The Community of the Matronae Cult in the Roman Rhineland:
Provincial Identity in the Western Frontiers

A Thesis Submitted on the Seventh Day of April 2016

To the Department of Classics

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the School of

Liberal Arts of Tulane University

For the Degree of Masters of Arts

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I would like to sincerely thank Dennis Kehoe for all the effort and time he put into helping me write this thesis. Without his guidance and patience, I would never have been able to bring it all together. For two years he has been my mentor both in the classroom and outside. Thank you for being such a fine role model. Your kindness has made the lives of many so much fuller. I would also like to thank Chris Caterine as well as my parents, Allison and Brian Woram, for reading portions of this thesis in earlier drafts. I thank Ryan Boehm and Thomas Frazel, who served on the panel for my thesis defense and offered valuable comments. Many thanks to the faculty and staff of Tulane Classics Department for their support over the past two years.
Table of Contents

Acknowledgments........................................................................................................ ii
List of Figures ............................................................................................................ v
Introduction ............................................................................................................... 1
Chapter I: Religion in the Western Frontiers ......................................................... 9
  I.1: Introduction ....................................................................................................... 9
  I.2: The Imperial Cult in the Forts ........................................................................ 11
  I.3: Local Religions and Soldiers .......................................................................... 15
Chapter II: The Ubii and the Romans ................................................................. 23
  II.1: Introduction .................................................................................................. 23
  II.2: The Ubii and Caesar .................................................................................... 23
  II.3: The Ubii and the Julio-Claudians ............................................................ 27
  II.4: Civilis’ Revolt and Aftermath ................................................................... 30
  II.5: Peace of the First and Second Centuries ............................................... 38
Chapter III: The Matronae and the Troops ......................................................... 41
  III.1: Introduction ................................................................................................ 41
  III.2: Soldiers and Veterans as Patrons of the Matronae Cult . 41
  III.3: Sites of the Matronae Cult ................................................................. 46
Chapter IV: Matronae Iconography and Creolization ................................. 52
  IV.1: Introduction ............................................................................................... 53
  IV.2: The Matronae and Theories of Romanization ................................. 53
List of Figures

1. Altar of Q. Vettius Verus  .................................................. 3
2. Bridgeness Slab from Scotland Right Panel  ......................... 13
3. Tribune Fresco from Dura-Europos ................................. 14
4. Legio III Cyrenaica Coin Obverse  .................................. 19
5. Legio III Cyrenaica Coin Reverse  .................................. 19
6. Map of Germanic Tribes in First Century BC .................... 25
7. Altar of Titus Statilius Proclus and Sutoria Pia .................. 57
8. Altar of C. Candidinius Verus .......................................... 60
9. Side Panels of C. Candidinius Verus Altar ......................... 61
10. Altar of Q. Caldinius Certus .......................................... 62
11. Altar of T. Flavius Severus ............................................. 77
12. Altar of Flavia Tiberina ............................................... 78
13. Side Panels of Q. Vettius Verus Altar ............................. 79
14. Matronae Altar Fragment with Procession of Women ........... 80
Introduction

While a military historian of the imperial Roman army seeks to understand how the Romans conquered their enemies, a social historian tries to comprehend how those soldiers interacted with their former enemies. The Roman soldiers who served on the frontiers formed social relationships with the provincial populations through marriage, religion and economic activity. The Matronae cult of the Rhineland offers a useful example of cultural exchange between Romans and provincials for the social history of the imperial Roman army in the west. In the militarized frontier zones, the army acted as an agent of Romanization while also adopting local cultures. Within the walls of the forts, the troops had to maintain a religious culture that focused their attention on the well being of the army unit, the empire, and their commander-in-chief. Just outside the walls, however, provincials and merchants from across the empire brought their own beliefs and customs with them as they came to live in a community with the soldiers. The walls of a Roman fort could keep enemy armies at bay, but they could not stop the exchange of cultures between the provincials and military. These exchanges laid the social foundations of the urban areas that would develop in the frontiers.

In the Rhineland area of Germany, a particular religious community developed comprised of the Germanic Ubii and the Roman troops living near
them. This community worshipped the Matronae, a group of three female deities whose shadowy origins lay in the Ubian people. The Ubii brought their cults across the Rhine as they settled on the west side of the river in the first century BC. The Rhineland (Cologne, Bonn, and the Eifel area to the west) has produced evidence of Matronae worship by far than any other region, well over a thousand inscriptions preserving votive offerings, though some scattered examples appear in other places in the west.¹ While the Ubii worshipped the Matronae before the Romans’ arrival, the evidence for Roman participation in the cult begins in the early second century, and peaks at the turn of the third. Despite similarities to certain Celtic goddesses, like the Gallic Matres, the Matronae appear to be particular to this region based on their iconography.² When depicted artistically, rather than just named on a votive, the Matronae come in a group of three with two older women flanking a younger maiden in the center (See Figure 1). They wear Ubian dresses and hairstyles, suggesting that the Ubians either brought the Matronae with them across the Rhine or adopted them after settling in the Celtic area west of the river.¹ Often they have an epithet that ties them to a specific place or to the clan lineage of the devotee. Based on the votives, the Matronae cult seems to have been closely tied to this area and the Ubian population who lived there.

In this thesis, I have chosen to discuss the Matronae as part of the cultural interactions between provincials and soldiers stationed in the frontier zones. Previous scholarship on the Matronae is extensive, particularly among German speakers. A symposium took place in Cologne in 1987 specifically focused on the Matronae cult, from which there is a volume on a number of topics about the goddesses. The majority of the German scholarship has been archeological, focusing on the iconography of the altars as well as the architecture and layout of

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3 Relief of Quintus Vettius Verus, limestone (Sculpture), 164 AD. Rheinsches Landesmuseum.
the temple sites. In both German and English, religious scholars have discussed
the Matronae, but primarily in short encyclopedic entries. Since 1994, three
dissertations have been written on the Matronae, one of which later became a
monograph. They all focus on the material evidence from the Rhineland, while I
have decided to use the Matronae as an example of a community formed through
religious exchange. I approach the Matronae cult through the lens of a social
historian. Material and archaeological evidence plays a role in my discussion of
the Matronae, but I want to contextualize the evidence from those sources within
the social changes occurring in the Rhineland. The fact that the Matronae cult
developed in a militarized area shaped the community. As I will argue in chapter
five, the Matronae likely became a part of the military religious calendar in the
area, allowing the provincial and army populations to create their own local
identity through shared ceremonies.

The goal of this thesis is to show how a religious community formed
between the soldier and the local population in the Rhineland area centered on the
worship of the Matronae. The epigraphic and archaeological evidence for the
Matronae suggests a creolization of the Roman and local cultures. This resulted in
Germanic iconography on Roman votive artifacts with Latin inscriptions as well
as rituals that combine elements of both local and Roman religious traditions. I
borrow the term creolization from Jane Webster’s work on Romanization, which
focuses on the cultural exchanges between Romans and provincials of the lower

5 Alex Gustav Garman (2008), The Cult of the Matronae in the Roman Rhineland: An Historical
socio-economic levels. Until the 21st century the major scholarship approached Romanization from the evidence left behind by the elites. In response, Webster proposes that scholars of Roman imperialism should use the creole studies of colonial archeology in the Americas as a framework with which to approach the Roman provinces. I will follow Webster’s bottom-up approach, focusing particularly on soldiers and the local populations around the forts of the Rhineland in Lower Germany. The religious community of the Matronae cult emerged as a creolization of its Roman and Germanic cultures as a result of the relationships formed in the fort areas. My discussion of that community will suggest ways in which it will be possible to analyze local communities formed by soldiers and veterans in other areas in the Roman empire.

In chapter one I lay out the general pattern of religious exchange in the fort areas of the west. The high-ranking officers maintained the authority of the imperial center through various means, and the religious aspect of that authority spread through soldiers into the extramural settlements. In turn, the provincials shared their own cults with the soldiers, with whom they interacted on a daily basis. Chapter two turns to the Rhineland in specific to discuss the history of the Ubii and the Roman army in that area. Both peoples had a mutually beneficial relationship and developed in sync: they centered themselves around the same civic areas and settled the countryside alongside one another. Moving from the general sites of interest for the Ubii and Romans, chapter three discuss the centers of Matronae cult activity and those who the participated in the cult. Most of the

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areas with substantial architecture had military patrons, because they had the most wealth. Chapter four deals with the iconography and ritual of the Matronae cult and parses out, to the extent possible, which features of the cult are Ubian in origin and which ones are Roman. Before concluding, in chapter five I examine the potential role women played in the Matronae cult, and how the growing number of soldier marriages in the second century could have further facilitated the spread of the cult. The conclusion offers a summary of the thesis and potential areas for further study of religious community formation in the western frontiers.

Before beginning chapter one, I would like to provide a brief summary of the development of permanent forts in the western frontiers, since they will play a large role in my discussion of the Matronae. The static defense strategy that the Romans adopted in the second century played a key role in the creation of extramural communities in the west. In the first century AD, Vespasian absorbed the many eastern client kingdoms that had once acted as buffer states between Rome and its enemies, which created a defined line between Roman and non-Roman control. As a result, legions and auxiliary cohorts from the new provinces were stationed on longer and more remote borders in order to respond to threats or assemble for a campaign as quickly as possible. The Romans did not adopt this system overnight in the west; rather, the limes defense developed over time from the strategies employed by various generals beginning in the early first century. Luttwak describes the border defense system as a “marching camp writ large,” because the garrisons did not serve to create a barrier against hostile attacks, but

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rather as platforms for campaigns.\textsuperscript{8} This strategy began with generals like Germanicus who in 16 AD constructed earthworks along the Rhine.\textsuperscript{9} The Romans built the first auxiliary fort at Nijmegen (Noviomagus Batavorum) in Holland in 40 AD for a partially mounted cohort.\textsuperscript{10} In Britain, Agricola used forts during his campaigns (77-84 AD) to maintain control over the Britons and establish a boundary of Roman control.\textsuperscript{11} Along the Rhine, Danube and the frontiers in Britain earthworks became palisade defenses, and then ultimately stone walls with forts and garrisons at intervals.\textsuperscript{12} This border defense strategy required that forts be garrisoned permanently, meaning that soldiers in the western provinces spent longer time in one place than they had previously.

The earlier mobile legions did indeed have camp followers, but only in the second century did massive extramural settlements form around the camps. By Hadrian’s reign, the legions and cohorts had adopted permanent forts and garrisons along the \textit{limes} that attracted extramural settlements, particularly in the west where they were located in the frontiers rather than cities.\textsuperscript{13} A large proportion of the forts in the western provinces show remains of such extramural settlements. According to C. Sebastian Sommer, an archaeologist who specializes in the fort settlements of the west, over half of the surviving forts in Britain show

\begin{thebibliography}{13}
\bibitem{8} Luttwak (1979), 57.
\bibitem{9} Tacitus, \textit{Annals} 2.7.
\bibitem{11} Tacitus, \textit{Agricola}, 23.
\bibitem{13} Haynes (2013), 75-77.
\end{thebibliography}
remains of *vici* or *canabae*, as do most in Raetia, and in upper Germany.\(^{14}\) Those who lived in the canabae developed social relationships with the soldiers, whether economic, religious or familial through marriage. These civic areas became the main population centers on the frontiers, meaning they had a significant impact on the countryside around them.

I: Religion in the Western Frontiers

I.1: Introduction

Roman religion re-shaped the east and west in very different ways: namely, the east accommodated the incoming Roman religion, while the west adopted it. The east had long established cults and systems of worship that played significant roles in local politics and civic identity. Wealthy elites relied on these cults, so they did not give them up to embrace new Roman ways. Roman authority required that the empire’s religion have a presence in order to establish loyalty, so the local elites had to accommodate this in some way if they wanted to maintain their civic authority. They did so by becoming the patrons of the emperor cult, aligning themselves politically with the Roman center. The common people participated in festivals that were part of the Roman calendar, but they continued their own local traditions without change.¹ Elites could use emperor worship to curry favor and assure governors of their loyalty, but for the average easterner, his or her religious life remained unchanged.

The western provinces adopted, perhaps by necessity, the Roman imperial cult more substantially than the east. Augustus was the first Roman to consolidate his power over the empire as princeps enough to lay the groundwork for the imperial cult. He could not outright claim divinity in front of the political elite at

Rome, but instead had to build on previous Republican titles, use abstractions like the *Pax Augusta*, or associate himself with the state gods that represented rulership. The western provinces had their own imperial cult centers, like the Altar of the Three Gauls or the Ara Ubiorium in Cologne (discussed in II.3), which could maintain the standards put in place to allow Augustus all but deification. Only the major imperial cults, however, could be held to such guidelines about emperor worship, while communities and individuals were left to worship as they pleased. The less “civilized” areas like Gaul, Britain, and those the Rhine and Danube rivers, show no sign of a pre-Roman ruler cult, so on a local level these areas had neither a model nor oversight to create their own imperial cults. As such, provincials had varied approaches to emperor worship both in how they viewed the imperial family’s divinity and in their rituals. While the eastern elites embraced the new cults for political reasons with little effect on the non-elites, in the west entirely new and powerful imperial cults were established both in large cities and smaller townships.

The religious nature of the western frontier society developed largely from forces coming in two different directions. From the Roman direction, officers and soldiers had to maintain the cult of the emperor and the Roman state religion within the camp, and likely outside it as well. The army used religion to maintain cohesion among the soldiers, so it is likely that those living near forts were drawn into the military ceremonies as well. In the other direction, locals introduced their own religions to the troops who often embraced them in order to win over

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protection as well as to integrate into provincial society. Vitellius, for example, ordered that sacrifices be made to the *dii loci* after his victory at Cremona. Soldiers either syncretized local gods with Roman equivalents or added them to their religious rosters unchanged. Richard Alston describes these two influences at work:

> The army became part of the local society while maintaining its status as part of the imperial polity; soldiers could become locals while remaining Roman, just as, in political terms, locals could become Roman while remaining local.

While Alston refers to the political structure of the empire, his analogy aptly summarizes the religious relationship between the two groups on the Roman frontiers. The religious exchanges between those living in the forts and those around them created new religious communities that were neither wholly provincial nor Romanized. The forts of the Rhineland area had the same religious permeability, allowing the cult of the Matronae to expand with patronage from both the Ubii and the Romans.

**I.2 The Imperial cult in the Forts**

The army could supervise emperor worship easily since the emperor had become the center of military cohesion since Augustus. Much of the army’s organization and daily life focused around the commander-in-chief and his

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4 Tacitus *Hist.* 2.70.

precessors. Images of the emperor around the camp provided constant visual reminders of the imperial religious center. Augustus instituted this policy in his consolidation of the army by emphasizing the connection between his role as head of the army and the troops’ well being. The army’s established connection to the emperor cult and its direct relationship to Rome made it the primary patron of the imperial religion in the frontier zones.

As part of the imperial cult, soldiers held yearly celebrations on particular holy days, and they included those living near the military fort. Officers officiated such ceremonies, leading to direct and routine contact with locals in a religious setting outside of the camp walls. Artistic depictions of military religious ceremonies, like the Bridgeness slab from Scotland (Figure 2) or the Tribune Fresco from Dura-Europos (Figure 3) usually portray just the soldiers and military attendants. Other sources suggest that civilians also attended these festivals. In his correspondence with Trajan, Pliny mentions often that he officiates oaths of allegiance to Rome sworn by both military and provincial officials. The papyrus logbook of a strategos from Elephantine in Egypt suggests that local civilians also participated in military religious rituals. It describes the celebrations of the emperor Severus Alexander’s birthday on October 1st 232 AD, in which both civil officials and officers carried out a ceremony with offerings at an urban temple.

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7 Haynes (2013), 192
8 RIB 2139.
9 Pliny Epist. 10.52f., 100f., 102f.
10 P. Paris 69.
Through these festivals, the imperial cult of the Roman army fostered a sense of religious community between the soldiers and those living in the fort surroundings.

(Figure 2: Bridgeness Slab from Scotland)\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{11} Image from Stoll (2007), 460.
The military religious calendar acted as a coercive tool of Romanization, but also helped to strengthen the bond between soldiers and provincials through shared holidays. The primary source of the military calendar, the *feriale Duranum* found at Dura-Europos, has many overlaps with calendars found at Rome. These ceremonies gave the diverse military communities a shared state-sponsored religion around which to build an identity. It also drew those living near the fort into the religious community. Non-soldiers likely had a role in the ceremonies, meaning they were more than passive observers. The *feriale Duranum* mentions

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12 Image from Haynes (2013), 209.
15 Haynes (2013), 203
little in terms of specific ceremonies other than the animals to be sacrificed, so the army and local participants likely carried out the prescribed ceremonies in their own ways. These holidays gave the fort communities the chance to enjoy a day of leisure and festivities. For example, an account from the Vindolanda tablets in Britain shows that the banquets served in the forts provided a substantial amount of alcohol. The soldiers and provincials were reminded daily of these ceremonies through images of sacrifices on public monuments, coins, and even on the molds used to baked sacrificial cakes used for ceremonies. These ceremonies affected life beyond the particular days in which they were carried out. Spreading the cult outside the walls allowed the military authorities to institute yearly customs that gave the fort settlements a sense of identity within the larger empire while also retaining local customs and autonomy.

I.3 Local Religions and Soldiers

Aside from the imperial cult, the western frontiers fostered a give-and-take between the Roman and local pantheons along with the religions and cults introduced by auxiliaries. Some scholars such as Eric Birley have suggested that Roman officials had to approve of a religion before allowing its worship, but this would have been too burdensome and unnecessary. For particular cases,
however, the Romans did have to use a heavy hand to monitor religions. For example, the Egyptian cult institutions had such great civic power that the Romans chose to supervise them to make sure they did not undermine imperial authority. Likewise in the west, the Roman authorities in Britain felt threatened by the Druid class. Tacitus denounced the Druids’ religious practices as empty superstition, but Pliny the Elder praised the Roman Empire for fighting against superstition in the world, and he singled out the supposed Druid practice of human sacrifice and cannibalism. The anti-Druid policy may have stirred resentment from the Britons toward the Roman imperial cult. Tacitus describes how the Britons in Boudicca’s revolt saw a temple to the emperor Claudius as a sign of Rome’s brutal imperialism:


On this spot a temple built for the divine Claudius was seen as if a citadel of eternal domination, and the priests who were chosen poured out all their wealth under the pretense of ceremony.

Tacitus mentions the temple, however, after detailing the abuses that the veterans of the colonia Camulodunum enacted on the locals. The temple is more of the last straw than the root cause. Overall, cases of religious conflict were in the minority. In terms of policy, Roman governors could only intervene or make policy regarding Roman religions, not local traditions. Pliny provides an example of this policy when he writes to Trajan for advice on how to deal with a local religious

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24 All translations are my own.
The citizens of Nicomedia had begun to build a new forum, but the construction required the destruction or removal of a temple. Since the local religious laws differed from the Roman ones Pliny did not know how to precede, so he consulted Trajan as the pontifex maximus. Trajan lays out the official imperial policy in response,

\begin{quote}
Potes, mi Secunde Carissime, sine sollicitudine religionis, si loci positio videtur hoc desiderare, aedem Matris Deum transferre in eam quae est accomodatior; nec te moveat, quod lex dedicationis nulla reperitur, cum solum peregrinae civitatis capax non sit dedicationis, quae fit nostro iure. (Pliny Letters X.50)
\end{quote}

My dear Secundus, you are able to move the temple of the Great Mother to that place which is more suitable without anxiety for ritual, if the location of the area seems to be desirable; do not let it worry you that no law of dedication is found, since there is none pertaining to the dedications of a foreign city which is in our law.

Trajan’s response shows that governors left religious matters to the provincial customs and only acted as oversight. As a result of this non-intervention policy, Romans rarely altered local sanctuaries in a significant way. In general, so long as local religions did not undermine peace or imperial authority, troops and provincials could worship as they pleased.

Roman soldiers had a particular interest in the foreign gods of the places where they fought, often because they wanted to win them over for protection in a new environment. For example, the practice of *evocatio*, in which a soldier attempted to win the favor of an enemy deity, began with evocation of Juno.

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{26} Beard (1998), 345.
\end{flushright}
Regina of Veii in 396 BC.\textsuperscript{27} During his Gallic campaigns, Caesar took note of the local religion. Of the Gauls he said:

\begin{quote}
Deum maxime Mercurium colunt... Post hunc Apollinem et Martem et Iovem et Minervam (Caesar, \textit{De Bello Gallico} 6.17).
\end{quote}

They worship Mercury most… and after him Apollo, and Mars, and Jove and Minerva.

Although Caesar goes at some length to describe how the Gauls specifically worshipped Mercury, his lack of familiarity with the Gallic religion leads him to provide Roman equivalents instead of the deities’ names. While he may have little knowledge of the Gallic deities, Caesar shows an interest in understanding his enemy’s religious culture.

Numerous examples of Roman soldiers, both auxiliaries and legionaries, making offerings to the gods of where they were stationed suggests that troops respected or worshipped local deities. In his tour of the provinces, Hadrian stopped at Jerash in Jordan for just a short time in the winter of 129/130 AD, yet his cavalry bodyguard felt the need to dedicate an altar to the city’s main goddess, Deania Augusta.\textsuperscript{28} A coin from the town of modern-day Bosra (ancient capital of the \textit{provincia Arabia}) encapsulates the efforts of the Legio III Cyrenaica to unite the local gods with their own.\textsuperscript{29} The legion minted the coin, which has the bust of its own god Zeus-Ammon-Sarapis on the obverse (See Figure 4). On the Reverse, Zeus-Ammon-Sarapis shakes hands with the goddess of Bosra, Tyche (See Figure 5). The words \textit{CONCORDIA BOSTRENRUM} are written along the edge of the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[27] Livy V.21.1-7
\item[28] Stoll (2007), 466.
\item[29] Stoll (2007), 472.
\end{footnotes}
reverse to explain that the two deities are in harmony. Roman soldiers in the Rhineland likely turned to the Matronae in the same hope of winning over the local deities, and to the locals themselves.

(Figure 4: Legio III Cyrenaica Coin Obverse with bust of Zeus-Ammon-Sarapis)\textsuperscript{30}

(Figure 5: Legio III Cyrenaica Coin Reverse with Zeus-Ammon-Sarapis and Tyche)\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{30} Image from Stoll (2007), 472.

\textsuperscript{31} Image from Stoll (2007), 472.
The fort-settlements and *coloniae* of the west offered the right elements to foster religious exchange. Legions and cohorts could be multi-ethnic, particularly when local recruits filled in for soldiers lost to discharge or as casualties. With the local religions added, many different groups brought their own cults to the mix. Though these different groups had various deities, they often shared similar rituals and customs. Many cultures had similar votive practices, like breaking objects before offering them. Liminal spaces held religious significance for many peoples. Social interactions and daily life also had religious associations, like officiating documents or transactions. In such a diverse environment, soldiers had to be accommodating of one another’s religious practices, and that accommodation facilitated the exchange of spiritual cultures.

Army life required that the individual soldier sacrifice much of his own individuality to meld into the larger group. He had to adopt a new Roman name, like the sailor Apion who took the name Antonius Maximus. He needed to learn a new military language, the *sermo militaris* or *sermo castrensis*, which mixed languages in addition to Latin and Greek as well as technical terms that a civilian would not understand in his own mother tongue. For example, Arrian justifies his own use of foreign words in his *Tactica* because he knew no suitable Latin or

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33 Haynes (2013), 197
34 BGU II 423.
Greek synonyms.\textsuperscript{35} The recruit also had to adapt to a new military habit through his clothes, hairstyle, and hygiene.\textsuperscript{36}

In the face of the camp’s monotony and conformity, a religious community outside the walls allowed a soldier or a group of soldiers new forms of expression and individuality.\textsuperscript{37} A soldier practiced his own religion, Roman or not, in his own private time and space. Troops could make offerings to their own gods to remind themselves of home, but also look to the local deities. provincials and troops could form \textit{collegia} based around cults.\textsuperscript{38} Since military communities had multi-ethnic occupants, various religions were available to the troops.\textsuperscript{39} Each garrison and its surroundings had their own distinct religious associations, which allowed soldiers to have their own personal sense of identity with the local population.

The western frontiers are prime areas for the study of religious exchange in the Roman Empire. In the east, the Roman and local populations had less religious exchange because both groups had long-standing religious traditions woven into the fabric of urban communities, so they tended to merely accommodate one another. The west’s absence of a pre-Roman ruler cult or religious infrastructure allowed the Romans to have a greater effect on the


\textsuperscript{36} James (1999), 16.


\textsuperscript{38} Stoll (2007), 462.

\textsuperscript{39} Stoll (2007), 451.
provincials. In the frontier forts, the stone walls were permeable in terms of religious exchange: the soldiers took the imperial cult and Roman pantheon in the settlements while the locals brought their own deities into the forts. From this exchange, communities grew based around cults. The development of the Rhineland Matronae is no exception to this pattern along the frontiers. With this general schema of religious exchange, I now turn to the history of the Ubii and the Romans.
II: The Ubii and the Romans

II.1: Introduction

As in other areas along the *limes* of the western empire, the stone fortresses of Lower Germany in the later first and second centuries attracted extramural communities that drew in locals as well as soldiers’ dependents and merchants from across the empire. The soldiers and veterans provided capital for infrastructure and development through their steady wages, leading to infrastructure for various communities. The Ubii who inhabited the Rhineland area of Lower Germany had a long-standing mutually beneficial relationship with the Romans, and as a result the Ubii joined together with soldiers, veterans, and other settlers to form the new frontier society. The Matronae cult is one example of the cultural exchanges between those living in the frontier and the Ubii. This chapter focuses on the history of the Ubii and the province of Lower Germany, and ends with a discussion of the Roman military presence in the second and third centuries. The army’s forts, outposts, and veteran colonies were the major points of contact between the two peoples, and thus good starting points for a discussion of the Matronae.

II.2: The Ubii and Caesar

The first literary accounts of the Ubii appear in Caesar’s commentary on the Gallic Wars. In 55 BC, Caesar attacked the German peoples living across the
Rhine, ostensibly to aid the Ubii who were being oppressed by the Suebi.

According to Caesar, the Ubii alone had reached out for Roman aid:

Ubii autem, qui uni ex Transrhenanis ad Caesarem legatos miserant, amicitiam fecerant, obsides dederant, magnopere orabant
ut sibi auxilium ferret, quod graviter ab Suebis premerentur; vel, si
id facere occupationibus rei publicae prohiberetur, exercitum modo
Rhenum transportaret: id sibi ad auxilium spemque reliqui
temporis satis futurum (Caesar, De Bello Gallico IV.16.5-6)

The Ubii, however, who alone from across the Rhine sent
messengers to Caesar, made an alliance, offered hostages, and
were pleading greatly that he bring aid to them, because they were
being pressed upon harshly by the Suebi; or, if he was prevented
from doing this because of obligations to the Republic, [they were asking] if he might send an army soon to the Rhine. This would be
sufficient aid and hope for the remaining time.

From their first interaction, the Romans took the Ubii under their protection.

Caesar did this either for beneficent reasons or as an excuse to extend his
campaigns further. Ultimately, Caesar’s campaign into Germany intimidated the
German tribes enough that the Suebi decided to leave the Ubii alone.¹ This
appears to have established a strong relationship between the Romans and the
Ubii, in which the Romans offered protection in exchange for loyalty.

The Romans took the Ubii under their protection at a time when the tribe
had been in decline. Although Caesar praises their civitas and humanitas, he also
notes that their fighting spirit had been worn down by attacks from the Suebi:

Ad alteram partem succedunt Ubii, quorum fuit civitas ampla atque
florens, ut est captus Germanorum; ii paulo, quamquam sunt
eiusdem generis, sunt ceteris humaniores, propterea quod Rhenum
attingunt multum ad eos mercatores ventitant et ipsi propter
propinquitatem Gallicis sunt moribus adsuefacti. Hos cum Suebi
multis saepe bellis experti propter amplitudinem gravitatem
civitatis finibus expellere non potuissent, tamen vectigales sibi

¹ Caesar De Bello Gallico IV.19.4.
fecerunt ac multo humiliores infirmiores redegerunt (Caesar, *De Bello Gallico* IV.3.3-4).

The Ubii occupy the other part, whose civilization was rich and flourishing, as much is the capacity of the Germans; they are a bit more cultured than those of their own race or the other Germans, and since they live on the Rhine and are visited by merchants more and they live closest to the Gauls, they are accustomed to their culture. Although the Suebi, having tried often in many wars, could not expel them from their borders because of the great size of their state, they did, however, make them tributaries and greatly reduced them to humble weaklings.

The Ubii offered Caesar the opportunity to take in a new protectorate while also having a pretext for further invasions (See Figure 6). As a mercantile tribe, unlike the other nomadic Germans, the Ubii could use Roman protection to ensure their access to Gallic trade, which included merchants from other parts of the territory controlled by Rome. As such, the two groups entered into a mutually beneficial relationship.

(Figure 6: Map of Germanic Tribes in First Century BC)²

² Image from https://m.imgur.com/k7r4Yza
The Ubii likely faced continued pressure from other German tribes, since they eventually crossed the Rhine to settle on the western side near Cologne and Bonn. The details of their re-settlement are unclear: the Ubii may have decided to migrate on their own or the Romans may have invited them to come to the western side. In any case, the Romans had to oversee the movement to some degree since they had control of the area. Pliny the elder notes that Agrippa moved the Ubii in 38 BC to the area once occupied by the Germanic Eburones, who had been defeated and enslaved by Caesar. When Caesar first made contact with the Eburones, they occupied an area larger than the Ubii ever held, encompassing the southern Netherlands, east Belgium, and the Rhineland. After the Eburones’ defeat, the Ubii could settle in open land. On the west side of the Rhine, the Ubii enjoyed Roman protection, available farmland, and distance from belligerent German tribes.

The new home of the Ubii also served as a launching point for potential Roman campaigns into Germany. To prepare for these ventures, the Roman army set up two temporary legionary camps at Bonn and Neuss (Novaesium) in 16 BC. With the area under the control of the Ubii, the Romans had a loyal defensive force against possible German invasions. Tacitus even suggests that the Ubii had been allowed to migrate precisely because they could then protect the area without Roman supervision (ut arcerent, not ut custodirentur). The Ubii could help defend the area in the event of an incursion, as they eventually did in the Civilis revolt discussed below.

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3 Pliny *Nat. Hist.* 4.106; Also see Strabo 4.3.4.
II.3: The Ubii and the Julio-Claudians

Although the Romans had a safe base of operations for a German campaign, none of their ventures across the Rhine led to expanding the Roman province beyond the Rhine. Augustus’ stepson Drusus led the first foray against the German tribes in 12 BC and he reached the Elbe river by 9 BC. The campaign came to a halt, however, after Drusus fell from his horse and died. Tiberius then took control until 6 AD when the Pannonian revolt called him south to the Danube. The Romans had nominally conquered Germany at this point, and the area began to look like a province. According to Cassius Dio, the army set up forts across the region, cities were founded, and the German tribes began to trade with Roman merchants.\(^5\) Just sixteen years later, however, the disaster in the Teutoburg forest would halt the process of provinciazation for good.

As governor of Germany from 6-9 AD, Publius Quintilius Varus attempted to Romanize the natives with an iron fist. He treated the Germans like a subject nation and demanded high taxes from them.\(^6\) In response to Varus’ tyranny, a young chieftain of the Cherusci, Arminius, who had fought for the Romans and earned decorations of bravery\(^7\), devised a trap for Varus in the Teutoburg forest. He led an ambush in the forest against three Roman legions heading to cross the Rhine for winter quartering in Xanten (Castra Vestra). The Germans cut down the three legions, and killed their commander Varus, and

\(^{5}\) Cassius Dio, 56.18.2.  
\(^{6}\) Cassius Dio, 56.18.3.  
\(^{7}\) Tac. *Ann*. 2.9.10.
fewer than a thousand survivors surrendered themselves to capture.\(^8\) Seneca the Younger later remarked that that a large number of young Roman elites also died with Varus, underscoring the devastating loss of Roman power from the incident.\(^9\) Varus’ attempts to bring the area into stricter Roman control lead to the unraveling of Drusus and Tiberius’ earlier limited success, and even allowed Arminius to cross the Rhine to harass the Romans and Ubii. Germanicus eventually turned back Arminius’ forces and then led a campaign of retribution in 14-15 AD, in which he recovered the lost standards.\(^10\) Ultimately, though, the prospects for a Roman province across the Rhine evaporated.

During the Romans’ attempts to expand further into Germany, the Ubii settled the Rhineland. Extramural settlements developed around the forts at Bonn and Neuss, and Cologne became the civic center of the Ubii as well as an important city for the Romans. The city was founded in 5 BC as the Oppidum Ubiorum, likely in recognition of the Ubii’s loyalty to the Romans. The city housed an altar to the imperial cult by at least 14 AD, which Tacitus refers to as the Ara Ubiorum.\(^11\) At Lyons (Lugdunum), the 64 Gallic civitates met an altar of Rome and Augustus to pay religious homage, but also to meet with Roman officials or even the emperor himself.\(^12\) The altar at Cologne likely had the same purpose, but for a potential larger province of Germania. From an early point,

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\(^9\) Seneca, *Epistolae* 47.10.
\(^10\) Tac. *Ann.* 1.45-72.
Cologne served as both the center of the Roman presence in Germany and a focal point for the Ubii, which aligned the two peoples religiously, politically, and geographically.

Cologne developed over time from a military outpost to the civic center of the Lower Germany, but retained a militarized population continuously. In 50 AD, Claudius raised the city to the status of a *colonia* and renamed it *Colonia Claudia Ara Augusta Agrippinensium* in honor of his wife and Germanicus’ daughter Aripppina. She had been born in the town when Germanicus had his military headquarters there.\(^{13}\) Agrippina’s desire to improve her hometown’s status as well as the fact that Cologne had been a target of plunder by Arminius’ forces suggest that the city had become sizeable.\(^{14}\) The first and sixth legions had been housed at Cologne, but by 30 AD both moved to the forts that became Bonn and Neuss respectively.\(^{15}\) Although the legions left, as a *colonia* it housed veterans of the legions stationed on the Rhine. Moreover, the governor of Lower Germany and his personal staff kept their headquarters at Cologne. The Rhine fleet (*classis Germanica*) also sailed out of the port at Cologne.\(^{16}\) Soldiers in these forts likely turned to the Ubii for labor, food, and potentially auxiliary recruits, thereby creating relationships that crossed the fort walls.

\(^{13}\) Tac. *Ann.* 12.27.1-2.


\(^{16}\) Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites: Cologne.
II.4: Civilis’ Revolt and Aftermath

The Rhineland had general peace until the civil wars of 69 AD. During this time, a German legionary Gaius Julius Civilis led the Batavians, a tribe in the northern Rhine Delta, in a revolt following the turmoil after Nero’s death. During this revolt, the Ubii appear to have remained loyal to the Roman cause. According to Tacitus, Civilis’ troops passed by Bonn while marching from the south to Cologne. In order to block their advance, the Legio I, stationed at Bonn, attacked the passing troops through sorties from the fort. They recruited a number of locals to aid in their efforts, whom Tacitus describes:

Simul paganorum lixarumque ignava sed procax ante periculum manus omnibus portis prorumpunt (Tac. Hist. 4.20)

In addition a number of cowardly, but shameless in the face of danger, locals and camp followers poured forth from all the gates.

This note about the defense of Bonn suggests that Ubii living near Bonn had developed a strong sense of loyalty to their Roman neighbors. People living in the rural areas and just outside the walls risked their lives to aid the Roman effort. Civilis’ forces cut down the legionaries and their local supporters, but nonetheless the Ubii had shown their loyalty.

The plundering Germans who had sided with Civilis had a particular hatred for the Romanized Ubii, suggesting that the Ubii had become particularly attached to the Romans in the Rhineland. When Civilis’ forces attacked the Rhineland, they showed their enmity toward the Ubii:

Actae utrobique praedae, infestius in Vbiis, quod gens Germanicae originis eiurata patria Romanorum nomen Agrippinenses vocarentur. (Tac. Hist. 4.28).
In both areas plunder was taken, with more hostility against the Ubii, because that race of German origin had forsworn its fatherland and they were called by the Roman name Agrippinenses.

According to Tacitus, the Ubii had wholeheartedly adopted Agrippina as their patron to the extent that they took her name. In this case, Tacitus is likely referring to the Ubii elite who lived in Cologne and had become a part of the Roman aristocracy in Lower Germany. Much like his description in the *Agricola* of the British chieftains taking on Roman *humanitas* like slaves, here Tacitus suggests that the Ubii had become clients of the Romans.

Tacitus does, on the other hand, also comment on how the Ubii and Roman lower orders had intermarried. The Ubii living in Cologne responded to Civilis’ invitation to rebellion by expressing desire to join their German kinsmen, but also hesitation because of their blood ties to the Romans:

*Deductis olim et nobiscum per conubium sociatis quique mox provenerunt haec patria est; nec vos adeo iniquos existimamus ut interfici a nobis parentes fratres liberos nostros velitis* (Tac. *Hist.* 4.65).

As for those who came here long ago and became our comrades through marriage and those children who came soon after, this is their homeland; we do not suppose that you are so unjust as to wish us to kill our parents, brothers, and children.

The Ubii retained a tie to their German ancestry, but new family bonds between them and the Romans made their decision difficult. The residents of Cologne were more likely to intermarry because they lived closer to one another in a city setting as opposed to the Ubii and Romans living in the rural areas. For those outside the cities and fort communities, however, economic and political ties

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united the inhabitants. The Ubii traded with the Roman population and also relied on them for protection, particularly against the raids of German tribes from across the Rhine. As I will point out later, these two groups had likely come together in religious communities as well. Across the social levels, the Ubii and Romans appear to have become tight-knit in the cities and forts as well as the rural areas of the Rhineland.

The Ubii eventually had to switch allegiances during the civil war of 69-70 AD and Civilis’ revolt, but stayed true to the local Roman commander when possible. They sided with Vitellius, who had lived in Cologne as commander of the Rhine legions in 68-69 AD. After Vitellius’ death in October of 69 AD, they had no clear leader to support. They likely surrendered Cologne in order to protect their families, which included Romans, against total destruction from Civilis’ forces. After Quintus Petillius Cerialis turned the tide of the revolt, with Vespasian established as emperor, the Ubii rejoined the Roman side. Since Cologne was a strategic asset in the Rhineland, its return to the control of the Ubii and Romans brought on Civilis’ defeat.

After Vespasian had secured control along the Rhine, he reorganized the provinces as well as the cohorts and legions stationed there. Most significantly, the German auxiliaries were sent to fight in other provinces to prevent another rebellion. In turn, auxiliaries from Britain filled their spots.

Tacitus provides little evidence for the stationing of the auxiliaries after Civilis’ revolt, but a study of soldiers’ epitaphs by Brent Shaw and Richard Saller

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suggests that the soldiers stationed in Britain and Germany were not local to the areas. The stationing of Roman legions and auxiliary cohorts has been difficult to determine. Presumably the legions began to draw on more provincials as the number of citizens outside of Italy grew. The question has always been at what point did the provinces have the ability to fill their own legionary ranks through local recruitment. In addition, literary sources from the first and second centuries talk about auxiliaries being sent from their homelands across the empire, but the specifics of those stationing patterns have been lost. To address this problem, Saller and Shaw used epitaphs to determine patterns of recruitment and stationing. Their study suggests that the German auxiliaries were sent abroad at the end of the first century, meaning that the soldiers who lived in the Rhineland area at the end of the first century were not locals.

Saller and Shaw looked at marriage patterns to determine whether or not soldiers in an area were locals. Arguably, soldiers who served away from their homelands generally refrained from starting families. Identifying the commemorators of a soldier’s epitaph thus provides evidence for the origin of the soldier’s legion or cohort. If the soldier had a wife or children, it seems right to hypothesize that the widow or her children likely would have commemorated the deceased, rather than an extended family member or fellow soldier. On the other hand, for bachelor soldiers, comrades or extended family members would put up the funerary monument. For example, in Saller and Shaw’s study only 14% of the funerary monuments of the equites singulares, auxiliary cavalry recruited from
the northern frontiers who served in Rome, came from partners or children.\textsuperscript{20} Of the *equites singulares* funeral monuments at Rome, brothers serving in the same unit or other comrades often dedicated epitaphs, meaning soldiers of the *equites singulares* remained unmarried.\textsuperscript{21} This *equites singulares* at Rome served as a comparison group for other legions and cohorts since the unit certainly comprised German auxiliaries serving away from home at Rome. The marriage status of a soldier, which epitaphs often provide, can be used to determine whether or not a unit served in its homeland.

In the epitaphs that Saller and Shaw use for Britain and Germany, only a small number of the soldiers commemorated served in their home province. In their study of both auxiliary and legionary funerary monuments in Britain, only 70 of the approximately 180 epitaphs show commemoration by partners or children, and a considerable number are from centurions and other officers who would have had enough wealth to bring their families to Britain.\textsuperscript{22} The evidence from Lower and Upper Germany had even fewer family commemorations with only a third of the 333 epitaphs. The funerary evidence suggests that the legionaries and auxiliaries recruited in these provinces served abroad, and in turn non-native soldiers were stationed in Britain and Germany. Soldiers living in the Rhineland in the later first century likely did not intend to stay there after service or being families. This affected the spread of the Matronae cult, since the Ubii and

\textsuperscript{21} Saller and Shaw (1984), 134.
\textsuperscript{22} Saller and Shaw (1984), 143.
military Roman population were less likely to form communities with one another.

Saller and Shaw recognized that their study of Britain and the Rhine provinces relied on a restricted body of funerary evidence. Although the study relies only on a small number of epitaphs over two centuries, the importance of funerary monuments to provincial non-citizens gives this evidence much more weight. Epitaphs allowed both the deceased and the commemorator to display their relationship as recognized by Roman authority, especially as regards the transfer of property. Elizabeth Meyer has suggested that local legal systems in the western provinces offered minimal protection over inheritance rights, so provincial non-citizens would have coveted the security of a Roman will. She also points out that epitaph production increased greatly in the first and second centuries, particularly among populations desiring to display their recently acquired citizenship. This suggests that wives and families of auxiliaries would have a good reason to commemorate their husband or father if they had the means. Likewise, for the illegitimate families of legionaries, their relation to the soldier entitled them to certain benefits, like claims on inheritance, so they too were motivated to sponsor a funerary monument.

Literary evidence also suggests that British and German auxiliaries served abroad. Tacitus depicts local leaders in both provinces uniting natives against Rome because of forced conscriptions. The *Agricola* refers to the conscriptions of

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24 Meyer (1990), 74.
the Britons in two passages. In the first, Tacitus assumes the perspective of the Britons listing the Roman injustices before following Boudicca to rebellion. The last and most serious abuse they mention is the conscriptions that the Romans forced on them:

In proelio fortiorem esse qui spoliet: nunc ab ignavis plerumque et imbellibus eripi domos, abstrahi liberos, iniungi dilectus (Tac. Agr. 15.3).

In battle it is the stronger who take the spoils: now those inexperienced in war and the ignorant pillage our homes, carry off our children and enforce conscription.

Later in the Agricola, before the climactic battle of Mons Graupius in which Agricola defeats the last great army of Britons, the Scottish leader Calgacus gives a passionate speech to his assembled force that lists the evils of the Roman empire. He describes the Roman conscriptions as an act that threatens the nature of the Britons’ society:

Liberos cuique ac propinquos suos natura carissimos esse voluit: hi per dilectus alibi servituri auferuntur (Tac. Agr. 31.1).

Nature has willed that every person’s children and neighbors should be their most dear: these ones are taken off somewhere else to serve.

The Romans, it seems, sent the British conscripts abroad in order to avoid pitting them against other Britons. Though Tacitus did not know for certain the motivations behind the Britons’ revolts, his own emphasis on the conscriptions as a key factor shows that he knew that the British auxiliaries were stationed outside the province. Auxiliary diplomas corroborate Tacitus’ claim and show that Britons who were recruited around 80 AD served along the Danube border to
defend against the waves of Dacian assaults. Of the 15 British cohorts and cavalry units known from this period, all but two served in Pannonia.\textsuperscript{25}

Tacitus suggests that German auxiliaries were sent abroad as well. According to him, Civilis incited the Batavians to rebellion by mentioning the demand for auxiliaries that the Romans placed on them:

\begin{quote}
Instare delectum quo liberi a parentibus, fratres a fratribus velut supremum dividantur (\textit{Tac. Hist.} 4.14.3).
\end{quote}

Conscription is at hand, in which children are divided from parents and brothers from brothers as if for the last time.

Just as with the Britons in the \textit{Agrippa}, Tacitus may have exaggerated the Batavians’ resentment of the Roman conscription, but his narrative likely reflects a historical fact. Whereas the Romans sent the British auxiliaries east, they used German and Gallic auxiliaries to fight local tribes in Britain. These transplanted troops likely won the battle of Mons Graupius for the Romans, as suggested by a passage from the \textit{Agricola}:

\begin{quote}
Instinctos ruentisque ita disposuit, ut peditum auxilia, quae octo milium erant, mediam aciem firmarent, equitum tria milia cornibus adfunderentur. Legiones pro vallo stetere, ingens victoriae decus citra Romanum sanguinem bellandi, et auxilium, si pellerentur (\textit{Agricola} 35.2).
\end{quote}

He thus arranged his troops eager for battle, such that the auxiliary infantry, of whom there were 8,000, held the center line, and 3,000 cavalry were sent to the wings. The legions stood before the camp: the greatness of the victory would be more glorious without Roman blood in the fighting, and as a reserve if attacked.

This passage shows that the Romans stationed auxiliaries in Britain and did not hesitate to use them over the legions. Tacitus did not observe the battle, but he

\textsuperscript{25} Haynes (2013), 126.
likely heard a description of it from his father-in-law Agricola, so his account has
credibility. Tacitus’ historical works support Saller and Shaw’s evidence, and
together they show that the soldiers stationed in Britain and Germany had so few
epitaphs dedicated by family members because they were not native to those
provinces. The familial ties between the Ubii and Romans were a special case,
particularly in the first century. I will discuss marriage between soldiers and
locals later, but for now I want to show that the auxiliaries from Germany were
sent to fight outside the province after Civilis’ revolt.

II.5: Peace of the First and Second Centuries

After Civilis’ revolt, Lower Germany remained peaceful until the Frankish
invasions around 257 AD, in the reign of Gallienus (253-68). Soldiers in the
Rhineland, both legionaries and auxiliaries, did go off to fight in other campaigns.
For example, the Legio I, stationed at Bonn, fought in the Dacian (101-106 AD)
and then the Parthian Wars (161-66 AD), but returned to Bonn in 167 AD. The
German legions did participate in the civil wars of 193 AD, but did not fight in
the province. Because the province was spared from turmoil, the soldiers could
lay down their roots in the area. This in turn led to the formation of communities
between soldiers and locals, particularly through marriage and families, economic
relationships, and religious cults.

During this peaceful period, a substantial number of soldiers lived in the
Rhineland area, and they would have interacted with the Ubii living in the limes
and in the countryside. Two legions were stationed in Lower Germany through
the first and second centuries, comprising around 11,000 soldiers. The province also had around 10,000 auxiliaries during this period. Specifically in the Rhineland area, Bonn housed the Legio I Minerva, Cologne the classis Germanica, and Nettersheim had a statio, an outpost from which troops could patrol the roads and collect tolls. After serving under Cerialis against Civilis, the Legio VI Victrix occupied a fort at Neuss near Düsseldorf. Trajan, however, later sent the Legio VI to Xanten when he reduced the Rhine legions to free up troops for his Dacian campaigns. Trajan gave Xanten colonial status around 100 AD, renaming it Colonia Ulpia Traiana, meaning that veterans of the Rhine legions settled there along with civilians who moved to there as family members or for other opportunities. The legion stayed there until 122 AD, when it transferred to Britain to replace the Legio IX Hispania. Though the Legio VI had its headquarters just north of the densest area of Matronae inscriptions, soldiers from the legion did offer votives to the Matronae. After the Legio VI left the Rhineland, the Legio XXX, which Trajan has raised specifically for the Dacian Wars, moved from the fort at Nijmegen to Xanten and remained there until the fourth century. With such a large military presence in the Rhineland,

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26 Luttwak (1976), 85.
27 Luttwak (1976), 87.
30 Dando-Collins (2010), 141.
31 Dando-Collins (2010), 141.
32 CIL XIII 7869, 8174.
33 Dando-Collins (2010), 190.
the Ubii developed communities with the soldiers and veterans, including the cult
of the Matronae.

From the Ubii’s first interactions with the Romans, they were steadfast
allies who benefited from Roman patronage. The major urban areas of the
Rhineland (Cologne, Bonn, Xanten) all developed as military sites that housed
Roman troops. The Ubii centered themselves around these places, particularly
with the *ara Ubiorum* at Cologne, and lived in the countryside as well. The
Matronae cult developed from this relationship between the two peoples,
particularly in the militarized areas. These places thus offer the most evidence for
the cult, and I will discuss them in the following chapter.
III: The Matronae and the Troops

III.1: Introduction

In the Rhineland area, the army’s patronage of the Matronae cult led to the creation of the temples and votives that survived, providing most of the evidence for the cult. The Ubii certainly worshipped the Matronae in some form before the arrival of the Romans, but they left behind a minimal amount of evidence. In general, the western frontier zones where the military settlements developed had little to no masonry architecture or emphasis on public space before Roman occupation, so the army made a huge impact by providing the infrastructure for these relatively dense population centers. Temple sites were also built during the first and second centuries that had Roman architectural influences. Soldiers and veterans patronized some of these sites as well. This chapter will discuss the different sites of Matronae cult activity and how they developed with support from the military population.

III.2: Soldiers and Veterans as Patrons of the Matronae Cult

Numerous camp settlements in the area, including one around the statio at Nettersheim, facilitated the production of the stone votives. Stone depictions of the Matronae are not found from the pre-Roman period, since the Celts and
Germans preferred to make religious votives out of precious metals, not stone.\(^1\)

Once the Romans had established a static presence in the area with their forts, they created a market for stone masonry. As a result, either local or foreign artisans catered to the religious needs of the troops and camp settlers. Votives to the Matronae were in high demand, evidenced by the fact that 645 of the 1112 religious votive inscriptions in Lower Germany mention the Matronae.\(^2\) The canabae and vici had space for the industrial production, which allowed local and foreign stonemasons to set up in the vicinity of the fort.\(^3\) The high number of stone votives in the Rhineland must have come from multiple stonemasons who had set up in one or more of the camp settlements to cater to the demand for stonework. The iconography on the votives, which I will discuss later, suggests that the craftsmen were familiar with the Ubian iconography for the Matronae. These features make it more likely that locals were involved in the production if not in charge of it.

Soldiers and veterans had the funds to make dedications to the Matronae, even highly wrought altars. Soldiers could accumulate considerable wealth before their service ended. For example, Gaius Longinus Kastor, a veteran of the praetorian fleet at Misenum who lived in the village of Karanis in the Egyptian Fayyum region, supported a six-person household with multiple land properties.

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and homes. Kastor’s surviving will, translated from Latin to Greek, lists his numerous heirs and their inheritances. It includes his two slave women, Marcella and Kleopatra, and also stipulates that Sarapias, the daughter of Kleopatra, be manumitted. The amount of property given to Sarapias suggests that she was Kastor’s own daughter, and so he likely considered Kleopatra to be his spouse. The marriage prohibition prevented Kastor from having a legitimate marriage with Kleopatra, but he nonetheless could provide his family with a secure livelihood, which is evidenced by his will:

[Σαρ]απιάς δούλη μου, θυγάτρια Κλεοπάτρας ἀπελευθέρας μου, ἔλευθερα ἔστω, [Ἱ] Καί δίδωμι καταλίπω ἄρουρας σιτικὰς πέντε... ὁμοίως ἄρουραν μιᾶν τέταρτον [κο]ιλάδος, ὁμοίως τρίτον μέρος οἰκίας μου καὶ τρίτον μέρος ἐκ [τ]ῆς αὐτῆς οἰκίας, ὁ ἥγορασα πρότερον... ὁμοίως τρίτον μέρος φοινικῶνος, ὃν ἔχω.5

Let my slave woman Sarapias, daughter of Kleopatra my freedwoman, be free, to whom I also give and bequeath: five arouras of grainland... likewise, one and a quarter arouras of wadi-land; likewise a third share of my house and third share of the same house which I earlier bought... likewise, a third share of a palm-grove which I hold.

Even if Kastor had done unusually well for himself, a soldier’s steady and decent wage allowed him to save up his wealth for after his retirement. Kastor’s example shows that a soldier’s financial stability allowed him to participate and even patron cults.

The Severan military pay raises likely contributed to the increase in Matronae inscriptions in the Rhineland. Septimius Severus catered to the army through a number of privileges, including raising their salaries, being the first to

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5 BGU I.326.
do so since Domitian. According to Dio, Septimius’ last words to his sons in Britain in 211 AD were: ὁμονοεῖτε, τοὺς στρατιώτας πλουτίζετε, τῶν ἄλλων πάντων καταφρονεῖτε (‘Be united, enrich the soldiers, look down on all the others’ Dio 77.15.2). Caracalla quickly killed his brother Geta, but he did follow the second bit of advice from his father. He spent lavishly on the soldiers while taking money from the aristocracy and from the lower classes through taxes. Caracalla’s extension of citizenship to all freeborn inhabitants of the empire through the Constitutio Antoninana in 212 AD allowed him to tax a larger number of people to pay for the soldier’s increased pay. The Rhineland area felt an economic boost because of the number of the soldiers in the area who received this new wealth. As a result, veterans and soldiers could better patronize the religious cults by paying for altars and infrastructure.

Veterans could have served as religious leaders of the Matronae, particularly in the camp settlements or countryside cult areas. Estimations for the Roman population are difficult to ascertain, but by most accounts the veteran percentage of the population was quite small. Ian Haynes has suggested that veterans made up only .2-.3% of the total Roman population. He bases this percentage on the supposition that there were between 82,000 and 120,000 honorably discharged veterans living at a given time in the empire. Using Walter Scheidel’s estimation for the Roman imperial population of around 40,000,000,

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6 Haynes (2013), 89.
7 Dio, 78.9.1.
8 Ian Haynes, (2013), 341.
Haynes then produces the .2-.3% figure.\textsuperscript{9} Though a small part of the population overall, veterans did not spread out evenly across the empire in retirement. Instead, they lived close to one another, often nearby their former stationing or even in the extramural settlements of their old forts.\textsuperscript{10} They might have preferred to remain near their former posting out of familiarity or the connections that they had made while enlisted. In addition, veteran colonies were founded in places close to the fronts in order for the veterans to serve as a reserve or policing force. Tacitus discusses how veterans who had fought in the British campaigns settled in a nearby colony to help pacify a recently conquered area:

Silurum gens non atrocitate, non clementia mutabatur, quin bellum exercet castrisque legionum premenda foret. Id quo promptius veniret, colonia Camulodunum valida veteranorum manu deducitur in agros captivos, subsidium adversus rebellis et imbuendis sociis ad officium legume (Tacitus \textit{Ann.} 12.32).

The Silurian people were changed by neither harsh nor merciful means, and because they waged war legions were stationed in forts. So that this might come sooner, a colony of able-bodied veterans was established in the lands taken by force, as a reserve against rebels and for compelling the allies to obey the law.

Veterans of the German frontier would have faced the same pressures as those who served in Britain since hostile tribes lived right across the Rhine. This factor, as well as the familiarity with the area, suggests that the Rhineland area had a significant veteran population living either near the camps or close by in the countryside.


Epigraphic evidence shows that veterans in the west refrained from taking up civil leadership, other than as the original decurions of a colony, but did gravitate toward religious patronage. According to a study by Leszek Mrozewicz, of the 1072 epigraphs from the Rhine and Danube frontiers that mention municipal office holders, only 63 (5.8%) were veterans. Mrozewicz’s sample size for Lower Germany is small, only 35 inscriptions, but of that group only one was a veteran. On the other hand, veterans did take on religious patronage and leadership after their service ended. Numerous religious monuments mention their veteran patrons, and a small number of high and middle-rank veterans served as flamens. For the Matronae cult, four of the surviving military votives of the Legio I come from veterans. The Rhineland area matches the general trend of veterans and cult participation, particularly in this area where the military had a significant presence.

III.3: Sites of the Matronae Cult

The fort at Bonn seems to have been the center and origin of the Roman populations’ worship of the Matronae. The Legio I Minerva, stationed at Bonn, provided the majority of known military dedications to the Matronae. The cult was quite popular among the legion: of the 62 inscriptions left by the soldiers, 19

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are dedications to the Matronae. Many of the inscriptions come from the foundations of the cathedral at Bonn, their proximity to one another suggesting it could have been a cult center. The legion’s patronage likely accounts for the abnormally high number of inscriptions found in the rural area west of Bonn as well. These rural sites had been centers of worship for the locals before the Roman presence, but the troops’ patronage led to the construction of small Gallo-Roman style temples as well as votives with Latin inscriptions, sculpted figures, and both local and Roman iconography. The Matronae cult developed as a community between the Roman and Ubians at Bonn, taking off in the second century and into the third.

The Legio I Minerva had its base at Bonn since Domitian raised the unit in 82 AD for his campaigns against the Chatti in 83. In the same year, the legion built a stone fort at Bonn and occupied it into the fourth century unless when on campaign in other fronts. An auxiliary camp lay 500 meters to the south of the fort, and a camp settlement developed between the two. The Legio I had its headquarters there until 401 AD, when it headed to Italy to help Stilicho, but there met its end fighting Alaric’s Visigoths.

At Bonn soldiers of various ranks participated in the Matronae cult. Together with the beneficiarrii at Nettersheim, members of the military elite at

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16 Bauchness (1986), 421.
17 Dando-Collins (2010), 94.
20 Dando-Collins (2010), 95.
Bonn dedicated 25 votives, 23 of which addressed the Matronae Aufaniae.\textsuperscript{21} The epithet Aufaniae likely comes from an Ubian word meaning, “of the swamp,” referring to an area in or near Bonn.\textsuperscript{22} Of these dedications, legates and a wife of a legate dedicated four, camp prefects two, centurions and a daughter five, and thirteen come from beneficiarii consulares.\textsuperscript{23} The inscriptions from this group are more ornate with longer text, and eight of them have figures of the Matronae.\textsuperscript{24} Such inscriptions provide important iconographical features of the cult.

Roman worship of the Matronae by a large community began at Bonn. Though only three inscriptions at Bonn to the Matronae Aufaniae come from regular soldiers of the Legio I Minerva, they likely actively participated in the cult, perhaps through offerings of cheaper perishable materials.\textsuperscript{25} The Aufaniae votives are the earliest that have been dated in the area, to the early 160’s AD. The epithet Aufaniae appears on other inscriptions outside Bonn made by Romans, suggesting that those dedicators came into contact with the cult at Bonn and brought it to the other areas, despite the specific location implied by the epithet. Though the local Ubian population had been worshipping the Matronae before the Roman presence, by the mid-second century the soldiers at Bonn had adopted the gods into their own pantheons.

\textsuperscript{21} Burns (1994), 240.
\textsuperscript{22} Alex Garman (2002), \textit{The Cult of the Matronae in the Roman Rhineland}, (Doctoral Dissertation from University of Missouri-Columbia), retrieved from JSTOR. 3074404, 68.
\textsuperscript{23} Burns (1994), 240-50.
\textsuperscript{24} Garman (2002), 68.
\textsuperscript{25} N 160, N 182; CIL XIII 8021.
At Nettersheim, just 25 miles southwest of Bonn, the beneficiarii who operated out of a *statio* in the area participated in the Matronae cult. In general, beneficiarii were officers who reported directly to a provincial authority, perhaps the governor or consul in the province. They behaved like a military police force that often overstepped its power boundaries, as many papyri sources in Egypt attest.\(^\text{26}\) The Beneficiarii at the Nettershiem *statio* likely patrolled the major roads running through the area and collected tolls. Nine of the thirteen inscriptions by the beneficiarii come from the *statio* at Nettersheim.\(^\text{27}\) Since they dedicated to the Matronae Aufaniae, these beneficiarii likely reported to the legion at Bonn, or at least had considerable contact with it.

Near the statio on a hilltop next to the Urft river was a Gallo-Roman temple that served as a sanctuary to the Matronae Aufaniae. A Gallo-Roman temple generally has the same characteristics of a Roman temple with columns, pedimental porches, and surrounding porticoes. The Gallo-Roman type, however, is smaller with its plan shape varied between square, rectangular, circular, or polygonal.\(^\text{28}\) There was a small village, or vicus, nearby that likely built the sanctuary, and one altar from the site comes as a dedication from the village as a group, noted as the *vicani*.\(^\text{29}\) The oldest inscription, found on an altar to the Matronae Aufaniae, suggests that the villagers had built it by the early second


\(^{27}\) CIL XIII 7826, 11984, 11985, 11986, 11987, 11988, 11989, 11991, 11999.


\(^{29}\) CIL XIII 11983.
century. The inscription comes from a certain Gaius Novius Priscus, who may have been the suffect consul in 152 AD. Coin evidence, however, shows that the site had been in use since the first century BC. The dating of the inscriptions suggests that the beneficiarii began to worship the Matronae on account of their relationship with the Legio I as well as the local population. Although the locals dedicated in the second century, all the beneficiarii votives come from 205-237 AD. The statio may have been built later or the officers just took longer than those at Bonn to dedicate to the Matronae. In either case, Nettersheim had a clear link to Bonn and the area through the religious community made up of locals and soldiers around the Matronae.

In the township of Nideggen just 25 miles west of Bonn, the altars from a sanctuary to the Matronae suggest that veterans had their own version of the goddesses for their own worship. The altars from this area address the Matronae Veteranehae. The epithet in fact comes from the Latin veterani. The archaeologist who led the excavation of Nideggen, Markus Sommer, picked the area because of remains of rural villas in the area. Wealthy veterans from the German limes likely owned these villas. Their wealth shows in the elaborate decoration of the altars: two altars have relief depictions of the goddesses and

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30 Garman (2002), 69; CIL XIII 11990.
31 Garman (2002), 70.
33 CIL XIII 7821, 7822, 7823, 7906, 7907, 7908, 7909, 7910, 7911.
34 Garman (2002), 73.
36 CIL XIII 7907, 7908.
four include images on their sides. There are other simpler altars to the Matronae Veteranehae from the site, suggesting that either veterans of less means or locals also patronized the site.

The hilltop sanctuary near Pesch, located 15 miles southwest of Bonn, was the largest of all the known sites with a large temple structure. The evidence from the site, however, is problematic because of the damage done to the altars. Most of them either suffered water damage from being placed in a well, or were used as building materials for later structures. Of the 300 altars found that are still legible, most mention the Matronae Vacallinehae. Hans Lehner, who excavated many of the Matronae altars, argues that the soldiers from the area dedicated them. Miranda Green, who specializes in Celtic religion and art, claims that the bread imagery on the altars proves that soldiers were the dedicators. As a staple of the military diet, bread held a special iconographic importance for the troops.

Another altar from Pesch further suggests a military presence. It mentions Matronae without an epithet, and also has an image of a scutum on its left side. While the evidence does not absolutely confirm a military presence at the Pesch site, the damaged altars do not sufficiently refute the possibility. Given the

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37 CIL XIII 7822, 7823, 7829, 7909.
41 CIL XIII 12017.
presence of soldiers at other sites in the region and the iconographic evidence from the limited sources, soldiers and veterans likely patronized the site.
IV: Matronae Iconography and Creolization

IV.1: Introduction

The location of the Matronae temple sites and their dedicators suggest that both locals and the military population worshipped the goddesses. This does not confirm, however, whether or not the soldiers and locals worshipped together as a community. They could have visited the same sanctuaries and made offerings to the same deities, but that does not necessarily mean a community existed. The answer to the question of a community lies in the new iconography that emerged in the second century on the altars, which combines elements from both the Roman and Germanic cultures. The altars act as a medium of exchange between the two groups through the stonemason, whose identity may be uncertain, but his customers certainly participated in the religious community formed around the Matronae.

IV.2: The Matronae and Theories of Romanization

In order to explain the resurgence of local iconography in the western empire of the second and third century, some have suggested a “Celtic Renaissance.” Ramsey MacMullen claimed that the return of native imagery came as a result of religions that had once been forced underground eventually re-emerging:

The imported [Roman] pantheon, having for long enjoyed a pre-eminence among resident Romans and among the richer Gauls
alike, began to give way before resurgent native gods and goddesses (for instance, Epona) whose temples flourished once more, whose symbols and attributes appeared more often in the plastic arts, and whose altars attracted new devotees. The priestly class of Druids, having been driven into hiding by the decrees of the early emperors, had sustained themselves and some shadow of their influence in obscure places, and emerged less tentatively in the third and fourth centuries.¹

While this theory may hold for the Celtic religions of Gaul and Britain, the case of Germanic religions is quite different. The rise of the Matronae cult among Romans did not come about from a backlash against repression, because the Romans had no need to combat a religious class like the druids among the Germanic peoples. Caesar draws the distinction between the two peoples in his Gallic Wars:

> Germani multum ab hac consuetudine differunt. Nam neque druides habent, qui rebus divinis praesint neque sacrificiis student (Caesar, De Bello Gallico 6.21).

The Germans differ greatly from this custom. For they do not have druids, who would preside over sacred matters or concern themselves with sacrifices.

According to Caesar, the Germans had no religious class for the Roman occupiers to contend with, or at least enough of one to note. While the Roman population did not embrace the Matronae instantly, they had no reason to interfere with the local tradition.

Though the Romans did not try to change Ubian religious practice through coercion, the Matronae cult did not live on through the Roman period completely unchanged. The nativist tradition of Roman provincial studies, which was most

prevalent in the 1970’s and 80’s, argued that the indigenous peoples shielded their own culture from Roman influences. In her article on creolization, Jane Webster points out the flaws of the nativist model. As she puts it, for the nativists, “Romanization was little more than a surface gloss beneath which Celtic lifeways survived unscathed.”\(^2\) This model fails because it does not account for the hybrid architectural and religious forms that arose during the Roman period, like the Gallo-Roman temple styles or the adoption of foreign deities. The nativists focused on the polar ends of a supposed Romanization spectrum without looking to the hybrid culture in between.\(^3\) The Matronae cult developed as a part of both Roman and Ubian traditions through the military communities.

Germaine religion remains largely mysterious to modern scholars because most evidence for it comes from Roman interpretation. The local iconography on Matronae altars, however, can be explained with literary and archaeological evidence. Tacitus notes that the Germans preferred to worship without structures like temples or sanctuaries:

\[\text{Ceterum nec cohibere parietibus deos neque in ullam humani oris speciem adsimulare ex magnitudine cælestium arbitrantur: lucos ac nemora consecrant deorumque nominibus appellant secretum illud, quod sola reverentia vident (Tacitus, Germ. 9.3).}\]

[Other than the German equivalents of Mercury, Hercules, Mars, and Isis] they think it inappropriate from the authority of the heavens either to confine the gods or to assimilate them into any form of the human face: they consecrate groves and woods, and they call by the names of the gods that which they see only with reverence.

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\(^2\) Webster (2001), 212.

\(^3\) Webster (2001), 213.
According to Tacitus the Germanic peoples had a few deities that the Romans identified as Mercury, Hercules, Mars, and Isis through the *interpretatio romana*, but a number of other local faceless deities. The Matronae fit this latter category: general female triads that have ties to particular areas or peoples denoted by epithets. Before the Romans built temples in these places, the Ubian population venerated these deities in their natural habitats and forms.

**IV.3: Ubian vs. Roman Iconography**

Early Celtic art depicted deities through images of nature, particularly trees, but later took on zoological and anthropomorphic features. The Matronae appear to have undergone the same change in iconography during the Roman period. Two large sacred enclosures from the 6th century BC in Germany, one of which lies just south of Bonn, show rituals based around a tree or possibly an imitation of one.4 The sanctuary at Pesch appears to have incorporated that feature into the sanctuary with a sacred tree as a focus of the cult area.5 Tree imagery continued to appear even on Roman Matronae altars (See Figure 7). Altars with sufficiently detailed images to specify the tree appear to be oaks, an unsurprising association given that oaks are durable and have long lifespans. The oak tree also serves as a non-anthropomorphic symbol of fertility.6 Latin literature shows that the Romans also associated the oak tree with divinities: in the *Aeneid*, the Trojan

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5 Green (1989), 152.
hero Pallas promises to place his arms on an oak tree for the Tiber river god in return for a killing blow to Halaesus.\textsuperscript{7} This common association between oak trees and divinity helped preserve the imagery among the Ubian and Roman Matronae cult communities.

Zoomorphic images also appear on the Matronae altars as further elements of the local traditions. The most common animal to appear is a snake, usually as a part of the tree image. Rüger argues that the snake represents the earth itself, while Green suggests that the snake acted as a beneficent guardian of the tree god.\textsuperscript{8} The animal could also represent the earthly part of the tree divinity, which has its roots in the ground. Some altars depict goats, which Rüger suggests establishes a link to the German Mercury deity.\textsuperscript{9} The goat appears on two high-ranking Romans' altars. Flavia Tiberina, wife of the Legio I officer Claudius Stratonicus, and Titus Statilius, prefect of Legio I, with his wife Sutoria Pia dedicated altars with goat images instead of the anthropomorphic goddess figures (See Figure 7). They draw on a local custom likely because of their intimate participation in the cult. The goat and snake imagery, along with the oak tree, were local associations with the Matronae that became a part of the religious creolization of the community.

\textsuperscript{7} Vergil \textit{Aen.} X.420-5.
\textsuperscript{8} Rüger (1983), 214; Green (1989), 142.
\textsuperscript{9} Rüger (1983), 215.
The Romans introduced three images to the iconography: the cornucopia, the globe, and the shell-shaped canopy. Of these, the cornucopia appears the most because it can be portrayed simply and can be easily recognized as a symbol of plenty and fertility. The image is distinctly Greco-Roman, but the cornucopia’s association with rivers fits nicely with the Matronae, whose sanctuaries tended to be close to rivers. The globe and shell-shaped canopies appear much less frequently, and only on altars with reliefs. Both symbols are tied to water, again

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10 Image from Bauchhenss and Neumann (1987), Tafel 11.
12 Green (1989), 7.
drawing on the Matronae’s association with water. They feature heavily in the depictions of the goddess Dea Nehalennia from the town of Domburg in the Netherlands. Nehalennia presided over seatrade, so she had a strong association with water. The oak tree image occurs most often, likely because it is simple and the locals and lower ranked soldiers could afford such a design. The wealthier Romanized patrons, however, could afford highly wrought altars with reliefs and more Greco-Roman iconography.

IV.4: Ritual of the Matronae Cult

The reliefs of two inscriptions offer a glimpse into the rituals of Matronae worship. The two versions are quite different, however, with one seeming quite Roman and the other having more Ubian influence.

A Decurion of Cologne named C. Candidinius Verus offered the more Romanized relief of the two (see Figure 8). The altar was found in Bonn, but the date of its devotion is unknown: it has stylistic similarities to the Vettius stone of 164 AD, but its side panels are similar to the later votives of 220-230 (See Figure 9). The sacrifice scene on the altar shows four figures beneath a relief of the Matronae Aufaniae. The first, a man wearing Roman garb with his head covered, stands to the right of the altar. Three attendants stand on the left: one with a patera for libations, another with pipes, and a third preparing incense. Side panels show

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14 See CIL XIII 8776-8802 for various depictions of Dea Nehalennia.
15 N 163.
a pig being prepared for sacrifice and a pot to cook the animal. All these elements point to a normal Roman ritual, but with Germanic deities.

The depiction on Verus’ altar suggests that Roman officials could make offerings to the Matronae in a typical Roman ceremony. As a decurion at Cologne, Candidinius may not have been very familiar with the cult, so he followed the Roman standard. The altar shows that some Roman members of the cult adopted very little of the local tradition, yet still wanted to participate in venerating the Matronae.

(Figure 8: C. Candidinius Verus Altar with Romanized Ceremony)

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18 Image from Bauchhenss and Neumann (1987), Tafel 5.
An altar dedicated by Q. Caldinius Certus depicts a different ritual with more Ubian influence (see Figure 10). This piece seems to have come from the second century and was found under the Bonn cathedral. The Matronae Aufaniae sit on a bench that sticks out above the sacrificing scene. Next to them stands a maiden with loose hair, perhaps Certus’ daughter or a female attendant. Below,

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19 Image from Bauchhenss and Neumann (1987), Tafel 4.
20 Nesselhaub 00169 = AE 1930, 21.
a man dressed in Roman clothing stands to the left of an altar with a matron
dressed in Ubian robes and headdresses opposite him. Just behind the altar is a
specialist examining items on the altar.

(Figure 10: Q. Caldinius Certus Altar with Side Panels depicting Ceremony in Ubian
Tradition)\(^\text{22}\)

Certus and his wife could have both been locals, or Certus may have been
a soldier who married a German woman and started a family with her. His wife
was certainly Ubian given her clothing and headdress. The trees on the side panels
recall the older Ubian association of the Matronae with oaks. Whereas Verus had
only been in Bonn for a limited time while serving as Decurion at Cologne,
Certus had become a member of the religious community built around the

\(^{22}\) Image from Bauchhenss and Neumann (1987), Tafel 6, 13.
Matronae. The ceremony on this altar likely reflects the older Ubian form of worship.

The Matronae cult of the Rhineland area provides an example of soldiers and locals forming communities together in the frontiers. In this case, a common religious worship brought the two groups together in a social organization. The economic opportunities for stonemasons and other artisans related to the cult as well as the family ties created by marriages between troops and provincials fostered this religious community. The Roman presence did indeed use coercive imperialistic power, but the participation across all the socio-economic classes as well as the cultural exchanges between both groups, which created the mixed ritual and iconography, suggests an active and cooperative relationship.
V: The Matronae, Women, and Military Marriage

V.1: Introduction

The Matronae cult appears to have had a strong female presence among both its Ubian and Roman members. As a group of three goddesses associated with the earth and nature, it comes as no surprise that the cult would take on a female identity. Many chthonic deities are female, like Rhea, Demeter or the idea of mother earth. The Germanic peoples also considered women to have particular powers, and this tradition lived on through the Roman period. Depictions of ritual from Roman altars show women playing a major role in the Matronae ceremonies. Since the Matronae cult took off at a time when soldiers on the frontiers began to take on local spouses, Ubian women likely facilitated the transfer of the cult to some degree. Around the turn of the second century, the wives of legates stationed at Bonn even adopted the cult. In this chapter, I argue that traditional religious roles of Ubian women in the Matronae cult lived on in the Roman period, and that the increase in soldier marriages, including local and foreign soldiers marrying Ubian women, brought the cult into the forts’ walls. From there, soldiers throughout the Rhineland adopted the cult, leaving behind a number of votives from the later second century and onwards.
V.2: Military Marriage under the Ban

Although Roman soldiers enjoyed many privileges under the emperors, they could not be married while in service for most of the early imperial period. It seems that active soldiers had no *conubium*, which was a legal status necessary to form a legitimate marriage in Roman law. The military marriage prohibition does not survive in its original form, but literary and epigraphic evidence provide some details. Cassius Dio states that Claudius gave the soldiers the rights of married men, though they were not allowed to have wives.\(^1\) Although this only provides a *terminus ante quem* for the prohibition, the general consensus among scholars of the Roman army, including Brian Campbell and Sarah Phang, is that Augustus likely instituted the prohibition as part of his other social and military reforms. According to Herodian, Septimius Severus lifted the ban in 197 AD as part of his own changes to the army.\(^2\) The wording of the auxiliary diplomas suggests that the prohibition functioned by removing a soldier’s *conubium* while in service.\(^3\)

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\(^1\) Cassius Dio *Histories* 60.24.3.


\(^3\) Peditibus qui militaverunt in coh. I Fl. Bessor… quinque et viginti stipendiis emeritis dimissis honesta missione, quorum nomina subscripta sunt: ipsis liberis posterisque eorum civitatem dedit et conubium cum uxoribus, quas tunc habuissent cum est civitas iis data, aut si qui caelibes essent, cum iis quas postea duxissent dumtaxat singuli singulas… M. Antonio Timi f. Timi Hierapol., et Tioroturmae Dotochae fil. uxor eius Tricorn., et Secundo f. eius, et Marcellinae fil. eius (ILS 9055).

[The Emperor Hadrian] to the soldiers who served in the military in the cohort first Flavian Bessians… who after having finished their service of 25 years and were dismissed with an honorable discharge, whose names are written below, to them, their descendants, and their children gave citizenship and *conubium* with their wives, whom
During the time of the prohibition, however, soldiers did form marriage-like unions even while enlisted. Evidence from epigraphic and literary sources shows that troops frequently took up partners with whom they started families, even though their enlisted status barred these relationships from full legal recognition until Septimius Severus gave soldiers the right of conubium. It follows then that soldiers in the Rhineland could have been exposed to the Matronae cult through their Ubian spouses.

Roman literary sources offer some explanation of Germanic religion and women’s roles within them. While Caesar had very limited knowledge of Germanic religion, Tacitus provides a general overview of their religions and rituals, with particular local examples like the holy grove of the Semnones. As a general note on the Germans’ treatment of women, Tacitus notes that:

Inesse quin etiam sanctum aliquid et providum putant, nec aut consilia earum aspemantur aut responsa neglegunt. Vidimus sub divo Vespasiano Veledam diu apud plerosque numinis loco habitam; sed et olim Aurinia et complures alias venerati sunt, non adulatione nec tamquam facerent deas (Tacitus, Ger. 8.2-3).

Moreover, they think that in [women] there is a certain holiness and prescience, and they do not reject their counsel or deny their responses. We have seen under the Divine Vespasian that Veleda was regarded among many for a long time to be divine; but also long ago they worshipped Aurinia and many others, and they did so not with flattery or by contrived divination.

they had at the time when citizenship was given to them, or if they were unmarried, with those whom they later married, so long as each had only one wife… to Marcus Antonius Timus, son of Timus, of Hierapolis, his wife Tioroturma daughter of Dotochas of Tricornum, his son Secundus and his daughter Marcellina.

4 Tacitus Germ. 9, 10.

5 Tacitus Germ. 39; For other specific examples Tacitus Germ. 40, 43, 45.
It appears then that the German tribes believed that women had a special providence in general, and that this power allowed certain women to take on a divine status even while alive. In such a society, women likely had access to priesthoods or even complete control of particular cults, like the Matronae.

Although the Ubii were unique among the Germans by trading with the Gauls and accepting Roman protection, they too revered a particular feminine spirituality. During Civilis’s rebellion, the Ubii who lived in Cologne relied upon the same Veleda mentioned by Tacitus to broker a peace treaty between them and the rebels. The presence of female attendants or priestesses on Matronae altars and the number of altars dedicated by women also supports Tacitus’ claim about women in Germanic religion. If the female presence in the Matronae cult continued into the Roman period, then the Ubii likely had a female priesthood or rituals based around the Matronae.

Two major trends occurred in the Rhineland during the end of the first and beginning of the second century: the local auxiliaries were sent abroad in response to the Civilis revolt, and the *limes* began to adopt permanent stone fortresses. The permanent garrisons gave more stability to soldiers looking to start families, and the *vici* and *canabae* that developed nearby are likely to have attracted more potential marriage partners. Epigraphic evidence, such as soldiers’ epitaphs and auxiliary diplomas, show that more soldiers started families in service after the army adopted a static defensive system. In response to the growing number of soldiers taking permanent partners, the emperors of the second century,

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6 Tacitus *Hist.* 4.65.
particularly Hadrian, tried to ameliorate the legal problems of illegitimate military families. Septimius Severus’ decision to end the marriage prohibition likely came about as a result of military marriage becoming so commonplace that the law became too much of a hindrance.

As more and more provincials gained citizenship over time, especially in the late second century, the border provinces could offer enough recruits from their own population to form local legions. Forts then did not have to rely on troops sent from other provinces, but could provide their own local recruits. The line between auxiliary and legionary became less distinct during the second century, likely as a result of the growing number of citizens. Auxiliary diplomas after 140 AD stipulated that they offered citizenship to veterans who did not already have it, showing that a lack of citizenship no longer characterized most of the auxiliaries. The soldiers who served in their home province might have wanted to begin their married lives in service since their potential wives might have lived nearby enough to maintain contact. Families could even live in the extramural settlements that developed around the forts. Consequently, the pool of soldiers looking to start families grew consistently over time.

In the period just after Civilis’ revolt in 69-70 AD, the auxiliaries who had been recruited in Germany were sent abroad and the province did not have enough citizens to supply its own legions. The soldiers living in the Rhineland area were mostly foreign, meaning they did not begin families or take spouses. As Saller and Shaw have shown, soldiers stationed in foreign provinces preferred to

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7 Haynes (2013), 80.
wait until after their service to start families. Towards the end of the first and beginning of the second century, however, troops along the Rhine were locally recruited once again after the emperors trusted that they would not revolt. Moreover, they also needed troops there for the Dacian campaigns and to defend the Rhine *limes*. At the same time, the permanent fortresses made those troops who had come from other provinces, both legionaries and auxiliaries, more keen to get married to women living the area.

The cases of Pannonia-Noricum and Spain offer evidence to show that in pacified areas with locals serving in the army, soldiers started families while in service. Saller and Shaw looked at 404 funeral monuments from the Pannonia-Noricum region, and 116 from Spain. In both areas, over 70% of epitaphs show soldiers being commemorated by their nuclear families. Although Saller and Shaw do not group their findings chronologically, it is likely that most of their samples came from the second half of the first century and afterward. In response to the Pannonian revolt in 6 AD, the Romans sent all cohorts and cavalry units from that region elsewhere so that they would not have the chance to help their countrymen lead another revolt. Not long after, however, local recruiting and stationing in Pannonia resumed. Epitaphs and diplomas from the first century show that the army recruited local auxiliaries in Pannonia-Noricum, likely in response to the growing threat of the Dacians across the Danube. Tacitus claims that Claudius ordered the governor of Pannonia to supplement his legions with

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8 Saller and Shaw (1984), 144.
9 Haynes (2013), 122.
10 Haynes (2013), 128.
auxiliaries from the area in 50 AD. Later, campaigns into Dacia under Domitian and Trajan likely kept the Pannonian recruits either at home or just across the Danube. Greene’s claim that Pannonian auxiliaries started families while in service at a high rate after 90 AD further suggests that most of the epitaphs with family commemorations from their study came from this period. Trajan’s column depicts watchtowers along the Danube (scenes 1-2), showing the earlier stages of the army’s defensive border strategy. The epitaphs, auxiliary diplomas and archaeological evidence from Trajan’s column all suggest that the legionaries and auxiliaries from Pannonia were recruited and stationed locally in the second half of the first century, when the less mobile military strategy gave them the opportunity to start families while in service.

The situation in Spain resembled post-revolt Pannonia in that the province enjoyed relative peace, a high number of citizens, and a legion made up of locals. Legionaries and auxiliaries from Spain in the first century fought both locally in the western Iberian peninsula and in campaigns on other fronts in Europe. By the second century, however, the major military unit from which Saller and Shaw drew their evidence, Legio VII Gemina, had become rooted in Spain. After the Flavian period, Spain ceased to send auxiliaries to other provinces, meaning that the province relied on its own population to supply its army. Serving in their homeland allowed the Spanish troops to begin their families before discharge,

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11 Tacitus *Annales* 12.29.
13 Saller and Shaw (1984), 144.
14 Haynes (2013), 107.
which explains the high number of family-commemorated epitaphs that Saller and Shaw found.

Epigraphic and literary evidence shows a direct correlation between the stationing of troops and their decision to begin a marriage while in service. Soldiers serving in their home provinces seem to have been more inclined to have a family life. This change is concurrent with the army’s evolution from a collection of mobile units into a series of garrisons and forts along the borders that served as launching points for campaigns. Under Hadrian’s reign, these defenses became even more static through the adoption of stone fortresses and walls, most notably Hadrian’s Wall. The use of such defenses meant that more often soldiers spent most of their time in the same place.\textsuperscript{15} Forts drew in settlers from the local population and elsewhere to set up \textit{vici} and \textit{canabae}, communities outside the walls, exposing soldiers to more potential marriage partners. A large proportion of the forts in the western provinces show remains of such extramural settlements. According to C. Sebastian Sommer, an archaeologist who specializes in the fort settlements of the west, over half of the surviving forts in Britain show remains of \textit{vici} or \textit{canabae}, as do most in Raetia, and in upper Germany.\textsuperscript{16} Many of the epitaphs of married soldiers from Saller and Shaw’s study in Britain and Germany likely came from this period, meaning that the forts allowed even foreign soldiers to begin families.\textsuperscript{17} Although the forts were often located in areas of low

\textsuperscript{15} Haynes (2013), 75.


\textsuperscript{17} Saller and Shaw (1984), 131.
population, the extramural settlements attracted new groups of people, from whom the soldiers could find potential partners.

The auxiliary diplomas show the effect of the border garrisons on military family life particularly when considered before and after Hadrian’s accession. According to a study in 1986 by M. Roxan, of the 51 diplomas discovered before 117 AD, only 19 mention wives or children. In comparison, of the 29 diplomas dated between 117 and 140 AD, 22 indicate family units.18 Elizabeth Greene made this distinction clearer in her own study of auxiliary diplomas, which draws from 900 diplomas, over half of which were found after Roxan’s.19 According to Greene, of the 34 surviving diplomas from between 71 and 90 AD, none listed family members. In the period from the late 90’s AD up to 140, around 70% of the diplomas recognize wives and most include children as well.20 Greene believes that the reason for this pattern is unclear, even claiming that Hadrian, “did not have an exceptional need to pander to [the army].”21 It seems likely that the greater number of soldiers’ families came as a result of the widespread change in military strategy. The creation of a border marked by walls and forts fostered peace and stability in the frontier zones. When the forts became permanent and developed extramural communities, both legionaries and auxiliaries had greater

19 Greene (2015), 130.
motivation to start families while in service, perhaps even those who served abroad.

Hadrian and later emperors responded to the rise in military families with legal reforms. Hadrian recognized soldiers’ families by alleviating their legal predicaments stemming from the marriage prohibition.22 His most significant reform to military family law was to allow soldiers’ technically illegitimate children to claim inheritances in the event of their father dying intestate.23 Hadrian did this by putting soldier’s illegitimate children in the third praetorian class (unde cognati) for inheritance claims.24 Evidence of this reform comes from a copy of a rescript of his in 119 AD, written to an Egyptian prefect, which the prefect had translated into Greek and posted in a legionary winter camp.25 The pertinent portion of the text is provided below:


For although those children are not heirs of their own fathers, who in that time were serving in the army, nevertheless I judge that they too can also claim a possession of the inheritance according to that part of the Edict that gives a claim to relatives by birth.

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22 Haynes (2013), 75-77.
23 Phang (2001), 319.
26 BGU III.140.
Hadrian’s letter makes specific reference to the edict, showing precisely which law he interpreted. Although agnate heirs in the first class, including any legitimate children the soldier might have had, still had a greater claim over cognate heirs, Hadrian’s reform gave soldiers’ illegitimate families substantial legal recognition and helped alleviate the problems stemming from the marriage prohibition. This move likely came as a result of the increasing number of soldiers starting families while in service. In the Rhineland area, since the Ubii and the Romans had a long and amicable relationship, soldiers were likely marrying Ubii women, who may have introduced the soldiers to the Matronae cult.

Septimius Severus’ decision to repeal the marriage prohibition at the end of the second century comes as no surprise given that the evidence from epitaphs, literary sources, and the auxiliary diplomas all show that the number of military families increased from the Flavian period onward. The development of vici and canabae around border forts provided marriage prospects to the soldiers. Prospective legal dispensations from the emperors made the soldiers more attractive as potential spouses and more likely to start families. Severus’ reform, therefore, seems like the logical conclusion to a natural progression.

V.3: Marriage between the Ubii and Romans

The Romans and Ubii appear to have intermarried in the early first century, soon after the two peoples came into close contact. Evidence for this comes from the Tacitus passages mentioned above about the Ubii hesitating to join Civilis’ revolt because of family ties. Epitaphs from the early second century on show Romans continuing to marry Ubian women. An epitaph from Neuss,
where the Legio VI headquartered after the revolt, shows a man with a Roman name married to an Ubian woman:

\[
\text{protomae} \\
\text{reliquiae} \\
\begin{array}{l}
\text{LOVBA GASTI} \\
\text{NASI F UBIA H Se} \\
\text{Q CORNELIUS Q F} \\
\text{GAL CONIUGI SUAE}^{27}
\end{array}
\]

In the epigraph, Quintus Cornelius makes clear that the woman Louba is both his wife and an Ubian. Since Louba was his \textit{coniunx}, Quintus must have been a veteran, otherwise he could not have had a legal wife. The epitaph is hard to date for a number of reasons. Quintus could have been an auxiliary with an adopted Roman name in the early first century since Claudius did give auxiliary veterans \textit{conubium} with their wives in return for their service. The use of the formula \textit{h.s.e.} also suggests an earlier date.\textsuperscript{28} In this case, however, Claudius kept the Legio XVI at Neuss without an auxiliary cohort. The Legio VI later rebuilt the fort after Civilis’ forces burned the fort and defeated the Legio XVI, but Neuss did not house an auxiliary cohort until the second century. Since Roman legionaries were more likely to marry in the second century, with the forts having become permanent and Hadrian’s reforming of the military family laws, Quintus more likely served during the early second century. Marriages at this time between Roman soldiers and Ubian women coincide with the rise of the Matronae cult, suggesting that local women could have played a role in introducing the soldiers to the goddesses.

\textsuperscript{27} CIL XIII.8565.

\textsuperscript{28} Saddington (1975), 123-4.
Another epigraph shows that even high-ranking officers married locals.

The votive, dedicated by T. Flavius Severus in 205 AD at Bonn, suggests that the beneficiarii who were stationed at the statio near Nettersheim had begun families with the locals (See Figure 11). The votive reads:

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AUFANIS
SANCTIS
TFL SEVERUS
B F COS
ET SUCCESSI
NIA TITA PRO
SE ET SUIS V S L M
IMP ANTONINO II
///////////COS
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Titus and his wife Successinia made the devotion together, and the ending of his wife’s name suggests that she was an Ubian. Titus could have been a Roman who married a local, or perhaps even a native himself. Provincial recruits often adopted the *tria nomina* upon enlisting, so he could have been recruited as a beneficiarius from the area. Succeasinia, however, likely came from the vicus nearby. Whether or not Titus was an Ubian, his union with Successinia shows family relations forming between the soldiers and locals in the area.

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30 Burns (1994), 123.
31 James, (1999), 16.
V.4: Women in the Matronae Cult

At Bonn the wives of legates appear to have been involved in the cult.

Domitia Regina, wife of the Legio I Minerva legate L. Calpurnius Proclus, dedicated two altars to the Matronae Aufaniae in the second half of the second century. Domitia and her husband, who also dedicated an altar to the Matronae Aufaniae, likely came from Asia Minor. In addition, Flavia Tiberina, wife of the Legio I Minerva legate Claudius Stratonicus, dedicated an altar sometime

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32 Image from Bauchhenss and Neumann (1987), Tafel 1.
33 N 147, 148.
34 Burns (1994), 242; N 146.
between 184 and 186 AD (See Figure 12). Her altar has an oak tree image, which draws from the older tradition of the Matronae when the goddesses were associated with oak trees. Flavia likely knew the cult well and was an active member. The participation in the Matronae cult by wives of high-ranking officers suggests further that women had a prominent role in spreading the cult.

(Figure 12: Flavia Tiberina Altar with Oak Tree Design)

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35 Heinz Günter Horn (1987), 50; N 149.
36 Image from Bauchhenss and Neumann (1987), Tafel 11.
Some altars depict women as the major participants in the Matronae cult. The Vettius stone, dedicated at Bonn in 164 AD, depicts two female offering attendants on either side of the altar (See Figure 13). Both wear long dresses, carry fruit on platters, and have garlands in one hand. These garlands were typical to Roman votive ceremonies, so the process depicted on the stone is not completely Ubian in ritual.\(^{37}\) The presence of the two female attendants, however, suggests that women could have been the main officiators of the cult.


\(^{38}\) Image from Bauchhenss and Neumann (1987), Tafel 9.
Another depiction of the Matronae cult from 220 AD on a votive shows a possible entirely female procession of worshippers (See Figure 14). This stone, dedicated to the Aufaniae at Bonn, has five women dressed in Ubian clothing approaching from the right and bringing offerings to the three Matronae, who are seated on a raised platform. To the left of the Matronae stand two figures, which are hard to identify. They could be members of the same group, or perhaps a Roman couple observing. In either case, this stone depicts a ritual that is non-Roman. Instead of performing a sacrifice on an altar, the attendants are bringing gifts, likely fruit, to place on the empty platters of the Matronae statues. The Vettius stone and the later depiction suggest that those living in the Rhineland area could worship the Matronae in different ways: either through the standard Roman votum ritual, or in the more traditional Ubian fashion with female officiators and fruit offerings.

(Figure 12: Matronae Altar Fragment with Procession of Women)\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{39} Image from Bauchhenss and Neumann (1987), Tafel 6.
A possible reference to *Matronalia* in the Vindolanda Tablets could mean that Roman military women had their own particular religious roles, supporting the notion that the women of the Rhineland area facilitated the growth of the Matronae cult. The *Matronalia* festival honored Juno Lucina, the goddess of childbirth, but also Roman mothers and wives. Women, in fact, played the lead role in the *Matronalia*, with those at Rome participating in a ceremony at the temple to Juno Lucina. One of the tablets from Vindolanda written for Flavius Cerialis has a list of supplies, including a potential provision for the *Matronalia*. The pertinent of the text reads:

\[ \text{Kalendis Martis dom}\!
\]

\[ \text{matronar}^{41}\]

The text is not clear or substantial, but the “kalends of March” coincides with the known date of the *Matronalia*. The date makes the matronar- more likely some form of the word *Matronalia*. Cerialis’ wife Lepidina would have presided over such a ceremony at Vindolanda. The Matronae cult at Bonn could have played a similar role in which elite women had the chance to lead religious rituals and celebrations that gave appreciation to the women of the fort and settlement outside. The evidence from Vindolanda sheds light not just on the Matronae cult, but the role of women in the military in general.

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40 Haynes (2013), 198.

41 *Tab. Vindol.* III.581.72.

Various forms of evidence point to the conclusion that women living in the Rhineland area, both Ubian and Roman, played a role in the spread of the Matronae cult. The Ubii considered women to have a particular spirituality that made them potential religious leaders, so Ubian women likely had a major role in worship of the Matronae. Soldiers, particularly those who married Ubian women, were exposed to the Matronae and gravitated towards the cult both to get closer to the locals and to win over the deities for protection. As more and more German troops began to serve in the Rhineland and the forts became permanent with large extramural settlements, more soldiers started families while in service. Hadrian’s legal reforms made military marriages much more viable, which helped to create blood ties between the military and local populations. The Matronae cult drew in wives of soldiers and allowed them to have leadership roles in the community. Like the *Matronalia*, Matronae worship allowed women in the military sphere to have a presence, particularly one that brought the Ubii and Romans together.
VI: Conclusion and Potential Further Areas of Study

VI.1: Conclusion

In the frontiers of the western Roman empire, exchanges between the Romanized soldiers stationed in the forts and those living outside forts and in the nearby countryside helped to create a new provincial identity. The idea of Romanization fails to describe this phenomenon accurately, since the new cultures created along the borders came as a result of the melding of various peoples, with Romans being only one among them. The power structures of provincial society were certainly asymmetric, with the Roman authorities able to exert much more power and influence. The lower social orders felt that influence less, however, since they desired to live together in a community. Soldiers wanted to win over the local inhabitants and their gods for protection, and also to earn a place in provincial society after their service when many veterans settled near their former postings. All the various groups living in the area had to accommodate one another, and a common culture helped bond them.

The Matronae cult of the Rhineland area serves as one example of a hybrid culture that emerged in these areas. Since the Ubii and the Romans had a long-standing mutually beneficial relationship, communities could form between the two peoples without significant interruptions. The Ubii continued their worship of the Matronae in the first century AD and began to build temples that combined
Gallic and Roman architectural elements. The iconography and ceremonies of the cult depicted on the altars suggests Roman and Ubian influences. Perhaps the cult served as a form of the Matronalia for soldiers and locals, or even as an additional female-focused ceremony. While other cults like those of Mithras or the horse-god Epona spread across the militarized areas of the Empire, the Matronae cult was a distinctive creolized cult located in the Rhineland area.

I will conclude by proposing three cases in which my methodology and the conclusions I have drawn from the Matronae cult could be useful: the forts along Hadrian’s Wall, the Jupiter Columns of the German provinces, and the Syrian auxiliary forts in Pannonia. In each of these cases, the soldiers appear to have formed religious communities with the locals that led to new provincial cultures. Further study into sites like these could explain the creation of strong political units based around the forts in the 3rd century. In addition, other social relationships, like economic ones, could have played a role in the formation of frontier communities.

VI.2: Britain

In Britain’s northern frontier zone, clear religious structures appear less frequently than in the more urbanized south, but other evidence of interaction between locals and soldiers shows religious communities. Even more so than southern Britain, the northern areas had little to no substantial social hierarchy before the Roman presence. Once the army stationed itself along the area of Hadrian’s Wall, soldiers used their relative wealth to become the major religious benefactors of northern
Britain.\textsuperscript{1} Two apparent forms of this patronage survive: altars to local deities and the fine ware that soldiers purchased, which portrayed the Celtic and foreign gods of the extramural communities.

Soldiers along the wall purchased fine ware with religious designs from craftsmen in the \textit{vici} and \textit{canabae}, creating a relationship based around religious exchange. While some of these objects remained with the soldier at camp, some ended up in sanctuaries to the south as votive offerings.\textsuperscript{2} These fine-ware remains, however, prove that the \textit{vici} and \textit{canabae} were developed civic centers in which soldiers provided a demand for religious craftsmanship. These pieces show both Roman gods, like the various carved gems found at Vindolanda, and local deities.\textsuperscript{3} For example, a \textit{trulla} (ornamental shovel) found in the wall fort at Capheaton shows the army adopting foreign gods. It depicts a local female goddess with Roman standards, emphasizing the concord between the army and Britons.\textsuperscript{4} These items suggest that a fine crafts market existed that helped spread local religion in Britain’s northern frontier zone.

Altars dedicated to British deities by the soldiers stationed along Hadrian’s Wall provide another form of material evidence for army-local religious exchange. Whereas the south of Britain had more temples, 559 of the 922 votive

\textsuperscript{2} Martin Henig (1999), “ Artistic Patronage and the Roman Military Community in Britain” in \textit{The Roman Army as a Community}, Ian Haynes and Adrian Goldsworthy (eds.) Portsmouth, RI, 152.
\textsuperscript{3} Henig (1999), 154.
\textsuperscript{4} Henig (1999), 154.
inscriptions in the province come from altars along Hadrian’s wall. 5 Often the altars address gods with the British name only, not syncretizing them with a member of the Roman pantheon. Of these deities, two war gods Cocidius and Belatucadras appear most frequently. 6 A relief from Carrawburgh along Hadrian’s wall with three nymphs symbolizing Coventina shows that troops commissioned public religious monuments in the military settlements. 7 Although the statuary may be of low quality, likely on account of the lack of highly skilled masons, it shows that a religious community existed between troops and the local population. Another altar from Vindolanda that the vicani erected to Vulcan, the god of crafting, shows the local community giving thanks for their religious ties to the fort. 8 Furthermore, the altar has an address to the imperial cult with the standard formula pro domu divina et numinibus Augustorum.

While the northern frontier area around Hadrian’s wall lacked the large Celto-Romanic temples of the south or the spa structures at Bath, the vici and canabae established religious connections with the forts through trading religious items. Soldiers adopted local and foreign gods in their jewelry and artistic possessions, and acted as religious patrons by commissioning monuments in the civil space. These communities may not have created urbanized settlements along the wall as much as other spots on the western frontiers, but they certainly helped

5 Zoll (1994), 34.
7 Henig (1994), 159.
8 RIB 1700
the *vici* and *canabae* to develop the social relationships characteristic of urban settlements.

**V.3: Jupiter Columns**

The Jupiter columns of the German provinces and eastern Gaul provide an example of provincials borrowing a Roman form, the triumphal column, and decorating it with their own religious figures. The earliest example comes from Mainz (Mogontiacum), the military center of Upper Germany, where the residents of the *vicus* dedicated the monument in honor of Nero.\(^9\) The 150 or so of these columns found in eastern Gaul and along the Rhine share the same main features: a height of up to 15 meters, a depiction on the base of the Capitoline triad with non-Roman deities, and a statue of Jupiter-Taranis on top, either enthroned or on horseback.\(^10\) The Celtic god of thunder Taranis had become syncretized with Jupiter, and was often depicted with both classical and Celtic attributes. These columns draw on Roman architectural and iconographic vocabulary, but also adapted to the local religions creating a distinct regional identity.\(^11\)

Since Mainz developed into an urban center in the late first century BC, the *vicus* possessed the infrastructure and resources to put up such an impressive monument by the reign of Nero. The other numerous Jupiter columns were built in frontier settlements throughout the second and third centuries after they had

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more time to develop. Both soldiers and locals sponsored their construction throughout the province.\textsuperscript{12} The images on all sides of their bases means that those who made the columns intended for them to be seen in a public open area. The columns became a symbol of the Germanic peoples’ integration into the empire, emphasizing both local and imperial traditions. The Jupiter columns thus provide another example of religious communities composed of soldiers and locals on the frontiers.

\textbf{V.4: Pannonia}

The Syrian auxiliaries who came to Pannonia in the second century left their religious mark in multiple places by setting up cults to their gods. Pannonia relied on local recruitment well into the second century,\textsuperscript{13} but saw a large number of Syrian troops stationed there at the end of the century.\textsuperscript{14} As a result, the Syrians brought their own gods to Pannonia where locals in the fort areas adopted them and continued to worship them after the cohorts became non-Syrian. The \textit{Cohors I Millaria Aurelia Hemesesnorum Sagittororum Equitata} enlisted in the town of Emesa and served in Syria for twenty years before transferring to Intercisa in Hungary at the end of the second century. They brought with them their god Elagabalus and Syrian camp followers who set up in the \textit{canabae}. The troops and residents of the fort area dedicated a temple to the god in 202 AD, when the cohort still had a high number of Syrian troops. Another dedication to Elagabalus in 214 AD, however, shows that after such a long period of time in which the unit

\textsuperscript{12} Beard (1998), 346
\textsuperscript{13} Haynes (2013), 128-9.
\textsuperscript{14} Haynes (1993), 150.
would have lost its original ethnic identity, the soldiers and locals still maintained the cult.¹⁵ The religious community must have dedicated to Elagabalus because the cult had become such an important part of the military settlement’s identity that even newcomers to the area adopted the cult. A similar situation occurred at Brigetio, another fort-town in Hungary, in which Syrian regiments occupied the fort and helped sponsor the construction of temples to Syrian deities alongside Pannonian ones.¹⁶ In both places, soldiers used their wealth to develop religious infrastructure that helped foster a religious community.

Religious communities like the Matronae cult of the Rhineland could have formed along Hadrian’s Wall, in the German provinces, and in Pannonia. Each of these areas show signs of localized cultures developing in the form of religious cults. Looking at the western empire in terms of Romanization fails to take into account the distinct creolized communities that arose in the militarized frontier zones. Each fort area had its own ethnic influences, making the western empire into a diverse patchwork of various cultures.

¹⁵ Haynes (1993), 150-1.
Works Cited


Biography

Kevin Woram graduated from Dartmouth College in 2013 with a BA in Classical Languages and Literature and a minor in Ancient History. From there, he spent a year at Georgetown’s Post-Baccalaureate in Classical Studies program. He began his MA in Classical Studies at Tulane in the Fall of 2014. As of April 2016, he planned to pursue a PhD in Ancient History at the University of Virginia.