Figure 1. Restored Jupiter column, early third century A.D. Ladenburg, Lobdengau-Museum (with original crowning group of Jupiter and a giant). R. Wiegels, Lopodunum II: Inschriften und Kultdenkmäler aus dem römischen Ladenburg am Neckar (Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss Verlag, 2000), fig. 10a.
A sacred landscape

The creation, maintenance, and destruction of religious monuments in Roman Germany

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In the second to early third centuries A.D., with the establishment of the first civilian administration and a new, more defensible border on the Roman Empire's northwest frontier, the landscape of Roman Germany was transformed (Rüger 2000; Sommer 1999). Cities, towns, and legionary camps were set up, a network of roads was cut, and new land cleared for farming. Nor was the religious dimension of the landscape neglected. Rather, it was enhanced through the construction of new sacred monuments such as temples, shrines, and altars (Kühnen 1996; Künzl 1982). This monumentalization of the religious landscape was a characteristic product of Roman occupation, and one that must have been particularly striking in a region with few previous examples of large-scale stone architecture and statuary. 1 It is consequently all the more noteworthy that so many of these sacred monuments have been found in destruction contexts: toppled, buried deep in the ground, or smashed into thousands of pieces (Bauchhenss and Noelke 1981:21–26).

In the present article I foreground this destruction of the sacred landscape of Roman Germany. 2 Scholars have tended to focus on its creation, examining issues such as the chronology, patronage, and artistic style of individual monuments. My analysis is more broad-ranging, encompassing not simply the origins but also the mutilation, renewal, and eventual destruction of sacred objects—in essence, their full “life cycle”—as well as their relation to one another and to the landscape as a whole. I draw on visual, epigraphic, and archaeological evidence to reconstruct, insofar as possible, the historical contexts in which such monuments were destroyed. In addition, I seek to illuminate the possible motivations of those who destroyed the monuments, including so-called barbarians, such as the Franks and Alamanni, 4 the Romans themselves, 5 and the early Christians. 6 My sense is that the destructive activities of the “barbarians” have been exaggerated, and the more thoroughgoing efforts of the early Christians neglected. This has important implications both for our understanding of the monuments themselves and for our interpretation of the destruction of images in Roman provincial society.

Before turning to a consideration of the monuments in question, some brief definition of terms will be useful here. My focus of interest in this article is on violence towards religious objects in Roman Germany and the impact such violence had on the articulation of the religious topography—the object of de Polignac’s work particularly—than on its development over time, culminating in the destructions of the Late Antique period.

1. For a critique of this tendency, and suggestions for a new approach based on the complete biography of objects, see Flood and Strother 2005; for the Roman world, see Hallett 2005.

2. On the Franks and Alamanni as likely suspects see, for example, Bauchhenss 1976:12; Bauchhenss and Noelke 1981:24; Noelke 2001:104–105; Noelke 2005:130–131; Spiegel et al. 2002:740–742. Because of their differing settlement patterns—the Franks largely along the lower Rhine, the Alamanni by the upper Rhine—the Franks are generally blamed for destructions in Germania Inferior, the Alamanni for the more numerous destructions in Germania Superior.

3. On the possibility that some apparent destruction contexts were in fact “ritual burials,” see Bauchhenss and Noelke 1981:25–26.

4. A few scholars have suggested that the early Christians were the predominant destroyers of religious monuments in the Rhineland, although their work has had limited influence on the field as a whole (Bauchhenss and Noelke 1981:24–25; Kühnen 1992:42–43; Müller 1975; Waas 1939).
sacred landscape in that region. Because the Romans generally depicted their gods in human form, this violence was directed above all towards figurative images, ranging from modest votive reliefs to grandiose cult statues. It can thus be construed as falling under the rubric of "iconoclasm," a popular if highly contested term in modern scholarship. Initially associated with the religiously motivated destruction of figural images in particular historical periods—above all, the Byzantine iconoclastic controversies—it has recently been construed more broadly, as applying, for instance, to French Revolutionary activity against symbols of the Ancien Régime, or the attack on the World Trade Center. This broader definition of iconoclasm is useful because of its flexibility. It does not prejudge the motivations of the iconoclasts, and it leaves open the possibility of a range of destructive responses to images, including selective mutilation and programmatic reuse as well as complete annihilation (Mitchell 2005:125–132).

I find this broader, more flexible definition of iconoclasm very helpful for approaching the case of Roman Germany. While scholars have frequently blamed a single social group for all violence towards images in the region, my examination of the evidence has led me to conclude instead that a number of different actors were at work, adopting a range of iconoclastic strategies and with varying motivations. I have thus used the term "iconoclasm" in this broad sense, supplementing it when possible with more specific terms.

Creating a sacred landscape: Roman conquest and the transformation of the German borderlands

Although the focus of this article is on the destruction of monuments, it is necessary to begin by looking briefly at the origins of the sacred landscape of the Roman Empire in Germany. One should note that for the indigenous inhabitants of the area, the landscape had always been sacred, its religious character inherent in its natural features: trees, lakes, hilltops, and so on. In order to access or propitiate the power of these sacred places, ritual practice was the only requirement: for instance, the deposition of votive offerings in lakes or rivers, or the enclosure of religious space within an area marked off by animal sacrifice (Webster 1995). With the Roman conquest, however, the sanctity of the landscape was brought out more explicitly, as man-made structures echoed and enhanced its natural features. The temples, shrines, and altars established by the Romans were set up, frequently, at sites already marked as sacred (Kühnen 1996:18–20). They arrogated to themselves the worship given earlier to the landscape's natural features and guided it towards Roman practices. In this way, one might speak of a cultural, indeed, an explicitly religious imperialism, which followed in the wake of Roman military conquest.

But to describe the Romans' sacred landscape solely in these terms would be simplistic. The occupying forces certainly suppressed some traditional religious activities (for example, Druidism) and, just as certainly, imposed some new, Roman-derived modes of worship, such as the imperial cult. At the same time, they encouraged or at least permitted the creation of new, culturally hybrid religious monuments, which drew on both native and Roman traditions in a highly original synthesis (Fischer 1971; Künzl 1982). The works of art that resulted were successful, because they spoke to both constituencies. In the German provinces, this relates, above all, to the extremely popular and prominent votives known as "Jupiter columns" (figs. 1, 5, 7). Romans could appreciate their use of the quintessential classical architectural form, the column, as well as their Latin inscriptions, and their sculpted images of divinities based on familiar imperial types (Bauchhenss and Noelke 1981:388–390; Krause 1987). Locals, by contrast, could see in these columns a reference to former traditions of tree worship, often enhanced by the representation of leaves or vines on the column shaft (Bauchhenss and Noelke 1981:83–84; Rüger 2000:510–511; Thomas 1994:156). They might also appreciate the selection of gods, chosen with an eye to local equivalences—for instance, the Roman Jupiter for the Celtic sky god Taranis (Bauchhenss and Noelke 1981:83; Hefner 1967; Schutz 1985:66–67)—and also the mode of depiction, with the paired gods characteristic of local cult patterns (Bauchhenss and Noelke 1981:54; Scoppa 1958). Given the hybrid nature of these columns, it is not surprising that they had broad, even universal appeal. Dedicated by both Romans and local aristocrats, they were ubiquitous in the German provinces and Gallia Belgica (over 1,150 have been found so far) and

7. See, for example, Barber 2002; Grabar 1984; Pelikan 1990.
they appeared everywhere: in town and country, in sanctuaries, forts, and rural estates, in Roman colonies, and the most traditional of native hamlets. 11

In this way, the Jupiter columns served very effectively to make a sacred landscape of the contested frontier region, dominated by large-scale architectural monuments topped with sculpted gods. And the analysis of their “life cycles” offers a useful means by which to track the evolution of this landscape, since they were its most numerous and prominent man-made features. At the same time, the Jupiter columns did not exist in isolation, nor was iconoclastic activity directed solely at them. And so the final section of this article will integrate their histories with those of other damaged religious monuments in order to demonstrate more fully the wide-ranging transformation of the sacred landscape that occurred in the early Christian period.

Maintaining the landscape: “Barbarian” destruction and Roman response

By the mid-third century a.D., the sacred landscape of the German frontier was becoming increasingly difficult to maintain. Established under Roman power, it suffered as that power fragmented during long years of civil war. Within the Roman empire as a whole, the Rhineland was indeed particularly contested, and particularly vulnerable, at this time. Due to its heavy concentration of troops, it was a prize much fought over by contenders for the imperial purple (Drinkwater 1987). At the same time, the Rhineland’s proximity to the frontier made it an attractive target for crossborder tribes, such as the Franks and the Alamanni, who took advantage of Roman infighting to raid the area. 12 This toxic combination of internal and external threats exacted a harsh toll upon the Rhine region, well documented in the archaeological record through sacked forts, abandoned farmhouses, hoards of precious metal buried and never recovered, and the skeletons of those scalped, thrown in wells, or cut to pieces (Kühnen 1992).

This violence extended to sacred objects as well, although they were never its primary target. It may be observed, for example, in the remains of a Jupiter column from Ladenburg, the Roman town of Lopodunum on the Neckar River (fig. 1). 13 In the 230s a.D., the column was damaged, its crowning statue group broken and thrown in a well. The rest of the column was then restored by a man named Novanius Augustus, owner of the property on which it was reerected. Novanius’s activities included the commissioning of a new statue group, in a different color of sandstone, to replace the damaged original; he also had the inscription recarved—traces of the original are visible underneath—the column repainted, and an altar from elsewhere appropriated, reinscribed, and set up nearby (figs. 2, 3). Novanius had thus acquired for his property a newly impressive religious monument at comparatively low cost, made possible because of his careful reuse of damaged materials.

Novanius’s column is one of a handful of monuments whose restoration can be dated to the years around a.D. 220–240 (fig. 4). 14 Because at just this time there occurred the first recorded raids in the area by the Alamanni, scholars have associated the two phenomena. 15 According to this interpretation of the evidence, the monuments were damaged in the course of the raids and then restored with the reassertion of Roman power in the region. This seems plausible. In the

11. For the most recent count of the number of columns, see Noelleke 2005:128; on the findspots of the columns, see Bauchhenss and Noelleke 1981:21–26, 293–307; for a map showing their distribution, Wiegels 2000: map 2.

12. The impact of Frankish and Alamannic raids upon the Rhineland has been much debated in the recent scholarship. Early accounts, influenced by the Roman literary sources, tended to emphasize the dangers posed by the “barbarians,” and to identify nearly all signs of destruction in the archaeological record as their handiwork; for an intellectual history of this hypothesis, see Unruh 1992. More recently, scholars have been more skeptical; they have highlighted the exaggerations in the literary sources (Drinkwater 1996) and identified some forms of destruction as more likely due to Roman infighting than to raids (Okamura 1996). A balanced assessment of the evidence would acknowledge the damage done both by the Romans themselves and the crossborder tribes, while stressing that the Romans—backed by their superior weaponry and knowledge of military strategy—posed the greater danger.


14. Other religious monuments restored during this period include a Jupiter column from Heidelberg (Frankfurt, Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte inv. no. X 8384), whose recarved inscriptions show that it was restored twice, for the second time in a.D. 240; see Bauchhenss and Noelleke 1981:124–126; Hahl 1937:28–29; Meier-Arendt 1983:47, 53–59. There is also a Jupiter column from Mainz (Mittelrheinisches Landesmuseum inv. no. S989) restored in a.D. 242; on it, see Bauchhenss 1984:49–51, pl. 76–79, an inscription in honor of the imperial house and the goddess Virtus Bellona from Mainz-Kastel (CIL XIII 7281, restored in a.D. 236), and a statue of Minerva from Öhringen (CIL XIII 6541, restored in a.D. 232).

15. Herodian 6.7.2; on the literary sources for the period, see especially Unruh and Graßl 1992, and for the connection of the raids and the restored columns, Bauchhenss 1976.
case of Novanius’s column, for instance, the attackers focused on the most vulnerable part of the object, the crowning statue group in the round. The projecting arms, legs, and head would have been particularly easy to break off, and this is indeed what happened. The rest of the column was left in fine condition, facilitating its reerection; inscriptions were recarved to attest to Novanius’s generosity, and an altar added. The attack on the column fits a reasonable reconstruction of the Alamanni’s modus operandi. As a prominent monument within the Roman landscape, the column perhaps invited attack, but it was by no means the primary object of the raiders’ attention. The inhabitants, and above all their movable wealth, counted more.

16. The arms and head shown in fig. 1 are restorations. The head, arms, and upper body of the Jupiter were all damaged, as were the head, neck, lower part of the tail, and the genitals of his horse; in other words, parts of the sculpture that would be easy to damage were all missing.

Other monuments received very different treatment. A particularly interesting case is that of a Jupiter column from Wiesbaden, the Roman spa town of Aquae Mattiacorum near Mainz (fig. 5). This column was uncovered at the base of a well or shaft, together with animal bones, pottery, and charcoal fragments. Above it were roof tiles, arranged in a flat, fan-like pattern; their careful arrangement suggesting that at the time of deposition at least, the shaft was dry and accessible to those who deposited the material there. Above the tiles were found pieces of a stag, more roof tiles, and a broken round piece of limestone. At the top, the shaft was sealed by five large pieces of cut stone, arranged pyramidally on a base of red sandstone, with several boulders above them.

17. Wiesbaden Museum, Slg. Nassauischer Altertümer, inv. no. 14193. The initial publication of the excavation is Horschutz 1890; later discussions include Bauchhenss and Noelke 1981:25–26, 244, pl. 52.1–2, 53; Czysz 1994:230–232; Grönke 1982:34–36.
Although the deposit from Wiesbaden was particularly elaborate and well preserved, it was by no means unique. In fact, we have at least forty examples of similar deposits in the German provinces (fig. 6). These deposits, too, have been interpreted by scholars as the

work of the Alamanni, but here their arguments are less convincing, given the time and effort involved in their creation as well as the lack of compelling evidence for the raiders’ antipathy towards religious monuments. More plausible is the suggestion that the deposits were created by the inhabitants of the land themselves, and were not a violent attack on the gods but a protective measure, intended to safeguard these sacred monuments in a perilous time.

The archaeological evidence for the deposits offers support for this hypothesis. As excavation reports demonstrate, the deposits contained almost exclusively religious monuments: temple furnishings, large-scale votive sculptures, statues of gods. This near-exclusive concentration on religious artifacts is significant because the material culture of Roman Germany was by no means limited to such monuments. There was, for instance, an extensive production of soldiers’ tombstones, which might have seemed tempting targets for the Alamanni (Künzl 1982). But tombstones are rarely found in such contexts. Instead, what the deposits preserve is an aggregation of all the sacred objects associated with a particular site, for instance, a civic forum, or a Roman farmhouse in the countryside. Statues of Venus, votive columns to Jupiter, altars to the homegrown mother goddesses of the German frontier, and other such objects were carefully brought together and deposited in a manner that allows us to reconstruct mentally the rural and civic shrines of which they formed a part. This does not seem likely to happen by chance or through the arbitrary violence of outsiders. Instead, it looks like the thoughtful and intentional effort of pious insiders, in carefully organized religious rituals.

In addition to the monuments themselves, the deposits also preserve useful evidence for the reconstruction of these rituals. Most significantly, there are traces of faunal remains and ashes, suggesting animal sacrifice. While such remains are not documented everywhere, they are recorded often enough to constitute a pattern. Most frequently, all the excavation reports reveal is that animal bones were found, for instance, at Eisenberg, and at two rural villas on the outskirts of Cologne.

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19. For the argument that “barbarians” destroyed the monuments, see the sources listed in note 4. For counter-arguments, emphasizing the elaborate and difficult character of the deposits, see Kuhnen 1992:42–43.

20. For this argument, as applied to the Wiesbaden column, see Bauchhenss and Noelke 1981:25–26; my sense is that the same suggestion may be generalized to apply to the bulk of the deposits.

21. The deposit from Eisenberg, an iron mining town, contained animal bones, shards, a stone table, smashed, a statuette of Minerva.
cases, we have more details. The deposit at Wiesbaden, and another at Obernburg, for example, are particularly interesting in that each contained the bones of a stag; since deer were not domesticated by the Romans, but hunted, this adds a further level of complexity to the deposition ritual.22 Elsewhere the deposits included bones of more ordinary domesticated animals, sometimes in considerable numbers; one well at another rural villa outside Cologne contained the bones of at least eleven bovines, a calf, a dog, and a young sheep (Spiegel et al. 2002:767–779). The well, if still in use at the time, would quickly have been poisoned by the flesh of the decaying animals within it; this was not an action to be taken lightly. It suggests, rather, a conscious and premeditated act, a sacrifice not only of the monuments and animals, but also of the utility of the well.23

To reconstruct the circumstances in which these deposits were created, two aspects of the evidence are particularly important: the dating of the deposits and their geographical distribution. In terms of chronology, the dates cluster around the mid-third century A.D.24

An altar with an inscription to Jupiter Optimus Maximus, and fragments of a Jupiter column (ibid.:123; Sprater 1929–1930). A deposit from a rural villa site, Köln-Vogelsang, contained animal bones, tiles with signs of burning, bits of wood, and fragments of a Jupiter column, Seiler 1993:491–492, 498, figs. 16–18; Spiegel et al. 2002:742, while another, from Köln-Widdersdorf, had the skeletons of at least eleven bovines, with signs of burning but not butchering, wood particles, ceramics, a layer of architectural debris, in which were fragments of at least two Jupiter columns, then the intact skeletons of a dog and a lamb, in a layer with architectural debris, tua, and tiles, and above this a layer with gravel, wood, and broken tiles and shards (Spiegel 2005; Spiegel et al. 2002:710–713, 731–744).

The well at Wiesbaden; the deposit from Obernburg contained at the base a layer of mostly sandstone fragments and tiles, above this a black layer with potsherds and the remains of a stag, and at the top a layer of brown earth with sculptures including the base of a figural group, an altar to Jupiter Optimus Maximus, many very fragmentary inscriptions, and fragmentary remains of two Jupiter columns (Bauchhenss and Noelke 1981:199, pls. 40.1–2; Hefner 1967; Hefner and Michelbach 1962; Mattern 2005:107–108, 118–119, 124, pls. 56–57, 67, 71).

A point made by Spiegel et al. 2002:740–742, for example, where yet this is seen as an attempt on the part of crossborder raiders to “break” the power of the sculpted gods and poison the well.

Well-dated deposits of the third century A.D. include those from Eisenberg, Frankfurt, Köln-Vogelsang, Ladenburg, Obernburg, Wahlheim, and Wüsteiwerl; on them see note 18. Some deposits from the northern part of the Rhineland date instead to the mid-fourth century A.D.; this can be understood in light of well-documented Frankish raids in the period—on which see Hummer 1998:10. Alternatively, these deposits may come in response to Early Christian attacks. The deposits in question are those described in note 18 at Jülich, Köln-Widdersdorf, and Titz-Ameln.

And geographically, the monuments found in deposits come from the frontier region, particularly the area in southern Germany east of the Rhine, known as the Agri Decumates (fig. 6). At this time, the area was the focal point for the crossborder raids and civil wars already described; the combination of the two also brought economic devastation. In consequence, the Agri Decumates were gradually abandoned over the course of the third century, as settlers on the frontier pulled back to stabler regions, for instance, eastern Gaul (Nuber 1997). This abandonment of the area was accelerated in a.D. 260 when the Roman frontier was officially pulled back to the Rhine, in order to ensure a stronger, more defensible border along the Rhine and Danube (Drinkwater 1987; Witschel 2004). While not every Roman left immediately—there was continued habitation at many farmhouses, along with ongoing Roman craft traditions such as glassmaking and pottery, into the early fourth century (Fingerlin 1997; Stirbrny 1989)—the overall trend was clear and irreversible. The Roman military presence beyond the Rhine and Danube, initiated by Julius Caesar some three hundred years earlier, was given up.

It is in light of this historical situation that we should understand the ritual burial of Roman religious monuments in Germany. As the inhabitants of the area left, individually or in groups, they presumably took what they could with them: money, treasured possessions, their household gods. But they could not easily bring along their large-scale religious monuments; the Jupiter columns, for example, have an average weight of about one ton.25 Instead, they chose deposition, which preserved the integrity of cult objects or groups of objects, while ensuring that they could not be damaged by hostile forces later on. And religious ritual, for instance, animal sacrifice, helped to mitigate the dangers posed by such potentially sacrilegious behavior.

If this analysis of the deposits is correct, then it has important implications for our understanding of the evolving religious landscape of Roman Germany. As previous scholars have argued, it certainly changed in response to the Frankish and Alamannic raiders of the third to fourth centuries A.D., but in a manner more complicated than has sometimes been suggested. What has often appeared to scholars as destruction tout court may be more plausibly explained instead as concealment.

I thank Dr. Peter Fasold of the Museum für Vor und Frühgeschichte, Frankfurt, and Dr. Nina Willburger of the Württembergisches Landesmuseum, Stuttgart, for discussing the weights of Jupiter columns with me.
for the purposes of preservation—a religious landscape “gone underground,” as it were. The raiders were, to be sure, still indirectly responsible for the landscape’s transformation, since it was their raids that convinced the Roman inhabitants of the region to depart and to safeguard their monuments prior to departure. But the raiders did not create the elaborate, time-intensive burials already detailed, which allowed the safeguarded monuments to continue to participate underground in the frontier’s sacred landscape. Invisible to ordinary humans, these buried objects were nonetheless perceptible to the gods and had perhaps an enhanced connection to the underworld divinities whose realm they now occupied.

These burials find numerous parallels in the historical record. A particularly close and well-documented analogy is that of a group of sculptures from a Roman sanctuary of Mithras in London (Toynbee 1986). These were first injured—the head of Mithras, for instance, appears to have been cut off at the neck—and then buried under the floor of the sanctuary in the early fourth century a.d. The excavators have suggested that this was done following an attack by early Christians, newly powerful from the time of Constantine onward; the sculptures were likely preemptively buried to secure them from further harm. This seems plausible, since the Christian antipathy to pagan images is well documented, and literary sources attest to the practice of hiding such images to protect them. Indeed, though it is rarely discussed in the archaeological literature, it seems to have been a widespread practice in the late Roman empire; another well-documented case is the Varvakeion copy of Phidias’s Athena Parthenos, hidden inside the wall of a house in Athens in the fifth century a.d. (Frantz 1988:88).

This practice of ritual burial was prevalent in Roman society, because it was rooted in an understanding of the sacred image that was similarly widespread. For the Romans, a religious object—once it was set up in sacred space, consecrated, and worshipped—could never lose its sanctity. It might be abducted, damaged, or replaced, but it retained, nonetheless, the uncanny power it derived from contact with the divine. For this reason, a sacred monument could not simply be abandoned or thrown out. Instead, it had to be interred with extreme caution, lest its ill treatment redound upon the heads of those who had injured it (Donderer 1991–1992:203–210). The deposits examined here offer a well-documented example of this practice and help to suggest the considerable effort it could entail. They illustrate as well how what might appear initially as iconoclastic violence could in fact serve a very different purpose: the maintenance and safeguarding of sacred objects. A more comprehensive, thoroughgoing destruction of images came only later to the German borderlands, as the sacred landscape of Roman paganism was attacked, desecrated, and eventually reconfigured by the early Christians.

Transforming the landscape: The Christian destruction of images in Late Antiquity

The process of Christianization along the German borderlands was gradual, urban in its focus, and heavily dependent upon top officials and the army. According to the second-century bishop Irenaeus of Lyon (Adv. haer. 1.10.2), Christian communities were already present in the region by his time, although no clear archaeological traces of them have been found. If they did exist, these Christians worshipped in private and offered no ostentatious repudiation of traditional religion; at any rate, they produced no celebrated martyrs in the persecutions of the third century. The situation changed following the ascension to the imperial throne of the Christian convert Constantine I. The new ruler proclaimed official toleration for Christianity throughout the Roman empire and gave it particular encouragement in the German provinces, his base of operations for the defense of the northwest frontier (Schumacher 2003; Unruh and Grafis 1992:21–22). Constantine’s fourth century successors followed in his footsteps, both in terms of their support for Christianity (apart from the short-lived apostate emperor Julian) and in their preoccupation with the defense of the Rhineland. In the latter they were ultimately unsuccessful, and the region fell to the Franks in a.d. 406 (Todd 2004:179–193). Their efforts to Christianize the area bore more fruit. With the

26. On ritual burial generally, see Merrifield 1987:48–50. A series of deposits in Britain have been seen as exemplary of religious activity; one—a shaft or well at Bar Hill, a Roman fort on the Antonine wall filled with building debris, religious objects, and animal bones—seems particularly close in character to the deposits described here (Ross 1968:259).

27. For example, a panegyric on the Egyptian bishop Macarius narrates his destruction of 306 pagan idols in one village, after which the inhabitants hid their remaining religious objects in cisterns (Panegyric on Macarius v. 11, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 416).

28. As Dassmann 2004 has argued, the (rare) accounts of such martyrs preserved in the literary sources are medieval inventions rather than authentic Late Antique traditions.
backing of the emperor, his administration, and his army, local Christians built up an impressive organizational structure—including bishops in Mainz, Trier, Cologne, Worms, and Speyer, as well as occasional regional synods—and initiated construction of numerous churches. They also encouraged the development of new Christian cemeteries, often in conjunction with churches, and filled with tombstones commemorating adherents of the new faith (Schmitz 2004).

The result of all these Christianizing activities was a transformation of the region's sacred landscape, at least in the major cities and military forts. By the end of the fourth century, Christians in the German borderlands had created a network of new holy sites and places of worship, beginning with humble shrines on the outskirts of cities and proceeding (in the case of Trier at least) to larger, more ambitious constructions in civic centers, the forerunners of the Rhineland's great medieval cathedrals. Nor was their impact on the cities restricted to the areas consecrated for Christian worship. Instead, through processions and festivals, they linked these areas with the broader urban landscape, albeit in ephemeral fashion (Kuhnen 1996:27–30). In this way, they articulated a new and different topography of the sacred on the German frontier, with nodes of power emanating initially from extramural sanctuaries and reaching eventually to the cities' urban core.

This Christian transformation of the landscape came often at the expense of the traditional pagan one. The point perhaps needs stressing, as does the potential for violence inherent in the Christian attitude towards pagan monuments. It is true that Late Antique imperial legislation did not ensure that all pagan shrines were immediately obliterated, as repeated, increasingly fervent edicts on the subject demonstrate (Fowden 1978:53–58). And there is evidence that individual Christians appreciated the aesthetic value of the sculptures and buildings of their religious adversaries and sought to preserve them—for instance, through the formation of collections of (desacralized) cult statues and the re-use of temples for new secular or Christian purposes (Saradi-Mendelovici 1990:50–56). But despite these occasional instances of toleration, frequently noted by recent scholars, it must be emphasized that the orthodox Christian attitude towards the artifacts of pagan religion was condemnatory and intransigent. Constantine's chronicler Eusebius, for example, announced joyfully that Christians could by the 340s A.D. “spit on the faces of the lifeless idols, tread down the unholy rites of the demons” (H.E. 10.4.16). So too, Firmicus Maternus in A.D. 346 urged on the sons of Constantine: “[T]here remains only a very little for your laws to accomplish, whereby the devil may lie prostrate and overthrown before them, and the baneful contamination of a dead idolatry shall have vanished away” (De errore profan. relig. 20.7). By the end of the fourth century, Augustine could urge his congregation to destroy pagan idols: “[F]or that all superstition of pagans and heathens should be annihilated is what God wants, God commands, God proclaims!” (Serm. 24.6). Indeed, it could not be otherwise. For those engaged in the wholesale transformation of antique society, these relics of past religious practice were not simply works of art but sites of demonic power, deeply threatening to adherents of the new faith. Thus, these dangerous monuments had to be destroyed or at any rate transformed in such a way that they could do no further harm. It was the right, indeed the obligation, of proper Christian leaders to do so, and both literary and archaeological sources suggest that bishops, monks, and many imperial officials fulfilled such duties with particular zeal.

Such early Christian iconoclastic activities seem especially pronounced in the Latin West. While the attacks in the Eastern empire—for instance, the destruction of the Serapeion in Alexandria—are more famous, those in the West were perhaps even more extensive, because the central government was less powerful. As Garth Fowden has shown, bishops in the Western provinces were able to attack pagan monuments even without official legislation or the support of the government; the Aquitanian bishop St. Martin of Tours provides the best-documented example of this practice (Fowden 1978). St. Martin aimed at the conversion of the countryside; with this goal, he frequently destroyed statues, shrines, and temples that served as a focus of

29. The most comprehensive up-to-date discussion of the Christianization of the Rhineland is Dassmann 1993, with a good integration of literary and archaeological sources. On the bishops and churches, see also Dassmann 2004:4–10; Klein 2000.
31. See, for example, Papalexandrou 2003; Saradi-Mendelovici 1990.

32. For Eusebius, Firmicus, and Augustine, see MacMullen 1984:86–101, “Conversion by coercion”; see also Mango 1963.
33. For the literary sources dealing with St. Martin, the best-documented of these icon-smashing Christian leaders in the Late Antique West, see Stancliffe 1983, esp. 328–340, for St. Martin’s campaign against paganism; for a broader picture, contrasting the situation in the eastern and western halves of the empire, see Fowden 1978. For the archaeological evidence, such as Gaul, for example, see Rousselle 1990:155–163.
pagan worship. He is even recorded as destroying a pagan votive column with a statue on top, very plausibly a Jupiter column, since they occur in France as well as Germany.\textsuperscript{34} And while his activities were particularly well documented by his hagiographers, St. Martin was not unique; instead, his activities were characteristic of his era, as is shown by a number of pagan sanctuaries in Gaul and Germany whose destruction is dated to the Late Antique period and plausibly linked to Christians (Rousselle 1990:155–163).

These destructive actions of the early Christians were closely linked to their creative transformation of the religious landscape. This is particularly clear in the case of Late Antique churches, frequently constructed using spolia from pagan monuments.\textsuperscript{35} The monuments have been excavated from a series of fourth to fifth century A.D. churches in the Rhineland, including the predecessor to the Bonn Münster,\textsuperscript{36} the Late Antique churches beneath St. Gereon's\textsuperscript{37} and St. Ursula's in Cologne,\textsuperscript{38} the predecessor of the Pfarrkirche St. Maria-Himmelfahrt in Jülich,\textsuperscript{39} and the building beneath

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure7}
\caption{Map of the German provinces in the Late Antique period showing sites where pagan religious monuments were found in churches. Key to map: 1. Alzey, 2. Bonn, 3. Jülich, 4. Köln. Note: A larger dot shows the site where two churches with monuments were found. Adaptation of fig. 56 from Maureen Carroll, Romans, Celts, and Germans: The German Provinces of Rome (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Tempus Publishing Ltd., 2001).
}
\end{figure}
and an inscription. The blocks, although much weathered, also show signs of intentional damage, particularly to the heads of the gods (Bauchhenss and Noelke 1981:415–416, 481, pls. 59–61, 95; Haberey and Neuffer 1951:306–312).

40. A series of Jupiter columns and other religious monuments (such as votive stelai) were found in the foundations of an early fourth-century building (Skulpturenbau C) within the fort. The building has been identified as a church based on its location (under the later St. Georgskirche) as well as the many religious monuments used in its foundations. In addition, many of the monuments have been defaced in a manner characteristic of other Late Antique Christian sites; the faces and genitalia of the gods seem to have been particular targets. At least nine fragmentary Jupiter columns and twenty-two other votive monuments were reused in the building’s foundations (Bauchhenss and Noelke 1981:88–92, pls. 2.1–2, 4.2; Künzl 1975:7–9, 16–28).

41. See note 40 (Alzey), note 36 (Bonn).
Fragments of pagan monuments were deployed as well in a series of Late Antique fortifications from the German frontier. Of course, even more than with the recycling of these artifacts in churches, there were practical reasons behind their reuse in city walls and fortresses (Staab 1994); the third-century raids by the Alamanni had provided a clear demonstration of the frontier region’s vulnerability, and inhabitants responded by constructing walls around almost every major civic and military site (Nuber 1997). To do so effectively and efficiently, they were forced to make extensive use of spolia; their efforts resulted in the

they tended routinely to damage these monuments in certain characteristic ways. In the building beneath the Bonn Münster, for example, they chopped the heads off all images visible in the foundation walls (fig. 9: Lehner 1931:4–5). While in the case of statues in the round this might be seen as practical—such action rendered the object a sturdier, four-square block for building—the same explanation does not hold for relief sculpture. There the heads projected no further than the rest of the body, and so it is quite striking to see them systematically lopped off, especially in scenes with large numbers of figures. Such action required extra time and effort, but it was, it seems, the appropriate method of treatment for divine images. Torn down, broken up, and with their heads, the source of their power, destroyed, these remnants of pagan monuments in Christian churches served as a clear and effective symbol of the triumph of the new religion. As such they appeared in churches throughout the Roman Empire—ranging from the Byzantine Little Metropolis in Athens, with its incorporation of classical reliefs from the Acropolis, to the great medieval churches of Rome—and were particularly popular in Germany, where the recycling of these mutilated sculptures continued well into the Middle Ages.43


43. On the “Little Metropolis,” see Papalexandrou 2003; on Rome, Gramaccini 1996:63–73; in the most comprehensive catalogue of Roman religious monuments in Germany to date, that of Émile Espérandieu (1907–1981), some six percent of the objects were found built in to later churches (Espérandieu 1907–1981; Merrifield 1987:97).
preservation (albeit in mutilated and fragmentary form) of extraordinary numbers of earlier monuments, 2,375 in the Late Antique city wall of Mainz alone, and others from Altrip, Alzey, Bad Kreuznach, Deutz, and Eisenberg (fig. 10). Nonetheless—as was the case with churches—it is worth noting that in these walls too they made much more frequent use of religious than of funerary monuments, even when the votives and cult statues appear most inconveniently shaped for building purposes. And in addition, the reused religious objects often exhibit signs of attack—for instance, smashed heads and mutilated genitals, which are difficult to explain on purely pragmatic grounds (fig. 11). We might thus hypothesize that they too suffered from Christian iconoclastic violence, either during construction of the walls or more likely during the destructive activities, which rendered the monuments available for reuse.

44. The city wall spolia in Mainz were not exclusively religious—in the area of the city’s former cemetery, grave monuments were used as well—but the votive and cult images and altars were both more numerous and more broadly distributed throughout the wall as a whole. They likely comprised most of the furnishings of the legionary camp’s sanctuaries (Frenz 1986: esp. 335).

45. The wall of the Late Antique fort at Altrip, dated to the late fourth century A.D., included numerous votive inscriptions and reliefs. On the wall itself, see Dassmann 1993:59, and for examples of the sculptures, see Bauchhenss and Noelke 1981:86–87, nos. 2–8.

46. The Late Antique fort at Alzey was constructed ca. A.D. 370, Oldenstien 1994:71. Its fortification wall, like its church, incorporated the use of spolia including a Jupiter column (Bauchhenss and Noelke 1981:88, nos. 9–10; Künlz 1975:23–24, no. 6, 40–41, no. 36 (a rare grave monument), 41–42, no. 39).

47. The Late Antique fort at Bad Kreuznach, erected ca. A.D. 350, included extensive numbers of spolia; approximately forty percent of the stone monuments found in the area came from it (Boppert 2001, 29, fig. 3).

48. The Late Antique fort at Deutz, opposite Cologne, was inhabited from the early fourth to fifth centuries (Carroll-Spillecke 1997:143); its wall contained spolia from Jupiter columns, on which see Bauchhenss and Noelke 1981, 434–435, nos. 47, 48, 448–449, no. 92.

49. The mining town of Eisenberg had a Late Antique tower, which incorporated within it spolia including Jupiter columns (Bauchhenss and Noelke 1981:121–124, nos. 132–141).

50. For the use of spolia from religious monuments and public buildings rather than graves as characteristic of Late Antique walls in Gaul and Germany, see Blagg 1983. The awkwardly shaped sculptures reused in such walls include the statues of Jupiter in the round, often found atop Jupiter columns—for example, an enthroned Jupiter from the wall at Mainz (Mainz, Mittelrheinisches Landesmuseum inv. no. S 867, Bauchhenss 1984:21–22, no. 2, pls. 4–5).

51. These are particularly notable in the relief sculptures reused in walls as also in churches. See, for example, Mainz, Mittelrheinisches Landesmuseum inv. nos. S 815, S1065, Frenz 1992:84–85, no. 44, 100, no. 69, pl. 383; S660 Bauchhenss 1984:51–52, no. 45, pls. 80–81.
is the city wall of Pergamon, into which the sculptures from the Hellenistic Great Altar were incorporated, but the same phenomenon may be observed also at Ephesos, Ankara, Miletus, and Sardis (Foss and Winfeld 1986:132–139; James 1996:20 n. 56). In such cases, the high-profile redeployment of sculpted marble blocks, frequently arranged in ornate patterns, might suggest that aesthetic motives encouraged such recycling. But given the context of the early seventh century—when the Roman Empire in the east faced first Persian, then Arab attacks, both very powerful and arriving in rapid succession—it is possible that other motivations were at work as well. As Liz James has argued, the deployment of pagan monuments on these walls can plausibly be seen as apotropaic, that is, as an attempt to harness the extraordinary power inherent in the objects for the defense of the city (James 1996:16). An apotropaic function seems appropriate as well for the German monuments, particularly given that aesthetic concerns seem less operative here; most of the objects were, as in churches, deployed at the foundation level.

The attacks, mutilations, and instances of recycling detailed above help us understand more fully the attitudes towards images prevailing in Late Antique frontier society. It is worth noting that these attitudes were congruent with those of the earlier inhabitants of the German borderlands, although the actors here were likely Christians rather than pagans. In both cases, those who dealt with the objects seem to have emphatically acknowledged their inherent supernatural power, and all sought to access it—whether through the safeguarding of intact monuments via ritual burial or through their redeployment, fragmented and disfigured, in churches and fortifications. In this way, we can see how Roman imperial conceptions of the image formed part of the inheritance of Germany's first Christians; this has important implications for our understanding of the area's early medieval art.

52. Much recent scholarship on the Byzantine reception of classical art has focused on aesthetic motives for spoliation; see, for example, Hansen 2003:225–243; Papalexandrou 2003:61; Saradi-Mendelovici 1990:53.


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