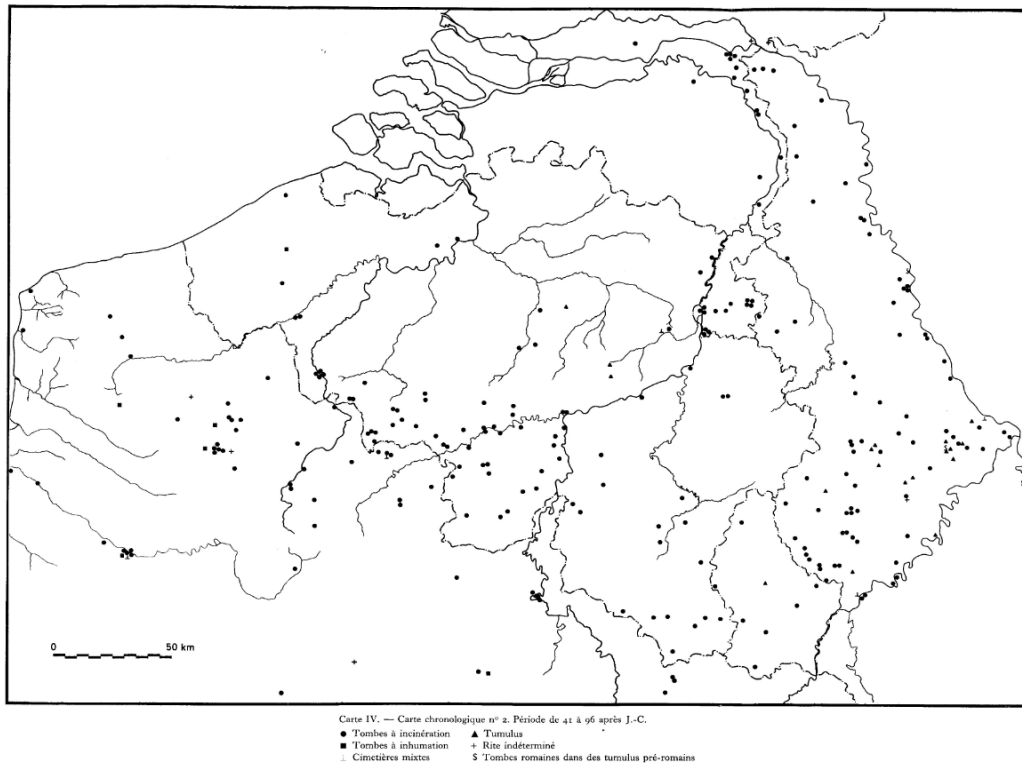⊥ Cimetières mixtes        $ Tombes romaines dans des tumulus pré-romains

*Figure 4: Maps showing the distribution of cemeteries with cremations, inhumations, or both. The map above shows period I (27 BCE to 37 CE) and the map below period II (41 to 96 CE) (after Van Doorselaer 1967).*

These maps shown in Figure 4 are to some extent misleading vis-à-vis their potential for interpreting the current state of the Roman funerary research. The maps were based on the level of archaeological research in 1967, Van Doorselaer's (1967) definitions of what a Roman cemetery looked like, and the large uninhabited regions seem unlikely as well. Despite that the maps will be used as an analytical starting point, hence, questions that result from this data set are those about what the characteristics of these inhumation burials were and whether more recent archaeological evidence or interpretations can lead to new views on these ritual practises. Previously, Hiddink (2008) compiled the research on the cemeteries in Meuse-Demer-Scheldt region and his research showed there was a lot of variation between graves (cf. Hiddink 2008, 62-66). The cemetery level of analysis of the study by Van Doorselaer (1967, 10) allowed it to show a large picture of Late Roman Gaul, but it lacks in detail at the level of the burial due to the size of the study. This was acknowledged by Van Doorselaer (1967, 37), who advocated doing a more thorough study of the first and second century CE inhumations, while he argued there was a certain influence from the predating Roman and surviving local inhumations. The existence of inhumation rites as a minority practice in Rome during the first century CE,

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referred to as an extraordinary burial ritual by for instance Nero and as a Greek way by Petrone, also inspired Van Doorselaer (1967, 39-41) to consider the influences from the east. Yet, assumptions related to the feasibility of recognizing local, indigenous, and 'Roman' graves in the archaeological funerary evidence were underlying these interpretations and have been adhered to in more recent publications as well (cf. Berszin 2012; Höpken 2007, 288-299; 301).

This change in funerary customs followed in the footsteps of the changes in funerary rites from all over the Roman empire since the first century CE. The inhumation burial practice that was adopted, had already been common to the east of the empire (cf. Morris 1992, 52). As a consequence, one of the first explanations for this shift in funerary rites was that of the *ex oriente lux* model, which saw the east as a primary factor in influencing the adoption of the inhumation burial ritual in Rome. Especially, since these processes seemed to dovetail with a philhellenism among elites in the first century CE (Cumont 1956, 171-173; Morris 1992, 53-61). Morris (1992) also saw the new burial practice as a diffusion from the Greek east to the Latin west, placed within the context of emulations by elites (interested in Greek culture as part of the Hellenistic fashion) and emulations between Rome and other cities in the empire. And, Van Doorselaer (1967, 44) even advanced the possibility that only the imperial family and the most wealthy people could afford the privilege of a cremation. Furthermore, the element of social cohesion was seen by Morris (1992, 68) as fundamental to the shift, because the empire was in increasingly more crises. Additionally, the explanation by Nock (1932, 357-358) in terms of 'fashion' was based on the idea of plain popularity and saw the inhumations as merely determined by personal preferences and processes of emulation. Although this theory underappreciates the underlying processes that cause something to be fashionable, these theories will be elaborated further in the following chapter (2. Historiography and Theory).

The early Christian beliefs have been appointed as another motive for the use of inhumations burials (cf. Cooke 1998, 247). In the late Roman period Christianity was introduced in North-West Europe, so commonly this has been thought to be connected to the change in burial practice. However, a shift has occurred in the confidence with which late Roman burial treatments could be identified as being Christian. This happened for the reason that the church seems to have played only a limited role in the contemporary burial rituals in the Mediterranean, making it equally unlikely to have been of more importance in the north-west Roman regions (Pearce 2015, 442). On top of that,

the Christian explanation had already been questioned because of the relatively early dating of the increase in inhumations graves and the generality of this transition (cf. Cooke 1998, 247). Likewise, uncertainty surrounds the religious influence of oriental cults (e.g. Mithraism) on inspiring the use of the inhumation burial (Graham 2015, 45).

The process that replaced cremation burials with inhumations did not happen instantaneous, as could be seen in Van Doorselaer's (1967) results, and also in early Roman history the two rites had coexisted (Graham 2015, 44-45). Nevertheless, the shift was viewed by Morris (1992, 67) to have coincided with the Crisis of the Third Century, which lead to the interpretation of the new burial ritual as having been pushed to create more unity in an increasingly heterogeneous empire. Whether this actually happened in such a conscious way or maybe not at all for this reason, there were still various differences between the local rituals. And, Van Doorselaer's (1967) study showed that already before the third century CE in Gaul the inhumation rite was picking up momentum.

In most of the more recent studies a new focus on the preservation of the body has been considered to be at the basis of the inhumation burial practice (cf. Graham 2015, 41; Pearce 2015, 453-458; Toynbee 1971, 41). Notwithstanding the possibility of this view, the inhumation burial is portrayed to some extent as being diametrically opposed to the old rituals by seeing a different treatment of the body as going hand in hand with a new meaning of the burial ritual. Therefore, questions are raised as to how this change in rites could ever happen in the first place (other than by for instance being imposed by influxes of peoples who took certain rituals with them). So, instead of only regarding this new bodily preservation as the new meaning of the burial ritual this study will try to interpret the archaeological evidence using the theory on fractal personhood and how this relates to dividual and individual persons (see chapter 2; cf. Budja 2010, 48; Fowler 2004, 23). Whereas the individual personhood and identity, that is nowadays seen as normal to western people, is an indivisible or impartible concept, having another view on personhood is possible as well (cf. Budja 2014, 48). For instance, it has been argued that in the Neolithic persons could be seen as partible and dividual, which makes personhood fractal (cf. Chapman and Gaydarska 2011, 22; Fowler 2004, 49-50; Jones 2005, 213-214). The question is to what extent the archaeological evidence from the Roman period burials allows such a distinction and interpretation in terms of dividuals or individuals to be made. So, to be able to tie these theoretical ideas to the archaeological material reality a detailed knowledge of the grave characteristics is required. Therefore, to detect the material

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differences that reflected the changes in burial rituals more specific research is needed on a local level at the early cemeteries that house both late cremation and early inhumation burials.

Nonetheless, the transition probably aided in for instance the spread of Christianity (Morris 1992, 67-68). And, Morris (1992, 33) thought such a spread of a burial practice went hand in hand with a new burial system and a new meaning of the burial rituals. Therefore, he argued for embedding the changing treatment of the body in its ritual context and for a breakdown at multiple geographical levels to also stress the variation in the smaller ritual systems. While more research has been done since Morris' study, as can be read in chapter 2, this research recommendation will form in a way a point of departure for this thesis research on both the regional and cemetery level. To this end, the cemeteries of Tongres and Cologne will be examined further in two case-studies, because both Theuws' (2009, 285) and Van Doorselaer's (1967, 52) observations indicated that in these locations some of the region's earliest cases of the inhumation ritual could be found in the late second and early third century CE. And, overview maps will be made of how the cemeteries with early inhumation graves were distributed per period in the research region.

This study will try to provide more of the needed detailed insights into their archaeological materials by looking at the graves from Tongres, Cologne, and other cemetery sites from the research region with the earliest Roman inhumation graves. Subsequently, after having examined what the actual differences between the cremations and inhumations were, these will be interpreted along the lines of the theoretical framework on personhood. In doing so it will also be possible to make a comparison of these geographically close cemeteries that were going through broadly similar processes, see the effects on the burials, and tell whether the earlier mentioned empire wide theories (e.g. in terms of ethnic migrations, spreading religions, or influences from Rome) are still applicable at this level or need revisions. Especially, since at these sites in the Roman period often new societal contexts were developing that need interpretations of their rituals and social practices at the local level (cf. Roymans 1990, 240).

Using the catalogues that summarize the results of the archaeological excavations that were done at the case-study sites Cologne and Tongres (and other sites with early inhumation graves from the research region) the grave goods, dates, and other burial

specifics will be collected. These data will hopefully allow for cross comparisons between grave types and funerary sites to answer the following main research question:

*Can a re-evaluation of the archaeological finds from the area around Tongres, Cologne, and Trier in combination with a new interpretational model of fractal personhood elucidate the motives for adopting the inhumation burial ritual in the Roman period in the north-western parts of the Roman empire?*

This main research question will be answered using two sub-research questions, relating to the more specific archaeological materials:

*What are the general trends in the cemeteries with early Roman inhumation burials in the research area?*

*How do the archaeological finds from Tongres, Cologne, and other sites with early Roman inhumation burials from the research region relate to the transition to the inhumation burial ritual?*

Answering these questions and thereby the main research question will not only be of a great importance to the understanding of the archaeology of the imperial Roman period of the research area, but also to the rest of the western parts of the Roman empire (where a similar change in burial rituals was happening as was discussed before). On top of that, in the following Merovingian period the burial ritual starts to play an important role in archaeological debates about how the late Roman fourth and fifth century CE weapon graves from Northern Gaul should be interpreted (Petts 2003, 139; Theuws 2009, 297; cf. Theuws 2014). On that account it is interesting to research why the inhumation burial ritual was adopted in the first place, as more knowledge about the possible reasons might also help in interpreting these later mortuary rituals.

# 2. Historiography and Theory

This chapter will start by describing the broad historiography of the scholarly research that has been done on the rise of the inhumation ritual in the West Roman empire. Starting in Rome the changes are followed to the rest of North-West Europe and in broad terms it will be discussed how these changes were incorporated in the various mortuary rites. This includes several of the proposed explanations that have been coined to explain the empire wide shift in funerary rites that was taking place. Second, some of the more general funerary rituals are discussed, as well as other theories for changes in these rites. Lastly, the theory on personhood is described with a particular focus on dividual and individual personhood.

## 2.1 Historicizing theory

In the eight to sixth century BCE *Sepulcretum* in the Roman Forum it can be seen cremation and inhumation burials were both used, and it seems that based on the Law of the Twelve Tables this was also the case in the fifth century BCE (Toynbee 1971, 39). From 400 BCE onwards (up until the first century CE) cremations became the norm in Rome, so by 60 CE the inhumation ritual was practiced in the east/Greek part of the empire while cremations were the norm in the west/Latin part (figure 5) (Morris 1992, 52).

*Figure 5: Cremation and inhumation regions in the Roman empire by 60 CE (Morris 1992, 52).*

Under Hadrian in a classic revival the Hellenistic culture flourished in second century CE Rome, coinciding with the spread of inhumation burials. However, the *ex oriente lux* model of diffusion is according to Morris (1992, 53) not sufficiently explanatory as the Greek customs were actively adapted and used to fit the Roman purposes. It is unclear whether the richer classes at Rome or the lower peoples took up the rite first, but the burial evidence of the richer classes at Rome indicated that the transition to the inhumation burial ritual in Rome was for the most part finished within the time span of about a single generation (between 140 and 180 CE). Yet, more specific relative numbers of cremation and inhumation burials were not provided by Morris (1992, 54). The origins of this quickly proceeding process are hard to directly attribute to Roman philhellenism, but by 200 CE it was probably a prerequisite for elites to participate in the inhumation burial rituals, because doing otherwise would have likely meant placing oneself outside the imperial culture (Morris 1992, 59; 61).

The main reason why early Christianity has been linked with sparking the shift to the inhumation burials is that it was believed by some early Christians that the body would resurrect, implying the need for preservation and correct burial (although others believed the soul would find a new home in a spiritual body) (Petts 2003, 135-136). However, Toynbee (1971, 40) did not think that dogma's of resurrection already played a role in pagan thought, or that Christian (or Jewish) influences were the reason, because for the former the shift was too general and for the latter it was too early. A causal link with Christian beliefs was questioned as well by Cooke (1998, 247) because of the much later date of adoption as the official religion of the empire (cf. Cooke 1998, 247). Yet, it can be asserted that this is disputable for the reason that before a religion is adopted officially as the state religion it was presumably already practiced by many people, making it more viable for a broad reception into the Roman society. Nevertheless, the church seems to have played a limited role in contemporary burial rituals in the Mediterranean, tolerating many burial practices, which makes it less likely to have been very influential in the north-west provinces (Pearce 2015, 442; Rebillard 2009, 177-178).

All in all, it can be said that the third century CE was a period of change for the empire. More than 20 official emperors alternated in the fifty years before Diocletian established the Tetrarchy (in an attempt to re-stabilize the government with a system of four emperors in 284 CE), silver coins were debased on a large scale (indicating economic problems), and the army was re-organized into border guards (*limitatenses*) and a mobile field army (*comitatenses*) (Petts 2003, 32). In 303 CE Diocletian again initiated new

persecutions against Christians, though in the west these may have only consisted of the destruction of a few churches (Petts 2003, 33). The end of the persecutions came when Constantine (and Licinius), Diocletian's successor, issued the Edict of Milan which allowed religious toleration in 313 (Petts 2003, 36). In 314 CE Constantine called a church council in Arles and as many bishops as possible were asked to come to ensure maximum credibility and support (Petts 2003, 36-38). Written references dating to the early fourth century CE have furthermore been made to bishops of Mainz, Trier, and Cologne (Ristow 2007, 297). The installation of bishops in Reims and Trier around the third century CE, in Metz near the end of the third century, in Cologne in the beginning of the fourth, and in Tongres around the end of the third century can be interpreted as pointing towards the existence of communities of Christians (Van Doorselaer 1967, 79). However, for this bishop in Cologne this may have been based upon the *falsum* of Cologne's concilie, so this assertion would not be valid (cf. Duchesne 1902 13-14). Nonetheless, the pagan emperor Julian, the successor to Constantine, planned to replace Christianity with a pagan religion (with Sol/Mithras at its head), but this was not successful: after Julian's death the official Roman support to the Christian church was re-installed (Petts 2003, 42). Moreover, under Gratian and later under Theodosius until 395 CE more anti-pagan legislation was passed and the altar of victory was removed from the house of the senate (Petts 2003, 43-44).

Other theological explanations than those about Christianity were coined by Cumont (1956, 171), who saw the Oriental mystery religions as bringers of the inhumation. For instance the mysteries of Mithras were seen as having spread widely over the empire along with the practice of the inhumation (Cumont 1956, 171-173). Among these mystery religions (dated to appear between the sixth century BCE and the fourth century CE) are the mystery of Eleusis (about the two Goddesses Demeter and her daughter Persephone), Dionysus, Magna Mater from Asia Minor, Isis and Osiris from Egypt, and Mithras the old Indo-Iranian deity (Burkert 1987, 4-6). Interesting for the funerary rites is the Latin translation of *mysteria*, which has evolved to *initia* and the concept of initiation. Therefore, Burkert (1987, 8) suggested that the mysteries were initiation ceremonies that were forms of personal religion which depended on private decisions and salvation through closeness of the deity (Burkert 1987, 12; 15). Close links have been drawn between Christianity and the mystery religions: similarities in language, rituals, and concerns for the afterlife have led historians to treat Christianity as one of these cults. They all first appeared in the Mediterranean East and from there spread to the west, involved rituals that differed from the state cult, and promised a better future after death.

However, according to Bowden (2010, 24) this view underappreciates the roots of Christianity in Judaism, Greek thought, and Jewish practices. Furthermore, he suggested that there was little contact between Christianity and the mystery cults, as he thought their shared vocabulary did not actually indicate a common religious understanding (the Christian use of *mysteria* accordingly referred to something secret). Although he argued that certain practices (e.g. the shared meal or baptism) could have been similar, these were found so widely in the ancient world that they did not necessarily indicate a shared meaning (though they drew on a common religious heritage) (Bowden 2010, 208-210). Besides that, Jones (1987, 816) stated in an essay on the burial customs of Rome and the provinces that other than the placement of a cult object (like a figurine) there is little evidence for the influence of cults on the burial rituals. The question is whether this absence of evidence should be interpreted as reflecting evidence for the absence of influences from the mystery cults on the burial rites.

Another explanation for the shift to inhumation burials has been provided by Nock (1932, 357-358) who saw the changes as a matter of fashion. By this he meant that the habits of the rich trickled down to the lower classes due to processes of emulation. In Rome according to Nock the shift had mostly to do with changes in form in several parts of the ritual, but left intact the overall structure so that inhumation in the third century CE and cremation in the first century CE said broadly the same things (Morris 1992, 33; Nock 1932, 357-359). Yet, it can be questioned if this interpretation does right to the change from transformation by cremation to the more pronounced emphasis on the intact dead body, especially since this change can affect how the deceased person is reflected by the burial ritual (which will discussed further in later paragraphs). And, Toynbee (1971, 40) did not belief just fashion or an ostentatious taste could have caused this change in burial rites either, as ash-coffins could be equally ostentatious and because the two rites appeared together as well.

Van Doorselaer (1967, 55-57) explained the early examples of the inhumation burial ritual in first century CE Gaul in terms of southern regions that had kept on inhuming people, resisting the cremation ritual that neighbouring others were adopting and thereby signalled a continuation of the inhumation ritual from the La Tène period into the Roman period. Furthermore, indications for the presence of Oriental merchants (Jews or people from Asia minor) in the same area were interpreted by Van Doorselaer (1967, 56-57) as probably having inspired the inhumation burial ritual in places like Mainz, Trier, and Cologne. Nevertheless, Van Doorselaer (1967, 67; 69) saw 'Romanization' as a major

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factor in spreading the inhumation burial ritual and as sparking a 'renaissance' of the Celtic tradition of inhumation burials (Van Doorselaer 1967, 86). So, it is debatable whether these views do not emphasize Roman influence too much and whether such bounded ethnic ascriptions do right to the interpretation of the archaeological record.

Having discussed possible influences from Rome and the east of the empire, it is necessary to discuss some of the Roman conceptions of the afterlife and social processes that may have led to the use of the inhumation burial in the Roman period.

For instance Morris (1992, 33) saw the inhumation rite in Rome as marking a cultural homogenization that coincided with a political and economic regionalization (Morris 1992, 33). To make his point Morris (1992, 45-62) compared the ways in which cremations and inhumations were treated and what these could have meant in the Roman society. The typical second half of the first century BCE imperial tomb in Rome is the *columbarium*, a barrel-vaulted brick tomb with walls that could hold several thousands of cremation urns. Though it has been estimated that less than 1% of the population in Rome ended up in *columbaria,* Morris (1992, 45-46) thought a strong uniformity was present in the graves from the first century CE, as the cremation was basically the only used rite in Rome. Furthermore, the variation between burials of people of different statuses, apparent in inscriptions and characteristics of *columbaria*, is according to Morris (1992, 46) overshadowed by the notions of solidarity and stability. Therefore, the *columbarium* would have created a social structure with a well-off class that embraced citizens, freedmen and even slaves (whose burial fees were paid for by their rich patrons). Cremations in turn extended the unity of the vision to those not buried in *columbaria*, while allowing the major split-up between the classes to remain intact (Morris 1992, 47). Unlike the *columbaria* that could house large amounts of cremations an equally sized tomb would only have room for a few inhumations, putting more emphasis on the burial group's relations. The function that hitherto had been fulfilled by the columbaria can be seen as taken over by the catacombs which also allowed many inhumations to be placed together, while even incorporating chambers for privileged burials to replace the central niches for privileged urns (Morris 1992, 61). All in all, this transition in funerary rites was interpreted by Morris (1992, 61) as reflecting only a change in form and a continuation of the significance of these types of burials for the Roman society.

After 100 BCE Roman nobles began erecting elaborate tombs and statues which were interpreted by Morris (1992, 43-46) as influenced a great deal by the Hellenistic East, where the inhumation rite was already the norm. Furthermore, the mausoleum of

Augustus was seen as having redefined the lavish burial display as only appropriate for the imperial family, explaining the use of symbols of pietas in more modest family tombs of the rich in Rome from 30 BCE onwards (Morris 1992, 43-46). In the Roman empire the spread of the inhumation rite was seen by Morris as providing evidence on the relation between the empire's peoples and the centre: characterized by encouragement of the emulation of Rome and the reuse of imperial images by provincial elites. Whether this happened because of new religions, philosophies, or fashion trends had according to Morris (1992, 62) only to do with the mechanisms of dissemination and the changes that occurred when symbols were reinterpreted and reused in local ritual systems.

Important to Morris (1992, 67) was that the rite was first taken up in Rome and that subsequently the new 'Roman' custom reached the outer provinces of the empire. Thus, Morris stated that by these mechanisms a *mos Romanus* was created and that later the new ritual functioned as unifying factor in the heterogeneous empire and in the events of the Crisis of the Third Century (Morris 1992, 67). While it is questionable that general unrest in the empire inspired people to start making changes in their local burial rituals, this perceived homogenization of the Roman culture was according to Morris (1992, 68) a consequence. And, even if the details between local rituals differed it would have also aided in the spread of Christianity (Morris 1992, 67-68). For these reasons Morris (1992, 33) thought such a spread of the inhumation rite happened in parallel with a new burial system and a new meaning.

Notwithstanding the plausibility of these effects there is an underlying notion of the unidirectional processes of Romanization present here. Whereas Morris (1992, 43-46) described the Hellenization process in Rome as active and adapting, he made no such nuances for the comparable changes in the culture of the rest of the Roman empire. Also, an awareness of provincial peoples of the burial practices in other parts of the empire is assumed by Morris as well as an attributed importance of these rites from other places. Morris' top down interpretation of a change in burial rites as promoting solidarity is also argued to be unlikely by Graham (2015, 45), for the reason that the empire in the first two centuries CE (when the inhumation ritual started to take on momentum) was actually at its peak in prosperity.

In a later publication Schoen (1998) has provided a detailed analysis of the funeral practices and the relations with social status (for mainly elite males) for first century BCE to fourth century CE Rome. He argued that the life of the deceased (i.e. his place in society) was one of the main factors in determining how elaborate and long the funeral

and mourning duration were (Schoen 1998, 1). This led Schoen (1998, 4-5) to interpret material differences and public display in terms of status, while the ritual 'prescriptions' were essentially seen as the same with gradual differences. Schoen's interpretation does indicate some level of assumptions regarding his thoughts on how culture was reproduced in the public domain. Seeing funerals as following a similar 'ritual basis' leaves little room for new cultural phenomena to emerge, other than making a funeral more or less elaborate. This problem was recognized by Schoen (1998, 6-7) by stating that there was still enough flexibility in the rite for new views and practices. Furthermore, Schoen (1998, 5) thought the funeral had a potential political power, which could be used to solidify family statuses.

Another basic of the Roman cult of the dead associated to these funerary practices was that according to King (1998, 447) Romans believed that when people died they became *manes*, individuals through which the human existence continued after death and who could interact with the living as deities. These *manes* were living apart from the living human community and were segregated based on the criterion of *pietas*, the reciprocal piety that was related to the degree they had kept up proper reciprocal relations with their family, gods, and government during live (King 1998, 444-448). This cult that was dated from the beginning of the first century BCE onwards included the belief that the *manes* were capable of fulfilling desires (e.g. a longer life, safety, success in war, food, fertility, happiness, fidelity, guidance, and for instance success in love), showing the power of the dead in Roman daily life (King 1998, 6; 449). These services did however require the living to make regular offerings, like food or wine, and *pietas* (King 1998, 450).

An explanation that was less focused on Roman culture was provided by Toynbee (1971, 41) by suggesting that the inhumation was a more gentle or respectful way of treating the corpse, which was a temple and mirror of the immortal soul and enduring personality (reflecting the stronger emphasis on the individual's life in the hereafter) (Toybee 1971, 41). Therefore, the change from cremation to inhumation accordingly had several other implications as the body could be seen as a medium for ritual communication, allowing the display of 'natural symbols' (Morris 1992, 31).

In a recent article by Graham (2015, 41) it was argued that the change from cremation to inhumation burial in Roman Italy might not have been as radical a change as it seemed: the two rites would have involved different choices that reflected new attitudes towards the body and the importance of its integrity. The materiality of the corpse itself would have influenced the sensory experience, emotions, and embodied memories of the living,

creating a sense of personal or collective identity (Graham 2015, 41).

While cremating a body is not as simple as lighting a firing under a corpse, burying a body is not just a matter of putting someone in the ground either. In the preparatory rituals the burying group comes into contact with the corpse, which as Graham (2015, 46) argued coud have an impact on the relations between living and dead. Fear of the unburied dead terrorizing the living as ghosts seemed to have been a factor, but there were no signs that levels of these fears were elevated when inhumations became more common and throwing some earth upon the buried remains seemed to have sufficed in keeping the dead at bay (Graham 2015, 49). The libation pipes for securing the direct connection between living and dead, would form according to Graham (2015, 49) an obvious escape route, which would rule out the possibility of using inhumation graves with the intention of preventing the death from getting out of their graves. On the other hand the possibility of keeping the living out of the graves was argued to be improbable, because grave goods were scarce and because preventing accidental disturbances can be done more effectively by using grave markers. Although, intentional grave reopening for ritual reasons was not considered it was argued by Graham (2015, 49-50) that burying whole bodies carefully in coffins and shrouds was likely done to secure their protection (Graham 2015, 49-50). This claim is further substantiated by evidence that coffins often did succeed in keeping the earth away from the body, as many inhumed bodies seem to have decayed in a void while being held together by wrappings (preventing decay and fragmentation) (Graham 2015, 50-52). Therefore, in contrast with cremations, where a sudden separation with the body as a recognizable object is effectuated, inhumations were seen by Graham (2015, 52) as targeted on preserving the original identity by concealing the transformations the body is undergoing.

Reluctance of Roman families to be in contact with the decaying body might have been reinforced by the use of *libitinarii,* who were increasingly seen as polluted by their profession as undertakers (cf. Schoen 1998, 222-224). Based on literary evidence King (1998, 387-388) stresses the importance of the avoidance of contamination of death, by removing the deceased from the living, during the Roman funerary rituals. At the same time during the *pompa* (the funeral procession) the shrouds and coffin served to draw attention to the body, while hiding the identity from the onlookers and preserving its idealized image, effectively controlling the interaction between the body and the people (Graham 2015, 53). On top of that it appeared that around this period notions of the sleeping dead were becoming increasingly popular, as for instance pillows were found in several graves (Graham 2015, 54-55). Furthermore, changing interests in the well-being

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of the body in general may have also brought a new attention for the care of the death. Hence, the 'violent' actions to cremate a body were interpreted as the direct opposite of the 'careful' inhumation ritual and were seen as being no longer aligned with the prevailing cultural values (Graham 2015, 56). The employment of *libitinarii* increased the distance from the dead body, which was negotiated through the maintenance of the intact body. Thus, Graham (2015, 57) argued that the knowledge that the dead lay soundly in the ground helped in keeping up the memory of the idealized body, which could be interacted with.

In spite of these plausible emotional effects of the involvement of *libitinarii* this explanation only accounts for why the emphasis was put more on the preservation of the body in inhumation burials. Unanswered questions therefore relate to what came first in the north-west provinces: the use of *libitinarii* (if they were used at all in these regions) or the inhumation burial ritual, because an earlier spread of the inhumation burial than a shift to use of *libitinarii* would at least show that the adoption of the inhumation rite cannot only be attributed to the use of these *libitinarii*. Graham (2015, 58) did not provide the answer to this question and thought the use of these undertakers was likely to have been done first by elites (who could afford this). Through elite emulation in tandem with the shift to inhumation burials in general this new rite and attitude towards the dead would accordingly have spread from Italy to rest of the empire (Graham 2015, 58). A detailed chronological study of the first inhumation burials and their spread over the empire could perhaps provide new insights in this discussion. However, in this explanation there is an undertone of the effect of the unidirectional 'Romanization' on the provinces and it is debatable if this can aptly describe the changes in the local burial rituals.

In a similar vein as the previously discussed scholars Pearce (2015, 453) gave examples from the Rhineland of inhumations with exceptionally good preservations, due to wrapping material that was used with anti-bacterial and water-absorbing properties. Thereby, it was tried to show that by inhuming the focus was put on preserving the body. Nevertheless, it cannot be stated with certainty that such a treatment was intended for instance for religious purposes or to maintain a 'normal' appearance of the body during the course of its burial (Pearce 2015, 453). Pearce (2015, 458) furthermore interpreted this and the greater emphasis on dress and ornaments as identity and status markers for the creation of an image of the 'beautiful dead', which extended the aristocratic self-representations in the public and private arenas (Pearce 2015, 458).

Carroll (2013, 561) also focussed on the Roman Rhine frontier around the first century CE and interpreted the use of certain cultural traditions in this period in light of the many groups that were resettling this region under the influence of the emperor. To re-establish themselves these peoples would have made use of selected cultural traditions. For example the commemoration of the dead using stone monuments with texts and images, which did not exist here prior to the Roman period, was interpreted as reflecting a negotiation and expression of identity of the ethnic groups and a consolidation of non-Roman traditions within the framework of society. Also Smits and Van Der Plicht (2009, 55; 81) argued that these Roman funerary customs made it possible to display the self publically through ethnic dress and bodily adornment. This meant these local people could compete in this Roman style public display (by for instance being depicted in togas) (Carroll 2013, 562). However, this ethnic interpretation inherently suffers from the pitfall of interpreting burial rituals in terms of 'ethnic groups' and 'Roman' funerary customs, which correlates with a too unilineal and mono-causal view of how burial rituals changed. Roman culture that was used by Gallo-Romans was seen by Woolf (1998, 246 -248) as being adapted strategically to achieve the local people's goals, as opposed to being the result of a Roman civilization mission. These underlying goals could be the content and organization of the Roman cultural system or the Roman identity, albeit in the third century CE no longer strictly relating to Rome (as many people in all over the empire now identified themselves as Romans) (Woolf 1998, 249). Similarly, Terrenato (1998, 23-26) saw Roman culture as a ground for differentiating between provincial society and less so for demonstrating 'cultural community with Roman incomers'. Pearce (2015, 223) however argued that these rites symbolize 'Roman' style, instead of putting the emphasis on continuity (Pearce 2015, 235). More generally Pearce thought that by using grave goods the deceased's identity was emphasized more pronouncedly. Objects like cameos, rock crystals, and amber figurines are objects that can be seen as luxury amulets to even the high classes of Roman society, which together with the grave monuments were according to Pearce (2015, 235) indicative of burials being arenas for display and the negotiation of status. In this *mise-en-scène* the deceased's identity is shaped by the combinations of symbols with their attached associations, that are placed on the body, and in doing so the identity was fixed in the eyes of the onlookers (Pearce 2015, 236). Whether the identity was by this practice actually fixed (or even the same to the onlookers) is disputable, but there were several possible ways to conveys one's specific identity. For instance references by grave goods to the consumption of food and drinks to create feelings of community, the manipulation of physical appearance, dignified leisure

(*otium)*, and sociability in general (i.e. by dining or the grooming of the body) were interpreted as signifying virtues and cultural expertise that were needed to be a member of the Roman elite (cf. Effros 2003, 83-84; Pearce 2015, 236-237).

Furthermore, in a more contextual approach it was tried by Smal (2017, 173-174) to incorporate all grave elements (i.e. in this example the different Merovingian period grave constructions) and relate these to the meaning of this variability. Fifteen kinds of grave constructions were identified for the Merovingian period graves with different kinds of connotations regarding what they could have meant (e.g. for the preservation of the body or the analogy of the grave as the house) (cf. Smal 2017, 175-185). Though these conclusions probably cannot be directly projected to the funerary materials from the Roman period it is plausible that different meanings were also attributed to different executions of the graves from the research region.

Morris (1992, 33), Toynbee (1971, 46), Graham (2015, 46), and Pearce (2015, 548) all thought a different attitude towards the treatment of the body might have been at the basis of shifting to inhumation burials, which they all interpret in terms of a new meaning of the burial ritual (as discussed in the preceding paragraphs). However, seeing cremations and inhumations as diametrically opposed in terms of bodily treatment underestimates the rites around cremating and makes it inconceivable that these rites could develop into each other. Therefore, in the following paragraph the theory on funerary rites and the underlying reasons for using certain burial customs will be elaborated.

## 2.2 Burial rituals

Funerary rites, according to Bloch and Parry (1982, 38), served in the Lugbara community to conserve life after a death and to protect its reproductive capabilities, making sure both the society and the individual are reborn. Possibly, fertility and sexuality are often featured in funerary practices because nature is seen as capable of both taking and giving life, which was interpreted Bloch and Parry (1982, 1-2) as linking the social and natural order. Humans, being both a part of the social and biological order, therefore dealt with death not only in private terms. As the deceased were initially still a part of the social order they should be treated accordingly, to facilitate their rite of passage in which a new social identity was grafted onto the individual (Bloch and Parry 1982, 2-4). These rites served in South-East Asian ethnographic examples to make the soul part of society again, so it was argued that it was society and the person (that the deceased had been during life) which determined the corpse's burial treatment (cf. Bloch and Parry 1982, 4).

Furthermore, it was proposed that in these burial rites the value which was 'culturally conceived to be the most essential to the reproduction of the social order' was renewed and could therefore be different in every society (Bloch and Parry 1982, 7-9). When this value concerns authority, which was the case for Lugbara males, the dilemma is that notions of authority are perceived to be eternal and static, but the world is a much more dynamic place. Bloch and Parry (1982, 11-15) argued that in order to solve this dilemma either the social order is negated or individuality is erased during the funeral, creating an ancestor in the process. Emphasizing the legitimate authority by replicating the patterns ordained by ancestors thus transcended life and made groups seem to be enduring and maintained their continuity (Bloch and Parry 1982, 12). As the element that is to be conserved by the funerary rites is on this basis likely to differ per community, it can be material (land or goods) and immaterial (the roles the deceased held).

Non-western (and Western) civilizations have widely varying funerary rites, with similarities between these practices. An example is the *rite de passage* and the form it took among the Dayak of Borneo in the funerary rituals. This *rite de passage* involved the initial separation phase (e.g. someone's death), a liminal phase in-between death (e.g. the temporary disposal of the corpse), and lastly the final ceremony (e.g. the final burial). This last stage was meant to bury the deceased, ensure the soul's peace and a place in the land of the dead, and to allow the living to quit the mourning (Hertz 1960, 29-30; 53-54; Van Gennep 1960, 189-192). Furthermore, the liminal phase is often perceived as threatening, because the body that used to be a person now for instance can no longer exercise social control on its cultural shaping, but can only be shaped from the outside (Stutz 2015, 3). Therefore, the rites of passage are meant to transform an unstable situation to a more stable one, especially since a death threatens normal life and influences many people. In this way the 'soul' can once more become part of the community (or the community of ancestors) (cf. Thomassen 2015, 40). Consequently, it can be argued that widely differing but contemporary burial practices may have had similar intentions: entangling the different constituents that make up a person (e.g. the Western soul and body), transforming and cleansing those parts, and finally reuniting them (Hertz 1960, 77-78; 86). Schoen (1998, 257) suggested that this tripartite structure of the *rite de passage* could be found in the (elite) Roman funerary rites and the relations between the deceased and mourners/relatives. During the *rite de separation* goodbyes were said and the association with the deceased made relatives enter the taboo phase (*periode de marge)* (Schoen 1998, 257-258). The final *rite d'aggregrégation* was concluded by the cremation or

inhumation in a private setting and cleared the way to redistribute the social roles of the deceased and mend the social order. During this phase also the funerary meal and other religious activities took place. In the rituals a twofold identity as both a member of the *familia* (honoured and mourned in private by women) and a citizen (honoured in public by men) was distinguished and the period that women were seen as polluted lasted for as long as the body was decomposing (apparently stemming from an older inhumation rite and the idea that the soul would be set free after this process) (Schoen 1998, 258). It was important to perform the right ritual actions and use the appropriate materials in order to create the right setting for the biological fact to be turned into societal and cultural meaning. This meant that the status someone had held during life was expressed in an homage (which resulted in little honour for citizens with little authority) (Schoen 1998, 258-259). Next to this the circumstances of the death, age, parenthood, place of death, and fame of the deceased were of major influence on how the funeral was finalized (Schoen 1998, 261-262).

Theuws (2009, 291) adopted another view on the late Roman burial ritual in the provinces and how the deceased person's identity was shaped, by putting less emphasis on the position the deceased had in life. For instance, for the early Middle Ages it was suggested that cultural and biological identities were used for social purposes, being constructed in certain situations. And, also to the Roman elites and middle class people it was important to ensure that the family name lived on and that the family capital was secure. For this purpose even family definitions could be altered and new members were introduced or excluded according to Saller (1994, 162). Halsall (2010, 9; 103-104) in parallel advanced the theory that burials were used in times of social stress and competition for leadership to ascertain the authority of the family of the deceased. Even if these burying groups were not necessarily members of the aristocracy, death can call such notions of authority into question by causing shifts in social roles. In reaction to this model Theuws (2009, 289) argued that it might be overly directed towards power crises, social practices and political events. Hence, instead of focusing on the factors of social practices or power as expressed in the burial ritual Theuws (2009, 289) argued that (late Roman weapon) burial rituals have meaning for the creation of new concepts, values, norms, and ideas (and were not initially about local leadership).

Theuws (2009, 290-295) furthermore argued that late Roman burials are constructed by making use of a rhetorical strategy. Involved in this triangular performance are the burying group (the 'authors'), the audience, and the deceased (whose identity is created

for the audience by the burying group) (figure 6) (Theuws 2009, 294). Following this model the deceased were thus dressed by others specifically for the funeral and used to allude to other aims. Therefore, the burying group may have buried the deceased in a certain way, to for instance justify their own authority claims, whether the deceased was actually elite or not. However, the degree to which the identity of the deceased could be constructed at the funeral probably depended for a large part on the status that this person would have had in life and for instance the knowledge the audience had of this. A corollary of this theory is that grave goods found in burials at cemeteries should not be interpreted as probate inventories of the deceased and based on this it might be equally difficult to identify elite burials. However, up until recently burials from this period have been almost exclusively interpreted in terms of ethnicity, wealth, and rank (cf. Halsall 2009, 7; Theuws 2009, 287-288; 294). The question at hand is whether it is possible for scholars to interpret these 'political' practices independent of the representations that are produced by the burials or in texts, because independent contemporary sources are lacking (cf. Theuws 2009, 291; 292). At the same time it must be taken into account that material culture from graves is patterned in correspondence with the funerary rites on the basis of the conceptual cultural framework of the burying group, and that the representations of the dead in graves should not be seen as directly representing the living (Theuws 2009, 294).
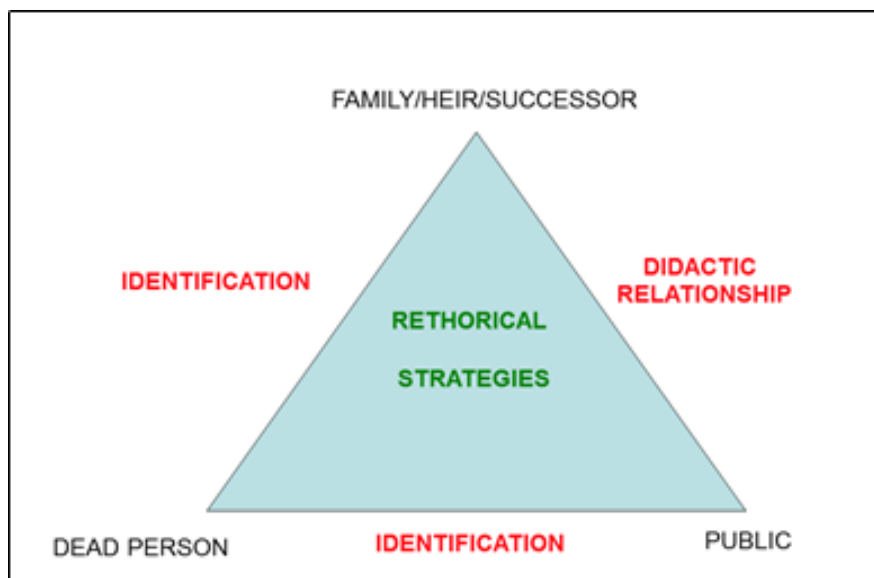


*Figure 6: Rhetorical strategies and the triangular relationship between the deceased, audience, and burying group (after Auzina et al. 2015).*

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Theuws (2009, 296; 308) has for instance interpreted the graves from Merovingian Northern Gaul as representing evidence for ancestor creation, which include references to fertility and authority. The grave goods that were found, like lances and bow and arrows, are associated with the hunt, a prestigious activity in which the killing of potentially deadly animals referred to surmounting nature and therefore death itself (Theuws 2009, 305-307). Another object commonly found in these graves is the axe, which bears symbolic meaning in the military and agricultural spheres (i.e. respectively referring to authority and fertility) (Theuws 2009, 302-303). Furthermore, by depositing food in graves fertility was stressed as well (Theuws 2009, 298). So, in these archaeological finds there are links with the fertility and authority to which end also present-day anthropological groups perform their rituals.

In addition to the grave goods the dead body was one of the major components in the burial ritual. It influenced how for instance in the transition from the cremation to inhumation burial attention was paid to the corpse, the construction or deconstruction of the person, and the cultural constructions of gender and ancestors (Theuws 2009, 295). So, the shift from cremation to inhumation burials was interpreted by Theuws (2009, 295) as indicative of a new focus on the dead body within the burial rituals. The diachronic element of this model for explaining the changing burial forms is that people appropriated new elements in their cultural constructions to their liking, because they were the authors of the new ritual repertoires that were applied to new societal contexts (Theuws 2009, 296). Consequently, to appropriately analyse the burial rhetoric it is needed to take into consideration the material culture (its different contexts for use and all its meanings), the different acts performed (e.g. gestures of the corpse, ritual phases, and actions by the audience), and the burial's location (and again its meaning) (Theuws 2009, 301).

According to Ochs and Capps (1996, 22) narratives could generate multiple partial selves in for instance the past and present, subject and object, and public and private and this also seems to be applicable to the rhetorical strategy that Theuws (2009, 290-292) suggested was employed in funerary practices. It is possible to see the individual as defined by its involvement with other people and things, and as the deceased had to give up his narrative rights to the burying group, the narrators could built a new understanding of the deceased, even if these understandings may not have exactly related to the 'truth' (cf. Ochs and Capps 1996, 23; 30; 34). It is however doubtful that the deceased's agency played only a little role in this narrative, but if the burying group constructed the story, and this story was differently understood by different people, bringing multiple partial selves to life, then how should the burial be interpreted?

While it is probably not feasible to offer a single all-encompassing interpretation, the theory on this subject will be further explicated in the next paragraph to better understand how these concepts apply to the person and personhood.

## 2.3 Theory on personhood

Cooke (1998, 262) recognized the difficulty in extracting the status of the deceased from the burial contents, because of chronological changes in furnishing, personal choices with regard to the furnishing of a grave, and the complexity in understanding these past motivations behind the decisions that were made. Cooke (1998, 263) therefore concluded that the furnishing of a grave more likely reflected wider concerns than that it expressed a social position. While this is plausible this interpretation does assume that the inability of identifying social positions based on archaeological funerary evidence also implies that the social position was of no importance in the funerary rites to the burying groups in the past. Nevertheless, Cooke did actually interpret the burial record (and the status of individuals) on the basis of grave goods by judging their 'involved expense to the deceased or mourners', by discussing grave goods like coins, crossbow brooches (interpreted as belonging to Roman officials), glass vessels, and later in the Roman period belts and weaponry (see previous paragraph 2.2) (Cooke 1998, 263; 265). The question is what this involved expense means and how it relates to the involved worth and linked value in the past, which was likely very different from the worth and value of a similar burial today. Then again Cooke (1998, 260) also did not think grave goods can be used as indicators of the social position of the deceased, or at least not in a wide area comparison study, because of the high degree of variability in burial rites between cemeteries. Furthermore, the early inhumations often contained large numbers of a wide variety of grave goods, while furnishing of the grave subsequently declined in popularity in the sites that were studied by Cooke (1998, 261), which led to his interpretation that social networks in the earlier period were more stable and later became more fragmented. Whether this decline in furnishing of graves can only be explained by less stable social networks can be questioned, because the changes in (Roman) burial rituals could have had more to do with changing ideas and meanings than with changing external circumstances (cf. Graham 2015, 46; Morris 1992, 33, Pearce 2015, 548; Theuws 2009, 289; Toynbee 1971, 46).

When Hodder (1985, 2) argued that the burial ritual was not a passive reflection of what the dead were in life, he stressed the importance of the cultural context to understand what individuals had done, as they were acting socially within a framework of meaning. However, it should be remarked that the concept of the 'individual' appears to be a

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relatively modern Western construct. Stemming from seventeenth and eighteenth century thought it connected the unified person, self, and consciousness in one and the same bounded and observable entity (Budja 2010, 48). Whether this also applied to people's conceptions of a person in the past is open for discussion. For Neolithic people for instance it was suggested that the 'person' was partible and dividual. Finds of the presumably often temporary combinations of substances, things, and human bones were interpreted as constituting kinship, showing social relations and their continuity after death by the manipulation and accumulation of these materials (cf. Jones 2005, 213-214; Chapman and Gaydarska 2011, 22). Ergo, the materiality of the human bones related to transforming identities which were selectively removed and accumulated, and which are incompatible with the modern ideas of individuality.

Fowler (2004, 23) argued personhood and identity of people could be seen as modular concepts: as being composed of different substances (e.g. blood, food, alcohol, money, knowledge), features (e.g. body, mind, and soul), and social relations that structured identity. This means people cannot just be seen as individuals, but as 'dividuals' too (Fowler 2004, 24). Therefore, giving and receiving between people can alter the internal person and ensure constant change of the person through social interactions (Fowler 2004, 25). This partibility in which a person is decomposed to allow new relationships happens for example in rituals that occur following the final stages of death (Fowler 2004, 26-27). So, personhood can be achieved, maintained, deconstituted, and even be reconfigured after death (Fowler 2004, 47). Furthermore, Fowler (2004, 34-35) argued that to all people there are individual and dividual sides, that the person emerges from the tension between dividual and individual aspect, and that it depends on the social and geographical context which feature is accentuated. Personhood can thus differ as it moves up or down scales (relating to for example clans or families): a single person's body can be both part of a larger body (the clan) while being composed of smaller bodies (different family bloodlines), which are also themselves complete, making personhood a fractal concept (Fowler 2004, 49-50). On top of that personhood can be seen as represented through things and Gell (1998, 122-133; 137) thought for example Polynesian people acted through objects by distributing their personhood over these things.

Personhood can thus be conceptualized as the social relations that a person is made of and this can differ for the individual person, being for instance buried undivided as a complete articulated body, and the dividual who can be buried in body parts or bone deposits (cf. Chapman and Gaydarska 2011, 22). For the dividual and partible person this entails that while alive one can be distributed over the social and material world to

temporarily become a whole person in the mortuary rite (only to possibly be redistributed in mortuary exchanges again later on) (Budja 2010, 49; Fowler 2004, 47).

Lastly, the concept of permeable personhood was described for example by Herrmans (2017, 255) on the basis of Luangans (indigenous Indonesian people from Borneo). For these people human souls/life forces are combined with social relations with humans and nonhuman beings, which together constituted personhood. As the soul was bounded with relations with others this was seen as dual and variable per context, making the boundaries of persons open and the human relations with spirits ambiguous and unpredictable (Herrmans 2017, 255). Both this permeable and the earlier discussed dividual personhood were interpreted as fractal by Fowler (2005, 123), because for both permeable and dividual personhood a person is composed of elements that exist elsewhere in the world. Furthermore, Fowler (2005, 123) argued that this fractal concept applies to persons at all scales (e.g. individual, object, clan) and that fragmentation of objects or bodies is not a necessary condition. For instance partible personhood in Melanesian Kula exchanges operates both through composite things (that are continually acquiring new parts) and through fragmentation. Considering the different ways people evaluated relations with objects, people and identities in the past Fowler (2005, 126) suggested that there were different kinds of fractal relations and persons (in European prehistory). Moreover, Fowler (2005, 124) argued that in for instance Melanesia the big man is exemplary for someone who is not only highly dividual (made by the members of his clan), but who also has unique individual qualities (e.g. oratory and organizational skills), implying that people can be dividuals and individuals at the same time.

To further investigate how these understandings of personhood relate to the transition to the inhumation burial ritual in the Roman period it is needed to take a closer look at the first inhumation burials and the contemporary 'normal' cremation burials, which will be done in the following chapters (after having discussed the applied methodology).

# 3. Methodology

This chapter on the methodology describes the steps that were taken during the research that was done for this thesis. First, a reasoning is provided in the following paragraphs for the chosen methods to gather the research data. Then, the processes and tools that were necessary for the creation of the overview maps will be described and the overview maps themselves are presented in this chapter as well.

## 3.1 The research approach

The methodology that was adopted for this thesis research involved several steps. First, it was important to get an understanding of which cemeteries in the research region were the first to contain inhumation burials. Due to the scope of this master thesis it was chosen to do this on the basis of the 1967 study by Van Doorselaer, who had composed a comprehensive overview of all the Roman cemeteries in the North Gallic provinces (cf. Van Doorselaer 1967). Due to advancements in the funerary archaeological research in this area since the 1960's, it is clear that this overview is not up to date anymore, which can be seen by for instance taking a look at figure 7.
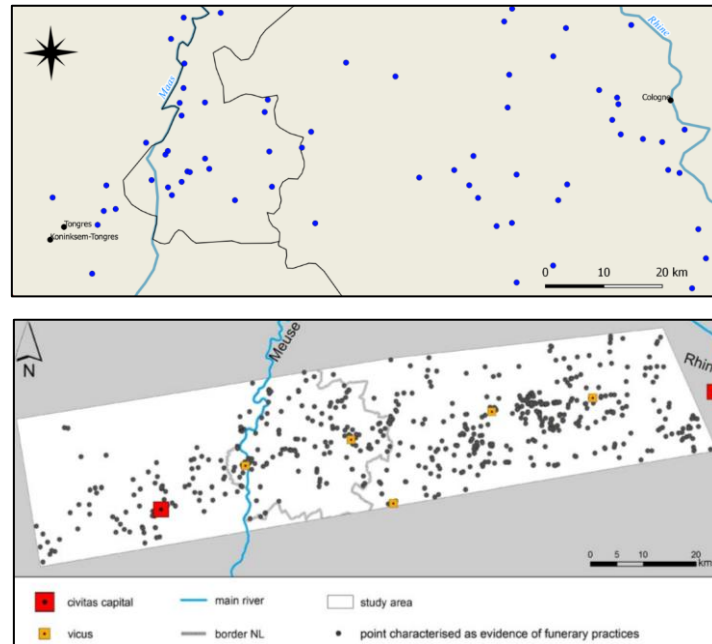


*Figure 7: A comparison of the map of Roman sites that was made on the basis of Van Doorselaer (1967) (above) and a map of Roman funerary activity around Cologne and Tongres by Jeneson in 2013 (below) (cf. Van Doorselaer 1967; after Jeneson 2013, 78).*

Notwithstanding the need for an updated overview map of the Roman cemetery evidence of North-West Europe, this study will focus on a more in depth look into the cemeteries where early inhumations have been found. While there might be some recent archaeological information missing, this will be considered when discussing the results. So, to that purpose Van Doorselaer's (1967) study will be used to for instance tell if cemeteries with inhumation burials were an isolated phenomenon or not.

The next step will be to take a closer look at the cemeteries with early inhumation burials that were found in the research area. Of each of these cemeteries the context, excavation circumstances, and quality of the publication will be described as much as possible. In terms of context for instance the geographic location, time period, and other archaeological data are incorporated in the research. For the excavation circumstances the year of excavation, kind of excavation, level of preservation, and for instance the extent of the excavations are important. Lastly, the publication quality will be discussed, because this can for instance vary from an elaborate and accessible scientific archaeological publication to only a short article.

The third step will focus on the funerary evidence itself, by looking at the two case studies of Tongres and Cologne (as well as examining the evidence from other sites with early inhumations). The burials from these two sites were elaborately described in excavation catalogues that included all of the available data (e.g. finds, grave characteristics, grave excavation drawings, and find depictions) and on the cemeteries from Tongres was an older thesis written before too (cf. Friedhoff 1991; Höpken and Liesen, 2013b; Päffgen 1992; Van Crombruggen 1960; Vanvinckenroye 1963; Vanvinckenroye 1970; Vanvinckenroye 1984). Although, these cemeteries were thus already previously published the interpretations of the assemblages are mostly rather limited and could benefit from an updated theoretical and more comprehensive perspective.

This analysis thus concerns a sample of sites that is probably not necessarily representative of the complete funerary archaeological record in the research region. Yet, the two case-study sites were two of the earliest to showcase the practice of inhumation burials and combined with their publication quality they could prove useful for studying how the early inhumation burials from the research region can be interpreted. Through this approach it may be possible to tell whether the cremation and inhumation graves from these cemeteries were actually different, other than in their mode of burial. And, the more striking burials can be discussed on the basis of their grave goods assemblages, dates, and other grave specifications.

The last step involves a comparison of the results with several interpretative models for

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the introduction of the inhumation burial rite in the research region. In this comparison it will be tried to falsify whether specific processes could have set the ritual transition in motion on the basis of the studied archaeological finds. In order to do this the models that are put to the test will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

### 3.1.1 Local origins

The first model points towards a local origin for the inhumation burial in the research region, as was for instance proposed for parts of Gaul by Van Doorselaer (1967, 86). While he saw the revival of old traditions (and old values) as potentially the most influential for the adoption of the inhumation burial, it is also possible that a local and basically new tradition (founded on new ideas) of inhumation burials was started independently. Whereas the expectation in the first scenario of this model is that 'old local' elements of inhumations burials are used again in the Roman period inhumation rites, this is not necessary for a 'new local' inhumation burial tradition. In addition, in the second scenario it would also not be expected to find many similarities with the 'external' inhumation burial rituals, and it would be possible for the cemeteries to be fairly isolated phenomena.

### 3.1.2 Eastern origins

The second model centres around influences from the east of the Roman empire, which have been proposed by several scholars before (cf. Morris 1992, 52-61; Van Doorselaer 1967, 56-57). Although, the studied cemeteries were picked on the basis of the early dating of their inhumation burials, influences from other parts of the Roman empire could have been caused in a number of entangled ways: migrations of people, exchange, military presence, and for instance the spread of religious ideas through mobile people. For each of these ways a different archaeological pattern can be expected as for instance in the migration scenario of this model it would be expected to find burials in a style that is usually found in another region. Yet, complicating these 'cultural' interpretations is that such an immigrant could have been buried in a local tradition as well, because the burying group might not know the non-local burial rituals. Conversely, a person that was native to an area could have been buried in an 'immigrant' style by for instance an immigrant burying group as well. Furthermore, the use of certain 'foreign' funerary elements could have been the result of exchanges of goods and ideas too.

In the case of the spread of the inhumation burial rite as a result of increased exchanges between people from the eastern and western regions of the empire it would be expected to find similarities between the inhumation burial ritual traditions of these areas on a more general level, with the eastern rites serving as an inspiration to the new North-West

European inhumation ritual. Whether it can be proved or falsified that such influences had caused certain changes in the funerary rites from the research region will remain to be seen, as general similarities do not unambiguously indicate direct influences between people in the past.

The third scenario for this model forms an explanation of the eastern influence on the burial ritual as having been caused by various movements of the Roman military, which especially after the Batavian revolt in 69 CE ensured soldiers were always stationed away from their homelands and thus brought with them their own cultural influence to other parts of the empire (cf. Carroll 2001, 102-103). In this regard it is thought of soldiers who were for instance buried in a mode that is common to their place of origin (or place where the soldiers had been stationed for a while), regiments' traditions ,and that are expected to have been found near military sites.

Lastly, the eastern burial traditions could have spread along with the proliferation of eastern religions, which could have diffused in various ways (cf. Cumont 1956, 171-173). The prognosis for burials that can be interpreted along the lines of this model are broadly similar to those of the second (exchange) scenario, but more specific similarities are expected as norms and values are often practiced and taken over more strictly when religion is a primary influencing factor. Nonetheless, the critique on this model is similar to that for the interpretations in terms of ethnicity: someone could have adhered to a certain religion, while the burying group did not bury that person according to his religion's traditions (and vice versa).

### 3.1.3 Complex origins

The last model can arguably be seen as a more realistic model, as the two previous models, and their different scenarios, likely paint a too simplistic picture of the archaeological reality, which is a mixture of several processes (that is also only partially preserved in the archaeological record).

The first scenario for this model is therefore targeted at a situation in which it is possible for all of these previously mentioned models and their scenarios to have occurred in parallel between different cemeteries or on the same cemetery. This would lead in the archaeological record to different inhumation burial traditions that co-existed.

The second scenario is comparable to the first, but keeps the option open for the mixing of all these explanations. This would therefore, on the basis of the hypothesized mixed archaeological record, probably not be very straightforward to interpret in terms of a single or a couple of the proposed explanations.

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Finally, the option for burials that can be marked as outliers is added to this model. These graves that have no apparent connection or similarity to other burial traditions. However, these were not likely to have aided in the transition to another burial ritual either. That is, if these 'outliers' actually were outliers and not the only discovered examples of more widespread burial traditions.

## 3.2 The overview maps

To create the overview maps of the cemeteries that have been found in the research area several elements were used: a list of the Roman cemeteries, the cemeteries' locations, maps of the research region, and a GIS program.

Most of the cemeteries that were plotted on the maps were found in the overview study by Van Doorselaer (1967). Van Doorselaer (1967, 52) made three lists (one per period) to display the cemeteries with the earliest inhumation burials, in addition to an index with all the sites that were discussed in his book, which will be used in this thesis (cf. Van Doorselaer 1967, 52; 303-322). Although the book also included maps which showed the distributions of the cemeteries and their locations, no digital information or coordinate information for each of these cemeteries was made available. So, to be able to use this study for further research in this thesis it was needed to convert the analogue information into its digital counterpart. To that aim was a Microsoft Excel sheet made for each of the periods and the complete index that held the cemetery locations' names and the region in which they were located, as it was provided by Van Doorselaer. To use these cemeteries in a map it was needed to find the correct coordinates, which was done through the following website: https://www.gps-coordinates.net (used until 5-2-2018). In spite of small differences that may result from this method to find the coordinates, the maps will functions as an indication of where these cemeteries were located on a larger regional scale. Subsequently, these coordinates needed to be converted from the EPSG 4326 (WGS 84) to the EPSG 5651 (ETRS 89) coordinate system, as this was the projection that was used for the map in the GIS program (this will be explained in the following paragraphs). To do this the website 'https://epsg.io' was used and the resulting coordinates were added to the Excel sheets (see the appendix), and these sheets were saved as 'tab delineated text' files, which the GIS software (QGIS) can convert into spatial maps. Because the region in which the cemeteries were located was noted by Van Doorselaer and the GPS coordinates website displayed a map of the Google Maps based search results as well, the location could be checked for each search.

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QGIS was used as the GIS program, for the reason of its open and free software basis (cf. www.qgis.org). Additionally, the Natural Earth quick start kit was used to create a map of the research area and surrounding lands that spans parts of the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, France, and Luxembourg (cf. www.naturalearthdata.com). Because of the range of shown countries it was needed to an extent to arbitrarily choose a projection that best fitted the research region. As the EPSG 5651 projection is used in Germany and corresponded to the UTM 31N zone that is focused right in the middle of the research area, this seemed like an appropriate projection for the map (cf. https://epsg.io). To conclude, the cemetery data were imported in the map for each period and the cemetery names were added to their location dots.

### 3.2.1 The overview maps

The maps that were made are presented here to get a better understanding of how the cemeteries with inhumation burials were spread over the research area in each period. Period I spans from 27 BCE to 37 CE, counts 7 cemeteries, and is depicted in figure 8. As it can be seen Köln-Gereonsdriesch was the only period I cemetery with inhumation burials in this thesis' research region and it also was the most northern cemetery with inhumation burials in this early Roman period.
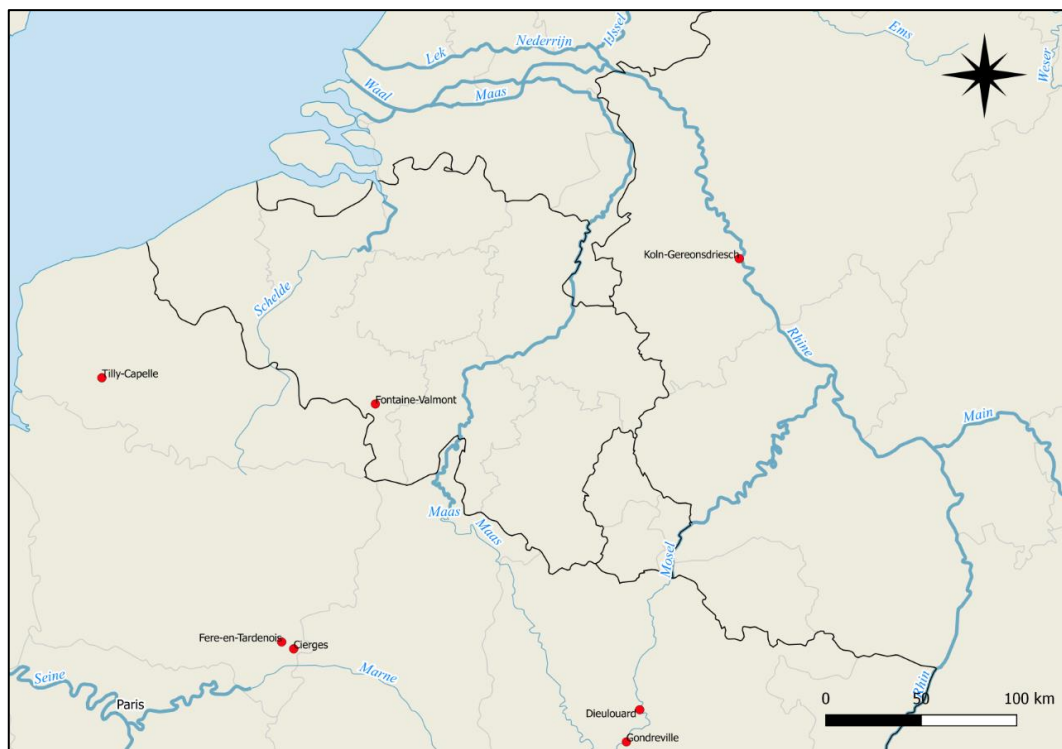


*Figure 8: A map based on the data from the study Van Doorselaer (1967) of the Period I cemeteries, marked by the red dots.*

The next period, period II, spans from 41 to 96 CE, counts 13 cemeteries, and is depicted in figure 9. As the maps shows Fontaine-Valmont, Gondreville, Köln-Gereonsdriesch, and Tilly-Capelle seem to have been only in use in the first period based on these records. Additionally, the map shows that in this thesis' research area only the cemeteries of Tongres and Andernach saw the practice of inhumation burials in period II.
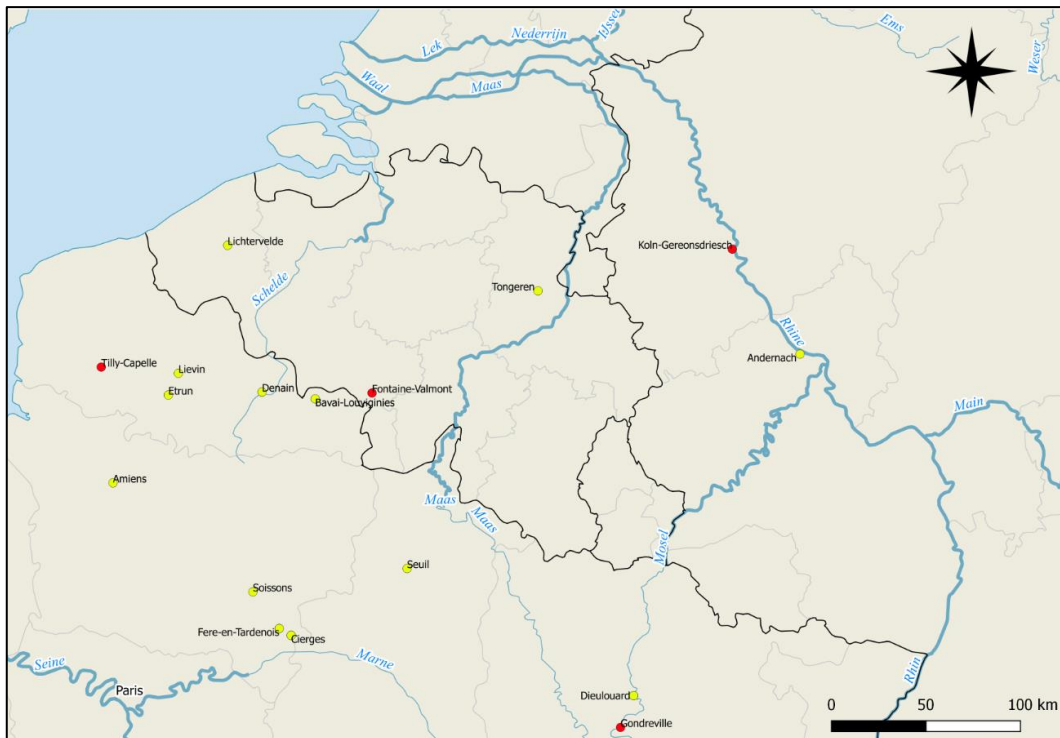


*Figure 9: A map based on the data from the study Van Doorselaer (1967) of the period II cemeteries, marked by the yellow dots.*

The third period was listed as dating between 98 and 180 CE, counts 36 cemeteries, and is shown by the map in figure 10. The gradual increase in the amount of cemeteries with inhumation burials that was already visible by the increasingly more numerous cemetery dots going from period I to II in figure 9 continued in period III at an even higher rate. Furthermore, it is apparent from these data that the period II cemetery of Andernach fell out of use, whereas another inhumation burial cemeteries appeared in Cologne. Moreover, in regard to the sites from within the research region Tongres, Grivegnée, Theux, Bas-Oha, Thon, Ciney, Kettig, Karlich, and Trier all had cemeteries with inhumation burials by period III.
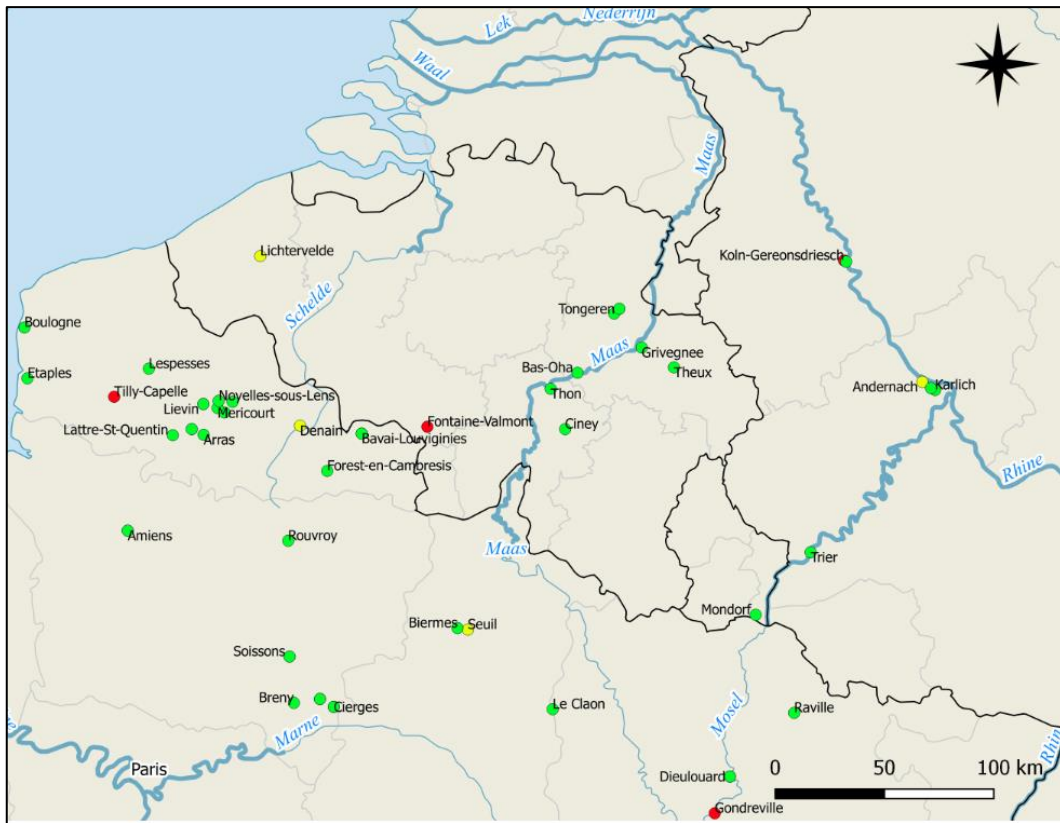
*Figure 10: A map based on the data from the study Van Doorselaer (1967) of the Period III cemeteries, marked by the green dots, on a scale of 1:1.298.430.*

These three periods were all quite early in terms of the transition to inhumation burials, as on the basis of Van Doorselaer's results they can be seen as being the first to partake in the new ritual. Therefore, it will be interesting to take a closer look at the cemeteries in the research region from between the second half of the first century BCE and the first two centuries CE in figure 11.
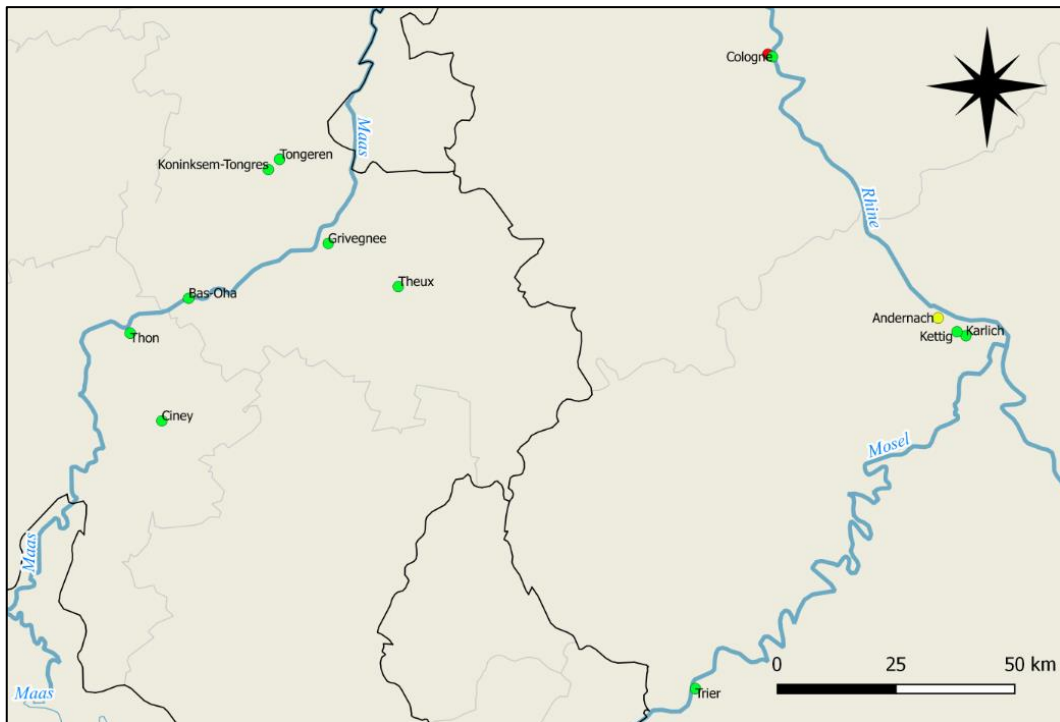
*Figure 11: A map based on the data from the study Van Doorselaer (1967) of the Period I, II, and III cemeteries, with period I, II and three marked respectively by the red, yellow and green dots, in the research area.*

From this map in figure 11 it can be deduced that the following places already from an early period onwards saw cemeteries with inhumation burials: Köln-Gereonsdriesch (period I), Tongres and Andernach (period II), and Grivegnée, Theux, Bas-Oha, Thon, Ciney, Kettig, Kärlich, and Trier (period III). To getter a better picture of these early inhumation burials an attempt will be made to provide a synthesis of their available archaeological documentation and publications in the following chapter.

To conclude, a map that was made based on the complete index of Roman sites that were mentioned in Van Doorselaer's study will be presented, to show a more comprehensive picture of the Roman activity in this area (see figure 12). As this does not just show the cemeteries (including cemeteries with only cremation burials), but possibly also other types of sites, this map does when compared to the other cemetery maps show a distorted picture (and is apparently even less complete than Van Doorselaer's (1967) Roman cemetery map; also in figure 12). Still, it can be useful to show concentrations in Roman sites in this region (albeit unclear whether those were caused by more archaeological activity or the actual Roman activity in the past). To improve the readability of the map the site names of all but the two first periods were left out.
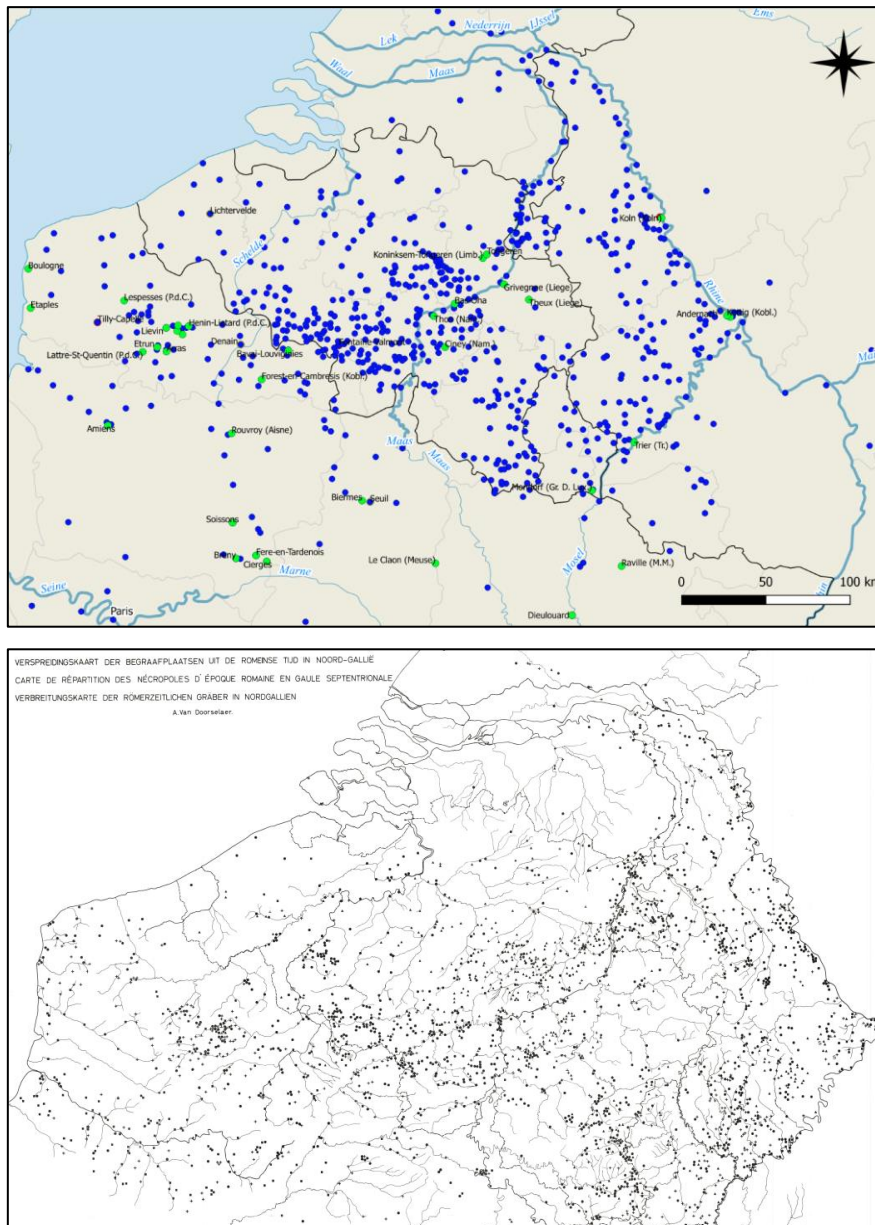
*Figure 12: Above a map based on the index data from Van Doorselaer (1967), with the period III cemeteries marked by the green dots and below a map after Van Doorselaer (1967) that showed Roman cemeteries from Northern Gaul.*

All in all, the cemeteries of Tongres, Cologne, Andernach, Grivegnée, Theux, Bas-Oha, Thon, Ciney, Kettig, Kärlich, and Trier, appeared on the grounds of the maps and chronology from the preceding paragraphs to be most important to this thesis research. Furthermore, an exceptional single inhumation burial from Someren will be included in the research, but the case-studies Cologne and Tongres will form the main body of this study (cf. Roymans and Kortlang 1993, 32-33). In the following chapter (on the results) their characteristics are discussed and the focus will be put on the earlier mentioned cemetery characteristics.

# 4. Results

In this chapter a description of the chronological developments in the research region will be provided for each of the sites that Van Doorselaer (1967, 52) marked as the sites with early inhumation burials. First, Tongres and Cologne will be discussed as two case-studies by presenting their contexts and funerary data and discussing the previous interpretations that were made of these data. Additionally, other cemeteries with early inhumation burials are discussed in a similar, but less comprehensive way.

## 4.1 Tongres

Between the first century BCE and the first century CE the Roman history of Tongres started with the conquest of Gaul. After the *Eburones* were defeated the area was repopulated by collaborating German *Tungri* (hence the name '*civitas Tungrorum*'), but no prior native habitation has been found in the *civitas* capital *Atutatuca Tungrorum* (i.e. Tongres) (Nouwen 1997, 297). Dated to the beginning of the imperial period, V-shaped ditches and palisades were found in Tongres, but at first it was not clear whether these could only be interpreted as evidence of a military foundation of the town (Vanvinckenroye 1975, 17-19; Wankenne 1972, 84). However, the military objects (i.e. mainly terra sigillata and coins from around 10 BCE) that were found in the first occupation layers according to Raepsaet-Charlier and Vanderhoeven (2004, 52) likely pointed to an origin of the town as a military camp. Furthermore, to the northwest limits of the city a temple complex is known that was constructed by the end of the first century CE (Brenders 1980, 106).

### 4.1.1 The south cemeteries of Tongres

The Gallo-Roman southwest cemetery ('Zuidwest-begraafplaats') of Tongres was located outside the antique city (see figure 13) along the roads (of which one led to the tumuli at Koninksem) and was excavated between 1972 and 1981 by the Provincial Roman museum of Tongres (Vanvinckenroye 1963, 13; Vanvinckenroye 1984, 7; 9). It has been assumed that the excavation researched the last remaining parts of the cemetery and contrary to the other cemeteries around Roman Tongres this cemetery was not built on in later periods (Vanvinckenroye 1984, 10-11).
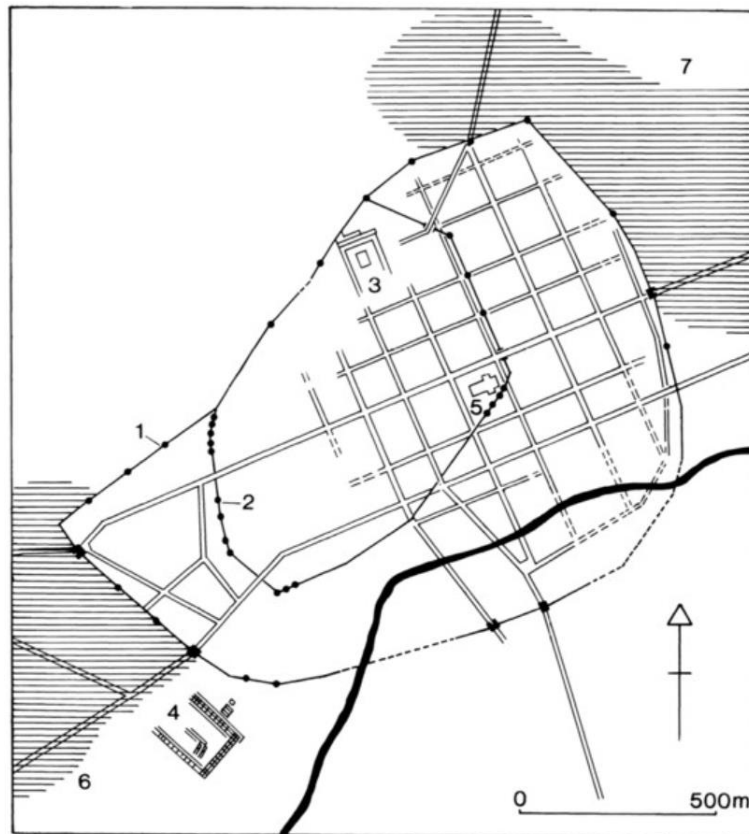
*Figure 13: A plan of Roman Tongres and its cemeteries. 1: The second century CE city wall, 2: The fourth century CE city wall, 3: The temple complex, 4: The horreum, 5: The Notre-Dame church, 6: The southwest cemetery 7: The northeast cemetery (Vanderhoeven 2004, 483).*

44 graves were recovered from the southwest cemetery during the excavations that went on until 1963. The oldest graves dated around the middle of the first century CE, while the four oldest inhumations dated from this period to the second century CE. In this early period at the southwest cemetery both the inhumation and cremation burial was practiced besides each other and even in some cases in the same graves (Vanvinckenroye 1963, 13; 39; 51; 135; 169). The other inhumation burials probably dated to the end of the second and beginning of the third century CE (Vanvinckenroye 1963, 25; 43; 48; 52; 55; 62; 73; 75). Other third and fourth centuries CE late Roman inhumation (and cremation) burials with grave foods had been found during 19th century excavations near the southwest cemetery and Koninksem (Vanvinckenroye 1963, 144-157).

The skeletal remains in inhumations were put in wooden coffins or plainly in the ground, all inhumations lacked grave furniture, and most inhumations were oriented north south (N.B. the direction of the head is mentioned first to describe the orientations) (Vanvinckenroye 1963, 169-170). In general grave goods were sparsely found in the inhumation burials, but the objects that were found were placed in and outside the

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coffins. The graves that were devoid of grave goods were also those without a coffin. Examples of finds from the inhumations range from an urn to a coin, sandals, finger rings, mirrors, and horse bones (Vanvinckenroye 1963, 136-137)**.**

Additionally, *ustrina* (large cremation pits with pyre remains and grave goods), *busta* (the oldest found cremations in which the deceased was burned and buried)*, Brandgräber* (spread pyre remains, burned bones, and grave goods in the grave pits), *Brandschüttungsgräber* (bones gathered in an urn with the pyre remains around it), *Knochenlager* (some burnt bones in the grave), and the most frequently found *Urnengräber* (an urn with the grave goods around it) were found at this cemetery. On top of that one grave had a burial vault and stairs, another grave was constructed using peat, and in some graves ritual pits were found (and red burnt inner walls) (Vanvinckenroye 1963, 169-171).

In 1964 more inhumations (and several pits with a large variety of materials) were found near Koninksem and dated from the second to the fourth century CE, but otherwise these burials were comparable to those that were found earlier at the southwest cemetery (Vanvinckenroye 1970, 13-22). However, as opposed to the broadly northwest southeast oriented burials a northwest southeast orientated weapon burial (containing among other things a sword and a knife) from the end of the fourth century CE was found as well (Vanvinckenroye 1970, 20-22).

From 1972 until 1981 the Provincial Gallo-Roman museum of Tongres excavated 289 graves of the southwest cemetery of Tongres and probably all of the remaining sections (Vanvinckenroye 1984, 9; 15-16). In the inhumation graves from the southwest cemetery skeletal remains were found, but due to the conservational state these could not be researched further (Vanvinckenroye 1984, 15). More important however is that many of the graves (i.e. roughly 60 graves) were disturbed by the construction activities in the area, meaning their grave goods, locations, and orientations were only superficially recorded. On top of that about one fifth of the late Roman inhumation graves had been reopened prior to the excavations, but often not all the objects had been taken (Vanvinckenroye 1984, 233-234).

Two *Brandschüttungsgräber* that dated to the early imperial period (roughly 27 BCE to 37 CE) were found near the habitational area. In this location also a levelled burial mount was found that dated to the Augustan-Tiberian time and it contained a grave, pyre, and a beaker that was similar to some La Tène period ceramics (Vanvinckenroye 1984, 220-223). The middle imperial period, with 67 cremation and 61 inhumation burials, relates to the

period from the Flavian dynasty (69) to the second half of the third century CE (Vanvinckenroye 1984, 224). *Ustrina* cremations were found in four locations, one *bustum* grave was found in an oval pit, and the cremation remains and grave goods were deposited in a variety of ways (in some cases human and animal materials were for instance mixed). Four other cremations, that dated from the end of the second century to the last third of third century CE, were surrounded by round and rectangular ditches and were thought to have been burial mounts (Vanvinckenroye 1984, 225-226). Furthermore, grave goods in these graves ranged from ceramics related to the consumption of foods and drinks to single finds of glass perfume bottles, small bowls, bronze and glass vessels, bracelets, finger rings, metal chandeliers, coins, and oil lamps (Vanvinckenroye 1984, 224).

The transition from cremation to inhumation burial rite was dated for this excavation of the southwest cemetery around the end of the second century and throughout the third century CE. In these middle imperial period inhumation graves 44 persons were laid in a wooden coffin and the remaining 17 without a container in the grave. Most inhumation graves were aligned northwest southeast, but the head could be pointed either way. The arms were in the majority of these inhumations stretched parallel to the body, but some were crossed over the pelvis or had one arm on the body. In only a third of the inhumations grave goods were included, which were found in and outside the coffin, and which were comparable in their assemblages to those of the cremations (but more limited). Coins were in some graves found near the head and near the pelvis (Vanvinckenroye 1984, 227). And, one inhumation burial from this period was encircled by an oval ditch (Vanvinckenroye 1984, 227).

Lastly, the late imperial period dates from the reign of Diocletian (from 284 to 305) to the start of the fifth century CE and comprised of 161 graves: 149 inhumations and 12 cremations (Vanvinckenroye 1984, 228). From the end of the third century CE onwards the inhumations were oriented for the majority northwest southeast and the fourth century CE graves that were put in older parts of the cemetery were oriented perpendicular to the nearby paths and roads (Vanvinckenroye 1984, 221; 229). In few cases the deceased was not put in a wooden coffin and in five cases the inhumations were interred in wooden chamber graves (Vanvinckenroye 1984, 228). Some of the inhumations from the first half of the fourth century CE were furthermore surrounded by square ditches (Vanvinckenroye 1984, 231). In this late imperial period the deposition of grave goods (in several places of the graves) was the norm and the assemblages were said to be more numerous and diverse than in the middle imperial period (inhumations devoid

of goods were even a rarity). Oil lamps were not present anymore in the grave goods assemblages, but otherwise the grave goods were comparable to those of the middle imperial period (Vanvinckenroye 1984, 230-231). Typically four earthenware vessels were found in the graves: a jug, a beaker, a bowl, and a plate (sometimes made of glass, bronze, or pewter), while some graves had three almost identical vessels. Tall cooking pots were almost exclusively found in graves with large grave goods assemblages and in at least 20 graves were faunal foods deposited, commonly with an iron knife (Vanvinckenroye 1984, 230-231). Jewellery was in many graves found in the place where it would have been worn, but girdles, fibulae, and shoes were frequently found outside the coffin. Additionally, it was thought three budded fibulae, iron axes, and girdles were found in male graves, whereas strings of beads, bracelets, mirrors, hair pins, glass perfume bottles, iron ladles, and trivets were thought to have been found in female graves. In children's graves regularly ear pots with a spout and terra sigillata or glass beakers were found (Vanvinckenroye 1984, 231).

Twelve late imperial period cremations were found in this part of the southwest cemetery (Vanvinckenroye 1984, 231). Two of these cremations from around 300 CE were encircled by a square ditch, two others contained iron axes, and three cremations were dated to the relatively late second half of the fourth century CE (Vanvinckenroye 1984, 232). A group of third century CE inhumation burials that was found at Tongres' southwest cemetery seemed to deviate from these developments in inhumation graves. The deceased had been buried without coffins, in communal graves, or in oval pits (with their legs bent and hands near the head), and some bodies were facing down or had their limps spread outwards. Nearby these graves horse burials were found as well as a group of six adults, children and a horse inside a water well (Vanvinckenroye 1975, 44; 78-79).

### 4.1.2 The north cemeteries of Tongres

The northeast cemetery of Tongres was located like the southwest cemetery outside the city and along the road, and a tumulus was situated here as well. Several late Roman inhumations were found near the cobble road, but multiple early Roman cremations dating between the first and second century CE are known from this area too (i.e. 'De Armenveldjes') (Vanvinckenroye 1963, 14; 140-141). A late La Tène cremation was discovered with two urns, two bowls, and a stone axe (Vanvinckenroye 1963, 162). In 20th century excavations four burials with grave goods were found and dated to the third or fourth century CE (Vanvinckenroye 1963, 157-161; Van Crombruggen 1960, 357-366). And, nearby the modern station, also northeast of Tongres, an inhumation grave was

found that dated between the end of the second and first half of the third century CE (Van Crombruggen 1960, 358). In other excavations of this cemetery cremations and a possible inhumation from the second and third century CE were recorded in the former Schaetzen collection and contained ceramics (urns and vessels for the consumption of food), glass vessels (e.g. bottles), coins, roof tiles, metal objects (e.g. a spoon, fittings, and a possible girdle), playing discs, jewellery (e.g. a bead string, fibulae, hair pins), mirrors, lamps, and toiletry items (Van Crombruggen 1960, 335-353; Vanvinckenroye 1970, 39-45). One of these cremations contained three jugs, a molten glass bottle, and a possible lance point, but the grave could not be dated (Van Crombruggen 1960, 346-347).

Between 1982 and 1987 more parts of the northeast cemetery of Tongres were excavated and 207 late Roman inhumations were found. These lay densely concentrated on the cemetery and were all except for one (with a coin) devoid of grave goods. Nevertheless, the graves were dated to the fourth century CE based on ceramic finds and interpreted as possibly part of a Christian cemetery as the graves were all oriented west east and a silver finger ring with a Christogram was found. In de sandy soil most of the skeletal and wooden coffin materials had been lost, but were still clearly visible (Raepsaet-Charlier and Vanderhoeven 2004, 63; Vanvinckenroye 1984, 242-243).

At the Sporthal location inside the city wall to the northwest of Tongres' centre another 12 inhumations (with 15 individuals) were found. These graves dated to the beginning of the first century CE (by ceramic types and C14 dates) and it was assumed these were not part of a larger cemetery (Veldman *et al.* 2013, 373; Veldman and Geerts 2013, 67-71). Only men and in about 35 percent of the graves children (all found in combination with adults) were discovered here. Many trauma, but few diseases were documented and the bodily positions varied from back to side and belly positions. One individual was interred in a coffin, the inhumations' orientations varied, and grave goods were found in two graves (i.e. a jug, some sherds, and animal bones) (Veldman and Geerts 2013, 75). On top of that animal depositions (among which dog bones) were found in pits at this site (Veldman and Geerts 2013, 76).

### 4.1.3 The tumuli from Tongres and its vicinity

In Tongres near Koninksem a tumulus was found that probably dated to the end of the second century CE and it was excavated in the 17th and 18th centuries (Amand 1985, 16). Furthermore, from the Haspengouw region (in which Tongres is situated) many tumuli are known, which date from around 70-80 to the start of the third century CE (Amand 1985,

23). These tumuli contained one or more cremations, unused grave goods (with in one case weapons), and very specific sets of ceramic assemblages that have been related by Roosens (1976, 147-149; 155) to the consumption of the funerary feast.

### 4.1.4 Synthesis and discussion of Tongres' developments in funerary rites

In general, it can be said that the funerary rites in Tongres' cemeteries developed from the start of the Roman period in Tongres with a majority in cremation burials to a dominant inhumation burial around the end of the second century CE (though in the early first century CE the inhumation burial was practiced at a smaller scale as well) (cf. Vanvinckenroye 1963, 13; 39; 51; 135; 169; 170; Vanvinckenroye 1984, 227). This was thought to have been too early to have been connected to Christianization (that in this region started around the third century CE), and it was rather seen in the light of all the contacts with foreigners that were made in Tongres by Vanvinckenroye (1963, 170). And, it was also attributed by Van Crombruggen (1960, 835-836) to the heterogenic population, with its German and Celtic elements. Another interpretation along the lines of persistent indigenous traditions was offered by Van Doorselaer (1967, 52-57), who argued the inhumation rite would have been brought to Tongres by the German *Tungri* (whose origins lay over the Rhine). Nevertheless, already in the La Tène period cremations were increasingly replacing the inhumation burial ritual in this area. Therefore, neither the possibility of certain oriental influences was excluded in large agglomerations like Tongres (e.g. Trier and Cologne), nor was it deemed unlikely that the inhumations were a part of the 'Romanization' of the area by Van Doorselaer (1967, 52-58; 67). What is however clear from all these explanations for the transition to the inhumation ritual in Tongres is that mainly external influences were considered, which may have stemmed from the ideas about Tongres' Roman period foundation.

Cremation weapon burials from the second century CE as well as weapon burials from the third and fourth century CE are known at both cemeteries from Tongres. While weapon burials in Northern Gaul dating until 50 CE were usually interpreted as auxiliaries and as part of the La Tène traditions, the weapons in these burials are lances and daggers (and for example *umbos* were not found) (Van Doorselaer 1965, 125; 128; Van Doorselaer 1967, 187). Therefore, these weapons in burials (that dated between 50 and 300 CE) were interpreted by Van Doorselaer as hunting weapons and signs of wealth and the higher classes (also because of the presence of many luxurious grave goods in two of these graves). A complementary interpretation of comparable finds from the early medieval period was made by Theuws (2009, 295-308) when he asserted that axes, lances, and

bows and arrows could also be seen as symbolically representing claims to land and authority (e.g. by referring to the hunt), which were used for the construction of ancestors (see chapter 2 and the following chapter 5 for more elaboration).

The later fourth century CE weapon burials however, were interpreted as a German rite (because weapons of German *laeti* and *foederati* could legally be private property in contrast to weapons of Roman peoples) (Van Doorselaer 1965, 128-129). The intentional destruction of some fourth century CE weapons finds in the Belgian region led to the conclusion that this was part of a pre-Roman tradition (possibly practiced by auxiliaries and similar to that of the first century CE). While these practices were not a common Roman military funerary rite, intentional destructions were for instance common in Hallstat rites (Van Doorselaer 1967, 194-196). Likewise, a fourth century CE weapon burial that was found near Koninksem was because of its grave goods assemblage interpreted in terms of German practices by Vanvinckenroye (1970, 33). In a similar vein fourth century CE weapon burials in Tongres were clarified by Frankish incursions, while weapon burials from Cologne's first three centuries were attributed to Germans in Roman military service (Altjohann 1995, 122; Vanvinckenroye 1975, 52-53). However, the role all these late imperial weapon burials played in the transition from cremation to the inhumation burial ritual seems not to relate to the choice for either burial ritual, because in Tongres weapon burials were found in several late Roman inhumations and in at least 11 cremation graves (cf. Van Crombruggen 1960, 817; Van Doorselaer 1965, 125; Van Doorselaer 1967, 187).

Variability between the cemetery data from Tongres was noticeable and seemed not to have resulted from the state of the archaeological research, as for instance the southwest cemetery and Sporthal location were assumed to have been completely excavated (though the data from the southwest cemetery were indicated to have been of impaired archaeological quality) (cf. Vanvinckenroye 1984, 10-11; 15; 233-235; Veldman *et al.* 2013, 373; Veldman and Geerts 2013, 67-71). An example of this variability can be seen in a comparison between the southwest and the northeast cemetery. Whereas the southwest cemetery seems to mostly reflect the general trends in Tongres' funerary rites developments in the graves from the early to late Roman period, the northeast cemetery yielded mainly late Roman inhumation burials without grave goods (cf. Vanvinckenroye 1984, 242-243). Additionally, at the Sporthal location only early first century CE inhumations were found (cf. Veldman *et al.* 2013, 373; Veldman and Geerts 2013, 67-71). Whereas the variability between Tongres' cemeteries was mainly linked with

chronological differences, the varieties of graves until the late imperial period were often used contemporary to each other.

The bodies in inhumation burials from Tongres were mostly found, like in other parts of the research region on their backs with their arms parallel to their body (with many variations in the positons of the body and arms), without a fixed orientation of the burials (Van Doorselaer 1967, 129-130; 133). Commonly, the deceased was interred from the middle of the third century CE onwards in a wooden coffin and sometimes lead, brick, tile, and wooden chamber grave constructions were used. A coin was placed in the hand or the mouth, and grave goods related to foods and drinks were placed besides the body. The graves of women and children were often accommodated with jewellery and the men's graves with occupation linked objects (Vanvinckenroye 1975, 78).

Both inhumation and cremation burials with protective measures in the form of stones and vaulted chamber graves were observed (Van Doorselaer 1967, 153-154). Gravestones were numerous in Tongres as well, but were rarely found *in situ*, and except for one tumulus (containing a cremation) from the second century CE no *in situ* monumental graves are known (though many tumuli were known from the Haspengouw region of Tongres) (Amand 1985, 23; Brenders 1980, 107; Van Doorselaer 1967, 167; 171). However, a series of fourth century CE inhumation graves with square ditches from the southwest cemetery were also interpreted as a continuation of Gallo-Roman burial mount traditions, because similar ditches were for instance seen in pre-Roman burials and tumuli from the Haspengouw region (Vanvinckenroye 1975, 77-79).

Therefore, it can be argued that on top of the general trends in funerary rites in Tongres a lot of variability in funerary practices was documented: several kinds of cremations and ways of inhuming the deceased, multiple inhumation and cremation grave constructions (e.g. the tumuli, above ground monumental grave markers, and ditches), and many different grave goods assemblages were used contemporary to each other at for instance the southwest cemetery during the middle imperial period. Furthermore, at the southwest cemetery there were multiple variations in cremation graves, several ways in which the pyre remains were deposited, and many ways in which the inhumation burials were made. It was even thought by Vanvinckenroye (1984, 226-227) that by several groups of intersecting graves possibly (family) burial communities could be recognized, but it can be questioned if these are actually recognizable by archaeological evidence without using DNA research.

Additionally, at the southwest cemetery a deviant group of third century CE burials was found and interpreted by Vanvinckenroye (1975, 44) as connected to the Crisis of the Third Century, because of their strange nature and dating. And, a number of fourth century CE weapon burials were furthermore thought by Van Crombruggen (1960, 832-835) to have been those of the *Laeti-Lagenses*. Whether, it is possible to ascribe certain burial forms to certain burial groups or communities of peoples or not, a plethora of funerary customs probably came together in Tongres and its surrounding lands.

Lastly, Tongres was seen as one of the places where according to Roosens (1987, 4-5) one of the first testimonies of Christian faith in Belgium could be found in the fourth century CE. The evidence for this was said to be the antique substruction underneath the modern basilica of the Notre-Dame church, the funerary tombs on the southwest cemetery, and a group of burials to the northeast of Tongres. Possibly the foundations belonged to an actual early Christian fourth century CE building, and in some of the tombs from the southwest and northwest cemetery were actually quite a few Christian symbols discovered (cf. Ristow 2007, 63; Roosens 1987, 7). Also, the mentions of a bishop of Tongres (i.e. Servatius who would have attended the concilies of Serdica in 350 CE and Rimini in 359 CE) pointed to the Christian interpretation of these graves (cf. Raepsaet-Charlier and Vanderhoeven 2004, 63). However, this group of burials that were asserted to have been a community of Christians was marked as such on the grounds of their (relative to other graves) divergent west east orientations, lack of grave goods, and the find of silver ring with a Chi Rho symbol (cf. Roosens 1987, 4-5). So, it is possible only the grave with the ring find concerned a grave that was connected to Christianity (assuming an intentional Christian symbol deposition by the burying group).

## 4.2 Cologne

Around 54 BCE the history of Roman Cologne began with the resettlement of the region by the *Ubii,* who put their main settlement (*Oppidum Ubiorum*) in the location where modern Cologne is situated. This was necessary because the area was virtually depopulated when Caesar's military campaigns were completed (La Baume 1958, 10-11; Rothe 2009, 15). Near the *Oppidum Ubiorum* a two legions strong Roman military camp was put in place and the *Classis Germanica pia fidelis* (i.e. the Roman fleet) was stationed in the modern Bayenthal part of the city. In the year 50 CE Cologne was granted the title of *Colonia* and it is probable that in the following years many veterans settled in its vicinity (as was indicated by several inscriptions on grave stelae) (La Baume 1958, 11). During the Batavian revolt in 69 CE Cologne was for the most part kept out of trouble as it had sided

with the victorious Roman side. In 98 CE Trajan became the emperor, after having led the German provinces for a year with the city of Cologne as a home base (La Baume 1958, 15). The second century CE was also a period of economic growth that had been set in motion in the relatively peaceful years that followed the Batavian revolt. This lasted until the short-lived Gallic empire, when emperor Postumus chose Cologne as his imperial seat, and the German invasions that took place around 276 CE (La Baume 1958, 15-17; Rothe 2009, 15-16). By the fourth century CE Cologne is known as an early Christian centre and cemeteries developed near the St. Ursula and St. Gereon churches (La Baume 1958, 39).

### 4.2.1 The funerary archaeology from near Cologne

Several different Roman burial grounds were located along the roads around Cologne. Burials were found to the north of Cologne at the Neusserstrasse, to the northwest at the St. Gereon church, to the west along the Aachenerstrasse, to the southwest on the Luxemburgerstrasse, and to the south with the large necropolis at the St. Severin church (and Jakobstrasse) (see figure 14) (cf. Friedhoff 1991, 10). Unfortunately, most of these sites were later built on and often only excavated on a small scale in the 20th century, while much of the documentation was only fragmentarily preserved (with the exceptions of the St. Severin and the Jakobstrasse excavations) (cf. Altjohann 1995, 117-118).
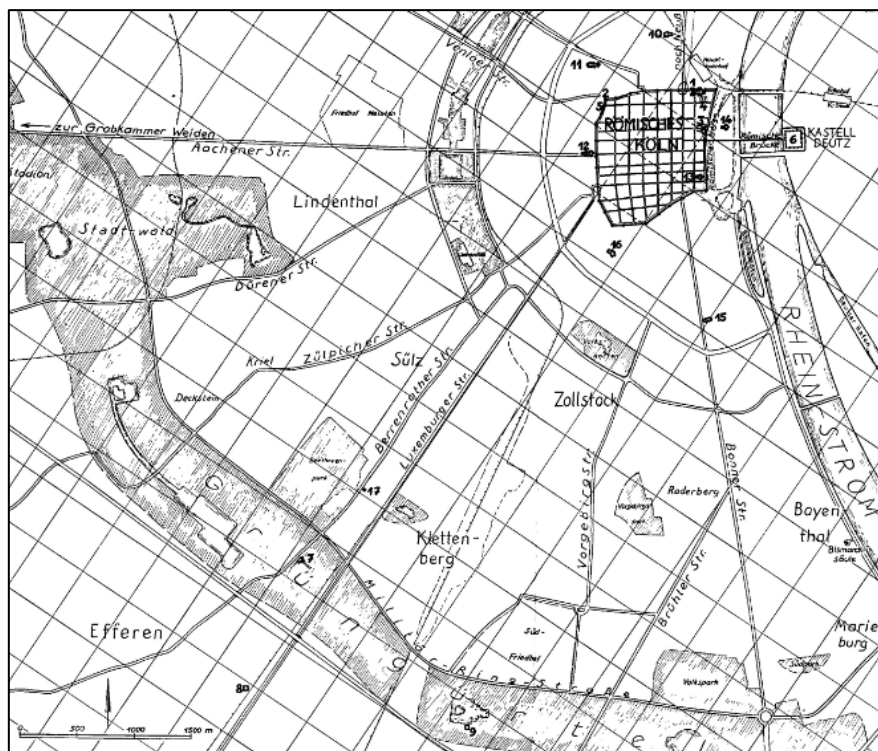


Figure 14: A city plan of Roman cologne: 10 is the St. Ursula, 11 the St. Gereon, 12 the St. Aposteln, 13 the St. Maria, 14 the St. Martin, and 15 the St. Severin (after La Baume 1958).

At the St. Gereon church location in addition to a large first to fourth century CE Roman cemetery a second century CE Isis altar was found between the Roman fundaments, which on the basis of finds of coins could be dated to have been used up to the middle of the fourth century CE (Berszin 2012; La Baume 1958, 40-41). Statues of oriental deities like Cybele, Dionysus, Mithras, and Jupiter Dolichenus that were found in Cologne were dated towards the end of the second century, while the Isis ones dated from the beginning of the third century CE onwards (Van Doorselaer 1967, 76). Excavations in the St. Ursula church during World War II yielded some sarcophagi, but none of these were dated before the end of the fourth century CE (La Baume 1958, 40). Many of Cologne's Roman burials come from the St. Severin church site, which was to the south of the town situated on both sides of the road to Bonn (La Baume 1958, 42). The Severinstrasse cemetery was stretched out over about 3 km and was apparently used for both soldiers and civilians for cremations, burials in sarcophagi, inhumations with and without a coffin, and chamber graves. Another cemetery was located along the Luxemburgerstrasse, 2,5 km long, and in use from the first to third century CE, whereas the cemetery at the Aachenerstrasse was 2 km long and in this location the oldest cremations from the first century were found (Berszin 2012).

### 4.2.2 Monumental graves from Cologne's region

A monumental stone grave from Weiden (to the east of Cologne) was constructed like a *columbarium* and therefore thought to have been used for urn depositions by Fremersdorf (1957, 25). It was dated as at least later than the first or second century CE by its description as a *columbarium*. The monument had nevertheless already been dated before by Klauser (1927 in Fremersdorf 1957, 58) between 260 and 340 CE (but could have been in use for longer). A third or fourth century CE sarcophagus was found in this grave as well as three busts (stylistically dated to the first three centuries CE) and second to fourth century CE finds like a chalcedony figurine, a Mithras symbol, an amber bead string, ivory reliefs and ceramic, glass, and silver vessels (Fremersdorf 1957, 28-50).

### 4.2.3 The north cemeteries of Cologne

In the Augustan period a large cemetery was situated to the north of Roman Cologne along the road to the northwest and it was according to La Baume (1958, 40-41) used by the native population. Near this location the St. Gereon church was erected in the late fourth century CE (La Baume 1958, 40-41). The Gereon site's Roman cemetery, was according to Höpken (2007, 301) not one of the cemeteries that was located along a road, unlike the other cemeteries from Cologne, but it did seem to merge into the west and

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north cemeteries (between which it was situated).

An early first century CE cremation weapon grave was found around the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Cologne (though the precise context in Cologne is unknown) and contained an iron bent *gladius* (as well as a ceramic beaker and three jugs). Other early imperial period inhumations (dated like the nearby cremation burials to the Claudian period) were found at 150 meter distance of the St. Gereon and these were (like the early first century CE cremation weapon grave) interpreted as auxiliary soldiers. One of these inhumations only contained a small bronze finger ring and another inhumation was found with some finds of early first century CE ceramics and with its legs pulled up (Fremersdorf 1927, 258-267). Furthermore, skeletal remains were found next to a cremation in an urn in the same grave, while another cremation grave with an urn and accompanying grave goods (a honey jar, jug, beaker, dish, four bronze fibulae, and ointment bottle) was found 30 cm higher than an inhumed person's legs (Fremersdorf 1927, 262-263). At least six other inhumations from the St. Gereon's cemetery dated to the first century CE and contained in almost all cases single finds of ceramic or glass vessels (mainly for consumption purposes, but also a cooking pot), a coin, or nothing at all (La Baume 1959, 461).

At the Steinfeldergasse (also located to the north of Cologne) 59 inhumations and 48 cremations were found. At least three of the inhumations were children (e.g. burial 89 with a child's skull that was covered by a mortar), one the burial of a dog, and two early Roman cremations were accompanied by horse burials (La Baume 1959, 460).

La Baume (1959, 461) discussed some Roman inhumations that were found at the St. Gereon cemetery. 67 inhumations and 84 cremation burials were found among the 191 find locations. The burials contained ceramics with stamps, glass items, coins, and were dated to the first century CE, but unfortunately these were not described in great detail. The final publication of the Roman graves that was supposed to be written by La Baume does not seem to have been finished (cf. La Baume 1959, 462).

In the later excavations in 1985/6 at the St. Gereon's cemetery of the Spiesergasse area, the Klapperhof, and Friesenstrasse cemetery another 734 graves were discovered. An additional 120 graves were found during the 1989 excavations of the Norbertstrasse (where mainly first century CE cremations were found). So, it was stated that at the St. Gereon cemetery 1200 burials were found, which dated to the first four centuries CE. Two thirds of these burials were cremations and 25% were inhumations, but also horse burials and '*Hocker'* burials were found. The various ways of interring people at this cemetery were furthermore thought to be different from the norm as well (e.g. head first and

downwards facing inhumation burials) (Berszin 2012).

Based on 20th century excavations the St. Gereon's cemetery was seen as one of the sites with early Christian (in some cases Frankish) burials (Berszin 2012). And, the inhumation burial of 'Bella' was an example of a 'Roman mixed style' burial from this cemetery that was found with a niche containing two perfume bottles. Remarkably, the gravestone was found too and read the name of Bella who belonged to the Remer tribe (from the area of modern Reims) (Höpken 2007, 299; Höpken and Liesen 2013a, 181).

Lastly, in Bickendorf to Cologne's northwest, two cremations were encountered and twelve 'German' auxiliaries' graves were found and dated between 200 and 260 CE. One of these graves was an inhumation, that was in a deeper layer with ceramic vessels (Fremersdorf 1927, 277-278).

### 4.2.4 The south cemeteries of Cologne

Most burials from Cologne's south cemeteries come from the St. Severin and the separate Jakobstrasse cemetery excavations (of other parts of this cemetery). In 1925 the St. Severin cemetery excavations were initiated by Fremersdorf as a rescue project, but soon grew to intensive archaeological activities which were thoroughly described by Päffgen (1992, 11). However, many early Roman funerary archaeological finds and monuments were already in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries collected by antiquarians and by academics from the 18th century onwards (Päffgen 1992, 28-29).

An 'un-Roman' early first century CE cremation grave was in 1900 found in Cologne Marienburg and contained a ceramic beaker, three jugs, and an iron bent gladius, which according to Fremersdorf (1927, 258-259) 'undoubtedly' was related to the fleet base and it was interpreted as the grave of an indigenous soldier in Roman service (N.B. the ceramics were sold as they were seen as duplicates).

The St. Severin cemetery was in use from the first to the eight century CE and gave room to 421 imperial period burials: 176 cremations and 245 inhumations (Altjohann 1995, 121-122; Päffgen 1992, 12; 15). In 184 out of the 421 imperial period graves (i.e. 43%) grave goods were found, but relatively more often these were uncovered in cremation graves (in 146 out of 176 graves or 83%). The inhumation graves with grave goods (only 38 out of 245 graves or 15%) were furthermore mostly dated to the third and fourth centuries CE (Päffgen 1992, 124-125). Furthermore, Päffgen (1992, 115; 117) thought the cremation burial rite was the dominant rite until the middle of the third century at the St. Severin cemetery, but that it was abandoned by the end of the third century CE. All the while the

inhumation burial was practiced in parallel from the early imperial period onwards and by the third century CE the inhumation burial rite started to be practiced more frequently (Päffgen 1992, 117).

At the St. Severin eight different cremation burial forms were described to have used stones, bricks (in the second and third centuries CE), slates, wooden and stone coffins (e.g. tufa ash coffins in the second and third centuries CE), and ceramic or stone urns (the latter typically in the early imperial period), but no glass urns. These containers were found in pits (some reinforced with wood), and possibly with organic containers from textile or leather. In one cremation grave a gravestone was reused as a cover for a limestone urn from the second half of the third century CE (Päffgen 1992, 71-74). Moreover, 14 different cremation practices were identified concerning the ways in which the cremation and pyre remains were handled or which containers were used (though some of these were different combinations of these cremation grave constituents).

Usually the ceramic urns were covered with a lid or sometimes with a dish, a mortar, or a stone. Beakers, honey jars, and a two handled jug were used as urns as well. Some of these urns were said to have been intentionally destroyed and new-born children were not cremated during the early and middle imperial period (Päffgen 1992, 113-115). Grave goods in the cremation graves were mainly deposited as primary depositions (i.e. by putting the goods along with the deceased on the pyre), which was done often with ceramics, glass items, fibulae, coins, bronze nails, and iron objects (Päffgen 1992, 123).

The inhumations burials had simple and more elaborate forms: lined in bricks, mostly in wooden coffins, using tufa or sand stone sarcophagi that could be decorated or undecorated (in 14 kinds of cover shapes; with or without iron clamps), and some were put in lead coffins in the third and fourth centuries CE (Altjohann 1995, 121-122; Päffgen 1992, 71-78). Wooden coffins were not only found in the graves in the ground, but in sarcophagi and brick graves too, and simple inhumation burials were in some cases covered by stones or bricks (Päffgen 1992, 74-75). In 17 sarcophagi it was seen that the cover and container did not originally belong together and variations in the forms of sarcophagi were recorded with for instance niches for the head or a fairly wide, but low sarcophagus (Päffgen 1992, 77-78).

Most graves' orientations were determined by the course of the nearby Roman street, but this did not apply to the inhumation burials as these were oriented in at least five directions (e.g. late imperial period inhumations were oriented with their heads to the east with a gaze to the west). The west east oriented inhumations were also often devoid of grave goods at the St. Severin cemetery and in some of the burials lime was used to

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cover the body (Päffgen 1992, 120). The hands and arms of the bodies in the inhumation burials were found in numerous positions (thought to have been intentionally done in a certain way), but most were laid parallel to the body and in some graves a headrest was used (Päffgen 1992, 120-121).

Ceramics were unearthed the most of all grave goods: in 147 graves (and 80% of graves with grave goods), while glass was found in 53 graves (and in 29% of graves with grave goods). The glasses were put in 45 of the 176 cremations and in 8 out of 253 inhumations (of mostly the third and fourth century CE). Also a few instances of metal vessels were encountered in cremation burials (Päffgen 1992, 124-125; 207-208). Commonly, the ceramic finds concerned vessels for the consumption of food or drinks, and were frequently found in sets of three vessels, or in the case of third and early fourth century CE ceramics in sets of a plate, pot with a handle, and a jug (Päffgen 1992, 124; 183). Animal bones that were interpreted as food depositions were found on ceramic plates in cremation graves (also mixed with cremation rests), but in fewer cases also in inhumation graves. Animal teeth (e.g. of a boar) were thought to have been used as amulets, while other amulets, pendulums, pearls, decorative stones (mostly from the second and third centuries CE), items for personal care, toys, and (ceramic and bronze) figurines were found in both cremation and inhumation graves (Päffgen 1992, 209-210; 222; 225).

Gender specific grave goods were thought to be not easily recognizable, but weapons, belt buckles, ('*Scharnierarm*'- and '*Zwiebelknopf*') fibulae, and razor knifes were marked as such for men and for instance small boxes for women (six in cremations and two in inhumation graves) (Päffgen 1992, 123-124; 242). These weapon burials from the third and fourth centuries CE were furthermore interpreted as those of Germans in Roman military service or as hunting weapons (Päffgen 1992, 128-129; 225).

Mithras symbols from the third and fourth centuries CE were seen on numerous kinds of objects in the graves (often those of women) (Päffgen 1992, 257-258). And, some Christian objects were found in the form of for instance three vessels with Christian scenes, which were all dated from the fourth century CE onwards (Päffgen 1992, 129). The grave goods were mainly put in the burial container or in the grave pit. Ash coffins for instance had niches or a podium, while niches in the grave were found in inhumation graves with wooden coffins or sarcophagi. Usually the grave goods were put near the feet in inhumation graves (or near the head) (Päffgen 1992, 125). Frequently, only a single vessel was put in the inhumation graves, but this changed in the late Antique period (i.e. roughly from the late imperial period to the early medieval period) when mainly in women's (inhumation) graves multiple vessels were deposited. Then again, in general less

goods were put in the men's graves in this period (Päffgen 1992, 126). The finds of in total 252 coins were dated from the second half of the first century CE (not counting two stray finds of Augustan period coins). The first peak in their amounts was reached by the second century, to decrease in amounts during the third century, and the maximum amount was reached by the fourth century (with only few coins finds from the fifth century CE) (Päffgen 1992, 130). Single coins were deposited in 34 cremations (and two or more coins in 20 cremation graves) while single coins were encountered in 14 inhumation graves (and two or more coins in five inhumation graves). In the cremations the coins were often deposited as secondary grave goods (i.e. not deposited in the pyre, but during the rites following the cremation of the body) whereas in the inhumation graves coins were found in the hands, in the mouth, in the coffin, in a pouch or ceramic container, and in several locations on or near the body (Päffgen 1992, 133-135).

None of the first century CE gravestones were found *in situ* at the St. Severin cemetery, some referred to the Roman military, and one apparently depicted a funerary feast (Altjohann 1995, 123-124; Päffgen 1992, 100-103). The fundaments (one with multiple cremation graves) that were found here were probably used to support walls and large funerary monuments (alike the first half of the first century CE cemetery pillar monument for Lucius Poblicius that was located nearby this site) (Altjohann 1995, 123-124; Päffgen 1992, 84-85). Numerous other stray finds of pieces of grave monuments (e.g. the cornice of a possible pillar monument, and relief fragments) from Cologne were dated between the first and third centuries CE (Päffgen 1992, 96-100).

Funerary altars from the second and third centuries CE and several elaborately furnished stone chamber graves (dated from the fourth century onwards) were found near the St. Severin church (with cases of later secondary uses of materials as well) (Altjohann 1995, 123-125; Päffgen 1992, 86-87; 89; 103). One of these chamber graves was hexagonally shaped, like a baptistery, with once freestanding sarcophagi inside (as seen by their imprints on the floor) (Päffgen 1992, 90-93). At the east side of the cemetery developed many grave monuments (including a group of grave houses) from the late Antique period onwards. And, by the fourth to fifth century CE a small church had developed in this location too (though it seems no medieval *ad sanctum* burials were located here because of the lack of a saint's burial) (Päffgen 1992, 12; 27).

Lastly, '*Plastische Grabgruppen*' (grave sculptures) were found during the St. Severin cemetery excavations. These included for example a lion fighting Hercules (dating stylistically around the beginning of the third century CE), a young man's bust, and a horse's torso (Päffgen 1992, 107-109). From the late second century CE onwards grave

reliefs were used to decorate Cologne's sarcophagi (Päffgen 1992, 111). Other second to third or possibly fourth century CE grave reliefs were found detached from their sarcophagi or grave monuments (and were thought to have randomly ended up in this location). Due to their daily life and shepherd depictions these were interpreted as Christian art forms (Päffgen 1992, 109-111). After the middle of the third century grave sculptures with simpler inscriptions were used and by the fourth century CE the grave monuments (mainly stelae) became relatively simple as well (Päffgen 1992, 112).

The Jakobstrasse was excavated between 1929 and 1930, but many finds and documentations were lost during World War II (Friedhoff 1991, 17-18). The cemetery was a part of the south (St. Severin) cemetery of the Roman city, which was not completely excavated (although most of the cemetery borders have been determined) (Friedhoff 1991, 19-41). The Roman burials from Cologne dealt with here are a collection of graves from the Jakobstrasse (which is perpendicular to the Severinstrasse), supplemented by some graves from the Severinstrasse that were recorded in the same catalogue as those from the Jakobstrasse (cf. Friedhoff 1991).

During the Jakobstrasse excavations another 287 inhumation burials, eleven cremations, two mass burials, and three chamber graves were found and dated between the middle of the second century and the second half of the fourth century CE (Friedhoff 1991). The oldest finds however date to the early Hallstatt period and were found in a possible Hallstat period burial mount near the Jakobstrasse (that was possibly reused in the Roman period). Nevertheless, the first Roman burials from this site were dated between the middle of the second and the middle of the third century CE. Though most burials from this phase were not furnished one inhumation was adorned with a bronze girdle that could be dated to the middle of the second century CE (but it could also be a first century CE grave) (Friedhoff 1991, 20). Multiple grave goods assemblages that dated between the middle of the second to the latter half of the third century CE had grave goods that ranged from jewellery to clothes, vessels (plates, bowls, beakers, or three small jugs), and coins (Friedhoff 1991, 26; 57). The finds from the mass grave were dated around the middle of the third century CE (Friedhoff 1991, 28). Other burials could be dated to the latter half of the third century CE by coin finds in the graves (Friedhoff 1991, 28). Between the period of the Tetrarchy to 330 CE and the middle of the fourth century grave goods assemblages began to become more elaborate and were not only in the grave and coffin but also in niches of the grave deposited. Jewellery and toiletry items were often found in women's graves (in boxes or niches), while coins were still found near the hands or mouth, and also

amulets with Mithras symbols were found (Friedhoff 1991, 30; 35; 57-58). However, the amount of grave goods decreased again from the middle of the fourth century CE onwards to finally result in graves that were devoid of grave goods (Friedhoff 1991, 58). Nevertheless, it was noted that in total most of the finds that were retrieved came from these later phases and consisted of glass or ceramic plates, bowls, dishes, beakers, jugs, pots, bottles, and cutlery (Friedhoff 1991, 60).

At the cemetery site no gravestones were found *in situ* and from the third and fourth century CE no gravestones are known from the Rhineland at all (Friedhoff 1991, 40). Several of the graves were double graves that often included a child and were seen as possible family graves (Friedhoff 1991, 40-41). The inhumations were found in simple earth graves interred with or without coffins, but probably in wrappings (Friedhoff 1991, 41; 45). Until the third century CE the inhumations' orientations varied, from the end of the third century CE most were oriented south north, and from the middle of the fourth century CE onwards the west east orientation became the norm (Friedhoff 1991, 42). Niches were frequently found in first half of the fourth century CE graves, and grave goods could also be placed in wooden boxes (Friedhoff 1991, 42-44).

130 Roman period inhumations were found without a coffin, three burials were enclosed by stones (dating to the second half of the fourth century CE), and three burials were found on wooden planks (one with a lime pillow; respectively dating to the second half of the second century, the first half of the third century, and the middle of the fourth century CE) (Friedhoff 1991, 46). 134 Roman period inhumations were found in wooden coffins and some of these were clad in lead, while other lead sarcophagi without wood seemed to be used from at least 241 to the fourth century CE onwards (Friedhoff 1991, 47-49). Decorated stone sarcophagi were used in 27 graves between the end of the third to the second half of the fourth century CE at this cemetery (Friedhoff 1991, 50). In addition to the earlier mentioned lime pillow lime layers and other headrests were used in 11 wooden and stone coffins from between the late third to middle of the fourth century CE. These lime layers were called '*Kalkbrei*' and were a kind of plastic lime mess that was thought to have served hygienic purposes (Friedhoff 1991, 53).

In 111 inhumations the positions of the body and limbs were documented and the majority were positioned on their backs, stretched out with their faces looking up. The arms of these bodies were laid in (or under) the lap (in 30 graves), parallel to the body (in 27 graves), with one arm stretched and one in the lap, with arms on the belly or chest, or one arm stretched or in the lap and the other on the breast or shoulder. Five others lay on their bellies or sides (in eight cases), one child was found seated, and apart from the

two mass graves four unattached skulls were found (thought to have resulted from looting or possibly even from secondary deposition rituals) (Friedhoff 1991, 54; 57). Other skull associated practices were trepanations, as holes were found in multiple skulls (but these were usually already made during life) (Friedhoff 1991, 57).

Three chamber burials from around the end of the third century to around the first half of the fourth century CE and a grave house were found at this cemetery. These were constructed using tufa stones, niches, multiple building phases, and contained sarcophagi (Friedhoff 1991, 66-72). A fundament comparable to those of the larger funerary monuments, which measured about 6,8 by 9,3 meters, was also present at the Jakobsstrasse and it was thought to have dated to an early period (Friedhoff 1991, 74-75). The eleven cremation graves from the Jakobstrasse were all *ustrina* and were found with and without cremation containers (e.g. urns, jugs, pots, wooden chests, and stone ossuaries) (Friedhoff 1991, 64). These cremations were mostly dated from the middle of the second to the latter half of the third century CE (but one dated around the middle of the fourth century) and their grave goods were comparable to those from contemporary inhumations (Friedhoff 1991, 66).

Höpken and Liesen (2013b, 369-371) wrote a publication on the more recent excavations of parts of the necropolis in Cologne's south. Both cremation and inhumation burials were found in these locations between the city wall and centre of the St. Severin cemetery.

The oldest grave that was found was dated to the Augustan/Tiberian period, but most graves were dated to the second half of the third to middle of the fourth century CE (Höpken and Liesen 2013b, 371-372). 19 cremations and 84 inhumations were found and the latter starting appearing from the middle of the second century and replaced the cremations by the second half of the third century CE (Höpken and Liesen 2013b, 372-377). Grave goods were put in niches of seven inhumation burials or in some cases in chests put on top of the sarcophagus (Höpken and Liesen 2013b, 377).

Intersecting graves were often found and apparently children's graves were frequently associated with the graves of adults (Friedhoff 1991, 40-41; Höpken and Liesen 2013b, 378). Previously, such double graves were seen as possible family graves by Friedhoff (1991, 40-41), but the osteological research pointed out that these adults could not always simply be the mother of the child (though other family ties would still be possible) (Höpken and Liesen 2013b, 378).

The sarcophagi were made of stone and wood, sometimes covered in lead, and the deceased were buried in stretched positions on their backs. Often the hands lay besides

the body, but some had either one or both hands on the pelvis, or the arms crossed over the breast. One child was buried on its side and four late Antique burials were buried with lime, which was also argued by Höpken and Liesen (2013b, 378) to have possibly been done because of its disinfecting quality. Holes in the lids of stone sarcophagi and other coffins reveal that the reopening of graves often happened. Still, in 22 inhumation graves coins were found (primarily single coin finds except for three burials where 2 two coins were found and four burials where five or more coins were put in the grave) (Höpken and Liesen 2013b, 378). The other finds that were dated to the third and fourth century CE consist of fibulae, belts, finger rings, bracelets, earrings, hair pins, amber beads, toiletry, writing equipment, mirrors, iron needles and pincers, keys, silver spoons, knives, lamps (an early and middle imperial period custom), weapons in male burials (interpreted as a Germanic influence), glass and ceramic vessels, food and drink table wares, a few cases of cooking and storage pots, ceramic money boxes, Mithras symbols that were often found together with molluscs, food (i.e. faunal remains) on large plates, and the for late the imperial period graves from the Rhineland characteristic sets of three ceramic vessels (Höpken and Liesen 2013b, 379-380; 382). Yet, it was noted some of these grave goods had been circulating for a long time before ending up in these graves (e.g. some coins that had circulated for 60 years) (Höpken and Liesen 2013b, 382).

### 4.2.5 Synthesis and discussion of Cologne's developments in funerary rites

Starting in the first century CE the developments in funerary rites of Cologne and can be characterized by the principal practice of cremating the deceased with grave goods (cf. Fremersdorf 1927, 258-259; 259-267; La Baume 1959, 461). Variations on the cremation burial customs were reported at the St. Gereon's cemetery in this period in the forms of for example a mortar on a head of child, a cooking pot, and horse and dog burials (La Baume 1959, 460-461).

Some of this period's cremation graves were found with weapons (e.g. an iron gladius) at the St. Gereon's cemetery (Fremersdorf 1927, 258-267; 277-278; La Baume 1959, 461). It was stated these were graves of auxiliaries, because weapon depositions in graves were said to be not a Roman custom and the Roman fleet station was in the vicinity. This was also done on the basis of grave goods that were perceived as not Roman (i.e. a late La Tène period fibula and a middle Rhine area pot) and because of finds in one cremation grave of parts of military equipment (but it is unclear which parts) (Fremersdorf 1927, 258-267; La Baume 1959, 461). Some of the other inhumations that were found close to these weapon cremations were likewise interpreted as auxiliary soldiers (also because of

military gravestones that were found nearby). Almost all of these were devoid of grave goods and weapons only seemed to have been found in one of the cremations and military equipment parts in another (Fremersdorf 1927, 258-269). So, it is debatable whether all these graves can be interpreted as auxiliaries. Despite that, early Roman period cremation weapon burials that were reported at Köln-Marienburg were also said to have been a part of the indigenous traditions (i.e. the graves of indigenous soldiers in Roman service), because of their early dating and their resemblance to Late Iron age tombs (cf. Fremersdorf 1927, 258-259; Van Doorselaer 1967, 189; 195). Yet, this interpretation too seems to have been primarily based on assumptions of what such graves would have looked like. Furthermore, the inhumations and cremations that were found on the cemetery between the Steinfelder and Spiesergasse were interpreted by Fremersdorf (1927, 269) as Celtic inhumations graves and German cremations graves, because Celts would have kept on inhuming and Germans only cremated. Subsequently, this led to the thesis that the combined cremation-inhumation graves were those of masters and slaves, while the body with the pulled up legs was supposedly that of an oriental person (because this burial type was in use in Egypt) (cf. Fremersdorf 1927, 269). Notwithstanding, the apparent lack of evidence other than the material culture and ethnicity linked assumptions, this interpretation of the early inhumations in ethnic terms was essentially similar to some of those that were made for Tongres (cf. Van Doorselaer 1967, 58; 67).

It was stated that at the St. Gereon cemetery 1200 burials were found dating to the first four centuries CE. Two thirds of these were cremations and 25% were inhumations, and it was argued by Berszin (2012) that this was a higher amount of inhumations than normally was expected relative to the amounts of cremations. However, as was for instance visible at Tongres and will be seen in the chronological developments of Cologne's south cemeteries variability existed in the proportions of cremations and inhumations between for instance the first and fourth century CE. Therefore, making such claims for the period of the first four centuries CE at this cemetery seems to be at a too general level. Nevertheless, horse burials and 'Hocker' burials were interpreted by Berszin (2012) as indicative of indigenous graves, albeit not clear what this interpretation was based on.

Recently, the burials that deviated from the norm were interpreted by Höpken (2007, 301) as possibly those of non-Italic people's burials. An argument for this standpoint was that apparently it was a Roman custom to deposit only a few symbolic grave goods (interpreted as signifying the need for graves to remain a presence in the society). This

was opposed to the supposedly Celtic custom of the deposition of many grave goods for the afterlife (Höpken 2007, 288-299; 301; Höpken and Liesen 2013a, 181). Though it is questionable to imply that these depositions of many objects held less symbolic meaning, or can be exclusively attributed to a Gallic tradition, the additional proposed possibility that for example veterans (who settled in the research region) took with them Italic cultural traditions cannot be excluded. However, the assumption that the burials of Italic and non-Italic peoples can be recognized by certain archaeological evidence can be questioned, as this would necessitate assuming that these peoples were always reflected by specific materials. Furthermore, other burials from the St. Gereon cemetery like the one of Bella were interpreted as a kind of 'Roman mixed style' burial. This was put forward by Höpken and Liesen (2013a, 181) because the 'indigenous' custom of inhuming was not commonly used in combination with this graves' 'Roman' furnishing (i.e. the stela and few grave goods) and it was thought this would have been arranged like this by her husband Longinus (Höpken 2007, 299; Höpken and Liesen 2013a, 181). Whether it is possible or not to mark certain burial rites (e.g. cremating or inhuming) as either indigenous or Roman seems to be a debate driven by the 'Romanization' ideas. Therefore, the question is whether it is possible to make such claims without more data about the origins of people (e.g. obtained by doing origins analyses using isotopes). On the other hand even if such provenance data were available about these burials, people in the past could have identified themselves in completely different ways than as either Roman, indigenous, or this 'Roman mixed style'. Besides that it is possible these 'Roman mixed style' burials were much more common, as this is the only case in the data from the research region of a grave that was found with its gravestone.

From the south cemetery at the St. Severin it was clear the inhumation burial rite was used more from the third century CE onwards, but cremations were still the dominant practice until the middle of the third century. In the periods preceding this century the inhumation burial rite was practiced as well, but only on a small scale (Päffgen 1992, 115; 117). Still, at the Jakobstrasse cemetery inhumation burials dated already from the middle of the second century onwards (to the second half of the fourth century CE) (Friedhoff 1991). Likewise, the inhumations started to appear more often from the middle of the second century CE and replaced cremations by the second half of the third century at the parts of the necropolis in Cologne's south that were researched in later excavations (Höpken and Liesen 2013b, 372-377).

Though only one fourth century CE cremation was found at Cologne's south cemetery,

some more cremations are known from this period in the Rhineland (Friedhoff 1992, 66; Päffgen 1992, 118). Furthermore, mainly the cremation burials contained grave goods and to a much lesser extent these were found in the inhumation graves (43% versus 15%). The inhumations that did contain grave goods mostly dated to the third and fourth centuries CE (Päffgen 1992, 12; 15; 124-125). Nevertheless, Päffgen (1992, 124) interpreted these developments as a sign of a general decline in the amounts of grave goods in graves during the late Antique period in Northern Gaul. Possibly, this interpretation was also based on the data from the Jakobstrasse (although no reference to this publication was made) where the amounts of grave goods, after having become more elaborate from about 330 to 350 CE, decreased in amounts from the middle of the fourth century CE onwards to finally result in graves that were devoid of grave goods (Friedhoff 1991, 58). Friedhoff (1991, 66) stated that the grave goods from for instance the middle of the second to the fourth century CE cremations from the Jakobstrasse were seen as relatively comparable to those of contemporary inhumations (Friedhoff 1991, 66). However, Päffgen (1992, 124-125; 207-208) noted that at the St. Severin excavations in the third and fourth century CE graves glasses were found relatively more frequent in cremations than in inhumations (in 45 of 176 cremations and in 8 out of 253 inhumations). Possibly this can be explained by the developments in funerary rites from the St. Severin and Jakobstrasse cemeteries, as according to Altjohann (1995, 122) elaborate burials with glass vessels from the Jakobstrasse were dated to the fourth century CE, whereas similar burials at the St. Severin site flourished in the second and third century. Still, as these burial grounds were part of the same south cemetery the question is how these differences came about. Were these differences the result of differential chronological developments in different parts of the same cemetery or could this have been the result of differently operating burying groups?

Furthermore, the grave goods were interpreted by Friedhoff (1991, 57) as either the deceased's belongings or as objects of the funerary cult. However, it seems this divide was made on arbitrary grounds and it is unclear why not all grave goods (which in essence all seem to be parts of the funerary cults) were seen as objects for the funerary cult.

Dating to the third and fourth century CE at the south cemetery sites (as well as in Weiden) Mithras symbols were found on several kinds of grave materials (cf. Fremersdorf 1957, 28-50; Friedhoff 1991, 26; 30; 35; 57-58; Höpken and Liesen 2013b, 379-380; 382; Päffgen 1992, 209-210; 222; 257-258). Often these were found in women's graves during the St. Severin excavations by Päffgen (1992, 257-258), and other gender specific grave goods

were determined at the St. Severin as well (Päffgen 1992, 123-124; 242). Although the skeletal remains of these people (that were marked as either men or women) were not researched in modern ways to determinate sexes, the more specific sets do seem to be indicating new ideas existed about what certain burials should look like in this late imperial period. Furthermore, the as gender specific perceived weapon burials from the third and fourth centuries CE were also interpreted as hunting weapons or as Germans in Roman military service (because of the as 'German' interpreted long sword) (Altjohann 1995, 122; Päffgen 1992, 128-129; 225). Weapons dating to the third and fourth centuries CE that were found in male burials in the later excavations at the south cemetery of Cologne were likewise interpreted by Höpken and Liesen (2013b, 379-380; 382) as possibly influenced by the Germanic people. These ethnic interpretations of the weapon grave goods however are like that in terms of gender hard to proof when for instance no physical anthropological, DNA, or isotope analyses were done on the human remains. Yet, the possibility of German influences can probably not be excluded.

At the St. Severin eight different cremation burial rites were documented, which could have been buried using 14 different cremation customs (concerning the ways in which cremation and pyre were used). Reuse of funerary materials was noted for instance in the case of a second half of the third century CE gravestone that was used as a cover for an urn, while usually lids, ceramic vessels (also a mortar), or stones were used to this end (Päffgen 1992, 71-74; 113-114). Other variations on the cremations rites existed of the utilizations of different kinds of vessels as urns, their handling (e.g. the intentional destructions), and the deposition of varying assemblages of grave goods as primary or secondary depositions (Päffgen 1992, 113-114; 123). So, it can be argued that a widespread variability was part and parcel of the funerary rites of the south cemeteries in Cologne of the early and middle imperial period. On top of that, these funerary customs did not seem to apply to new-born children who were not cremated in the early and middle imperial period (Päffgen 1992, 115). Furthermore, the children's inhumation graves from the necropolis in Cologne's south were often associated with adult graves, though the osteological evidence pointed out that these adults could not always be the mother (Höpken and Liesen 2013b, 378).

Alike the variability in cremation practices also several kinds of ways to inhume the deceased were practiced. Mostly wooden coffins or no coffins were used for the inhumation burials at the St. Severin (and Jakobstrasse) cemetery. These graves could be made in several sizes, shapes, and materials, but for instance lead was only used in the

third and fourth centuries (and chamber graves from the fourth century CE onwards) (Altjohann 1995, 121-125; Friedhoff 1991, 41; 45-49; Päffgen 1992, 71-78; 86-87; 89; 103). A lime pillow from the second half of the second century CE and lime headrests and layers from between the late third to middle of the fourth century CE were found at Cologne's south cemeteries (e.g. at the Jakobstrasse), and were thought to have served hygienic purposes (Friedhoff 1991, 46; 53; Höpken and Liesen 2013b, 378). It was argued by Päffgen (1992, 120) that the use of lime on the deceased's body served a kind of sealing purpose to be able to keep it in a building for some time. If this holds true then this use of lime might reflect the changed relations people had with the dead prior to the funeral, which were proposed before by Graham (2015, 56-57) (see chapter 2).

The grave goods could in addition be placed in several places in the inhumation graves (Päffgen 1992, 125-126). Until the third century CE the inhumations' orientations and positions of the body and limbs varied (for instance at the Jakobstrasse; which was thought to have been intentionally done in a certain way) (Friedhoff 1991, 42; 54; 57; Höpken and Liesen 2013b, 378; Päffgen 1992, 120-121). And, four unattached skulls were discovered at the Jakobstrasse and interpreted as the result of looting or possibly even intentional other secondary funerary rites (Friedhoff 1991, 54; 57).

On top of that a mass grave was found at the Jakobstrasse that dated around the middle of the third century CE and this was seen by Friedhoff (1991, 44-45) as connected to Frankish raids (Friedhoff 1991, 28). Though the finds of mass graves in the third century CE do seem to agree with the supposed events of the Crisis of the Third Century, it can be disputed whether specific historic events confidently can be linked with archaeological finds (e.g. these Frankish raids) (cf. Friedhoff 1991, 28).

Lastly, Christian objects at the St. Severin were found in the form of for instance three vessels with Christian scenes and all Christian finds were dated from the fourth century CE onwards (Päffgen 1992, 129). The west east oriented inhumations at the St. Severin cemetery were often devoid of grave goods and were because of these characteristics (and because of some finds of lamps with fish depictions) interpreted by Fremersdorf (1930, 161) as Christian graves (cf. Fremersdorf 1956, 9). Contrary to this Päffgen (1992, 119) argued that this was only possible to do when certain inscriptions or symbols are found (which were not found in all graves).

Another chamber grave from the Severinstrasse was dated by its style (stone walls and a stone sarcophagus) to the late imperial period. This grave in combination with correspondingly oriented burials in wooden coffins were said by Fremersdorf (1930, 161)

to be Christian burials that were part of a religious community. Yet, this suggestion seemed to be not supported by any archaeological evidence for these burials to be either related to a certain religion or to each other. Van Doorselaer (1967, 85; 121-122) therefore downplayed this to a possible influence of early Christianity (among other religions), in regard of the shift to the inhumation ritual. Nonetheless, one of the chamber graves from the St. Severin cemetery was hexagonally shaped, like a baptistery (Päffgen 1992, 90-93). And, during the late Antique period at the east side of the cemetery a small church developed by the fourth to fifth century CE (Päffgen 1992, 12; 27).

## 4.3 The other sites than Cologne and Tongres from the research area

Similar developments in funerary rites as in Tongres and Cologne seemed to be visible in Trier, Andernach, Theux, Ciney, and Someren (cf. Roymans and Kortlang 1993; Van Doorsear 1967, 52). These cemeteries were said by Van Doorselaer (1967, 52) to have had early inhumation burials as well, which is why these sites are included briefly in this chapter. Next to the data from the earlier mentioned sites the cemetery data from Grivegnée, Bas-Oha, Thon, Kettig, and Kärlich are briefly discussed in the following paragraphs (cf. Van Doorselaer 1967, 52). However, the data from these sites that were studied for this thesis are not comparable in quantity or quality to the archaeological information from the archaeological sites of Tongres and Cologne (but might be referred to in the following discussion chapter). Since the funerary data from Trier and Andernach were relatively comprehensive, these will be discussed in separate paragraphs first.

### 4.3.1 Trier

Trier was founded or became a city based on a previous settlement near a bridge over the Moselle and the road from Lyon to the Rhine (see figure 15) in the period of Augustus' campaigns in Germany. From about the first half of the first century CE onwards *Augusta Treverorum* (i.e. Trier) became a *colonia*, though the latter title seems to have been only honorary. And, between 51 BCE and 69 CE several revolts and rebellions in the *civitas Treverorum* were put down until finally the Treveran cavalry was disbanded and changes were made in the guard of the Treveran nobility (Rothe 2009, 12).
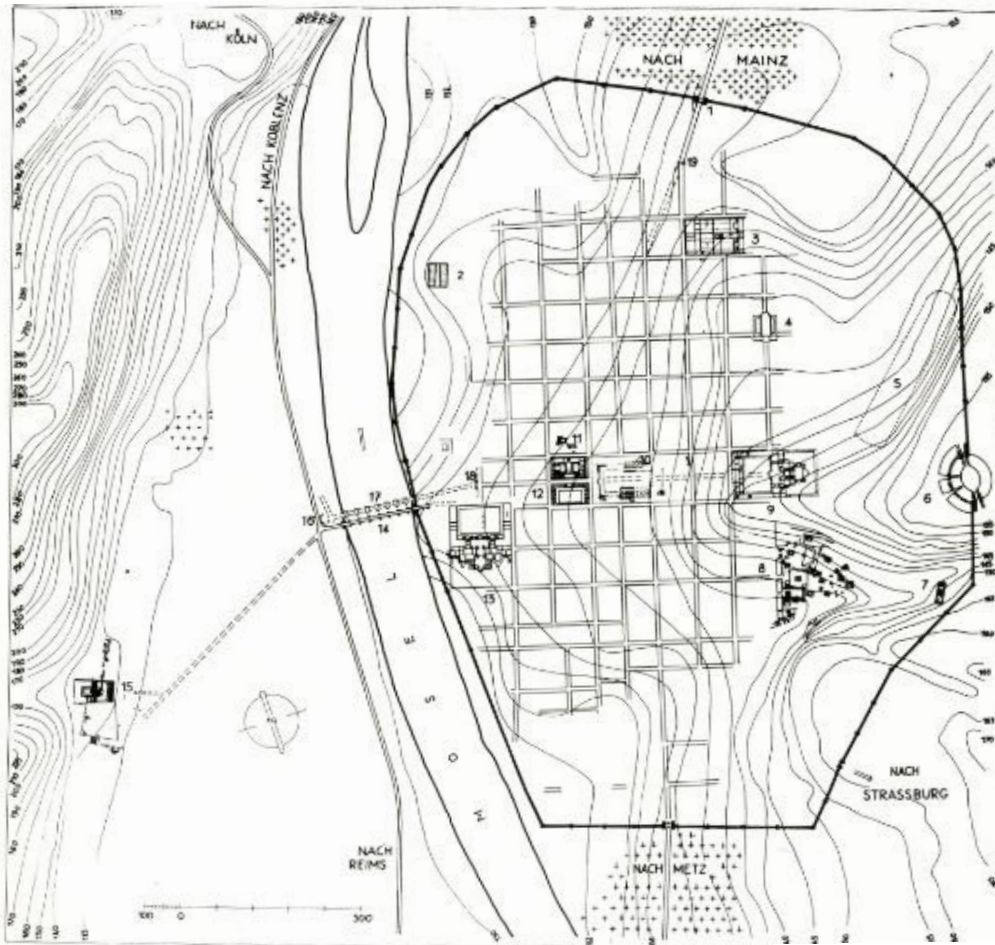
*Figure 15: A map of Roman Trier and its cemeteries, which are indicated by the crosses to the north and south along the roads to Metz and Mainz. The Altbachtal temple district is indicated by number 8 (after Cüppers 1983, 288).*

Functioning as the political and economic centre of the *civitas* Trier grew to a 2 by 1,7 km wide plan, that was about double the size of the later medieval city. A Roman cemetery was located near Trier on the left side of the Mosel (possibly connected to the *vicus* of the *Voclanniones*). A second century CE temple dedicated Mars was located on the same side of the Mosel adjacent to a 'medicinal' spring and next to an older Gaulish temple district (Von Krencker 1923, 16; 23; Wightman 1970, 11). The inscriptions in the temple for Mars read the names Mars Lenus, Mars Intarabus, and Mars Jovantucarus, which according to Van Krencker (1923, 24) were related to the Treveran tribes. It is probable also the Celtic-Gaulish goddess Ancamna and the *pagi* Teucoriatis and Vilciatis were worshipped in this temple. Nevertheless, the temple was, because of the idea that tribal cults were focused in a central shrine, seen as the result of the growth of Trier – which was according to Wigthman (1970, 11) a centre for Romanization. Possibly pre-Roman temples of the Romano-Celtic type were present in the Trier Altbachtal area and these were used to

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worship the Gallo-Roman Jupiter, Mercury Peregrinorum (linked with foreigners and trade), the mother-goddesses, Epona the goddess of horses, and water deities (Wightman 1970, 215-217). Furthermore, Trier was by the third century CE one of the places where Mithraism was in active practice, as shown by the small and late *Mithraeum* in the Altbachtal temple area (Roy 2013, 364; Wightman 1970, 218).

### 4.3.1.1 The funerary archaeological data from Trier

In and around Trier early Roman period weapon burials (including bent swords, shields, spears, and axes) were discovered and interpreted as auxiliary soldiers that were possibly continuing La Tène period funerary traditions (cf. Wightman 1970, 243). This was thought by Wightman (1970, 243) because the supposed buried auxiliary soldiers were seen as not having obeyed the Roman law that prohibited civilian weapon possession other than for the hunt (Wightman 1970, 243). But this was also thought because frequently bent swords (including *gladii*), spear heads, shields and axe finds are known from the late La Tène period Wetterau and Rheinhessen area. Therefore, these Roman period weapon depositions (and also the shallow ditches around some graves) were interpreted as a possible continuance of native practices (Wightman 1970, 243).

Many first century CE tumuli were present as well in the region around Trier (Ebel 1989, 2). The few earliest tumuli from this area date from the Augustan period until the Claudian period, but the majority dates from the period around the middle of the first century CE. Cremations were found under or in all these burial mounts in differing variations, using various kinds of tumuli (e.g. with different constructions, variable sizes, and grave goods sets) (Ebel 1989, 79-80; 101-110). Among the tumuli from for instance Trier-Olewig a weapon burial was noted which contained late La Tène wares (Ebel 1998, 117).

A number of grave stelae were found in Trier, but all were *ex situ* finds (cf. Cüppers 1983, 36; Ebel 1989, 2; 79-80; 101-110; Van Doorselaer 1967, 167; 171-175; 189). And, based on the imagery on the gravestones from Trier a form of initial resistance of the area against the Roman control was interpreted to be visible by the slow spread of the use of gravestones as well as by Roman dress styles that were mainly used by a small elite group in the capital area. When for instance more 'Roman' gravestones were used by the *Treveri* the native dress style was also still adhered to (Rothe 2009, 78). Then again, this interpretation essentially depended on modern views of what Roman and Treveran styles were and meant to people in the past.

Trier had two cemeteries: one to the northeast in the vicinity of the St. Maximin church along the road to Koblenz and Mainz, and one to the southwest near the St. Matthias church on the road to Metz (Van Doorselaer 1967, 23).

The north cemetery of Trier was located at 500 meter distance from the *Porta Nigra* (the north tower of the city) and was in use from the second century CE to the early medieval period (Neyses 2001, 20). The area of the monastery of the St. Maximin at this cemetery was not used much during the second and third century CE other than for a few cremation burials. Then again several fourth century CE stone chamber graves with sarcophagi as well as some reopened pre-fourth century CE child's sarcophagi were found here (Neyses 2001, 21-24). These graves were found together with a large red sandstone hall building from the fourth century CE (Neyses 2001, 21-22). Therefore, these chamber graves and sarcophagi were in combination with the building seen by Neyses (2001, 21-22) as part of the funerary culture of privileged Roman people. Some of these burials were found without grave goods, with bottles, in elaborate garments, oriented east west or north south, in decorated sarcophagi, or had been reopened (Neyses 2001, 21-36). Chamber graves decorated with black and green marble are known from the end of the fourth century CE. These were found in the *coemeterial* structure where other possible fourth century CE sarcophagi and inhumation burials were found as well (Neyses 2001, 38-49).

In Trier skeletons in tombs were found on a bed of lime and many instances of coin depositions, in mouths and in hands, are known from its late Roman inhumations (but the specific cemetery site was not documented). One example of an inhumation grave from Trier even had coins in the hands and the mouth (cf. Van Doorselaer 1967, 132; 138). Furthermore, at the St. Matthias cemetery fourteen sarcophagi with Christian inscriptions which dated to the fourth century CE were found with coins in the mouth and hands as well (Van Doorselaer 1967, 138). Next to inhumation burials with coffins decorated sarcophagi and lead coffins were found (Van Doorselaer 1967, 156-157; 163). From the middle of the fourth century CE onwards early Christian inscriptions were often recorded in the graves in the Maximin area, but also around the St. Paulin and as mentioned before at St. Matthias church. Possibly these were located here because of the close proximity to the graves of the first bishops of Trier and the desire for *ad sanctos* burials (Florencourt 1848, 71; Neyses 2001, 54). Furthermore, four chamber burials were found at the St. Matthias church cemetery area (www.uni-trier.de).

The north cemetery of Trier was used from the second century CE onwards, but it is not clear from the data when inhumations started to be used or when the inhumation burial rituals became the dominant funerary rite. Nevertheless, by the fourth century CE stone chamber graves and sarcophagi were used (at the south cemetery of Trier chamber burials were also found) and variability was present in these burials that were executed in multiple ways (e.g. with decorated or lead sarcophagi), besides the use of simple earth burials (cf. Neyses 2001, 20-40; 44-49; Van Doorselaer 1967, 156-157; 163).

Other funerary rites from Trier consisted of inhumations on lime beds and coins (in multiple places in the grave) in the late Roman graves. Additionally, early Christian inscriptions were documented at Trier's cemeteries from the middle of the fourth century CE onwards (cf. Florencourt 1848, 71; Neyses 2001, 54; Van Doorselaer 1967, 132; 138).

## 4.3.2 Andernach

The archaeological activities in Andernach started in the middle of the 19th century and cemeteries were found near a vicus, which had been protected by Rhine sediments (see figure 16) (Oesterwind and Schäfer 1987, 34; Van Doorselaer 1967, 224). At the cemetery to the north of the Kirchberg and at the cemetery at the Martinsberg graves from the La Tène to early imperial period were excavated and published by Koenen in 1888, but several late La Tène and early Roman stray finds are known as well (possibly found between the two excavated cemeteries) (Oesterwind and Schäfer 1987, 6).
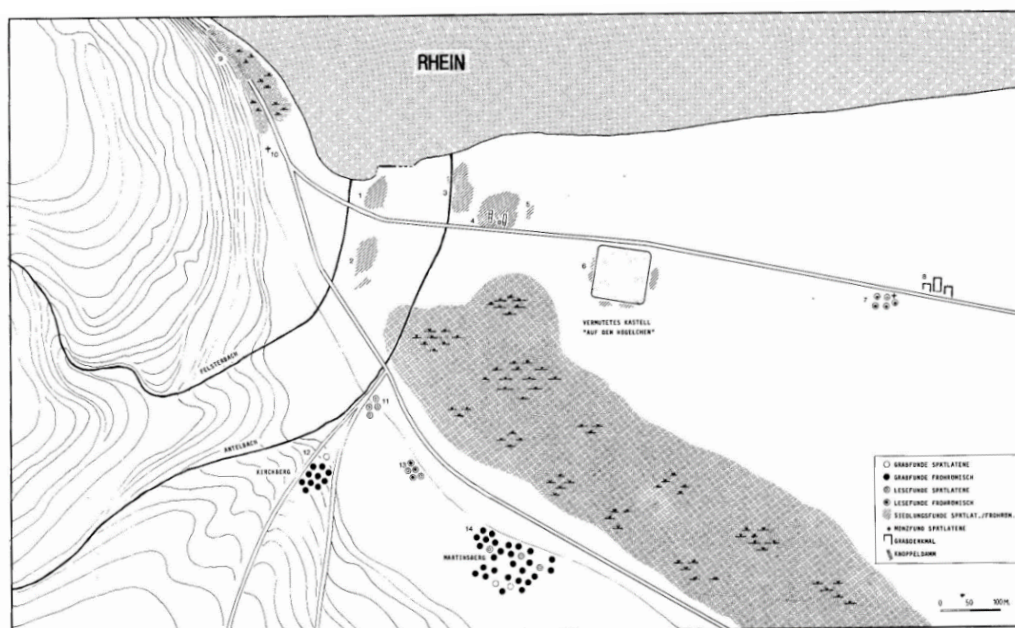


*Figure 16: A map of Roman Andernach and its cemeteries: empty circles are late La Tène, filled circles are early Roman period (Oesterwind and Schäfer 1987, 9).*

*4.3.2.1 The funerary archaeological data from Andernach*

Andernach's three cemeteries (near the Kirchberg, the Mittler'schen Mühle, and the Martinsberg) were discovered along a pre-Roman period road (on the outside of the late La Tène periode settlement) (Oesterwind and Schäfer 1987, 17). Apparently, all La Tène period finds from Andernach were found in either early imperial period settlement layers or waste pits, except for the late La Tène period inhumation burial that was found at the Martinsberg (Oesterwind and Schäfer 1987, 8; 16). Uninterrupted occupation of Andernach was determined by the dates of the ceramics from the late La Tène to the Roman period and Van Doorselaer (1967, 53; 189; 246) placed the burials from Andernach in the indigenous La Tène burial tradition (Oesterwind and Schäfer 1987, 13). Though, it is unclear which specific cemetery site Van Doorselaer referred to, this could possibly not matter much as the three cemeteries may have been parts of the same cemetery (cf. Oesterwind and Schäfer 1987, 17).

The inhumation burial that was found at the Martinsberg cemetery was also the only known late La Tène period inhumation from the region of Koblenz-Neuwieder (Oesterwind and Schäfer 1987, 16). Furthermore, at the Martinberg's cemetery early Roman period weapon burials were found, which led Lehner to believe a *castellum* stood in Andernach (Oesterwind and Schäfer 1987, 6). This *castellum* hypothesis was later confirmed when trenches were found during canal constructions (Oesterwind and Schäfer 1987, 7). However, the original documentation of the V-shaped trenches was already in 1987 untraceable and the newly built town hall prevents further research on this early imperial period site (Oesterwind and Schäfer 1987, 14-15).

Early Roman (late Augustan period) burials are known from the Mittler'schen Mühle and the Martinsberg (e.g. from the latter site first century CE graves) (Oesterwind and Schäfer 1987, 15; 21). Furthermore, the Kirchberg's cemetery was interpreted in terms of the military camp and *canabae* settlement and 141 late Roman inhumations (in wooden coffins and a few sarcophagi) were found together on this cemetery with some middle imperial period cremations (Ament 1979, 352; Oesterwind and Schäfer 1987, 6). At the Koblenzerstrasse three soldier grave stelae (which could have belonged to a Raetian cohort) were found as well as a cremation burial cemetery ('Vor dem Burgtor') and 15 late Roman cremation and inhumation burials (Ament 1979, 354; Oesterwind and Schäfer 1987, 5; 24).

A non-Roman start in the developments in funerary rites is visible in the late La Tène period to early Roman imperial period (i.e. first century CE) graves that were found at the Martinsberg cemetery site (cf. Oesterwind and Schäfer 1987, 6). Nevertheless, it seems the trajectory in developments of the funerary rites at the burial grounds from Andernach is broadly similar to those of for instance Tongres or Cologne. For instance cremations that were found at the Kirchberg's cemetery dated to the middle imperial period, and many late Roman inhumations were discovered in wooden coffins and a few sarcophagi (cf. Ament 1979, 352; Oesterwind and Schäfer 1987, 15; 21). Additionally, cremation burials are known from the late Roman period at the Koblenzerstrasse in Andernach, showing that the cremation burial rite continued as a minority rite in the later Roman period (cf. Ament 1979, 354).

Among the early Roman burials at the Martinsberg cemetery weapon burials were recorded (Oesterwind and Schäfer 1987, 6). Furthermore, the cremation weapon burials from the Martinsberg cemetery held defensive weapons that were interpreted by Oesterwind and Schäver (1987, 26-28) as those of indigenous peoples while the ones with offensive weapons were seen as possible auxiliaries. However, it can be questioned if such a strict divide can be made by this aspect of the weapons: could offensive weapons not be acquired by indigenous peoples too and were auxiliaries necessarily different from these indigenous peoples in the first place?

## 4.3.3 Other sites from the research area

A brief synthesis of the funerary developments in other sites from the research region with early inhumation burials will be provided here (cf. Van Doorselaer 1967, 52). As said before these cemetery sites are Theux, Ciney, Grivegnée, Bas-Oha, Thon, Kettig, Kärlich, and Someren. However, as will be clear by the following paragraphs the obtained data of these sites did not result in a comprehensive overview, but the results are to some degree comparable to the data from the case-study sites.

Theux was thought to have been a prosperous agglomeration as two cemeteries were discovered here (Van Doorselaer 1967, 223-224). On a temple site in Theux two Mithraic inscriptions were found near a water source, but their dating is other than being Roman not known (cf. Roy 2013, 367). The cemetery of Kärlich was described as having a mixed sample of inhumation and cremation graves and Kärlich was located in the region of Koblenz, where it was a part of a large camp and vicus agglomeration (Van Doorselaer 1967, 28; 224). Kettig was located within 2 kilometres distance from the cemetery of

Andernach, and of Thon it was only noted that its cemeteries were located in the province of Namur, were among the largest, and counted more than three hundred graves (Van Doorselaer 1967, 52; 223). Bas-Oha and Grievegnée are situated near Liège, while Ciney is located near Namen, and all seem to be rural sites. Lastly, Someren is arguably just north of the research area, but it was chosen to include it anyway because of the atypical archaeological Roman finds that were found during the excavations by the University of Amsterdam between 1991 and 1992 (cf. Roymans and Kortlang 1993, 22).

### 4.3.3.1 The funerary archaeological data from other sites in the research area

In Theux, Ciney, and Someren early Roman period weapon burials were explained in terms of auxiliary soldiers who did not obey the Roman law, and practiced a native tradition, because for instance swords were bent (cf. Van Doorselaer 1967, 189; 194-199; Roymans and Kortlang 1993, 33; 35; Wightman 1970, 243). Nonetheless, the second century CE weapons from Theux concerned knives and iron axes, which made it plausible according to Van Doorselaer (1967, 197-199) that these were associated with the hunt or deforestation. In Ciney a sword was discovered in a grave, but shields were absent, so these were not associated with soldiers either (Van Doorselaer 1967, 194).

Several protective grave structures for the inhumations graves are known from Bas-Oha (i.e. an inhumation masonry tomb enclosed by roof tiles and stones), Ciney and Theux (i.e. by using coarse stones to surround the urn and by using stones to completely enclose the tombs with inhumations), and Grievegnée where an inhumation grave involved a body that was found in a masonry vault with the head placed in a cavity. Though lacking in chronological specifics its seems variability was present in the instances of deviations from the 'usual burial' (of a single body on its back with the arms parallel to it and stretched out inside a wooden coffin or buried in the earth) that were found at these sites. For instance in Bas-Oha bodies with folded legs were thought to have resulted from the burial in a textile bag, and a pillow (a coarse stone) was used as a rest for the skull in the tomb. Other examples could be found in Theux and Ciney where inhumation burials were found with two or even more corpses that were buried in wooden coffins, sarcophagi, and earth graves. Furthermore, in most of these sites the orientation of the inhumations was not the same for all graves, though the west east orientation was the same for all burials in Kärlich (Van Doorselaer 1967, 129-153). Then again, comparable funerary phenomena have been noted at other sites from the research region, which begs the question what led to the use of these funerary rites.

In Someren an early Roman weapon inhumation burial was found, while the other early weapon burials concerned cremations. This Augustan period grave was found at a late Bronze age to early Iron age urn field (900 to 600 BCE) that also yielded a 7th century BCE iron sword (similar to a sword in an urn that was found nearby) (see figure 17). And, it was assumed the complete cemetery was excavated (Roymans and Kortlang 1993, 22-30).
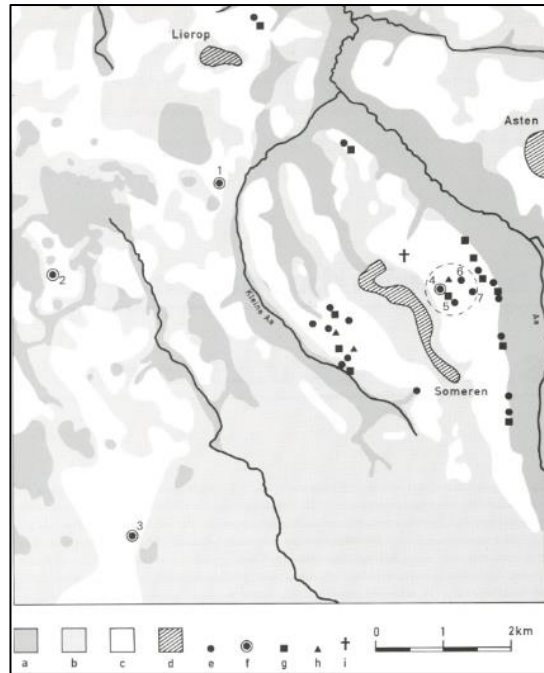


*Figure 17: A map of the archaeological and landscape features of Someren; the Roman inhumation is indicated by number 5 on the map (after Roymans and Kortlang 1993, 24).*

The early Roman inhumation burial was found in the ditch of an Iron age long-bed which was probably still recognizable as such in the Augustan period (Roymans and Kortlang 1993, 32). The deceased was buried in a coffin with a jug amphora, with above it in a niche an iron knife and possibly a wooden plate and a piece of meat. A silhouette was the only remaining evidence of the body, which was accompanied by iron scissors, an iron razor, and an iron *gladius* with pieces of a wooden sheath. It was thought by Roymans and Kortlang (1992, 33; 35) this person had lived in Someren, because at 75 meters from the grave two 'Roman' farms were found (Roymans and Kortlang 1993, 33; 35). The lack of other military equipment in the grave was thought to suggest that this was a veteran (auxiliary) who had kept his sword (Roymans and Kortlang 1993, 35). While it is possible this explanation for the burial is valid, it is debatable whether this can be proved other than by doing for instance isotope analyses on the skeletal remains to get an idea of where the deceased has lived or grew up. Interpreting the deceased's status (e.g. as a veteran) based on the grave goods is equally hard: could the lack of other military equipment not also signal that this *gladius* was obtained in a completely different way?

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# 5. Discussion

This chapter will discuss the chronological developments in funerary rites of the studied sites, which were presented in the previous chapter. This is done by first discussing the observed developments in funerary rites as observed in the research region. Second, it will discuss how these developments relate to the historical and theoretical perspectives on the transition to the inhumation burial ritual that were provided by previous scholars, which were described in chapter 2. Finally, the variability in developments in the funerary rites that was observed at the studied sites will be discussed with regard to the transition to the inhumation burial rite. Following that, the resulting view on the changes in funerary rites will be interpreted in light of the theoretical models for the transition to the inhumation burial ritual (that were proposed in chapter 3 on the methodology).

## 5.1 Discussing the observed developments in funerary rites

In the early imperial period the inhumation burial was used on a small scale, but the cremation burial was the dominant funerary rite (e.g. on the southwest cemetery of Tongres, the St. Gereon's cemetery north of Cologne, and the St. Severin cemetery to Cologne's south). Often the inhumation graves from this period contained few finds or no finds at all (Berszin 2012; Friedhoff 1991, 20; La Baume 1959, 461; Päffgen 1992, 117; 126; Vanvinckenroye 1963, 13-14; 39; 51; 135-141; 169; Van Crombruggen 1960, 358).

The twelve first century CE graves that were found recently at the Sporthal location inside the city wall of Tongres do seem to deviate from this early imperial period's characterization, as these were only inhumations, showed many trauma, and many were adult male-child double graves (cf. Veldman *et al.* 2013, 373; Veldman and Geerts 2013, 67-75). Double graves including burials of children were for instance also found at the south cemetery from Cologne, but these probably dated to the third or fourth century CE. Nevertheless, it also seems that the early and middle imperial period new-borns from Cologne's south cemetery were treated differently, as they were inhumed instead of cremated (cf. Friedhoff 1991, 40-41; Höpken and Liesen 2013b, 377-378; Päffgen 1992, 115). Still, it should be noted that the black and white divide between inhumation and cremation burials as it is presented here should probably be thought of more like a grey scale. For example at the southwest cemetery in Tongres some of the oldest inhumations were found together with cremations in the same graves, but this will be discussed further in the next paragraph (see paragraph 5.2) (Vanvinckenroye 1963, 13; 39; 51; 135; 169).

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Early imperial period weapon burials were discovered at the St. Gereon cemetery north of Cologne, near Tongres, in Cologne Marienburg, in and around Trier, in Andernach, Theux, Ciney, and Someren. These were explained in all cases as indigenous graves or/and as auxiliary soldiers, because of several practices that resembled native practices (e.g. bent swords, similar La Tène period finds, and a weapon burial in a tumulus (from Trier-Olewig) (cf. Ebel 1998, 117; Fremersdorf 1927, 258-259; 259-267; 277-278; Oesterwind and Schäfer 1987, 6; Roosens 1976, 147-149; 155; Roymans and Kortlang 1993, 33; 35; Wightman 1970, 243; Van Doorselaer 1967, 189; 194-199). The actual finds of soldier grave stelae in for instance Andernach and Cologne do make it likely some of the graves that were found actually belonged to auxiliary soldiers, but it can questioned whether the weapon burials that were found can exclusively be attributed to them (cf. Altjohann 1995, 123-124; Ament 1979, 354; Fremersdorf 1927, 258-269; Oesterwind and Schäfer 1987, 5; 24; Päffgen 1992, 100-103).

Furthermore, the burial from Someren can be characterized as an outlier in terms of its find in isolation, early Augustan dating, and its geographical situation just north of the research region. Nevertheless, this too was an inhumation burial that was found in an indigenous context (in the ditch of an Iron age long-bed on a Bronze- to Iron age urn field) that was likewise interpreted as a veteran (Roymans and Kortlang 1993, 22-27).

Tumuli graves were used in parallel to the cremation burials during the first three centuries CE in the region of Tongres and in the region of Trier primarily in the first century CE (in a variety of furnishings). Often specific sets of ceramic vessels and sometimes weapons were found in the burial mounts from both regions (cf. Amand 1985, 16; Ebel 1989, 2; 79-80; 101-110; Roosens 1976, 147-149; 155; Vanvinckenroye 1963, 14; 140-141). Additionally, monumental graves as well as the earlier mentioned gravestones were in use in the research region in the first century CE (e.g. at the south cemeteries of Cologne and Trier). However, these were rarely found *in situ* or with their above ground constructions and only one example of a grave with its gravestone is known (i.e. from Cologne's north cemetery, though it might date later) (cf. Altjohann 1995, 123-124; Cüppers 1983, 36; Friedhoff 1991, 40; 74-75; Höpken 2007, 299; Höpken and Liesen 2013a, 181; Päffgen 1992, 84-85; 96-103; Van Doorselaer 1967, 167; 171-175; 189).

In the middle imperial period the cremation burial rite was still dominant until around the second or third century CE, depending on the site, but the inhumation burial rite was beginning to be used more as well (for instance at the south cemetery of Cologne, the southwest cemetery of Tongres, and at the Kirchberg's cemetery of Andernach) (cf.

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Ament 1979, 352; Höpken and Liesen 2013b, 372-377; Oesterwind and Schäfer 1987, 6; Päffgen 1992, 117; Vanvinckenroye 1963, 13; 39; 51; 135; 169).

One of the differences between cremation and inhumation burials that was noted relates to the more limited and less frequent depositions of graves goods in the middle imperial period inhumation graves relative to the cremation graves (e.g. at Tongres' southwest cemetery) (Vanvinckenroye 1984, 227). Likewise, at the St. Severin cemetery south of Cologne it was noted by Päffgen (1992, 124-125) that grave goods were more often found in cremations than in inhumation graves. Also, metal vessels were mostly found in cremations, while glasses were more often found in inhumation graves of a later date (cf. Friedhoff 1991, 58; Päffgen 1992, 120; 124-125; 207-208). Other temporal differences are notable too as at this cemetery (and in Tongres' southwest cemetery): the inhumations that did contain grave goods dated mainly to the third and fourth centuries CE (i.e. the late imperial period), the grave goods assemblages began to become more elaborate around the end of third and the middle of the fourth century CE, and the late Antique west east oriented inhumations were even often devoid of grave goods (cf. Friedhoff 1991, 20; 30; 35; 57-58; Päffgen 1992, 120; 124-126; 207-208 Raepsaet-Charlier and Vanderhoeven 2004, 63; Vanvinckenroye 1984, 227; 230-231).

A schematic representation of how the amounts of grave goods that were found in inhumation graves differed per period in the cemeteries from the Tongres and Cologne is provided in figure 18 (based on the amounts of grave goods in the graves per period from this discussion and the previous results chapter).
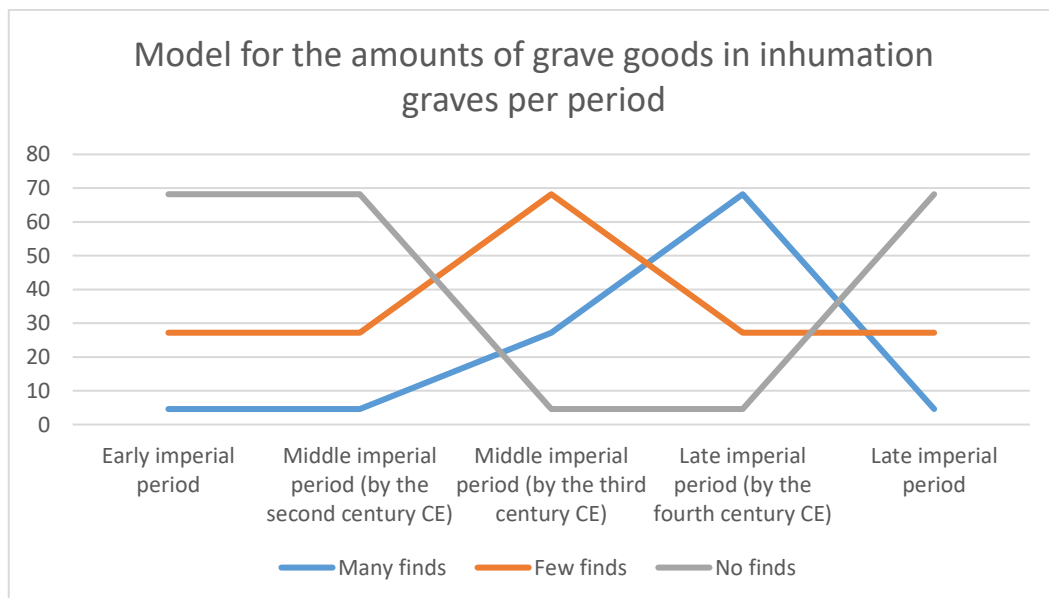


*Figure 18: A model for the relative presence of inhumation graves with many, few, or no finds per period at the cemetery sites in Tongres and Cologne.*

In addition to the general developments a lot of variation was documented at the cemeteries of the case-study sites Tongres and Cologne. Examples from Tongres' southwest cemetery and Cologne's south cemetery are the different kinds of cremations and inhumations and associated funerary ways. These concerned the grave structures and containers, funerary treatments and positions of the deceased, and grave goods assemblages that were used to construct the burial in the middle imperial period. However, it must be stressed some variations that were noted at for instance Cologne's south cemetery resulted from chronological differences. Examples are the lead coffins from the third and fourth centuries, the early imperial period stone urns, the late Antique east west oriented inhumations, the third and early fourth century CE sets of ceramic vessels, the lamp finds from the early to middle imperial period, and the decorated stone sarcophagi that were used between the end of the third to the second half of the fourth century CE) (cf. Altjohann 1995, 121-122; Friedhoff 1991, 41-42; 45-50; 53-57; Höpken and Liesen 2013b, 377-380; 382; Päffgen 1992, 71-78; 86-89; 103; 113-115; 120-124; 183; 210-225; Vanvinckenroye 1963, 169-171; Vanvinckenroye 1984, 224-227; Van Doorselaer 1967, 156-157; 163). Furthermore, other variations can perhaps best be described as outliers, like the different but rare funerary customs that were described for the St. Gereon's cemetery (cf. Berszin 2012; La Baume 1959, 460-461).

By the late imperial period in the third and fourth centuries CE in most places from the research region the inhumation was used as the dominant burial rite (e.g. in Tongres' southwest cemetery, in the south cemetery from Cologne, and possibly also in for example the Kirchberg's cemetery of Andernach) (cf. Ament 1979, 352-354; Oesterwind and Schäfer 1987, 5-6; 24; Päffgen 1992, 115; 117; Vanvinckenroye 1984, 228). Still, it seems that in this later period the cremation burial rite was practiced as a minority rite as well at for example Cologne's south cemetery, Tongres southwest cemetery, and in Andernach (cf. Ament 1979, 354; Friedhoff 1991, 66; Oesterwind and Schäfer 1987, 5; 24; Päffgen 1992, 118; Vanvinckenroye 1984, 232). A schematic representation of how the transition from the dominant use of the cremation to the inhumation burial ritual went over the course of the early to late imperial period, is presented in figure 19 (based on the described amounts of inhumation and cremation graves per period from this discussion chapter and the previous results chapter).
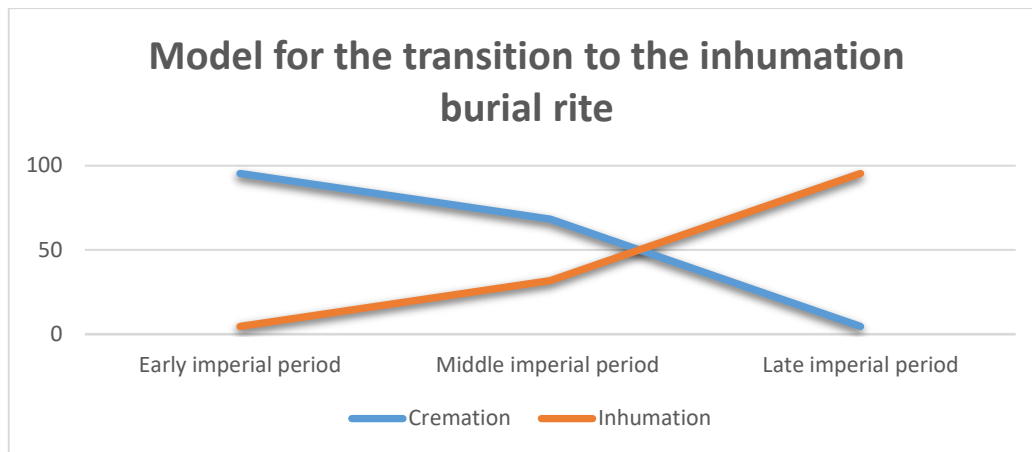
*Figure 19: A model for the transition from cremation to the inhumation burial ritual based on the observed developments in funerary rites per period from the cemetery sites in Tongres and Cologne. Note: neither rite is ever 0.*

The third century CE mass burials from Tongres' southwest cemetery and the Jakobstrasse excavations of Cologne can be seen relatively exceptional inhumation burial kinds as only a few examples are known and these graves deviated from the other inhumations in most respects (cf. Friedhoff 1991, 28; Vanvinckenroye 1975, 44; 78-79).

The grave from Weiden is an example of a monumental grave (that was constructed like a *columbarium*), which could be dated between 260 and 340 CE (or possibly earlier) and contained sarcophagi that were dated to the same period (cf. Fremersdorf 1957, 58).Furthermore, at Tongres' southwest cemetery first half of the fourth century CE cremations surrounded by square ditches were thought to be similar to burial mounts from the late third century CE (Vanvinckenroye 1984, 225-226; 231; 232). Yet, by the fourth century CE chamber burials were used more often in Tongres' southwest cemetery and in Trier's northern and southern cemeteries. In addition, the chamber graves known from Cologne's south cemetery were sometimes elaborately furnished and grave houses as well as beginning of the third century CE grave sculptures were found here too (cf. Altjohann 1995, 123-125; Friedhoff 1991, 66-72; Neyses 2001, 21-24; Päffgen 1992, 86-87; 89; 103; 107-109; Vanvinckenroye 1984, 228; www.uni-trier.de).

Roughly contemporary to the more divers and frequent depositions of grave goods in the inhumations from the third and fourth centuries CE, decorated and stone sarcophagi were used between the end of the third to the second half of the fourth century CE (cf. Friedhoff 1991, 50). In contrast with these decorations grave inscriptions on grave sculptures became simpler after the middle of the third century and Päffgen (1992, 112) stated that by the fourth century CE grave monuments (mainly stelae) became simpler as well.

Besides the dominant use of the inhumation burial ritual in the late imperial period several other developments in the funerary rites were noted in the research region. From the end of the third century CE onwards inhumations from Tongres' southwest and Cologne's south cemetery became for instance oriented mainly towards one direction (but still varied per cemetery) (cf. Friedhoff 1991, 42; Vanvinckenroye 1984, 221; 229). Furthermore, in the late imperial period's graves some gender specific grave goods sets (as well as the more numerous depositions of grave goods in the women's graves) have been identified at for example parts of Cologne's south cemetery and at Tongres' southwest cemetery (cf. Päffgen 1992, 123-126; 242; Vanvinckenroye 1970, 20-22; Vanvinckenroye 1975, 78; Vanvinckenroye 1984, 231). The third and fourth century CE weapon burials from for instance Koninksem near Tongres, Theux, and Cologne's south cemetery (which include sword finds) were related to the male gender as well. Though, these were also frequently seen as explainable by influxes of German peoples (i.e. Germans in Roman military service because of the 'German' long sword finds) or as hunting weapons (cf. Altjohann 1995, 122; Höpken and Liesen 2013b, 379-380; 382; Päffgen 1992, 128-129; 225; Van Doorselaer 1967, 197-199). A complementary discussion of these weapon burials will be provided in paragraph 5.3 (and is linked with the earlier discussions of weapon burials from chapter 2 and paragraph 4.1.4).

On top of that grave goods that were interpreted in light of specific religious ideas are dated to this same late imperial period (e.g. Christian or Mithras symbols). This was done because of third and fourth century CE Mithras symbols in women's graves and finds of fourth century CE vessels with Christian motives at Cologne's south cemetery) (Fremersdorf 1957, 28-50; Friedhoff 1991, 30; 35; 57-58; Höpken and Liesen 2013b, 379-380; 382; Päffgen 1992, 129; 257-258). The second to third or possibly fourth century CE grave reliefs with daily life and shepherd depictions from the St. Severin cemetery were interpreted by Päffgen (1992, 109-111) as possibly Christian motives, but their contexts were seen as *ex situ*. Furthermore, in Trier the earliest Christian inscriptions from graves (at the St. Maximin, St. Paulin, and St. Matthias churches) were dated from the middle of the fourth century CE onwards (Florencourt 1848, 71; Neyses 2001, 54; Van Doorselaer 1967, 138). While fourth century CE graves from the northeast cemetery of Tongres were interpreted as Christian graves as well, this can only be more confidently argued for the grave that contained the find of a silver finger ring with a Christian symbol, as was discussed in paragraph 4.1.2 (cf. Päffgen 1992, 120; 124-125; 207-208; Raepsaet-Charlier and Vanderhoeven 2004, 63; Vanvinckenroye 1984, 242-243).

## 5.2 Discussing previous theories on the transition to the inhumation burial

Early Christianization is one of the factors that has been coined in the past as having influenced the shift from cremation to the inhumation burial rite (cf. Petts 2003, 135-136; Vanvinckenroye 1963, 170). However, Toynbee (1971, 40) and Cooke (1998, 247) did not think this religion could have caused the transition in burial rites, as the period in which Christianity became the dominant religion seemed to date later. Looking at the results from the cemeteries in the research region it can be argued that these scholar's views were not falsified. The transition from cremation to inhumation burial rite was dated to have started by the second or third century CE (when inhumations started to be used more often) and the inhumation burial was the dominant burial ritual by the third and fourth century CE (depending on the site) (cf. Ament 1979, 352-354; Höpken and Liesen 2013b, 372-377; Oesterwind and Schäfer 1987, 5-6; 24; Päffgen 1992, 115; 117; Vanvinckenroye 1984, 228). The earliest Christian evidence from graves found at these sites (in Tongres, Cologne, and Trier) however dates from the fourth century CE onwards (not counting the grave reliefs that were marked as having randomly ended up in their find spots) (cf. Florencourt 1848, 71; Fremersdorf 1957, 28-50; Friedhoff 1991, 30; 35; 57-58; Höpken and Liesen 2013b, 379-380; 382; Neyses 2001, 54; Päffgen 1992, 109-111; 129; 257-258). Still, even if no Christian symbols were found it is possible for inhumation graves to have been those of early Christians: perhaps this custom of using Christian symbols in graves only later became a common practice. Looking at the developments in the amounts of grave goods in inhumation burials (often with few or no grave goods in the early inhumations, but with many and diverse finds around the third century CE) this might be a plausible explanation that leaves open the possibility of Christian influences on the transition to the inhumation burials.

The explanation of the transition to the inhumation burial rite as related to the Oriental mystery religions, that Cumont (1956, 171-173) for example had proposed, seems to be linked to similar chronological developments as were provided for the early Christianization hypothesis: the earliest finds of these symbols in graves from the research region date to the third and fourth centuries CE (Fremersdorf 1957, 28-50; Friedhoff 1991, 30; 35; 57-58; Höpken and Liesen 2013b, 379-380; 382; Päffgen 1992, 129; 257-258). As discussed in chapter 2, frequently Christianity has been treated as one of these cults, though this was debated by Bowden (2010, 24) who did not think these religions were very similar (cf. Burkert 1987, 4-6). Nevertheless, the absence of finds tied to these religions in earlier inhumation graves, could be due to the little influence these religions

had on the burials rituals, as was asserted by Jones (1987, 816). Their presence in for example Cologne around the second and beginning of the third century CE was attested by finds of statues of these Oriental deities and an Isis altar, while in Trier a *Mithraeum* and in Theux Mithraic inscriptions were found (cf. Berszin 2012; La Baume 1958, 40-41; Roy 2013, 364; 367; Van Doorselaer 1967, 76; Wightman 1970, 218). Still, if these religions actually had little influence on the burial rituals, it would also not be expected they played a major role in the transition to the inhumation burial ritual. On the other hand, the absence of archaeological evidence for the mystery religions prior to the third and fourth centuries CE does not necessarily imply they were of no importance in the transition to the inhumation burial ritual and their presence does seem to date contemporary to this transition.

On an empire wide scale the inhumation burial rite was first practiced in the east/Greek part of the empire, while the cremation burial was the norm in the west/Latin part (Figure 1). Applying the *ex oriente lux* model of diffusion however is according to Morris (1992, 52-53) not sufficiently explanatory for the shift to the inhumation burial ritual in Rome as the Greek customs were actively adapted and used to fit the Roman purposes.

In light of these developments the finds of coins that were placed in the mouth or the hand in Tongres' second to third century CE inhumation graves at the southwest cemetery, the late imperial period inhumations from Trier, and the inhumations from Cologne's south cemetery seem analogous to the coins that were placed near the head in Roman and Greek graves that were referred to as *oboloi*. Such an *obol* would have served a Greek/Roman mythical purpose to be able to pay Charon's toll, so the soul could go to the underworld. Finding an *obol* in a Roman inhumation grave would therefore imply that this was not the grave of a Christian person and the observed less numerous finds of coins in inhumation graves from Cologne's south would be expected for this interpretation (see paragraph 4.2.4). However, it for example has been argued for early medieval graves (from the sixth century CE onwards) that finds of coins near the head were actually testimonies of Christianization, because of the frequent depictions of Christian motives on these coins, showing that also in the provinces these possible 'Greek/Eastern' customs could have been actively adapted to fit specific local purposes (cf. Friedhoff 1991, 30; 35; 57-58; Odenweller 2014, 121-123; 142; Päffgen 1992, 133-135; Vanvinckenroye 1975, 78; Vanvinckenroye 1984, 224; 227; Van Doorselaer 1967, 132; 138). Whether such conclusions can also be applied to coin finds without these Christian depictions is unclear, but at least it can be argued that not all coin finds in graves necessarily imply a pagan

meaning was attributed to such depositions (cf. Odenweller 2014, 142). Exemplary for this are the inhumation graves with coin finds, as in several of these more than one coin was found, which were also found in other locations than near the head (cf. Höpken and Liesen 2013b, 378). Moreover, in fourteen of the fourth century CE sarcophagi with Christian inscriptions from the St. Matthias cemetery coins were found in the hands and mouths too (Van Doorselaer 1967, 138).

One of the local considerations that may have been of importance in choosing either a cremation or inhumation burial ritual was put forward by Päffgen (1992, 118). He thought possibly more social value was attributed to inhumation burials because Tacitus had written close family members in Rome were inhumed in urban mausoleums while others were cremated. Morris (1992, 59; 61) had also assumed that by 200 CE it probably was a prerequisite for Roman elites to participate in the inhumation burial rituals to not place themselves outside the imperial culture. Calling the process 'fashion' Nock (1932, 357-358) saw the transition to the inhumation burial rite as a habit of the rich and powerful that was emulated by the lower classes. However, the question is whether it is still possible to identify which graves were those of elites or the rich in the first place, without having to project modern notions of what such burials in the Roman period looked like. For example the early inhumations that were devoid of grave goods represent instances of the new burial ritual that were furnished in a way that is not normally called a rich burial in the modern sense, but it is possible these were the actual burials of elites trying to distinct themselves from the more elaborate burials.

Additionally, Schoen (1998, 1; 4-5) argued that in Rome the place in society of the deceased was one of the main factors determining how elaborate the funeral was, so material differences and public display were interpreted in terms of status. The ritual 'prescriptions' were essentially seen as the same with gradual differences and these differences were thought to be possibly usable to solidify family statuses. Notwithstanding, the plausibility of these processes in Rome, they can probably not directly be projected on the funerary archaeology from the research region, as it is likely different norms and values were of importance in these places. For instance more than gradual differences in funerary rites were observed in the kinds of funerary forms that were used in parallel at the sites in the research region (e.g. in the middle imperial period region of Tongres using tumulus burials or opting for either a kind of cremation or inhumation burial). On the other hand, also actual gradual differences were recorded in the sites from the research region(e.g. different executions of cremation or inhumation

burials) as well as groups of graves that were thought to reflect family graves (cf. Amand 1985, 16; Friedhoff 1991, 40-41; Vanvinckenroye 1984, 224-227). However, osteological research on some of the possible family graves (the double adult-child burials from Cologne) indicated that not in all cases straightforward mother-child family relations were at play (although the graves could have accommodated other family members) (cf. Höpken and Liesen 2013b, 378). Even so, it may not have been necessary for family burying groups to bury family members together at all, as long as they represented themselves appropriately (or conveyed their intended values rhetorically) using specific funerary elements, which will be elaborated on further in paragraph 5.3 (also see paragraph 4.2.5 for a discussion of possible evidence for differently operating burying groups in Cologne).

By seeing the cremations in *columbaria* in Rome in the first century BCE as representing a social structure that was divided between a well-off class and those who were not buried inside these structures Morris (1992, 33-47) saw the shift to the inhumation burial ritual as a cultural homogenization. Morris (1992, 43-46) on top of that thought that the mausoleum of Augustus redefined the lavish burial display as only appropriate for the imperial family, which would explain the use of symbols of pietas in more modest family tombs of the rich in Rome from 30 BCE onwards (Morris 1992, 43-46). The spread of the rite over the Roman empire would have been characterized by the emulation of Rome and the reuse of imperial images by provincial elites (Morris 1992, 62). Looking at the amounts of grave goods in the early imperial period inhumation graves as an indicator for the level of furnishing, it does seem modesty (if interpreted in the modern sense of less elaborate and fewer grave goods) was initially a factor in for instance the early inhumations from Tongres' southwest cemetery (see figure 18) (cf. Vanvinckenroye 1963, 136-137). Yet, this interpretation would assume these early inhumations were the burials of provincial elites, while also several other grave kinds could be attributed to these groups (e.g. the tumuli graves or even the cremations graves which were still buried in the dominant mode of burial in this period) (cf. Amand 1985, 16; 23; Roosens 1976, 147-149; 155; Vanvinckenroye 1984, 227).

Nonetheless, Morris (1992, 67) stated that by the mechanisms of cultural diffusion from the core to periphery a *mos Romanus* was created and that the new ritual functioned as unifying factor in the heterogeneous empire during the events of the Crisis of the Third Century (Morris 1992, 67). A perceived homogenization of the Roman culture was according to Morris (1992, 67) a consequence, that even with differing details between

local rituals would have aided in the spread of Christianity and happened in parallel with a new burial system and a new meaning (Morris 1992, 67-68). Notwithstanding the plausibility of these effects an underlying notion of the mainly unidirectional process of 'Romanization' can be discerned, as this theory assumed that variability between local rituals was of little importance. It is possible the new inhumation ritual functioned in a unifying way, but it is questionable to state that general unrest in the empire inspired people to make changes in their local burial rituals. Moreover, to start using another burial ritual would at first only introduce more variability in addition to the dominant cremation burial ritual. This is also shown by the variability in funerary rites in the research region that was noted in for instance the different kinds and forms of both cremations and inhumations from the early and middle imperial period (when the inhumation ritual is starting to be used more at the studied sites) (see paragraph 5.1). In spite of that, in Tongres and Cologne mass burials were found that dated to the third century which could have been related to this period of unrest (cf. Friedhoff 1991, 28; Vanvinckenroye 1975, 44; 78-79). Whether these mass burial events were also of major importance to the transition to inhumation burial ritual can however be doubted, as they for instance seemed to be different in most ways from this periods' inhumations (e.g. the positions of the bodies, the find context in a well, and the inclusion of a horse in the grave) (cf. Friedhoff 1991, 44-45; Vanvinckenroye 1975, 44; 78-79). Moreover, as was argued before by Graham (2015, 45) the inhumation burial ritual already started to take on momentum (for instance at Tongres' southwest cemetery) in the first two centuries CE when the empire was actually at its peak in prosperity (cf. Vanvinckenroye 1963, 13; 39; 51; 135; 169; 170; Vanvinckenroye 1984, 227).

The use of certain cultural traditions in the Roman period along the Rhine frontier was interpreted by Carroll (2013, 561) as being the result of the various groups who were resettling under influence of the emperor and who had to re-establish themselves by using selected cultural traditions. Also, Smits and Van Der Plicht (2009, 55; 81) argued that for example the use of texts and images on stone monuments to express certain identities within the framework of society made it possible display the self publically through ethnic dress and bodily adornment. On the other hand Rothe (2009, 78) argued the gravestones from Trier represented an initial resistance against the Roman control, because of their slow spread and the depictions of *Treveri* in native dress. Either way, both interpretations basically depend on understandings of the archaeological material by ethnic designations, which are arguably probably not recognizable by archaeological materials without

assuming that certain things were only used by specific ethnic groups. Yet, the gist of Carroll's theorem that certain elements of funerary rites may have been selectively used by people who were resettling seems plausible. Woolf (1998, 249) and Terrenato (1998, 23-26) also argued for strategic uses of 'Roman culture' by local peoples to differentiate themselves. Perhaps this can explain the variations in the cremation and inhumation burial rites (or even the initial choice between cremation or inhumation burial ritual) that were observed in the early and middle (and late) imperial period cemetery sites from the research region (see paragraph 5.1 on the variations in funerary rites per period and paragraph 4.1.4).

Graham (2015, 41) has argued that the transition to the inhumation burial ritual in Roman Italy might have only involved different choices, which reflected new attitudes towards the body and its integrity. Cremating was seen by Graham (2015, 56) as a 'violent' action, whereas inhuming was thought of as a 'careful' ritual. The use of *libitinarii* would according to Graham (2015, 56) have led to differences in how much contact there was between the burying group and the corpse, which would have impacted relations between the living and the dead. These relations with the body were thought by Graham (2015, 56) to have been negotiated through the dead body and the idealized memory of the body (cf. Graham 2015, 46; Schoen 1998, 222-224). The burying of the complete body in a coffin and shrouds was seen as done in order to secure its protection and to prevent decay and fragmentation (Graham 2015, 49-52). Thereby, instead of transforming the body by the cremation it was thought by Graham (2015, 52) the inhumation burial ritual preserved the original identity by concealing the transformations that the corpse undergoes. The possibility for the spread of the inhumation ritual as a consequence from these processes through emulation from Italy over the rest of the empire, as Graham (2015, 58) suggested, is plausible but also debatable as this theory depends mainly on ideas of unidirectional cultural diffusions from Italy to the rest the world (i.e. Romanization). Thereby, it underappreciates all of the variability that was observed in the local contexts of the studied sites, which likewise developed during the Roman period, and which would not be explicable by only looking at the 'core' of the Roman empire (cf. paragraph 5.1).

On the basis of pillows that were found in the graves (and literary evidence) it appeared that there were notions of the sleeping dead too (Graham 2015, 54-55). Finds of lime pillows and headrest were also documented at some sites from the research region (e.g. Cologne's south cemetery and Bas-Oha) (cf. Friedhoff 1991, 46-57; Päffgen 1992, 120-

121; Van Doorselaer 1967, 133). However, whether a pillow or headrest can only be interpreted along the lines of the idea of the sleeping dead can be debated. Is it for example not possible that this was a part of the burial rhetoric in which a specific position of the body (including the position in which the arms were put) conveyed certain values? Nevertheless, if the idea of the sleeping dead was actually adhered to in some of these burials, could that then be thought of as a kind of denial of the death of the deceased and as an attitude towards the deceased's person as someone whose social presence was still present in society?

Returning to the inhumation's supposed emphasis on the maintenance of the body, Pearce (2015, 453; 458) argued that (for example in graves from the Rhineland) this attitude towards the corpse put more emphasis on the identity and status of the deceased in the public and private arenas. Likewise, Toynbee (1971, 41) suggested that in Rome the inhumation was a more gentle or respectful way of treating the corpse, which reflected the stronger emphasis on the individual's life in the hereafter. In the research region this could have played a role as well because these processes would explain the observed variability in funerary rites (if this was indeed related to expressions of the individual deceased). Furthermore, various kinds of protective measures were part and parcel of the inhumation burials from the research region, using for instance coarse stones, burial mounts, and in the late imperial period chamber graves. However, except for the later chamber graves these were also used for cremation burials (not taking into consideration the monument from Weiden in which allegedly urns were put), whereas the early inhumations that were found in Tongres were often buried without a coffin to protect the corpse (cf. Fremersdorf 1957, 28-50; Neyses 2001, 21-24; Van Doorselaer 1967, 129-132; 153-154; Vanvinckenroye 1963, 136-137; Vanvinckenroye 1984, 228; www.uni-trier.de). Despite that it has been argued by Smal (2017, 173-174) that different meanings were attributed to the existing variabilities of grave structures from for instance the Merovingian period, which could have applied to these burial features from the Roman period too.

The shift from cremation to inhumation burials was also interpreted by Theuws (2009, 295) as indicative of a new focus on the dead body within the burial rituals (though the emphasis was put on different facets of the corpse). It was argued that by appropriating new elements that were most suited to the new societal situations into the burials, the 'authors' of these burials (i.e. the burying groups) used new ritual repertoires to culturally construct gender or ancestors, the person with its distinctive constituents, and to deconstruct the person at death (cf. Theuws 2009, 295-296). Consequently, the material

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culture from the graves, the burial's location, and the different acts performed (e.g. gestures of the deceased body, ritual phases, and actions by the audience) should be taken into consideration to appropriately analyse the burial rhetoric and the meaning of the burial (cf. Theuws 2009, 301). Applied to the results from the sites from research region this would mean all the variabilities in cremation and inhumation graves could have had different meanings (cf. paragraph 5.1).

An analogy can be made in this respect to the perceptions of different ceramics of Dangwara villagers that were anthropologically analysed by Miller (1985). For instance red and black vessels were used (as well as produced and distributed) in very different ways by these people, according to values that related to the social positions of the villagers and pots (though this was not seen as such by these villagers) (Miller 1985, 130; 148; 157-160). 53 different shapes of vessels were recognized for which only 16 functions were identified, making many shapes apparently not necessary. Yet, Miller (1985, 56; 164-170; 178-181; 201-202) argued that the specific shapes could symbolically or culturally have different meanings in different social contexts. Therefore, it was through this variability possible for a society to put across cultural ideas or communicate social ideas in certain situations.

On that account in the research region possibly the specific sets of ceramic vessels from the Rhineland could have been very significant in terms of their ritual meanings for the deceased, burying groups, and audience at the funeral. Other examples from the research region are possibly the specific sets of vessels that have been found more frequently in children's graves from the late imperial period at Tongres' southwest cemetery (cf. Höpken and Liesen 2013b, 379-380; 382; Vanvinckenroye 1984, 231). And, the same interpretation could apply to the sets of specific ceramic vessels that were found in tumuli in Tongres' region, which by Roosens (1976, 147-149; 155) were associated to the social context of the funerary feast (cf. paragraph 5.1). Nonetheless, a more elaborate and detailed analysis will be needed to learn more about how these ceramics were used in their specific context, but it can be argued that certain ideas could have been conveyed by these ceramic depositions in the funerary context.

A dialectic relation between the cremation and inhumation rituals has been assumed to have been underlying the choice for opting for either the 'destructive' cremation ritual or the 'preserving' inhumation ritual by Graham (2015), but in less diametric terms also by Morris (1992, 33), Toynbee (1971, 46), and Pearce (2015, 548). Yet, to people in the Roman period this difference may not have been perceived as pronouncedly different,

because for instance protective measures were taken for cremation graves as well, differences between furnishings of cremation and inhumation graves were not observed in for instance the middle imperial period grave goods assemblages from Tongres' southwest cemetery, and at the same cemetery some of the oldest inhumations were found together with cremations in the same graves (cf. Vanvinckenroye 1963, 13; 39; 51; 135; 169; Vanvinckenroye 1984, 227). From the perspective of the modern individual the latter cremation/inhumation burials seem relatively odd cases, but that probably has got more to do with the concept of the 'individual'. The 'individual' appeared to be a relatively modern seventeenth century Western concept, which could be defined as a unified person (the self and consciousness), bounded individual, and observable entity (cf. Budja 2010, 48). Conversely, the concept of the 'dividual' person has been defined as a partible and a temporary combination of fragments that came together in the mortuary rites, which could be manipulated and show different relations. So, the dividual concept could perhaps be argued to be more applicable to these double graves from Tongres' southwest cemetery (or to inhumation burials with multiple corpses from Theux and Ciney) (cf. Budja 2010, 49; Chapman and Gaydarska 2011, 22; Fowler 2004, 23-24; 47; Jones 2005, 213-214; Van Doorselaer 1967, 129-132; 152-153). While dividual identities could be transformed by removing or accumulating human bones, this would not be possible to do with individuals (when applying the modern definitions of the individual). Examples of finds that could also be interpreted as dividuals are the finds of the unattached skulls in Cologne (though possibly these resulted from looting of the graves), the mixed animal and human cremation rests from Tongres' southwest cemetery's cremations, and even the elaborately furnished graves could be interpreted as such if the grave goods are seen as representing parts of the dividual identities too (cf. Friedhoff 1991, 54; 57; Vanvinckenroye 1984, 225-226). Seeing the grave goods as parts of the dividual opens up possibilities for the interpretations of the graves that were devoid of grave goods: were these actually the graves of individuals (which did not need grave goods to establish their identity, as their individual identity would be already complete by this definition) (cf. Päffgen 1992, 120; 124-125; 207-208; Raepsaet-Charlier and Vanderhoeven 2004, 63; Vanvinckenroye 1963, 136-137; Vanvinckenroye 1984, 242-243)? Were dividual notions of the self attributable to the depositions of the more elaborate grave goods assemblages that grew to a peak when the transition to the inhumation burial ritual was in full swing in the sites from the research region (see figure 18 and figure 19)? And, could the numerous reopened graves (and recordings of reused funerary materials) from Tongres, Cologne, and Trier also be interpreted as dividuals instead of cases of looting (when being

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dividuals their selves could have been reshaped or partially reused in other burials) (cf. Höpken and Liesen 2013b, 378; Neyses 2001, 21-36; Päffgen 1992, 77-78; Vanvinckenroye 1984, 233-234)? Nonetheless, in contrast with the elaborately furnished late imperial period inhumations the early imperial period inhumations were often devoid of grave goods and their furnishings by this reasoning seemed to be indicative of 'individual' persons. So, these interpretations of the inhumation burial ritual as connected to a new understanding of personhood in terms of either individuals or dividuals do not seem to be able to explain all the observed developments in funerary rites in the research region (cf. paragraph 5.1).

A possible way out of this dilemma was provided by Fowler (2005, 123; 126) who argued that the fragmentation of objects or bodies was not a necessary condition for a fractal understanding of the self, considering the different ways people in the past evaluated relations with objects, people, and identities (which resulted in different kinds of fractal relations and persons in for example European prehistory). Moreover, Fowler (2005, 124) argued that one could be a dividual (made by the members of the clan) and also an individual thanks to the possession of unique individual qualities or skills, implying that people can be dividuals and individuals at the same time. Perhaps such notions of persons in the Roman period are reflected by the different constitutions of the cremation and inhumation burials per period and in the same period (possibly related to differently operating burying groups), that were described at the sites from the research region (cf. paragraph 5.1). Nonetheless, this description can be argued to be applicable to both cremations and inhumations, making it again a level playing field when it comes to personhood as a consideration for deciding upon using either the cremation or the inhumation burial ritual.

## 5.3 Discussing the observed variability in developments in funerary rites

Both Tongres and Cologne are places that probably developed from rural places to a large urban agglomeration in the Roman period (cf. La Baume 1958, 10-11; 15-17; Nouwen 1997, 29; Raepsaet-Charlier and Vanderhoeven 2004, 52; Rothe 2009, 15-16; Van Doorselaer 1967, 52-58; 67). In such a context, apart from sporadic pre-Roman period burials, no urban funerary culture was established yet and in these regions the urban civilization can be asserted to have been a new phenomenon as well (cf. Roymans 1990, 240). While instances of reused pre-Roman period graves, materials, and rites were documented (in for instance Cologne and Andernach), interpretations in terms of for instance inhuming Celts and cremating Germans are lacking convincing evidence to

support their claims (cf. Fremersdorf 1927, 269; Friedhoff 1991, 20; Oesterwind and Schäfer 1987, 13). Similarly, it might not be possible to know whether certain graves can be marked as either 'indigenous' or 'Roman' as this would also have to rely on assumptions of what such graves looked like. Moreover, in the first place this would depend on preconceived notions of the existence of clearly delineated groups of 'indigenous' and 'Roman' people in the Roman period, which did still seemed to be adhered to by Berszin (2012) and Höpken (2007, 288-299; 301).

The heterogenic population was also by Vanvinckenroye (1984, 235; 1963, 170), Van Crombruggen (1960, 835-836), and Van Doorselaer (1967, 52-58; 67) associated with the developments in funerary rites in for instance Tongres. However, even though the possibility for oriental influences in large agglomerations was not excluded by Van Doorselaer (1967, 52-67), these developments were mainly attributed to persistent German and Celtic cultural elements, (cf. Carroll 2013, 561).

As discussed before in for instance Tongres and Cologne many people were resettling and they had to re-establish themselves in this context where the urban culture had not yet been consolidated. Possibly this context made these people relatively receptive to new ideas of what the funerary ritual could look like, while they were at the same time in a context where many ideas of funerary rituals came together due to mingling groups of people with different backgrounds. Similarly, for late Antique Northern Gaul it was argued by Theuws (2009, 296) that elements of cultural contexts were merging in a creative process to a society that arguably could not be labelled as either Roman, Germanic, Christian, pagan, or barbaric. And, although Trier was founded on a previous settlement it can be argued on the basis of the growth of its size as an urban centre in the Roman period similar processes were taking place (that likewise can perhaps be seen by the variations in its funerary rites and the presence of for instance both Romano-Celtic gods and a Mithraism). Albeit possibly in a way that was less receptive for 'Roman' influences, which was possibly visible by the slow spread of gravestones and native dress style imagery on these stelae (as indicated by interpretations of the local elites' resistance in the first century CE) (cf. Cüppers 1983, 36; Ebel 1989, 2; 79-80; 101-110; Rothe 2009, 12; 189; Roy 2013, 364; Van Doorselaer 1967, 167; 171-175; Wightman 1970, 215-218). Nonetheless, could the local the people who had already been living in Trier's region prior to the Roman period not also be seen as just another cultural influence on the newly developing urban culture of Trier?

The presence of people from the eastern parts of the Roman empire in the research region was indicated for example by *cognomina* with a mystery meaning of Oriental merchants

(specifically in for instance first century CE Cologne and Trier) (cf. Van Doorselaer 1967, 56-57). On top of that Trier was also one of the centres in Gaul where religious names (relating to the cult of Cybèle) appeared foremost in the first century CE (Hatt 1951, 57-59). Therefore, Hatt (1951, 59) thought that the mystery religions had preceded and paved the way for Christianity, as early Christian names accordingly sounded similar and especially since pagan symbols could often be found in the Christian sarcophagus' ornamentation (Van Doorselaer 1967, 79). However, at the sites in the research region it seems the demonstrable influences of early Christianization and the mystery religions in graves dated later than the transitional periods of the change in funerary rites, so it can be pondered how much leverage these religions had in these developments (cf. paragraph 5.2).

Still, it is plausible eastern influences on the funerary rites were introduced in the cultural mix of the urban agglomerations from the research region. In the Roman period both veterans and auxiliary soldiers were likely candidates to bring cultural ideas with them to the places where they were settling or stationed (as they could have originated for instance from the east of the Roman empire or had seen different cultures and places during their military service) (cf. Ament 1979, 354; Höpken 2007, 299; Höpken and Liesen 2013a, 181; La Baume 1958, 11; Oesterwind and Schäfer 1987, 5; 24). Simply attributing the weapon burials that were found to (auxiliary or German) soldiers is probably not possible without assuming what constituted such a soldier burial and could underestimate the underlying values that were associated to these objects (cf. Theuws 2009, 289; Van Doorselaer 1965, 125; 128; Van Doorselaer 1967, 187). For instance Theuws (2009, 295-308) has interpreted weapon burials from Merovingian Northern Gaul as the creations of ancestors. Axes were interpreted as references to land claims and authority, while lances and bow and arrows were also associated with the prestigious hunt (which represented and reinforced social hierarchy) (Theuws 2009, 298; 302-303; 305-307). So, Theuws (2009, 289) argued that this burial ritual could have been valuable for the creation of new concepts, values, norms, and ideas, making such rites very suitable for various social situations. Especially in contexts like the newly developing urban centres this quality of the burial ritual could have been a factor, given that an urban social order likely still needed to be solidified. A further indication that certain values and meanings were attached to the ritual offerings for the dead could be found in the cult of the dead in Rome where it was according to King (1998, 447-449) believed the *manes* could bring for instance fertility, safety, or guidance in return for regular offerings. Whether people in the research region had similar beliefs has not yet been established, but it is plausible ideas

like these were among the influences from Rome on the locally developing funerary rites. In a way incorporating the assumed local influences, but by arguably putting too much emphasis on the possible unidirectional influences of Rome on the periphery Van Doorselaer (1967, 67; 69) called the developments in funerary rites from the research region 'Romanization'. He thought this was a major influence in spreading the inhumation burial ritual, and sparked a 'renaissance' of the 'Celtic' tradition of inhumation burials (Van Doorselaer 1967, 86). On the other hand, the resulting cultural traditions from these processes were seen by Carroll (2013, 561) as the product of the use of selected cultural traditions and by Woolf (1998, 246-248) as having been adapted to achieve the local goals. Similarly, a pragmatic interpretation of the use of certain funerary rites was argued for by Theuws (2009, 290-295) when as part of the burial rhetoric burying groups would have created the deceased's identity with certain aims in mind for the audience at the funeral. Pearce (2015, 236) described this as the shaping of the deceased's identity in the *mise-en-scène* of the burial. For instance the use of grave goods with references to food and drinks could create feelings of community, while references to dining and the grooming of the body accordingly could have signified social values that were important to the Roman elites (cf. Effros 2003, 83-84; Pearce 2015, 236-237). Yet, the social position that the deceased had held in life probably primarily determined to what extent these identities could be constructed during the funeral, as it was this social identity that was being reconstructed. Corresponding to these interpretations, Bloch and Parry (1982, 7-9) had described this on the level of anthropologically studied societies by stating that in funerary rituals that which was 'culturally conceived to be the most essential to the reproduction of the social order' was renewed, and this could differ for each society and social context. Furthermore, this does not necessarily mean these resettling peoples used the cultural elements they took with them in the same way as they would have in their regions of origins, because the new urban context could have required them to adapt to or adopt more appropriate rites. This made the Roman culture as Terrenato (1998, 23-26) argued a ground for differentiating the provincial society. So, instead of seeing the cultural elements that people who were resettling in the urban agglomerations took with them as being passively introduced without deviating from their original form (as kinds of billiard balls that were shot into this area and bounced off everything), a more evolutionary or dialectic view on how these cultural diffusions took place might better explain the observed forms of funerary rites and variabilities thereof (cf. Berszin 2012; Fremersdorf 1927, 258-259; Van Doorselaer (1967, 52-57). Furthermore, the local urban context where many ideas about the funerary rites were coming together could have made it a viable

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breeding ground for transitioning to a 'new' inhumation burial. As a suitable funerary option for selected aims the inhumation burial could emerge to become the new dominant funerary rite, whether this was thought of as a ritual from the east, a continuation of a familiar rite, or something that was locally conceived. Therefore, instead of attempting to recognize patterns in all the variations in funerary practices, it is needed to recognize the wide spectrum of variability in funerary rites itself to better understand the developments taking place in these Roman period provincial settings.

Finally, explaining the variability in developments in the funerary rites that was observed at the studied sites in light of the theoretical models for the transition to the inhumation burial ritual (that were proposed in the methodology) in terms of local, eastern, or even the complex origins would probably result in a too simplistic view of how the change to the inhumation burial rite was befalling the research region. Even if it could be asserted that these processes can be described as the mixing of several rites and influences, and the utilization of several rites in parallel (as was suggested in the complex origins model in paragraph 3.1.3), because this would not grasp the complexities, contexts, and underlying possible drives in the developments that lead to the transition to the inhumation burial rite.

# 6. Conclusion

The transition to the inhumation burial rite in the Roman period was the main subject of this thesis and several aims were to be fulfilled by its research. One of the main aims was to re-examine the graves from the two case-studies of Tongres and Cologne, as well as those from other sites in the research region with early Roman inhumation graves. This was aimed to be able to provide more detailed insights in these archaeological materials, to discuss whether the theories that previous scholars had proposed are still valid, and to reinterpret these materials within the theoretical framework on personhood. Many of these theories were focussed on the large empire wide processes (e.g. ethnic migrations, religious influences, 'Romanization', and a new focus on the maintenance of the body). Therefore, the aim was to also take a closer look at the more local geographic level and see if at the more local scale these explanations were sufficiently clarifying for the possible variations in the local ritual systems. Furthermore, it was aimed to create maps per period that could provide overviews of the cemeteries with the early inhumation graves.

Providing answers to the following research questions was the intend of this approach. So, the sub-research questions '*What are the general trends in the cemeteries with early Roman inhumation burials in the research area?*' and '*How do the archaeological finds from Tongres, Cologne, and other sites with early Roman inhumation burials from the research region relate to the transition to the inhumation burial ritual?*' will be answered in the following paragraphs in order to answer the main research question:

'*Can a re-evaluation of the archaeological finds from the area around Tongres, Cologne, and Trier in combination with a new interpretational model of fractal personhood elucidate the motives for adopting the inhumation burial ritual in the Roman period in the north-western parts of the Roman empire?*'.

## 6.1 Review of the methodology

The methodology that was put into practice to study the transition to the inhumation burial ritual in the research region was split in several parts. First, overview maps were produced for the research region. These overview maps were presented in the methodology and served as starting points to do the research on the funerary rites from the research region. With these maps it was possible to identify the sites with the earliest inhumation graves and to show per period how the cemeteries with early inhumation burials were distributed over the research region (see paragraph 3.2). As this was largely

based on the older study by Van Doorselaer it was recognized these maps should be seen as indicative of the spread of inhumation burials in each period rather than as representative overview maps of the current state of research. Nevertheless, with these sites in the research region as points of departure it could for instance be shown that the early inhumation graves in this area were not isolated phenomena. Subsequently, the focus was put on a more in-depth analysis of the case-study sites, as well as on the exemplary evidence from other sites (see chapter 4. Results).

Both the second and third steps, to take a closer look at the characteristics of the cemeteries with early inhumation burials from the research region and to focus on the funerary evidence itself, were presented in the results section. The following re-examination of the graves from Tongres, Cologne, and other sites from the research region resulted in a general overview of the developments in funerary rites, which was based on the more detailed insights in the variations that existed of these rites in the different periods (see paragraph 5.1 and also chapter 4. Results). In this way, at both the regional and the more local level the changing treatments of the body could be interpreted in their ritual and social contexts. Furthermore, this re-examination of the funerary materials from the studied sites allowed for a re-evaluation of the interpretations that were made by previous archaeologists of these materials at both the local site and the empire levels (see chapter 4 and chapter 5). By discussing the previous interpretations of the funerary materials from the research region as well as those relating to the transition to the inhumation burial ritual it could be revised to what extent these theories were still relevant for the observed local social and ritual systems from the sites in the research region (see chapter 4 and 5).

This was done by providing a description of the archaeological site contexts and by the presentations of the funerary archaeological data from the sites. The quality of the descriptions of the contexts and data from the case-study sites (and some of the other larger sites) allowed for a discussion of the results in relation to the theoretical interpretations that were made in association to these data. However, this was not the case for most of the other smaller sites (which made their results only useful to refer to as examples). Also, it must be noted that the resulting evidence relating to the funerary rites depends on the views of the archaeologists who first described these materials and contexts, and who decided what was worth recording and describing, due to the collection of data from earlier publications. This means that it is possible that distinctive qualities of these materials, their archaeological contexts, or other funerary features were missed if they were not described (e.g. use-marks on the bottoms of ceramics, to tell

whether vessels for instance only served specific purposes during the funeral). On top of that the resulting evidence should be seen more as a qualitative than as a quantitative analysis, as the cemetery sites from the research region (or even from the same site) differed in compositions and level of archaeological research. Moreover, inherent to the nature of archaeological evidence incomplete records of the past will hard to be avoid, but the state of archaeology that has been recorded and lost afterwards in some sites affected the results as well (e.g. the loss of archaeological materials in Cologne during the events of World War II).

The last step was aimed at comparing the results from the research region with descriptive theoretical models for the transition to the inhumation burial ritual (which were expounded in the methodology). It was tried to falsify whether specific processes could have set the ritual transition in motion on the basis of the studied archaeological finds. While these models could function as ways to ponder the possible ways in which the inhumation burial ritual could have gathered pace in the research area, in the end they seemed to fall short to sufficiently explain the observed developments in funerary rites.

## 6.2 Answering the research questions

The main research question for this thesis will be answered by first answering the two sub-research questions that relate to the more specific archaeological materials. The answer to the sub-research question '*What are the general trends in the cemeteries with early Roman inhumation burials in the research area?*' was essentially provided in a more detailed and elaborate way in paragraph 5.1, but will be briefly answered here as well.

In the early imperial period the inhumation burial was practiced as a small minority ritual, but the cremation burial rite was the dominant funerary practice. Often the inhumation graves from this period contained few finds or no finds at all. Both in Tongres and Cologne graves that did not seem to fit in this picture were found as well as graves in Tongres containing both a cremation and an inhumation. In parallel tumuli graves with specific sets of earthenware, monumental graves, and gravestones were used in the early imperial period, showing a variety of possibilities for ways in which the funerary rites were practiced in this period. Early imperial weapon burials that were found at several sites were repeatedly interpreted as the graves of the indigenous and the auxiliaries, but could be advanced to have possibly belonged to others as well (chapter 4 and paragraph 5.1). As an example of an outlier the burial from Someren can be mentioned, which concerned a single early Roman inhumation weapon burial that was found between Iron age graves.

By the middle imperial period the cremation rite was still the dominant funerary practice (up to the second or third century CE), while the use of the inhumation burial rite was spreading as well. In this period grave goods in inhumation graves were sparsely found compared with contemporary cremation graves. Furthermore, a wide array of variations on the cremation and inhumation rites were detailed for this period's graves from the case-studies. Diverse ways of cremating, inhuming, and other funerary practices became apparent from the use of different grave structures, containers, manipulations of the corpse, and the more elaborate grave goods assemblages that proliferated by end of the third century CE. Besides these variations outliers were noted too, for instance in the rare funerary practices from the St. Gereon cemetery of Cologne (cf. chapter 4; paragraph 5.1). Generally speaking, in the research region the inhumation burial ritual was used as the dominant burial ritual by the late imperial period in the third and fourth centuries CE. Incidentally, the cremation burial ritual was still practiced simultaneously.

Roughly around the end of the middle and beginning of the late imperial period (from the end of the third to middle of the fourth century CE), inhumations began to be interred with more elaborate grave goods assemblages. Yet, it was noted that a general decline in amounts of grave goods characterized the levels of furnishing in the late Antique period, which culminated in graves that were by and large devoid of grave goods. Nevertheless, the late imperial period's burials could be realized in many ways by for instance incorporating square ditches, constructing chamber graves or grave houses, making use of grave sculptures, using a myriad of sarcophagi kinds, and if present by composing the grave goods assemblages. Certain grave goods sets were attributed to specific genders, though often osteological research had not been implemented and modern natural scientific research methods were lacking completely. Likewise, weapon burials were seen as gender specific and they were also seen as connected to the migrations of ethnic groups, but it can be argued convincing evidence for these interpretations failed and other interpretations of the weapon finds were possible too. In addition, Mithras symbols were associated to both the female gender and the mystery religions, and Christian motives were found in some graves from the third and fourth centuries onwards at the case-study sites and Trier. However, due to the dating of the finds in graves related to these religions it is likely these religions can only be considered as having been of importance for the later imperial period's developments in the inhumation burial rite (instead of having influenced the early and middle imperial period's inhumation burials) (chapter 4 and paragraph 5.1). Yet, it is plausible these religious influences on the burial rituals did not

leave archaeological traces in the earlier inhumations.

Furthermore, at both case-study sites mass graves were found, which dated to the third century CE, but these should probably be interpreted as anomalies based on their relatively peculiar details, making it questionable to relate these to the events of the Crisis of the Third Century or the general transition to the inhumation burial ritual that already was gathering pace some time before these mass graves were completed, like Graham had expounded before (as was discussed in paragraph 5.2).

The answer to the second sub-research question '*How do the archaeological finds from Tongres, Cologne, and other sites with early Roman inhumation burials from the research region relate to the transition to the inhumation burial ritual?*' was mainly discussed in paragraph 5.2 and 5.3 but will be answered here more concisely as well.

In interpreting the transition to the inhumation burial rite as resulting from *ex oriente lux* diffusions, the focus could be put for instance on finds of coins in graves from the case-study sites. However, these appeared to not exclusively be interpretable as *obolus* depositions and neither could they only be seen as having been found in pagan burials. While for example in Cologne's south cemetery coins were found less frequently in inhumation graves, coins were still found in several inhumation graves from Cologne, and not only near the head. On top of that coins were even found in inhumation graves with Christian inscriptions in Trier.

In addition, supposed higher regards of the inhumation burial ritual and other social mechanisms related to it among the higher classes in Rome were seen by several scholars (e.g. Morris, Nock, Päffgen, and Graham) as possible precursory phenomena, that led to the wider adoption of this burial ritual. In assuming that through for instance processes of emulation similar higher social valuations were attributed to the inhumation burials by people in the research region, this interpretation forewent the difficulties that are associated with the identification of rich or elite burials in the archaeological record (without presupposing what these burials look like). Furthermore, the latent notions of 'Romanization' that lead these scholars to belief processes in Rome were also of importance for the provinces show that variations that were present in the local burial rituals were not recognized as having been of much significance in the transition to the inhumation burial ritual.

Yet, the possibility for similar social processes to have been taken into consideration by burying groups in the research region cannot be ruled out based on the observed results. Moreover, other social processes related to the funeral that for instance Schoen argued

to have been dealt with in Rome could perhaps help in explaining the funerary evidence from the studied sites. This concerns for example the possibility that the place the deceased had maintained in life determined the funeral's elaborateness, making material differences and public display indicators of family status (though without assuming how this was perceived in Roman period it might be hard to interpret burials in terms of status by their elaborateness). And, albeit probably not directly comparable to the funerary rites in the research region, where different norms and values were likely exercised, the variations in the observed funerary practices could be seen as possibly correlated with diverse burying groups.

Additionally, Graham had suggested different attitudes towards the deceased were linked with the transition to the inhumation burial ritual in Rome. Notions of the sleeping dead that had been proposed were indicated by finds of pillows or headrests from sites in the research region too, but whether these can only be interpreted in this way was debatable. Furthermore, the different choices that were made to ensure the body's integrity were seen by Graham as reflecting a choice between a destructive action (cremation) and a careful ritual (inhumation) that preserved the identity of the deceased by concealing transformations of the corpse. Correspondingly, Pearce and Toynbee thought the maintenance of the body emphasized the identity of the deceased in respectively the public and private arenas, and the afterlife. Underlying, Graham, Morris, Toynbee, and Pearce's interpretations were presumptions about how the cremation and inhumation burial rites were perceived by burying groups in the Roman period, that consisted of a dialectic choice for opting between the inhumation and cremation burial ritual. The question is if this was perceived as such, because of for example the double cremation/inhumation burials from Tongres. Then again, manifestations of protective measures found at the sites in the research region indeed attested of the emphasis on the maintenance of the intact body in inhumation graves. Despite that, most of these protective grave elements from the early and middle imperial period were used for cremations as well and early inhumations from Tongres were found without the protective coffins too. Nevertheless, it does seem possible to view these grave structures, like Smal suggested for the Merovingian period, as other possible ways for conveying different meanings (which may or may not have been related to the preservation of the deceased's identity and body).

Carroll saw the use of certain cultural traditions as reflecting the various groups who were resettling and by using these traditions re-established themselves in this period. However,

the interpretations of the use of certain cultural traditions by Smits and Van Der Plicht, and that of Rothe for Trier, essentially depended on ethnic designations that were assumed to be recognizable in the funerary archaeological evidence. Nonetheless, in seeing the funerary rites as the result of the selective and strategic use of cultural elements Carroll, Woolf, and Terrenato offered a view that could possibly explain the observed variations in both inhumation and cremation burials, as well as a view on why certain funerary rites could have become the dominant ritual.

In a similar vein Theuws saw the transition to the inhumation burial ritual as indicative of a focus on the dead body in the burial rituals, in which it was expounded burials were culturally constructed. This was done by appropriations of new elements that were most suited for the social situations of the burying groups, which suggests all the different variability in the characteristics of the burials and the funerary rites from the studied sites could have conveyed different meanings. Furthermore, incorporating the possible meanings ceramics for instance might have had in different social settings (like Miller argued for the Dangwara villages) could help in interpreting the specific sets of ceramic vessels known from for instance the Rhineland and the tumuli in Tongres' region.

Comprehending such culturally constructed graves from the perspective of the modern individual appears insurmountable and only intelligible by applying the concept of the 'dividual' person to these cases in which identities were suggested to have been constructed during the funerals. Possible examples of mortuary archaeological evidence from the studied sites that could be interpreted as evidence for perceptions of the self as dividuals was found in Cologne (i.e. the unattached skulls) and in Tongres (i.e. the cremations with mixed animal and human rests). Seeing the grave goods in a similar light as possible devices for constructing a dividual identity consequently implies that early imperial period inhumations without grave goods could embody the burials of individuals. The later peak in elaborate grave goods assemblages that coincided with the transition to the inhumation burial ritual would by this reasoning be epitomized by dividual notions of the self (as would be the possible examples of reopened graves). Therefore, the difference in furnishing of the earlier and later imperial period inhumations makes it hard to interpret the transition to the inhumation burial ritual as either connected to a dividual or individual take on personhood. Possibly a less strict perceived divide between dividual and individual concepts should be considered, as was proposed by Fowler (for the European prehistory) by suggesting people could be both dividuals and individuals at the same time. Possibly the variations in the cremation and inhumation burials from the research region can along these lines be interpreted as the different understandings of

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personhoods and how these were applied by the different burying groups. Nevertheless, it seems this theory applies to both cremations and inhumations, and therefore evens out between the two rituals when it comes to interpreting their part in the transition to the inhumation burial ritual.

Vanvinckenroye, Van Crombruggen, and Van Doorselaer suggested some of the graves could possibly be identified as those of indigenous people. Although this can be questioned, because this interpretation would have to assume that ethnic groups buried themselves in a distinct way that can possibly be recognized archaeologically, local influences or the influence of mobile groups in this period on the burial rituals should probably not be excluded. Moreover, the amalgamation of these local influences with the probable influences from the east that were brought to the urban sites by people who were settling or living there (e.g. veterans, soldiers, or merchants) was seen as resulting in heterogenic populations that were associated with the developments in funerary rites in the research region by Van Doorselaer, Carroll, and Theuws. It is possible the variety in funerary rites that these people with different backgrounds had been familiar with, allowed for many available possible funerary practices to re-establish themselves within the newly developing urban society and culture of the case-study sites (and Trier). This context may have been relatively receptive to new ideas because an urban funerary culture still needed to be developed in the Roman period. While ascribing the weapon burials from the research region to auxiliaries or veterans might not be as straightforward as it may seem, the underlying values (e.g. relating to authority) that could be conveyed using for example axes, lances, or bows and arrows make this burial type useful for various social contexts (as was advanced in similar cases by Theuws). In accordance with Theuws' line of reasoning burying groups may have constructed the identities of the deceased using selected cultural practices that best fitted the aims of these groups for the specific social context of the funeral with its audience, while at least to some degree conforming to the status the deceased had held in life. This may have been emphasized by the maintenance of the body and was linked with the identity of the deceased as was argued for by Pearce. Furthermore, implied by this interpretation and the anthropological interpretation of cultural reproductions in funerary rituals of Bloch and Parry, is that these practices differed per social context and could be tailor fitted as well. So, instead of seeing the funerary rites as having been passively reproduced, it is necessary to apply a more evolutionary view on the variabilities that were present in the larger developments in funerary rites in these local heterogenic contexts.

Finally, after having answered the sub-research questions the following main research question will be answered.

*Can a re-evaluation of the archaeological finds from the area around Tongres, Cologne, and Trier in combination with a new interpretational model of fractal personhood elucidate the motives for adopting the inhumation burial ritual in the Roman period in the north-western parts of the Roman empire?.*

Several of the motives that have been postulated in the past by scholars as explanations for the transition to the inhumation burial ritual revolved around persisting local, eastern (e.g. mystery religious, early Christian, and Rome centred), or ethnic motivations. While the archaeological finds from the research region indicated these influences on the developments in funerary rites were plausible, their validity can be questioned. On top of that these interpretations seem to forego the variability in funerary rites that was observed in addition to the more general developments at the studied sites. A new focus on the body as connected to the transition to the inhumation burial ritual can be argued to be not sufficiently explaining by itself and neither could this be asserted for an interpretation of the inhumation or cremation burial ritual as only explainable by new perceptions of the self as an individual or a dividual. Possibly more fluid (or fractal) conceptual ideas of personhood were adhered to by burying groups. Yet, exactly this less rigid view on how funerary rites can be interpreted and how these could have developed could explain the use of other rites than the dominant ritual. In light of the heterogenetic urban developing contexts from the research region where many funerary practices came together (and showed potential practices) the inhumation burial practice can be seen as just one more practice to choose from and possibly adapt to fulfil certain aims in a developing urban society, resulting in the variability in practices that was observed at the studied sites. Thereby, for the social context of the funeral the deceased was portrayed in the desired way using selected funerary elements (which could have incorporated some of the motives that were proposed by scholars in the past). From the perspective of these social mechanisms the inhumation burial ritual can be perceived to be not necessarily a diametrically opposed ritual tradition versus the cremation burial. Hence, the transition to the inhumation burial ritual could take place.

So, to answer the main research question: the re-evaluation of the archaeological funerary finds in the research region could in combination with an interpretational

model for fractal personhood in the context of for instance the developing urban societies from the case-study sites elucidate some of the motives that may have played a role in choosing a certain funerary practice (be that a kind of inhumation or cremation burial). As explained this model should not be perceived as mutually exclusive to previous interpretations of the developments in funerary rites in the research region (i.e. the transition to the inhumation burial ritual), but perhaps it can be thought of as an attempt to provide a more comprehensive view on how changes in these rites may have emerged and differed per social context.

## 6.3 Evaluation of the results and recommendations for future research

One of the main conclusions that was made on the basis of the results from the sites in the research region was that in the general developments in funerary rites a lot of variability was documented. It is possible some of the less numerous variabilities (and outliers) represented funerary rites that were practiced on a more regular basis, but which due to the state of the archaeological research did not appear as such. A similar argumentation applies to the resulting chronological developments (and developments in the levels of inhumation grave furnishings) that lead up to the transition to the inhumation burial ritual, which could turn out to date earlier when more earlier inhumation graves for example are found. In this regard the graves that were devoid of grave goods may need further research too, because these were often dated by indirect evidence and also could have been devoid of grave goods due to looting. And, the same may apply to other 'absence of evidence' that played a role in the discussion of the possible influences of religions from the east on the early inhumation burials and in the interpretation of certain burials as those of specific peoples, which were argued to be plausible, but lacking evidence.

Still, the more general developments in funerary rites were especially in the case-studies based on large numbers of graves from relatively well excavated and published sites, which makes it less likely the funerary rites should be interpreted in a completely different way (though the majority of the graves from the St. Gereon cemetery was only incorporated in the research results through the article by Berszin). Also, most data that were presented in this thesis were derived from the case-studies, which were both large urban sites. So, future research could pertain to the question to what extent the conclusions that were made on the basis of these data can also be extrapolated to other kinds of sites or to the transition to the inhumation burial ritual on a larger geographic

scale (though the sample results from the other studied sites with early inhumations did seem similar to the developments in funerary rites from the case-studies).

Furthermore, the interpretation of people who selectively used certain funerary rites essentially depends on a view of the funeral as being a public occasion, a recognition of the underlying values or meaning of the used funerary rites by the burying groups and the audience, and an acceptance of the construction of the identity (to a certain degree) of the deceased in this situation. In addition, these specific funerary rites that could be used depend on the categories that archaeologists used to describe them. So, several of these factors make this interpretation less certain than it may have appeared to be on the basis of the preceding discussion of the results and this conclusion. For that reason a possible research approach that could provide clues on some of the proposed social processes in these Roman funerals in the research region may need to look into other sources of these rites than just the archaeological record (e.g. art historical or historical evidence to research whether practices were primarily used by certain people or in specific contexts for particular goals).

Lastly, the analysis of the archaeological evidence was mainly done at the case-study level, which therefore relied on the publications of the research by other scholars on the funerary archaeological materials from these sites. So, possible new research questions relate to whether new analyses of the archaeological materials from these sites could provide new insights when analysing these materials using new theoretical frameworks and methods. For instance, could results from a more in-depth analysis of the grave goods and grave structures (e.g. sarcophagi, chamber graves, grave altars, or grave sculptures) provide more information of the possible meanings that were attributed to their use? And, can grave structures or grave goods assemblages be related to specific grave types or the identity of the person that was constructed in its social context? Furthermore, it can be researched whether the use of new techniques from the natural sciences on the physical anthropological remains of the deceased (if available) can produce new data and possibly even provide more detailed information on the variations in funerary rites from the research region. In particular, could DNA and isotopes research (e.g. for origins analyses as well as determining possible habitational areas) on the inhumations make it possible to tell whether groups of burials that seemed to have used similar funerary rites belonged to burying groups with possible family ties or people with similar origins? It would be interesting as well to find out if all the human remains were those of the same of body in the graves that were interpreted as possibly those of 'dividuals' (especially in

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those with signs of reopening). Lastly, other isotope research (C14 dating) could proof useful for providing the graves without grave goods in the research region with more certain dates, while these dates can also serve as a way to check if the observed variability in funerary rites did not actually reflect material from different periods after all.

# Abstract

In the Roman imperial period in the region of Tongres, Cologne, and Trier the inhumation burial ritual started to be used as the dominant funerary practice and thereby replaced the cremation burial. This transition to the use of inhumation burials had first occurred in Rome and it had also been in use in the east of the Roman empire before inhumations were used in Rome. Therefore, interpretations of this spread in burial practices over the empire had focussed on *ex oriente lux* cultural diffusions from the east to the west and several explanations saw the shift to the inhumation burial in the Roman empire as the result of emulations of Rome. Other empire wide theories were centred on relating the inhumation burial practice to early Christianization, the oriental mystery religions, the Crisis of the Third Century, ethic migrations, persistent local rituals, and the maintenance of the intact body. Whereas most of these explanations interpreted the inhumation burial rite on a regional scale this research tried to also incorporate a more local approach by re-examining the developments in funerary rites in the case-study sites Tongres and Cologne (as well as a sample of other cemetery sites with early inhumation burials). As it was also aimed to study the funerary rites at the regional scale the general developments in funerary rites in the research region were described and overview maps of sites with early inhumations in the research region were presented. Furthermore, following the recent scholars' interpretations of the inhumation burial rites in terms of the maintenance of the intact body and a possible new meaning of the burial ritual it was attempted to interpreted the inhumation burial ritual along the lines of the concept of fractal personhood (and how this could be constructed in the funerary rituals).

The interpretation of the inhumation and cremation burial rituals as two diametrically opposed rites or as exclusively connected to either the individual or dividual self did not seem to correspond with the results from the research region which indicated less rigid views of what the funerary practices could look like may have been prevailing. Possibly, the newly developing urban contexts of Tongres and Cologne where many different people and ideas of funerary practices came together made these places relatively receptive contexts towards other funerary ideas. Hence, the cremation and inhumation rites can be viewed as possibilities among the variability in funerary practices, which could have been selectively used to best fit the specific social situation, aims of the burying groups, and identity of the deceased.

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# Figures

## Tables

## Appendices

# Appendix 1

In this appendix the data that were used to create the overview maps for each period in QGIS are presented in the following three tables.

*Table 1: The names and coordinates of the sites from period I, 27 BCE to 37 CE, which were based on the study by Van Doorselaer (1967).*

| *Period I* | *Name* | *x-co EPSG 5651* | *y-co EPSG 5651* |
|------------|--------|------------------|------------------|
| *1* | *Cierges* | *31543733.76* | *5446340.20* |
| *2* | *Dieulouard* | *31725072.07* | *5414426.69* |
| *3* | *Fere-en-Tardenois* | *31537405.32* | *5449953.17* |
| *4* | *Fontaine-Valmont* | *31586534.55* | *5574695.05* |
| *5* | *Gondreville* | *31718091.36* | *5397577.32* |
| *6* | *Köln-Gereonsdriesch* | *31777253.18* | *5650875.97* |
| *7* | *Tilly-Capelle* | *31443192.19* | *5588424.78* |

*Table 2: The names and coordinates of the sites from period II, 41-96 CE, which were based on the study by Van Doorselaer (1967).*

| Period II | Site name | x-co EPSG 5651 | y-co EPSG 5651 |
|-----------|-----------|----------------|----------------|
| 1 | Amiens | 31449418.08 | 5527090.47 |
| 2 | Andernach | 31813096.88 | 5595296.64 |
| 3 | Bavai-Louviginies | 31556495.19 | 5571581.33 |
| 4 | Cierges | 31543733.76 | 5446340.20 |
| 5 | Denain | 31528280.75 | 5575200.77 |
| 6 | Dieulouard | 31725072.07 | 5414426.69 |
| 7 | Etrun | 31478714.39 | 5573625.70 |
| 8 | Fere-en-Tardenois | 31537405.32 | 5449953.17 |
| 9 | Lichtervelde | 31510092.05 | 5652915.92 |
| 10 | Lievin | 31484030.90 | 5585122.89 |
| 11 | Seuil | 31605099.05 | 5481734.39 |

| 12 | Soissons | 31523476.86 | 5469376.28 |
| 13 | Tongeren | 31674427.38 | 5628745.50 |

*Table 3: The names and coordinates of the sites from period III, 98 to 180 CE, which were based on Van Doorselaer (1967).*

| Period III | Site name | x-co EPSG 5651 | y-co EPSG 5651 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Amiens | 31449418.08 | 5527090.47 |
| 2 | Arras | 31484153.03 | 5571010.12 |
| 3 | Barisey | 31709906.10 | 5378514.16 |
| 4 | Bas-Oha | 31655287.44 | 5599439.12 |
| 5 | Bavai-Louvignies | 31556495.19 | 5571581.33 |
| 6 | Biermes | 31600334.62 | 5482470.00 |
| 7 | Bois-Bernard | 31493720.43 | 5581221.76 |
| 8 | Boulogne | 31402126.53 | 5620187.18 |
| 9 | Breny | 31525441.83 | 5448169.40 |
| 10 | Cierges | 31543733.76 | 5446340.20 |
| 11 | Ciney (Nam.) | 31649628.62 | 5573614.69 |
| 12 | Dieulouard | 31725072.07 | 5414426.69 |
| 13 | Etaples | 31403496.06 | 5596899.01 |
| 14 | Etrun | 31478714.39 | 5573625.70 |
| 15 | Fere-en-Tardenois | 31537405.32 | 5449953.17 |
| 16 | Forest-en-Cambresis | 31540701.70 | 5554456.00 |
| 17 | Grivegnée | 31684668.22 | 5610999.90 |
| 18 | Henin-Lietard | 31497425.34 | 5586169.05 |
| 19 | Kärlich | 31818958.53 | 5591547.64 |

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| 20 | Kettig | 31817066.52 | 5592399.83 |
|----|--------|-------------|------------|
| 21 | Köln | 31778218.62 | 5650349.32 |
| 22 | Koninksem-Tongeren | 31672063.64 | 5626565.54 |
| 23 | Lattre-St-Quentin | 31470025.72 | 5570825.95 |
| 24 | Le Claon | 31643923.83 | 5445258.65 |
| 25 | Lespesses | 31459068.40 | 5601307.14 |
| 26 | Lievin | 31484030.90 | 5585122.89 |
| 27 | Mericourt | 31490538.31 | 5583284.21 |
| 28 | Mondorf | 31736852.05 | 5488521.22 |
| 29 | Noyelles-sous-Lens | 31491049.04 | 5586573.31 |
| 30 | Raville | 31754446.98 | 5443592.32 |
| 31 | Rouvroy | 31522859.17 | 5522453.11 |
| 32 | Soissons | 31523476.86 | 5469376.28 |
| 33 | Theux | 31699421.76 | 5601908.34 |
| 34 | Thon | 31642981.63 | 5592089.50 |
| 35 | Tongres | 31674427.38 | 5628745.50 |
| 36 | Trier | 31761983.69 | 5517184.77 |