

A banquet for the gods: the cultural significance of a distinctive group of small, first century CE reclining bronze figures

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A banquet for the gods: the cultural significance of a distinctive group of small, first century CE reclining bronze figures

By Hella Eckardt

Keywords: Roman / figural mounts / banquetters / dining / incense burners / votive / religion

Schlagwörter: Römisch / figürliche Bronzen / Festteilnehmer / Bankett / Weihrauch / Votive / Religion

Mots-clés : Epoque romaine / figures en bronze / festoyants / banquet / encens / exvoto / religion

Introduction

Roman representations of, and attitudes towards, drinking and dining have previously been studied through the analysis of sculpture, mosaics and wall painting, highlighting the central role of these social practices across the Empire¹. This paper presents a previously unrecognised but very distinctive group of objects that can shed new light on banqueting but also on rituals associated with venerating the gods and the dead, in particular the burning of incense. The research presented here defines and analyses for the first time a group of 90 small (ca. 32 mm high and around 35 mm long) copper-alloy mounts that depict a reclining, usually but not always, male figure, intended to represent divine or human banquetters (*Fig. 1*)². No overview currently exists, but individual examples have been identified as river gods, Genii or Mercury³. These objects are solid-cast, relatively flat and usually slightly curved; some have solder on the lower edge. It is likely that they were originally attached to the rim, or perhaps lid, of a vessel, with the figure facing inwards; such vessels were probably for incense⁴. Other possibilities are lamp stands or cart fittings. The similarity in pose and size suggests that the figures, and perhaps the associated vessels, were produced in only a few workshops but they are now distributed across Italy and the north-western provinces.

This paper provides the first analysis of this distinctive group, beginning with a detailed iconographic discussion. The figures are contextualised by tracing the type's antecedents and discussing related, but slightly larger examples. I will then explore their function and review the dating and distribution evidence. Incense burners with reclining banquetters have a long history from the Greek period onwards, when they were very high-status objects indeed; these small and more humble examples nevertheless signify the adoption of religious practices across Roman society and in particular in the provinces. They may even relate to a specific late Republican propitiatory ritual, the *lectisternium*.

None were found still attached to a copper-alloy base (which may be expected for larger figurines) and none are associated with either a vessel, lamp stand or cart fittings, pointing either

¹ DUNBABIN 2003; ROLLER 2006.

² And one silver example from Pompeii.

³ KUNCKEL 1974, 94, pl. 52, No. F III.22; GREEN 1976, 216 pl. XIIIc; KAUFMANN-HEINIMANN

1977, 41, pl. 33,36; NIBLETT 1999, 411; FAUST 2000, 298 no. 52.

⁴ LEBEL 1962, 29; WEBSTER 1995, 49; WORRELL 2005, 451–452.



Fig. 1. Figural mount from Usk (71).

to their 'afterlife' once detached, perhaps as votive objects, or suggesting that they functioned as stand-alone figures, perhaps within a small shrine. That figural fittings could be removed from (in this case silver) metal vessels is indicated by Cicero in his case against the corrupt Verres, a source discussed in more detail below⁵.

This research is supported by a catalogue of all known specimens of this object type (*Appendix, Tab. 1–3*). These objects were gathered by an extensive literature search combined with information available on museum websites; many finds are now in private hands and while these lack contextual information they were considered in terms of iconography.

Iconography

The number of Roman figurines depicting reclining gods or humans is too large to be considered in detail here. This section focuses on a group of 90 small figures, which are broadly similar in terms of pose and size and which share a flat and slightly curved shape. The figure is almost always shown reclining on their left elbow, with the left hand in front of the body, over the drapery, and the right arm resting along the body; the head is facing forward. Where the entire object is curved, the head is facing inwards.

In order to investigate the meaning of these figures I have classified them into ten interpretative categories, defined on the basis of clothing and attributes such as the *petasos* for Mercury; within each type, there is also considerable variation in terms of the 'quality' of the representations and the details of their iconography (*Appendix, Tab. 1–3; Figs 2–9*). It is worth noting that the distinction between the very small, curved examples possibly from vessels and the slightly larger, more three-dimensional figures that could be from other objects or indeed have been free-standing, can be difficult to make, especially as illustrations are often poor and/or do not show all possible views of the object. In *Tables 1–3* these larger figures (>60 mm) are shown in italics and not numbered to make the distinction between the 'core types' of small diners and the rarer, larger, sometimes possibly hollow-cast and more three-dimensional forms

⁵ Cicero, *Against Verres* 2.4.48.

clear, while also acknowledging their shared iconography. Figures that share the iconography but are larger than 100 mm are discussed as parallels below but not included in the data tables.

We will move from male and female deities, Genii and Lares to humans, before considering shared stylistic features.

Type 1: Mercury (*Figs 2–3*)

That Mercury is intended is evident from the winged cap (*petasos*), although in some cases this has degenerated into two indistinct peaks (4 Biesheim, DE; 7 Fordham, UK; 16 Richborough, UK; 27 antiquities trade) or a helmet-shape without wings (2 Ampurias, ES; 11 Montbéliard, FR; *Figs 2–3*). In an example now in Paris, the hair is shown peeking out from underneath the cap. The identification as Mercury can be further confirmed by other attributes such as the *caduceus* (3 Augst, CH; 5 Breny, FR; 23 Cambridge [MA], US; 6 Eynsford, UK; 13 *Nasium*, FR; 18 Smederevo, RS; 19 Speyer, DE; and 22 Verona, IT) and the money bag (6 Eynsford; 7 Fordham; 14 Oderzo, IT; 17 Rißtissen, DE; 18 Smederevo; 15 Orange, FR; and unprovenanced examples now in 23 Cambridge [USA]; 24 Louvre/Paris, FR; 26 Weimar, DE). Two examples (w/o no. *Lauriacum*, AT & 20 Tiriolo, IT) have winged boots while the Augst (3) and Verona (22) examples hold a patera, which is an unusual attribute for Mercury. The god is shown either naked apart from a cloak around the shoulders with the legs modelled distinctly (3 Augst; 5 Breny; 23 Cambridge [MA]; 13 *Nasium*; 18 Smederevo; 19 Speyer and 22 Verona) or with a garment around the lower body, sometimes twisted, which is the clothing style shared with many of the other figures of this overall group (see below). Some examples are not well enough preserved to determine the clothing in detail (2 Ampurias; 14 Oderzo). The find from Lyon has unusually shortened legs and/or the remains of a casting sprue and may have been from a handle⁶.

While the garment is quite realistic in the Eynsford (6), Fordham (7) and Orange (15) examples, it is much more schematic in other cases (1 Albias, FR; 4 Biesheim; 9 Mantova, IT; 10 Margon, FR; 11 Montbéliard; 16 Richborough; 27 antiquities trade). On the back of the figure the clothing can be indicated by horizontal and diagonal lines; alternatively, a couch may be intended. A youthful figure of unknown provenance now in the British Museum is more three-dimensional, not curved and apparently hollow underneath; it lacks the *petasos* but holds a money bag in his right and a *caduceus* in his left hand; while small, it is clearly not of the type that forms the focus of this paper⁷. The slightly larger example from *Lauriacum* is the only figure reclining on his right side; the unusual posture, with the legs separated as if standing, and the supposed poor execution led some to suggest it is a modern forgery but others consider it Roman⁸. In cases where the object is worn or the available image is very poor (e.g. 12 Naples, IT; 28 antiquities trade) it is quite possible that a different observer would identify a human diner of Type 10A (see below).

⁶ ROLLAND 1965, 169–170 no. 389.

⁷ WALTERS 1899, 211 no. 1224; Acc. No. 1864, 0226.2; pers. com. Katie Manby.

⁸ FLEISCHER 1967, 199 no. 295a, pl. 133 vs. KAUFMANN-HEINIMANN 1977, 41.



Fig. 2. Type 1: Mercury at banquet.



Now in British Museum



14. Oderzo, Italy



2. Ampurias, Spain



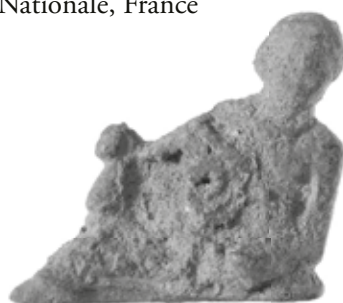
25. Now in Musée d'Archéologie Nationale, France



17. Rißtissen, Germany



26. Now in Weimar, Germany



7. Fordham, UK



15. Orange, France
(scale unknown)



4. Biesheim, France



16. Richborough, UK



10. Margon, France



1. Albias, France



9. Mantua, Italy



27. Antiquities Trade



Fig. 3. Type 1: Mercury at banquet continued.

Type 2



29. Finistère, France



30. Trier, Germany

Type 3



31. Now in British Museum, UK

*Now in British Museum, UK**Sicily, Italy (now in British Museum, UK)*

Type 4



32. Fiesole, Italy

*Palestrina, Italy (now in British Museum, UK)**Mathay (now in Montbéliard, France)*

0 30 mm
1:1

Fig. 4. Type 2: river gods; Type 3: Hercules; Type 4: Silenus.

Type 2: River god?

A reclining bearded figure reclining with a patera in his right hand and a garment draped over his lower legs from Finistère (FR; 29) could well be intended to represent a river god, although Hercules or Silenus are also possibilities. It is not certain whether there is a vessel in the crook of the left arm, which would confirm the identification (*Fig. 4*).

The figure from Trier (DE; 30) is clearly intended to be a river god, with the standard reclining pose but punched semi-circular lines on the lower body indicating waves. The right hand is holding a patera, and the left may hold another object, though it does not appear to be the vase from which a river springs that is a common attribute of river gods⁹. The back is plain, with a curved moulding, which may suggest a couch.

Type 3: Hercules

There are copper-alloy figurines of a drunk Hercules, but most of these appear to be slightly larger, more three-dimensional and lacking the curved shape of some of the Mercury, Genius and diner figures that are the main focus of this paper; these may have been freestanding figurines or attached to other types of objects (*Fig. 4*). The British Museum alone has three examples showing the god reclining naked: a Hercules holding a drinking cup and resting on a lion skin, a youthful Hercules Bibax and a small figure not certainly identified as Hercules (31).

Type 4 Silenus

Silenus is similar to Hercules in being an ‘appropriate’ image for a banquet, and in a figure from Italy (32 Fiesole, IT) he is shown reclining on a wineskin, bald and bearded (*Fig. 4*). Two further examples, from Palestrina and Montbéliard, are slightly larger and rest on their right arm, in contrast to the vast majority of the figural mounts discussed here.

Type 5: Asclepius

I am aware of only one figure that depicts the god of medicine, reclining and holding a patera in his right hand and what may be a snake in his left hand. This example is of unknown provenance but may be from one of the Vesuvian sites given that it was purchased from Sir William Hamilton, who was plenipotentiary envoy to Naples¹⁰. It is larger than most of the figural mounts that are the main focus of this paper, but does appear to be very slightly curved (*Fig. 5*).

Type 6: Fortuna?

A small group of figures depict a clothed female, holding a cornucopia in the crook of her left arm, and a rudder (34 Cologne, DE; 35 Xanten, DE) or a patera (33 Colchester, UK) in her right hand (*Fig. 5*). The object held in the left hand of the Colchester (33) figure is difficult to identify. The example from Cologne (34) has both a bun at the back of the head and a modius on the top of it. It is most likely that the deity represented is Fortuna. A figure originally identified as Fortuna from Verona (48) is more likely a Genius (see below). The figure from Lyon, originally identified as Tellus, has flowing hair and is larger than the other examples but may

⁹ FAUST 2000, 298.

¹⁰ JENKINS/SLOAN 1996.

Type 5



Now in British Museum, UK

Type 6



33. Colchester, UK



34. Cologne, Germany



35. Xanten, Germany



Lyon, France



La Cruz del Santo, Spain

Type 7



36. Vindonissa, Switzerland

0 30 mm
1:1

Fig. 5. Type 5: Asclepius; Type 6: Fortuna; Type 7: Minerva.

also represent Fortuna. A larger example of a beautiful Fortuna reclining on a cushion, with her left hand raised towards her head and the right hand holding the rudder is a chance find from La Cruz del Santo, Sotos del Burgo in Spain¹¹.

Type 7: Minerva

There is a single example of a clearly identified reclining Minerva, from *Vindonissa* (CH, 36). The goddess wears a helmet and *aegis*, with her left arm and shoulder resting on a large shield. The right hand holds a patera (*Fig. 5*).

Type 8: Genius

This group is shown as a fully clothed and veiled (*capite velato*) figure, holding a patera in their right hand (now Berlin, DE; Lyon; now München; now Naples; now Paris; *Pituntium*; Strasbourg; Venice and possibly Mildenhall) (*Figs 6–7*). Those from Strasbourg (FR, 46) and Verona also hold a cornucopia in the left arm while the ones from Aquileia (IT, 37), Castelvenere di Pirano (IT, 39), Lyon (FR, w/o no.), Mildenhall (UK); and Venice (IT, 47) hold an incense box (*acerra*). An antiquarian find from *Herculaneum* (IT, 40) appears to rest on his right side but is otherwise very similar to the group of figures holding an incense box and the antiquarian illustration may well be mirrored. The examples from Aquileia, Besançon (FR, 38), Castelvenere di Pirano and Mildenhall appear to rest on a bulky feature (possibly a cushion for a dining couch). The figure from Besançon is described as a veiled female but is too poorly preserved to determine this with certainty or identify any attributes. A figure now in Berlin may represent a Genius or a fully clothed diner of Type 10C; unusually the patera is in the left hand while the attribute in the right hand is unclear. Some Genii, like the figure from *Pituntium*, have rather schematic clothing.

The Lyon and Strasbourg examples were originally interpreted as a priest and a Lar respectively, though the latter is not convincing¹². Given the attributes of figures in this type, an interpretation as a Genius is most likely. While reclining Genii are far less common than standing ones, there is a now lost wall painting from Pompeii that depicts a Genius reclining on a couch at a banquet¹³.

Type 9: Lar

A figure originally from Rome, now in Paris (53), wears a belted tunic and holds a cornucopia in the left and a patera in the right hand, the arrangement usually seen in standing Lares; it may also have worn a wreath (*Fig. 7*). The same attributes and pose occur in an example from the antiquities trade (55). A similar figure from a private collection in the Netherlands (54) has the same attributes but in the opposite hands; his tunic flares at the bottom in a way that is very reminiscent of standing Lares. All probably represent household gods.

¹¹ L.: 85 mm; h.: 45 mm. – ORTEGO 1949, 416–418 figs 3–5; GALLIAZZO 1979, 73.

¹³ ROMEO 1997, 602 no. 17; see now STEFANI 2000, 424 fig. 6.

¹² BOUCHER 1960, 318 fig. 126; 1976, 242, pl. 81, nos 403–404.

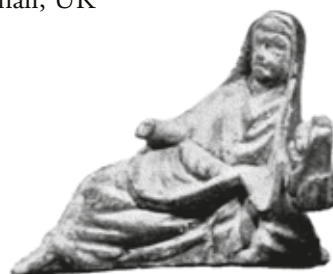
Type 8



42. Mildenhall, UK



39. Castelvevone di Pirano, Trieste, Italy



37. Aquileia, Italy (scale unknown)

45. *Pituntium*, Croatia

47. Venice, Italy (scale unknown)



52. Now München, Germany



49. Now Berlin, Germany

*Lyon, France*40. *Herculaneum*, Italy (scale unknown)

Fig. 6. Type 8: reclining Genius.

Type 8



50. Now Berlin, Germany



38. Besançon, France



48. Verona, Italy



46. Strasbourg, France

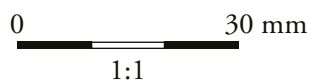
Type 9



53. Rome, now Paris



54. ?Netherlands



Type 10A



57. Bembridge, UK



59. Isle of Wight, UK



61. Antiquities Trade



64. Private collection, Germany



56. Baden, Switzerland



60. Fort Vechten, Holland

Fig. 7. Type 8: reclining Genius continued; Type 9: Lares; Type 10A: reclining diners.

Type 10: Human or divine banqueters

This, the largest attested type, may represent divine or human banqueters, with humans certainly intended for the fully clothed Type 10C (*Figs 7–9*). Types 10A and 10B have a naked upper body, with a garment draped around the lower body; these figures may be intended to represent gods or human diners in an archaizing style. Type 10A and 10B are distinguished by their overall ‘quality’ and style but that division is quite fluid. Generally, Type 10A is of a more elongated shape, with a clearly defined raised/angled right arm; the casting is usually more detailed. By contrast, Type 10B is of a more triangular shape, with often very schematic drapery, fingers and hair.

Type 10C is defined as a reclining figure of the same dimensions and shape, often with the ‘triangular’ body shape common to Type 10B, but clothed on the upper body, with clothing also shown on the back of the figural mount. Slightly larger than most of our examples and apparently made of silver is a fine female figure from Pompeii (IT, 88); the patera is in her left hand, which rests on a pillow¹⁴.

I consider most of the figures to be male, although in some cases a knot or bun at the back of the head may point to a female (85 Autun, FR; 80 Colchester; 87 Osburg, DE; 88 Pompeii; 69 Rickingham Inferior, UK; and 71 Usk, UK; also 61 antiquities trade; 64 private collection) or the overall, parted hairstyle may indicate a woman (56 Baden, CH; 86 Kempten, DE; 89 private collection; *Fig. 9*). The Ampurias (78), Autun (85), Baden (56), Osburg (87) and Trinity Antiques (83) figures hold a patera in their right hand and there may also be something in the right hand of the Earl Soham (UK, 58) and a find probably from the Netherlands (63). The figure from Vechten (NL, 60) has an elegantly raised right hand, but it is unclear if it once held an attribute. In a number of examples, the fingers of the right hand are rendered by simple lines (67 Cirencester, UK, and 72: *Verulamium*, UK). In the highly stylized figures from Colchester (80) and the Mosel at Trier (81) the right arm and hand are effectively lost, perhaps because they are underneath a garment. It is usually not possible to discern whether the left hand held an object, but this may be the case, for example at Rickingham Inferior (69) and perhaps also in an example from the Isle of Wight (UK, 59). The figure from Autun (85) is described as holding a garland, which extends across the hip. In many other cases fingers are clearly shown on the left hand, which therefore did not hold an attribute (73 Baldock?, UK; 57 Bembridge, UK; 67 Cirencester; 80 Colchester; 81 Trier; 71 Usk; 72 *Verulamium*).

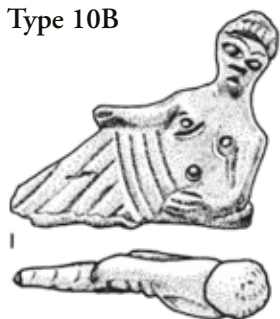
On some examples (e.g. 57 Bembridge; 80 Colchester; 58 Earl Soham; 59 Isle of Wight) there are horizontal and diagonal lines on the back, which may be crude renderings of the garment, or represent a couch.

Overall style

Within each type, there is considerable variation in terms of the quality and competence of the casting and decoration, with these qualitative differences cutting across the seven broad types defined above. For example, the casting of the drapery folds varies in quality, depth and detail between figural mounts, and can sometimes be incised. In some cases the folds are modelled very crudely by diagonal lines, often converging towards the feet in a highly stylized triangle. This simplistic rendering occurs across types, for example in Mercury figures (e.g. 1 Albias; 4 Biesheim; 10 Margon; 16 Richborough) and Type 10B diners. In a similar vein, a twisted garment around

¹⁴ STEFANI 2000, 427 fig. 11.

Type 10B



71. Usk, UK

67. Cirencester, UK
(scale unknown)

73. Baldock (scale unknown)

72. *Verulamium*, UK
(scale unknown)

75. Netherlands



69. Rickingham Inferior, UK



77. Netherlands



66. Bordeaux, France



76. Unknown, probably Germany



74. Unknown Ebay



70. Shenstone, UK



68. Langstone, UK

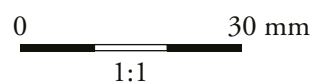


Fig. 8. Type 10B: reclining diners.

Type 10C



80. Colchester, UK



78. Ampurias, Spain
(scale unknown)



81. Trier, Germany



82. Antiquities Trade



79. Clermond-Ferrand, France



89. Private collection



87. Osburg, Germany



85. Autun, France



86. Kempten, Germany
(scale unknown)



88. Pompeii, Italy

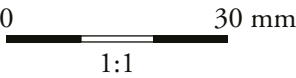


Fig. 9. Type 10C: reclining diners.

the waist can be rendered three-dimensionally (e.g. 58 Earl Soham; 60 Vechten) or simply as lines (Type 10B). The back of the Genius from Verona (48) shows the garment in some detail, while the back of the slightly larger Genius from Lyon simply shows three large grooves.

Features of the naked upper body such as the form of the chest and navel on the front and the shoulder blades on the back can be indicated either by moulded grooves or incised lines (e.g. 69 Rickingham Inferior; 10 Margon; 16 Richborough), or more rarely circular punches (81 Trier). In the more accomplished pieces the bodies are rendered slightly more in the round. In an example now in Paris (24: Louvre) the breast of what is thought to be a Mercury are unusually pronounced.

The face is often very worn, but commonly shows rather large eyes, sometimes with dotted pupils (e.g. 16 Richborough; 81 Trier). On the Richborough example “the nose and mouth [are] indicated by semicircular marks, which at first sight suggest that a drooping moustache is intended”¹⁵; the same effect is noticeable on the *Verulamium* (72) and possibly the Biesheim (4) figures, as well as Colchester (80) and Trier (81). The Usk figural mount (71) is described as having a “cheerful archaic smile” and “either a deeply notched chin or a rudimentary beard” (see *Fig. 1*)¹⁶.

The figures without a *petasos* or modius usually have quite helmet-style hair. The Rickingham Inferior example (69) has three crude grooves on the top, as does the one from Baldock? (73); Cirencester (67) has dots to indicate hair while Ampurias (78) may be bald. In other cases the hair is rendered by finer lines, sometimes ending in a straight edge above the eyes (80 Colchester; 71 Usk; 81 Trier). Colchester (80), Rickingham Inferior (69) and Usk (71) appear to have a knot or bun at the back of the head, indicating a woman.

Antecedents and function

The motif of reclining banqueting figures has a long history, the full exploration of which is beyond the scope of this paper. There are also too many Graeco-Etruscan reclining figures now detached from their vessels to consider in detail¹⁷. Examples include three banqueters from Italy thought to date to the 6th century BCE¹⁸, an Etruscan reclining banqueter holding a lyre and a reclining youth from a cauldron dated to circa 480 BCE¹⁹; there are also many Greek examples²⁰. There are also Graeco-Etruscan antecedents for a reclining Silenus, with a spectacular Etruscan example holding a patera in his right hand and with clearly defined goat feet now in Verona Museum²¹.

Instead, here I focus in particular on examples where the figures are still attached to a vessel. An Etruscan (525–500 BCE) example thought to be a wine-cooler is now in the British Museum²² and there are banqueters on rim of a tripod from Trebenischte, Belgrade²³. Somewhat

¹⁵ BUSHE-FOX 1949, 138.

¹⁶ WEBSTER 1995, 49.

¹⁷ But see BIEG 2002, 130–146.

¹⁸ MITTEN/DOERING 1967, 58–59 nos 43–45; WEBSTER 1995, 49.

¹⁹ HAYNES 1967/68, 113–114; pl. XXV; 1985, 296 no. 140. – COMSTOCK/VERMEULE 1971, 165 no. 189.

²⁰ Useful summary in JANTZEN 1955, 89–90 pl. 61 footnote 146; cf. HAYNES 1955/56; GALLIAZZO 1979, 72–73.

²¹ e.g. NEUGEBAUER 1936, 204–205 pl. 24–26; DE PUMA 2013, 73 no. 4,34a.b. – FRANZONI 1980, 207–208 no. 188; l.: 135 mm; h.: 88 mm, probably from a tripod and paired with a reclining female.

²² HAYNES 1985, 259 no. 39; Acc. No. 1873.0820.217; https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1873-0820-217 (last access: 21/07/2025).

²³ VULIĆ 1933, 466 figs 2–3. – Diameter of tripod rim 0.20 m.

closer in date and style is a vessel of unknown provenance and acquired by the British Museum on the antiquities market in 1859; it is stylistically dated by the British Museum to 250–150 BCE²⁴. This is a shallow bowl with an ovolo pattern around the edge; on the underside are two loops for suspension in the shape of dolphins. Soldered onto the rim are four figures reclining on their left elbows: three men have garments covering their lower limbs, with two grasping the clothing with their right hand and one holding a shallow bowl (*Fig. 10a*). The fourth may be female or a priest, as the garment is drawn over her head. The vessel's diameter is given as 12.7 cm and its height as 5.08 cm, and the figures are ca. 40 mm in length and 17–20 mm in height. This is described as an Etruscan incense burner; the figures' dress appears more typical of an Etruscan rather than a Roman object but may of course be archaizing²⁵.

A fascinating group of ceramic incense burners is known from Pompeii and surrounding areas, with 39 examples decorated with human appliques (busts and reclining females)²⁶. These are iconographically strikingly similar to some of our copper-alloy figures, depicting a reclining woman with her hair in a bun, wearing a belted chiton and holding a patera in her right hand. The ceramic appliques measure between 550–160 mm in length and 35–153 mm in height and are also curved, reflecting the fact that they were attached to the interior of the ceramic vessel, in some cases slightly protruding above its rim. The ceramic appliques differ in depicting a mattress and/or kline much more clearly than the copper-alloy examples. They are thought to date to between the 2nd century BCE and 1st century CE, and appear to a Campanian object type.

A complete incense burner, still containing ash and charred plants (!) and depicting a reclining female between two busts was found in the Risi Di Prisco villa of Boscoreale beneath a cult niche and in the same room as a marble statuette and a silver sheet once decorating a wooden box that also depict a female reclining figure; also found were unguent bottles, a jug and patera and a lamp²⁷. The indentations on the rim may echo the ovolo decoration of the copper-alloy example now in the British Museum and the object was clearly still in use at the time of the eruption (*Fig. 10b*).

Mould-made ceramic reclining figures (of a satyr, Hermes, Silenus and women) can also be affixed to the upper surface of low, shallow ceramic incense burners with overhanging lips and ring bases; these are thought to have an “early-Hellenistic Syracusan origin”, with multiple examples found at Morgantina²⁸. A well preserved shallow incense dish with raised rim and pedestal foot from Syracuse has a central, applied reclining woman in chiton and cloak holding a cornucopia²⁹. The iconographic similarities (in terms of deities, attributes, posture and details of dress for the women) are very striking.

It is perhaps significant that several of the Genii figures discussed in this paper (e.g. Aquileia, Mildenhall, possibly Venice) hold incense boxes, which would refer to the function of the vessel they were once attached to³⁰.

Where preserved, the height of the figures ranges from 27–40 mm (mostly around 32 mm) and the length from 29–63 mm (mostly around 35 mm); the thickness ranges from 3–10 mm.

²⁴ WALTERS 1899, 325 no. 2512; HAYNES 1965, 27–28 pl. 16; Acc. No. 1859,0301.25; https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1859-0301-25 (last access: 21/07/2025).

²⁵ cf. RICHTER 1915, 381.

²⁶ D'AMBROSIO/BORRIELLO 2001, 50–51 nos 62; 63; 65; now EBER forthcoming, Section 2.6.

²⁷ STEFANI 2000, 437–438 fig. 27; 2002, 112–115; EBER forthcoming, RS32.

²⁸ BELL 1981, 234–235 pl. 138–139 nos 935–938.

²⁹ GENTILI 1951, 283–284 fig. 20. – Height of figure (missing the head): 55 mm.

³⁰ cf. BOLLA 2002, 260.



Fig. 10. a Vessel with reclining diners now in London (British Museum, Acc. No. 1859,0301.25). Diameter 12.7 cm, height 5.08 cm, figures ca. 40 mm long and 17–20 mm high. – b Ceramic incense burner from Boscoreale (PAP Inv. 40196). Diameter 42.5 cm, height: 18 cm.

Both the Trier examples have solder on the base while the Fordham figure appears to have been secured by a rivet. Colchester (no. 80) has a very smooth base with transverse marks that could have been made by a rasp or file (pers. com. Glynn Davies) and the Eynsford mount has a roughened surface where it was once attached.

The back of many figures is moulded or incised, indicating that the back was intended to be seen (note for example the moulded clothing folds on the Trier no. 81 and the Rickinhall Inferior examples). The finish is generally better on the front, however, which is odd if the figures were facing inwards on a vessel, meaning that they would mainly be viewed from the back. On the other hand, as the vessel is so small, the effect would have been similar to the British Museum vessel, where the eye is drawn to the figure opposite the viewer.

The remains of a casting sprue may be evident on the figure from Lyon. The mount from Shenstone (UK, 70) is described as having a rib on the rear, which was thought to be part of the vessel rim or where the mount was slotted into a groove. The mounts can be quite worn (Cirencester, Langstone [UK, 68], Shenstone), and in the case of the Earl Soham example the head, feet and hands are missing; the head is also missing for the river deity from Trier (Trier no. 30). The wear and their apparent detachment from a vessel may suggest a long afterlife as a figurine in their own right.

In the few discussions of these figures, the consensus is that these figures once decorated bronze vessels, probably for incense, although none of the ninety examples recorded here have been found with a vessel³¹. There are only a few examples published in such a way as to show a top view, but where such images exist it is clear that the pieces are slightly curved (Earl Soham; Eynsford; Isle of Wight; Osburg; Trier no. 30 & no. 81; Usk; Verona). The curvature may be thought to hint at vessel diameter, which must have been quite small. If the figures were free-standing, the curvature would have provided some stability.

That such figures could be broken from their vessel is evident from Cicero, who describes the former governor of Sicily Verres as removing and stealing applied silver figurines, described as Penates or household gods, from a silver vessel during a banquet:

“When I come to call my witnesses from Sicily, let him choose whomever he wishes for me to interrogate about these **dishes, bowls and censers**: he will discover that not only is there no town, but not even the least wealthy villa that has not experienced this man’s abuse. Whenever he attended a banquet, if he caught sight of anything embossed, members of the jury, he could not keep his hands off it. There is a man of Tyndaris, one Cn. Pompeius, who used to be called Philo. He gave a dinner to Verres at his villa in Tyndaris. He did what the Sicilians did not dare to do; he, being a Roman citizen, thought that he could do it at less risk: **he set out a dish on which the reliefs were outstanding**. Verres, without delay, as soon as he saw it, did not hesitate to remove from his host’s table that symbol of the gods of the household and of hospitality, but I should acknowledge – and I have spoken previously of his moderation – **having removed the reliefs**, he returned the rest of the silver, thereby showing no greed at all”³².

³¹ WEBSTER 1995, 49; WORRELL 2005, 451–452. – From Piercebridge (UK) there is a mount of roughly similar size but depicting a naked figure reclining under a tree (filed down substantially for some reason), which is thought to originally have extended to form vessel handle, perhaps on a large bowl (<https://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/654843> [last access: 21/07/2025]). Such vessel handles are often zoomorphic (e.g. dolphins) but can depict human figures as in

the case of reclining tritons from Trier (MENZEL 1966, 104–105 fig. 49; pl. 76).

³² CICERO, *Against Verres* 2.4.48. Kindly translated by Jonathan Prag, as existing translations such as those by GREENWOOD 1928 (<https://www.attalus.org/cicero/verres24.html> [last access: 21/07/2025]) render *sigilla* as engravings rather than figures in relief, which they must have been to be removed by Verres.

That applied figures could be removed from vessels and valued (both aesthetically and in terms of their metal value) independently is indicated by this and other written sources³³, most notably the silver vessel depicting Africa from the Boscoreale treasure, which records the weight of the embossed element as distinct from the weight of the bowl³⁴.

The specific episode of Philo's silver vessel is immediately preceded by Cicero's general condemnation of Verres for taking vessels and incense burners: "Any big vessel or other large work of art they found they brought in triumphantly; if they failed to hunt out something of that kind, at any rate they would bag such small game as I have mentioned – dishes and bowls and censers. And then we can imagine the weeping and wailing of the women, when such things were done: small things, you may think, but things that cause great and bitter distress; to the poor women above all, as the objects are snatched from their hands that they have regularly used in divine service, inherited from their kinsmen, and had in their homes always"³⁵.

Importantly, this source highlights the association of such vessels with domestic rituals carried out by women. While the kinds of vessels Verres and Cicero were interested in are very high status objects such as the treasures of Morgantina and Boscoreale where the figures are in partial relief, it is just possible that vessels with applied figures that stood proud of the rim or lid are referred to, especially given the similarities to Sicilian ceramic incense burners described above³⁶.

Some of the larger figures have slightly wider, flat (platform) bases, so may have been designed to stand on their own, or were attached to vessels with a broader rim or other objects. Such objects could be the ring reinforcing or supporting the feet of tripods³⁷. Very rarely, a small reclining male figure (Type 10A) is still attached to another type of object, such as a ring now in Bonn interpreted as a harness or cart fitting³⁸. Larger figures thought to be from a luxurious cart in Bulgaria now in the Hermitage Museum St Petersburg depict a reclining Mercury (*Fig. 11*) and Hercules³⁹ and fittings from a cart from Pautalia in Thrace include one depicting a youthful reclining river god, resting is left arm on an urn and holding a fish in his right⁴⁰. Deana Ratković argues that the reclining Mercury from Smederevo in Serbia is also wagon decoration, or at the very least inspired by it⁴¹. An unprovenanced Mercury with *petasos* and cloak from the antiquities trade is shown reclining against an eagle, with his left hand around the bird's neck; the piece is slightly larger than most of our examples (h.: 68 mm) and stands on a circular, hollow base. This may also be a fitting of some kind⁴². It may be worth noting that a reclining figure is depicted on some Sabazius hands, but it differs in being cast as part of the bronze hands and in depicting a reclining woman nursing an infant⁴³.

An assemblage that includes three reclining figures now in Naples is shown in a photo from the DAI (German Archaeological Institute, Rome) with other fittings (eight male and female busts, some depicting deities such as Sol, Diana and Mars), which may point to use as furniture

³³ CALABI LIMENTANI 1958, 117–119; PAOLETTI 2003, 1008.

³⁴ DESSAU 1892, no. 8619; STEFANELLI 1991, 260 no. 37 figs 43; 99–100.

³⁵ CICERO, *Against Verres* 2.4.47; GREENWOOD 1928.

³⁶ PAOLETTI 2003, 1010.

³⁷ FRANZONI 1980, 212.

³⁸ MENZEL 1986, 165–166 pl. 141 no. 462.

³⁹ VON MERCKLIN 1933, 84–89 figs 1–2. – H.: 100 mm; l.: 160 mm. Inv. No. GP-7042.

⁴⁰ ROUSSÉVA-SŁOKOSKA 1994, 390 fig. 6. – No measurements provided but note that the base is flat with at least one perforation, so quite different to our examples.

⁴¹ RATKOVIĆ 2008, 797.

⁴² *Kunstwerke der Antike, Münzen und Medaillen Auction Catalogue* 60, 1982, 70–71 no. 147; pl. 45; cited in SIMON/BAUCHHENS 1992, 508.

⁴³ LANE 1989, 26–27; VERMASEREN 1983, e.g. nos 10; 13; 29; 68; 71; 75.



Fig. 11. Reclining Mercury now in St Petersburg (The State Hermitage Museum, Inv. No. ГР-7042). Height 100 mm, length 160 mm.

mounts. However, the busts are much larger and not uniform in size or style and while they likely come from the fulcra of Roman couches or in the case of the one with a ring from a chest or other item of furniture, they are unlikely to be from the same object, and it is doubtful that the three reclining figures were originally associated⁴⁴.

Two small (h.: 32.5 mm), male busts with a prong at their base were found in the same field as the reclining diner from Bembridge (Isle of Wight), but 'some years apart'⁴⁵. They appear to depict men with rather stylised hair and are stylistically date to the late Iron Age-early Roman period. These could be furniture mounts and *if* all three were originally associated, could again point to use on objects other than bronze vessels.

A luxurious Augustan lampstand from Ephesus now in Vienna was once decorated with a reclining Hercules figure, which is now in the British Museum; while larger (l.: 106 mm; h.: 75 mm) than our examples, it is stylistically very close. Hercules is very well modelled and holds a wreath in his right hand, the left is restored. The object is reconstructed from elements dispersed in the antiquities trade and the position of the figure on the lampstand is apparently based on traces of solder visible before the lampstand was cleaned⁴⁶.

⁴⁴ <https://arachne.uni-koeln.de/images/Abbildungen/dai-rom-fotothek-1967/Bestand-D-DAI-ROM-67.2394.jpg> (last access: 21/07/2025).

⁴⁵ PAS: IOW-2F, IOW-A7CF33 & IOW-C28CE6; WORRELL 2005, 468–469 fig. 22.

⁴⁶ BAILEY 1996, 100 Q3910, pl. 121; 189; WALTERS 1899, 213 no. 1244; BOARDMAN et al. 1988, 777–779; British Museum Acc. No. 1897,0728.1; https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1897-0728-1 (last access: 21/07/2025); EICHLER 1929, 210–211 fig. 145.

If we accept that the figural mounts are from copper-alloy incense burners, they may add a new dimension to our understanding of the consumption of sweet-smelling substances, including the exotic frankincense, even in remote provinces such as Britain⁴⁷.

Dating and distribution

This is the first collection of a large body of finds spread over many modern countries, with data collection shaped by small find publication levels, and the availability of digital museum collections. It is regrettable that 15 examples are only known from antiquities trade websites and 20 from websites provided by the Portable Antiquities Schemes of the UK and Netherlands and museum websites. The former in particular leads to a loss of archaeological information. Thus the example bought at Konz (DE, 62) may well be from Trier, from where two other figures are known, and a figure now in Australia is said to be from Essex (UK, 28). It is noticeable that more of the Type 10 figures come from private collections, presumably because deities were more easily recognised as significant by museums in the past and/or published.

Thankfully there are also many excavated examples or figures from historically dated sites such as Pompeii, which provide important contextual information on dating and distribution. The most secure dating evidence comes from Usk (71), where a figural mount was found in a pre-Flavian fortress pit and from Cirencester (67), where a now lost figure was recovered from a later 1st century feature. The Fortuna from Xanten (35) comes from the Vetera I fortress, so likely predates 70 CE. If the examples from Naples (12, 43, 90) come from a Vesuvian site (which is likely), they pre-date 79 CE; there is only an antiquarian drawing of the Genius from *Herculaneum* (40), but if part of this group it would again pre-date the eruption of Vesuvius. The fine reclining woman made from silver (88) was found near the amphitheatre of Pompeii in soil dumped from excavations, so is effectively unstratified but again pre-dates the eruption.

The mount from *Verulamium* (72) was found with mid-1st century coins and pottery, a bronze patera and cavalry fittings but also an enamelled brooch, which would normally be dated to the 2nd century. The site next to the River Ver was poorly understood at the time of excavation, but is now seen as a brushwood trackway, where offerings may have been made for some time⁴⁸. The reclining female from *Aquae Helveticae* (CH, 56) came from layers associated with a stone house, possibly an inn, dated to 70/80–90 CE⁴⁹. The find from Ristissen (17) may belong to the Claudian or Vespasianic phase of the fort, but that is not certain as it is from an antiquarian excavation, and there is Trajanic activity on the site, too.

The Richborough figure (16) was thought to be in a 4th century context but that is uncertain given the complexity of stratigraphy and date of publication⁵⁰. The available contextual evidence therefore suggests a 1st century CE date.

It is notoriously difficult to date small bronzes stylistically, given the variation in style and competence, and no attempt has been made in this paper to do so. The hair style for the Genius from Strasbourg (46) and the slightly larger example from Lyon is thought by Stéphanie Boucher to be Julio-Claudian⁵¹. The figure from Verona (48) is thought to be late Republican on stylistic grounds, and we will see below that the *lectisternium* rite is strongly associated with

⁴⁷ PEACOCK/WILLIAMS 2007; BRETTELL et al. 2013; 2015.

⁴⁸ NIBLETT 1999, 410–411.

⁴⁹ KOLLER/DOSWALD 1996, 207.

⁵⁰ BUSHE-FOX 1949, 138.

⁵¹ BOUCHER 1960, 318 fig. 126; 1976, 242 pl. 81 nos 403–404; KAUFMANN-HEINIMANN 1998, 55.

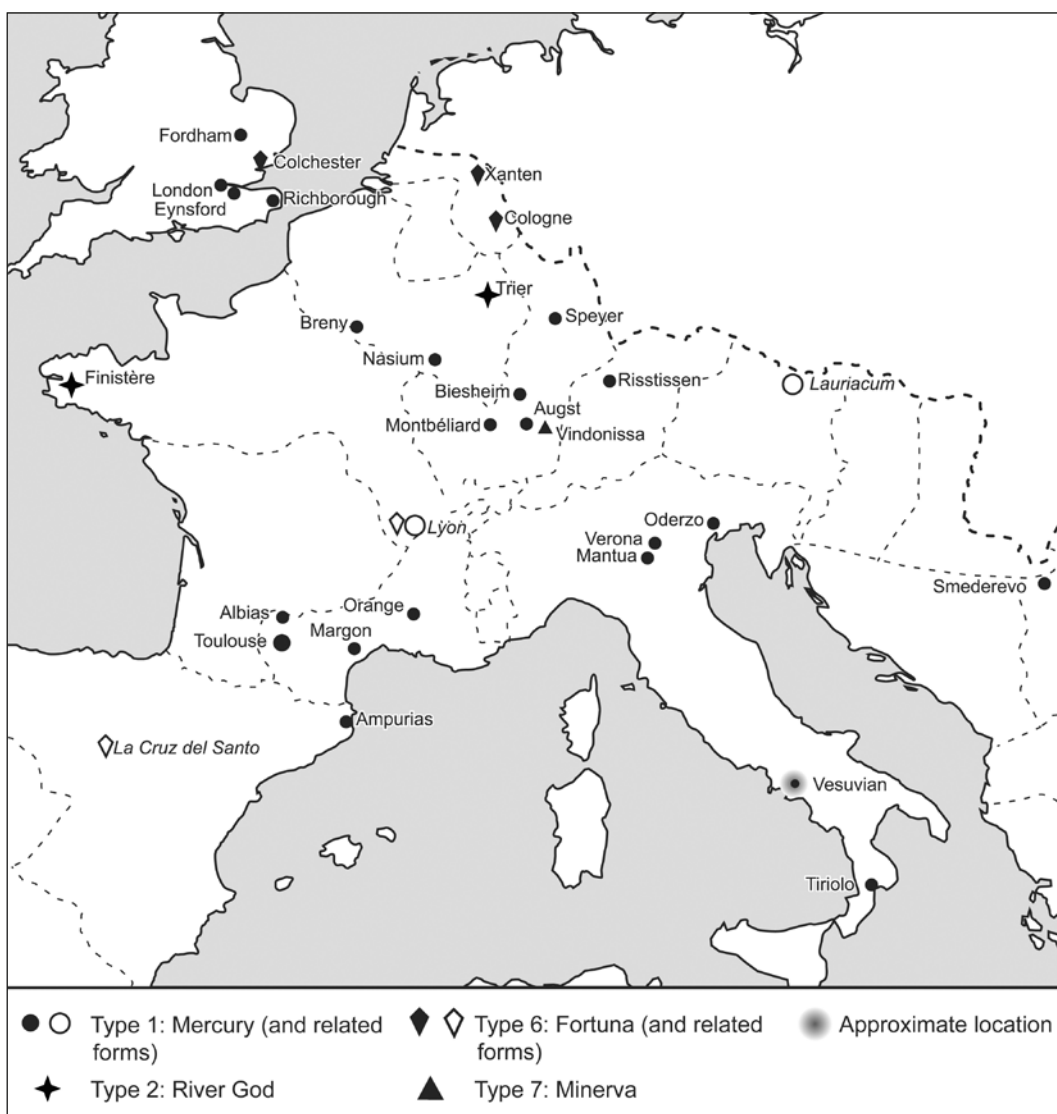


Fig. 12. The spatial distribution of figures of Types 1–7.

the Roman Republic. On the other hand, some authors believe examples like the one from Oderzo (14) belong to the 2nd/3rd century CE⁵².

In terms of spatial distributions, finds come from across Italy and the western Empire; a significant proportion (35 examples) comes from unprovenanced museum collections or the antiquities trade (*Figs 12–14*). Most of the Italian examples depict Genii, perhaps reflecting a particular practice and/or an early date. Boucher argues that the Gaulish examples of Genii are Italian imports⁵³. There is an apparent concentration in south-east France and south-west Germany, and in Britain an emphasis on the south of the province. The cluster in Suffolk could be a product of PAS bias, reflecting areas of intensive metal-detecting and recording, as does

⁵² GALLIAZZO 1979, 74.

⁵³ BOUCHER 1976, 242.



Fig. 13. The spatial distribution of figures of Types 8–9.

the overall picture for Britain⁵⁴. A cluster of finds from probably metal-detected finds from the Netherlands reflects Sabine Faust's access to information from private collectors; it is quite noticeable that most of these examples are of Type 10B.

While clearly belonging to one overall tradition, a few examples are so similar to one another as to suggest manufacture in the same workshop, notably the Trier Mosel (81) and Colchester (80) finds and the Richborough (16) and Biesheim (4) examples⁵⁵, now matched by another from the antiquities trade (27); another very close group consists of the Mercury figures from

⁵⁴ BRINDLE 2014.

⁵⁵ FAUST 2000, 298; 2008/09, 298. – The Richborough and Biesheim figures are also identical in size.



Fig. 14. The spatial distribution of figures of Type 10.

Augst (3), Eynsford (6), Smederevo (18) and Speyer (19) – and perhaps the examples from *Nasium* (13) and now in Cambridge (MA, 23); these all share posture, dress and the design of the *caduceus*. The very wide distribution (1300 km Speyer to Smederevo, 800 km Speyer to Eynsford) is curious and at present unexplained. Another very close group of Genius figures comes from Aquileia (37), Castelvener di Pirano (Triest, 39) and Mildenhall (42).

Only two figures, a Fortuna from Cologne (34) and a Mercury now in Harvard Art Museum, Cambridge (23), have so far seen scientific analysis⁵⁶. This showed that, as expected, that they are leaded bronzes; ongoing work at the British Museum will provide further surface analysis data (pXRF⁵⁷).

⁵⁶ THOMAS 2002, 306 fig. 5; <https://hvr.dart/o/303822> (last access: 21/07/2025). ⁵⁷ Katie Manby, pers. com.

The social distribution and context of the objects is difficult to assess, as so few come from recent, well-published excavations. In Britain the many metal-detected finds are likely from rural sites. Three (Cirencester and Colchester x2) are from military / urban sites, two from military sites (Richborough, Usk) and two from towns (London, *Verulamium*). On the continent, there are examples of military sites (e.g. Strasbourg, Vechten, *Vindonissa*, Xanten) and many more examples from urban centres such as Trier, Ampurias, Aquileia, Besançon, Lyon, Orange, Rome, Verona and Venice. A large proportion of continental finds are either antiquarian, essentially unprovenanced, figures in major museums, metal-detected or from the antiquities market.

There is very little detailed context information, with most finds presumably coming from deposits within settlements and none identified as coming from graves; two figures (81 Trier and 72 *Verulamium*) were found in rivers (the Mosel and the Ver).

Concluding discussion

This paper has gathered the first overview of a group of small figural mounts not previously recognised as a distinct group. There are likely more examples, published and unpublished, which will hopefully be brought together in future. Perhaps such discoveries will include reclining banqueters still attached to a vessel, but in the meantime metallurgical analysis of known figures may help elucidate workshop organisation and careful examination of the original pieces (rather than the illustrations I largely relied on) may provide information on methods of affixing the figurines and possible use wear.

The figurines gathered here depict reclining human diners or gods, in particular Mercury (28 examples) and Genii (16 examples), but also a wide range of other motifs. The figures hold or wear an array of attributes (winged cap, *caduceus*, *cornucopia* and *patera*), with only the latter occurring with certainly human figures. Most are male, but there are examples of female human and divine (Fortuna, Minerva) diners.

The identification of Mercury is certain, although provincial versions (and those now very worn) are sometimes harder to identify. Genii also appear to be a distinct type, perhaps associated especially with Italy, while depictions of Fortuna, Minerva and Lares are rare. The Hercules and Silenus figures are slightly larger and not certainly curved, and may represent a related object-type.

There is some difficulty in distinguishing between divine and human banqueters. Partial nudity may indicate divine figures, or if human diners are intended a semi-naked depiction may represent an archaising style. There are also certainly human banqueters, depicted fully clothed and usually without attributes. Their iconographic ambiguity (i.e. the suggestion that some may be reclining gods and others human) may reflect the fact that a clear division into mundane and ritual did not exist in antiquity.

While Mercury, Minerva, Genii, Lares and Fortuna are not normally shown reclining in other media, there are a number of depictions of Hercules as a symposiast on marble reliefs and statues⁵⁸. Stefan Ritter notes that the two reclining figures of Fortuna from Cologne (34) and Xanten (35) are in an unusual pose and both from sites near rivers, perhaps referencing river deities⁵⁹. River and sea gods are conventionally shown as bearded males reclining next to an urn from which the river springs, a motif that is used in sculpture, on mosaics and wall-

⁵⁸ BOARDMAN et al. 1988, 777–779.

⁵⁹ RITTER 1999, 734.



Fig. 15. Reclining river god from Steinbrunn.

paintings and on coins⁶⁰. There were female river and spring deities and nymphs, which like their male counterparts are often depicted reclining and semi-nude⁶¹.

However, copper-alloy figurines depicting river gods are rare in Britain, with only one certain example attested at Great Chesterford⁶²; there are also only two figurines of Neptune⁶³. Elsewhere in the provinces copper-alloy figurines of river gods are also rare. In an example from Steinbrunn in Austria (*Fig. 15*) a youthful god is shown with a naked upper body, clothing around the lower body, with the garment twisted around the waist. He is holding a branch in his left hand, and wears a wreath⁶⁴. This figurine is in the same tradition as the ones discussed in this paper but at a length of 126 mm and a height of 84 mm clearly larger. The find from Trier (30) is clearly intended to represent a river or sea god but it is interesting that the waves are incised rather than integral to the casting.

While an association of the iconography with specific deities remains ambiguous, what cannot be in doubt is that the reclining posture references dining and drinking. There is an extensive literature on the body posture and social significance of the Roman banquet, employing the rich evidence of sculpture, mosaics and wall-paintings⁶⁵. The motif of the reclining diner has a long history in ancient art, conveying ideas of status, privilege and luxury; in the so-called ‘Totenmahl’ (funerary banquet) reclining diners also commonly feature on tomb monuments⁶⁶. In Britain, there are ceramic figurines depicting reclining diners from a rich early Neronian grave in Colchester⁶⁷. Some of the figures may well be female, as by the Roman period respectable women could be depicted reclining⁶⁸.

The copper-alloy figures discussed here were presumably once attached to vessels, following in a rich Greek, Etruscan and Roman tradition of decorating shallow vessels that served as fruit or food bowls, wine coolers or most likely incense burners. Genii, especially if holding an *acerra* may be especially appropriate for such incense burners, visually referencing the offerings to the

⁶⁰ OSTROWSKI 1991; KLEMENTA 1993; COOMBE 2022.

⁶¹ LARSON 2001; COOMBE 2022.

⁶² DURHAM 2012, no. 101.

⁶³ DURHAM 2012, nos 374; 526.

⁶⁴ FLEISCHER 1967, 113–114 pl. 76 no. 145a.

⁶⁵ DUNBABIN 2003; ROLLER 2006.

⁶⁶ e.g. DUNBABIN 2003; ROLLER 2006; STEWART 2009; DRAYCOTT / STAMATOPOULOU 2016.

⁶⁷ ECKARDT 1999, 64–65.

⁶⁸ DUNBABIN 2003, 114–120; STEWART 2009, 272–274.

gods. The Graeco-Etruscan examples are certainly prestige objects, perhaps royal presents and were suitable offerings at sanctuaries or for burials⁶⁹. The provincial first century CE figures discussed here are of much poorer workmanship, but presumably once also adorned highly valued vessels. The motif would be fitting for a prized vessel containing wine, expensive food-stuffs or incense. On a most basic level, such a vessel crowned by small figural mounts would have acted as a conversation piece at a banquet.

The possible association with an eternal meal may have added ritual significance, and the depictions of gods may represent auspicious divinities watching over the table or watching incense rise to the heavens in a domestic shrine, perhaps especially associated with the veneration of ancestors. The Pompeian ceramic incense burners depicting a reclining female wearing a chiton and holding a patera in her right hand have been interpreted as depicting the goddess Bona Dea, perhaps representing an episode of her myth or a particular aspect of her worship⁷⁰. More recently, it has been convincingly argued that they are part of domestic ritual practices for female deceased women, with the ancestors being the recipients of offering bunt immediately beneath them⁷¹. Ceramic incense burners with reclining figures (including gods such as Mercury and satyrs) may be especially associated with ritual practices in Campania and Sicily, as reflected in the comments made by Cicero cited above.

There may be an even more specific function or meaning. Annemarie Kaufmann-Heinimann, Vittorio Galiasso and Lanfranco Franzoni independently note that the motif may relate to the *lectisternium* rite, which was meant to propitiate gods and repel pestilence or enemies and took the form of banquet served to the gods, whose images were placed on cushioned couches (Oxford Classical Dictionary)⁷². First attested in 399 BCE for Apollo, Latona, Hercules, Diana, Mercury and Neptune, other gods are later attested and the rite was performed both in public and in private cult, the latter apparently associated with birth rites in particular⁷³. It is not inconceivable that food, drink or incense offerings were made on a vessel surrounded by reclining figures during such rites.

I am not aware of provincial examples still attached to a vessel, and, while none come from obviously deliberate deposits, the figures may have retained or acquired ritual significance on their own once detached. Another possibility, especially if indeed associated with *lectisternium* rites, may be that the copper-alloy figures were placed on wooden couches, which would not survive normally⁷⁴. However, it is worth reiterating that the written evidence for the rite is associated with Republican Rome.

The apparent concentration of these figural mounts in Italy, south eastern France and in southern Britain is noticeable, but this may reflect publication levels. A production date in the first century CE seems certain and this has interesting implications for the early adoption by provincial communities of an object type with a very long classical tradition, and presumably for the use of such a vessel in 'Roman-style' banquets and domestic rituals, specifically relating to burnt offerings and perhaps even a specific late Republican / early Imperial ritual.

⁶⁹ HAYNES 1967/68, 114.

⁷⁰ STEFANI 2000, 442.

⁷¹ EBER forthcoming, Section 4.2.

⁷² KAUFMANN-HEINIMANN 1977, 41; GALLIAZZO 1979, 73; FRANZONI 1980, 212.

⁷³ NOUILHAN 1989; KÖVES-ZULAUF 1990, 120–123; 180–185.

⁷⁴ I am aware of only one example of a deity reclining on a bronze couch, a pantheistic female deity with Phrygian cap shown with an array of attributes now in Boston (COMSTOCK/VERMEULE 1971, 111 no. 118).

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Abstract: A banquet for the gods: the cultural significance of a distinctive group of small, first century CE reclining bronze figures

In this paper I present and interpret, for the first time, a previously unrecognised but distinctive assemblage of 90 small copper-alloy figural mounts depicting divine or human banqueters from across the Roman Empire. The reclining deities, most commonly Mercury and Genii, and the male and female human banqueteers probably adorned vessels, in particular incense burners. They build on Graeco-Etruscan antecedents, and possibly copy silver vessels decorated with figures in relief such as those mentioned by Cicero. A first century CE date is suggested by excavated examples, which stretch from Italy across the north-western provinces. This analysis enhances our understanding of Roman drinking and dining as well as religious practices, in particular offerings of incense in domestic and funerary rites. The figures were perhaps related to a late Republican propitiatory ritual, and may have also acted as votives once detached from the vessel.

Zusammenfassung: Ein Bankett für die Götter: Die kulturelle Bedeutung einer einzigartigen Gruppe kleiner, liegender Bronzefiguren des ersten Jahrhunderts n. Chr.

In diesem Beitrag wird zum ersten Mal eine Gruppe von 90 bisher wenig erforschten, aber charakteristischen kleinen figürlichen Bronzen aus dem Römischen Reich vorgestellt und interpretiert. Die liegenden Gottheiten (am häufigsten Merkur und Genien) und die menschlichen Gelagerten nehmen an einem Bankett oder Totenmahl teil. Sie schmückten wahrscheinlich Gefäße, die auf griechisch-etruskischen Vorbildern aufbauen und die möglicherweise silberne, mit Relieffiguren verzierte Gefäße kopieren, wie sie von Cicero erwähnt werden. Eine Datierung ins erste Jahrhundert n. Chr. wird durch ihre Fundzusammenhänge nahegelegt, die sich von Italien bis in die nordwestlichen römischen Provinzen erstrecken. Die Figuren könnten als Votive fungiert haben und stehen möglicherweise mit spätrepublikanischen Ritualen in Verbindung. Ihre Analyse trägt zu unserem Verständnis des römischen Trinkgelages sowie der religiösen Praktiken, insbesondere des Weihrauchopfers, bei.

Résumé : Un festin pour les dieux : la signification culturelle d'un groupe singulier de petites figures en bronze en position allongée datant du premier siècle de notre ère

Un groupe jusqu'ici peu étudié mais distinctif, se composant de 90 petits bronzes figuratifs et provenant de tout le territoire de l'Empire romain, est présenté et discuté pour la première fois dans cet article. Les figures représentent des divinités en position réclinée (habituellement Mercure et des Génies) ainsi que des humains qui participent à un banquet ou à un repas funéraire. Autrefois, ils décoraient vraisemblablement des récipients inspirés par des modèles gréco-étrusques, qui, copiant des réceptacles en argent décorés de figures en relief, étaient décrits par Cicéron. Une date au premier siècle après J.-C. est suggérée par les contextes de découverte répertoriés entre l'Italie et les provinces du nord-ouest. Les figures ont pu servir comme des exvotos associés à des rituels de l'époque républicain tardif. Leur analyse contribue à notre compréhension des festivités romaines ainsi que des pratiques religieuses, en particulier celles de l'offrande d'encens.

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References of figures:

Fig. 1: author. – *Fig. 2:* KAUFMANN-HEINIMANN 1977, pl. 33 no. 36 (by kind permission of Harvard Art Museum); PICHON 2002, 140 fig. 101 [5]; PAS LON-B48905; PRTTS 1979, pl. 13,21; by kind permission GDKE Landesarchäologie Speyer; RATKOVIĆ 2008, fig. 5 (by kind permission of National Museum of Serbia); FRANZONI 1980, no. 193; MOUROT 2004, 243; FLEISCHER 1967, pl. 133 no. 295a; ROLLAND 1965, 169–170 no. 389 (by kind permission Museum Calvet d'Avignon). – *Fig. 3:* © The Trustees of the British Museum; SIMON/BAUCHHENS 1992, fig. 49 (by kind permission Museo Civico di Treviso); artefacts.mom.fr (Ampurias; last access: 21/07/2025); REINACH 1894, 83 no. 72; ROUMÉGOUS 2009, fig. 259; KNEBEL 2009, 88 cat.-no. 40 (by kind permission Klassik Stiftung Weimar); by kind permission Landesmuseum Stuttgart; PAS: SF-7149D5; LEBEL 1962, pl. XXXV no. 40; artefacts.mom.fr (Albias & Margon; last access: 21/07/2025); MAGGI 1986, fig. 41 no. 26; BUSHE-FOX 1949, pl. XLIV no. 162 (by kind permission Dover Castle Museum); SCHNITZLER 1995, 129 no. 160; Timeline Auctions. – *Fig. 4, Type 2:* GALLIOU 2010, fig. 472; © GDKE, Rheinisches Landesmuseum Trier, Foto: Th. Zühmer. – *Fig. 4, Type 3:* © The Trustees of the British Museum. – *Fig. 4, Type 4:* by kind permission of Bibliothèque nationale de France, Serge Oboukhoff © CNRS-MSH Mondes; LEBEL 1962, 29 pl. XXXV no. 39; © The Trustees of the British Museum. – *Fig. 5, Type 5:* © The Trustees of the British Museum. – *Fig. 5, Type 6:* © The Trustees of the British Museum; RITTER 1994, 345 fig. 22 (34; by kind permission of Römisch-Germanisches Museum Cologne and Leibniz-Zentrum für Archäologie); MENZEL 1986, pl. 46 no. 85 (by kind permission B. Liesen, LVR-Archaeological Park Xanten). – *Fig. 5, Type 7:* TRUMM 2021, fig. 4 (by kind permission Kantonsarchäologie Aargau, Foto B. Polyvás). – *Fig. 6:* MNL 142; KUNCKEL 1974, pl. 52 no. F III.22; BRAVAR 2002, fig. 6 no. 9; KILIAN 1781, pl. 9 (probably mirrored); BOUCHER 1976, pl. 81 no. 404; KUNCKEL 1974, pl. 57 no. FIV 18; WÜNSCHE 2003, 75 no. 44; by kind permission of Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Antikensammlung/Franziska Vu, CC BY-SA 4.0, inv.-no.: 2133; Inst.Neg. Rom 67,2394; Photo: author in Archaeological Museum, Split. – *Fig. 7, Type 8:* by kind permission of Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Antikensammlung/Franziska Vu, CC BY-SA 4.0, inv.-no. 2132; LEBEL 1961, 60 no. 191; pl. LXXI no. 3 (by kind permission Musées d'Art et du Temps, Besançon); BOLLA 2007, 258–260; pl. III no. 15; BOUCHER 1960, fig. 126 (by kind permission Musées de la ville de Strasbourg, Photo M. Bertola). – *Fig. 7, Type 9:* by kind permission of Bibliothèque nationale de France, Serge Oboukhoff © CNRS-MSH Mondes and S. Faust. – *Fig. 7, Type 10A:* PAS: IOW-2F; PAS: IOW-16C188; TRUMM 2021, fig. 4; PAN-00134087; by kind permission of S. Faust. – *Fig. 8:* WEBSTER 1995, 49 fig. 17; HOLBROOK 1998, 318 fig. 192 [no. 67]; NIBLETT/THOMPSON 2005, fig. 4,29; MILLS 2000, 141; PAS: SF-7E1F81; artefacts.mom.fr (Bordeaux); NMGW-F4A3F6; by kind permission of S. Faust. – *Fig. 9:* by kind permission of Colchester Museums (photo Lori Rogerson); © GDKE, Rheinisches Landesmuseum Trier, Foto: Th. Zühmer/S. Faust; after: artefacts.mom.fr (Ampurias); BOUCHER 1982, no. 46; LEBEL/BOUCHER 1975, no. 128; WEBER 2000, fig. 120; by kind permission of S. Faust (private collection); Photo J. Eber, by permission of the Ministry of Culture and the Archaeological Park Pompeii, not to be reproduced. – *Fig. 10a:* © The Trustees of the British Museum. – *Fig. 10b:* J. Eber by permission of the Ministry of Culture and the Archaeological Park Pompeii. Not to be reproduced. – *Fig. 11:* by kind permission of The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg. – *Fig. 12–14:* maps by Sw. Sarkar/S. Lambert-Gates. – *Fig. 15:* after FLEISCHER 1967, pl. 76 no. 145a and by kind permission H. Herdits, Landesmuseum Burgenland (inv.-no. 25100). – Graphics: Lara Hies (RGK).

Catalogue Number	Site	Noticeable features	Measurements	Context details / associated finds	Reference
Type 1 Mercury					
1	Albias, Cosa, France	<i>Petastos</i> ; not clear whether attribute in left hand	l.: 31 mm	–	https://artefacts.mom.fr/en/result.php?id=STE-4008&find=STE-4008&pagenum=1&affmode=vign (last access: 29.5.2024).
2	Ampurias, Spain	<i>Petastos</i> ?; raised right hand	l.: 37 mm	urban site; 09.05.1968	https://artefacts.mom.fr/en/result.php?id=STE-4008&find=STE-4008&pagenum=1&affmode=vign (last access: 29.5.2024).
3	Augst, Switzerland	<i>Petastos</i> ; <i>patena</i> in right hand, <i>caduceus</i> in crook of left arm; naked lower body; cloak on shoulders	l.: 51 mm	insula 31, stray find 1965	Museu d'Arqueologia de Catalunya, inv.-no. 658.
4	Biesheim, France	Helmet-like hair with two peaks; drapery pointing to feet	h.: 34 mm; l.: 31 mm	'scientific prospection', no further details	KAUFMANN-HEINIMANN 1977, 41; pl. 33,36;
5	Breny, France	Cloak around shoulder; ? <i>caduceus</i> ; right leg angled	–	Found by F. Moreau but context unknown.	SIMON / BAUCHHENS 1992, 542 fig. 428.
6	Eynsford, United Kingdom	<i>Petastos</i> ; <i>caduceus</i> ; cloak draped over left shoulder and back	l.: 53 mm; h.: 37 mm; thk.: 11 mm; wt.: 54.85 g	–	Römermuseum Augst, inv.-no. 65.73.
7	Fordham, United Kingdom	<i>Petastos</i> ; ?money-bag; rough underside with iron rivet through its centre	h.: 39 mm; w.: 43 mm; thk.: 13 mm	–	SCHNITZLER 1995, 129 no. 160.
<i>w/o no.</i>	Lauriacum, Austria	Reclining on his right side on a ?cushion; money bag in left hand; <i>petastos</i> ; cloak on shoulder; winged boots	h.: 41 mm; l.: 51 mm	Thought by FLEISCHER (1976) to be modern forgery on account of unusual posture and poor execution, but KAUFMANN-HEINIMANN (1977, 41) disagrees.	PICHON 2002, 141 fig. 101.
					PAS: LON-B48905.
					PAS: SF-7149D5.
					FLEISCHER 1967, 199, no. 295a; pl. 133.
					Oberösterreichisches Landesmuseum Linz, inv.-no. B414.

Tab. 1. Reclining deities.

Catalogue Number	Site	Noticeable features	Measurements	Context details / associated finds	Reference
Type 1 Mercury					
8	London, United Kingdom	<i>Petastos</i> , <i>caduceus</i> in left and <i>patera</i> in right hand; cloak on shoulders; large base. Worn and 'severely cleaned'	h.: 38 mm; w.: 45 mm		GREEN 1976, 224; PITTS 1979, 53 no. 21; pl. 13,21. Museum of London, inv.-no. G. 2066.
<i>u/o no.</i>	<i>Lyon, France</i>	<i>Petastos</i> ; <i>caduceus</i> ; <i>casting channel</i> on <i>shortened legs</i>	h.: 40 mm; l.: 60 mm	<i>Found in 1843 'when digging foundations of forts.'</i>	ROLLAND 1965, 169–170, no. 389. <i>Museum Calvet d'Avignon, inv.-no. J102A.</i>
9	Mantova (Mantua), Italy	<i>Petastos</i>	h.: 35 mm; l.: 37 mm	Exact provenance unknown.	MAGGI 1986, 24 no. 26 fig. 41. Mantova Museum, inv.-no. 11164.
10	Margon, France	<i>Petastos</i> ; hands empty; breasts and shoulder blades indicated	l.: 38 mm		https://artefacts.mom.fr/en/result.php?id=STE-4008&find=STE-4008&pagenum=1&affmode=vign (last access: 29.5.2024).
11	Montbéliard, France	Cap but no wings; holding object in right hand	h.: 32 mm; l.: 36 mm	–	LEBEL 1962, 29; pl. 35,40.
12	Now Naples, Italy; provenance unknown but likely Vesuvian	Angled right leg, cloak round shoulders; attributes in hands lost / unclear	–	With two reclining figures (<i>Genius</i> and ?) and eight busts.	Permalink: http://arachne.uni-koeln.de/images/Abbildungen/dai-rom-fotothek-1967/Bestand-D-DAL-ROM-67.2394.jpg . Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, Inst.Neg. Rom 67,2394.
13	<i>Nasium</i> near Metz, France	<i>Caduceus</i> in left hand, right arm damaged; cloak around shoulders	–	?	MOUROT 2004, 243. Museum Metz, inv.-no. 18.
14	Oderzo, Italy	<i>Petastos</i> ; money bag in right hand; very worn	h.: 40 mm; l.: 50 mm	Collection Angelo Faurario	GALLIAZZO 1979, 72–74, no. 10; SIMON / BAUCHENSS 1992, 508 fig. 49. Museo Civico di Treviso, inv.-no. 476.
15	Orange, France	<i>Petastos</i> ; money bag in right hand, left hand empty?	–	Acquired 1904; 'found inside Gallo-Roman town'.	ROUMÉGOS 2009, 291 fig. 259.
16	Richborough, United Kingdom	'Two-horned cap'; ?beard; incised pectoral muscles, navel and shoulder blades; horizontal lines on back	h.: 34 mm	Bottom of inner ditch, N side of stone fort; '4 th century CE'.	BUSHE-Fox 1949, 138; pl. 44,162. Dover Castle Museum, acc.-no. 7351837.

Tab. 1 (continued).

Catalogue Number	Site	Noticeable features	Measurements	Context details / associated finds	Reference
Type 1 Mercury					
17	Rißtissen, Germany	<i>Petatos</i> , money bag in right hand, possibly vessel in left hand	h.: 32mm; w.: 40 mm; thk.: 2–7 mm	Found 1913 in rubble of barracks (fort established Claudius, rebuilt Vespasian; also Trajanic phase).	HAUG 1914, 682; https://bildarchiv.landmuseum-stuttgart.de/catalog/Bildarchiv/t/532405/viewmode=infoview (last access: 29.5.2024). Landmuseum Stuttgart, acc.-no. R164.1; image kindly provided by Dr Anke Wolf and Ulrike Klotter.
18	Smederevo (<i>Vinceita</i>), Serbia	<i>Petatos</i> , money bag or <i>patera</i> in right hand, <i>caduceus</i> in left arm; cloak round shoulder	h.: 35 mm; l.: 51 mm	–	POPOVIĆ et al. 1969, 89 no. 89; SIMON / BAUCHENSS 1992, 508 no. 50; RATKOVIĆ 2008, 808 fig. 5. Now in Belgrade, Narodni Muzej 2757/III.
19	Speyer, Germany	<i>Petatos</i> ; <i>caduceus</i> and ?money bag; cloak around shoulders with diagonal lines	–	–	HIMMELMANN / HÜNERFAUTH 2018, timeline; pers. com. B. Hünerfauth & S. Faust; image only, no discussion in text.
20	Tiriolo, Italy	<i>Petatos</i> ; winged sandals; cloak; <i>patera</i> in right hand	?	–	LIMC V 1 (1990) 370 no. 966a. Refers to: CATANUTO 1939, 51; pl. 22 fig. 67 but I have been unable to find: N. CATANUTO, Il Museo Nazionale di Reggio di Calabria (Messina 1939). https://artefacts.mom.fr/en/result.php?id=STE-4008&find=STE-4008&pagenum=1&afnode=vign (last access: 29.5.2024); reported by Eric Voss.
21	north of Toulouse, France	–	–	–	FRANZONI 1980, 212 no. 193. Verona Museum, inv.-no. A4,84.
22	Verona, Italy?	<i>Petatos</i> ; <i>caduceus</i> ; <i>patera</i> in right hand	h.: 33 mm; l.: 46 mm	Unknown provenance, now Verona Museum.	https://harvardartmuseums.org/collections/object/303822 ; SIEBERT 1990, 370 fig. 966b.
23	unknown provenance (now in Cambridge (Massachusetts, United States of America)	<i>Petatos</i> ; <i>caduceus</i> in left arm and ?money bag in right hand; legs angled; cloak around shoulders	h.: 44 mm; l.: 57 mm; d.: 16 mm	Harvard Art Museum	Harvard Art Museum / Arthur M. Sackler Museum, anc. coll. Fogg; inv.-no. 1932.56.8.

Tab. 1 (continued).

Catalogue Number	Site	Noticeable features	Measurements	Context details / associated finds	Reference
Type 1 Mercury					
24	unknown provenance (now Louvre, Paris, France)	Cap without wings?; money bag in right hand; curved and once attached to vessel	l.: 38 mm; h.: 32 mm; d.: 10 mm; wt.: 33 g	bought in 1825	DE RIDDER 1913, 81 no. 550; https://collections.louvre.fr/ark:/53355/cl010293425 (last access: 21.7.2025). Paris, Louvre, Département des Antiquités grecques, étrusques et romaines, inv.-no. 203 (N 6407).
25	unknown provenance (now Saint-Germain-en-Laye, France)	? <i>caduceus</i> in left arm; cloak around shoulder; worn cap	h.: 30 mm	Musée d'Archéologie Nationale, anc. Coll. Gréau ; acquired 1885	REINACH 1895, 83 no. 72; https://arifacts.mom.fr/en/result.php?id=STE-4008&find=STE-4008&pagenum=1&ffnode=vign (last access: 29.5.2024).
26	unknown provenance, (now Weimar, Germany)	Garment around lower body, money-bag in right hand	h.: 33 mm	Sammlung Goethe	KNEBEL 2009, 88 cat.-no. 40 (4.3.5). Klassik Stiftung Weimar, inv.-no. GPI/01254.
<i>w/o no.</i>	<i>unknown provenance (now in British Museum, London, United Kingdom)</i>	<i>Youthful, without petasos; ?money bag in right hand</i>	<i>h.: 22 mm; l.: 45 mm</i>	–	WALTERS 1899, 211 no. 1224; https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1864-0226-2 (last access: 21.7.2025). <i>British Museum London, acc.-no. 1864.0226.2.</i>
27	antiquities trade	Identified as river god but 'peaked cap' = Mercury	h.(?): 36 mm; wt.: 24 g	–	https://www.acsearch.info/search.html?id=3508678 (last access: 21.07.2025). Timeline Auctions, Ex Robin Symes gallery, 1990.
28	antiquities trade (now Australia)	Money bag? Very similar to other Mercury figures but lacking wings on cap	h.: 32 mm	said to be from Essex, United Kingdom	Theodore Bruce Auctioneers: https://www.theodorebruceauctions.com.au/auction-lot/a-roman-celtic-bronze-figure-of-a-reclining-male_9A54002953 (last access: 21.7.2025).

Tab. 1 (continued).

Catalogue Number	Site	Noticeable features	Measurements	Context details / associated finds	Reference
Type 2 River gods					
29	Finistère, France	Bearded, <i>patera</i> in right hand; poss. vessel in crook of left arm; garment around legs. Published as Silenus?	l.: 50 mm	context unknown	GALLIOU 2010, 449 fig. 472. M.A.N., inv.-no. 80.300.
30	Trier, Germany	Waves indicated, solder on base	h.: 21.2 mm, but missing head; l.: 30.5 mm; thk.: 2–4 mm	excavated material from Moselstrasse, 1999	FAUST 2000, 298 no. 52; Landesmuseum Trier EV 1999, 38a; GDKE / Rheinisches Landesmuseum Trier, Foto: Th. Zühmer.
Type 3: Hercules					
<i>w/o no.</i>	Sicily, Italy (now in British Museum, London, United Kingdom)	Nude and bearded, with lionskin under left arm and body; cup in left hand; wreath?	l.: 61 mm	–	WALTERS 1899, 221 no. 1313; https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1772-0302-146 (last access: 21.7.2025). British Museum London, acc.-no. 1772.0302.146.
<i>w/o no.</i>	unknown provenance (now in British Museum, London, United Kingdom)	Youthful; lionskin on shoulder and left arm; quite upright; cup in left hand.	l.: 63 mm	acquired 1824	WALTERS 1899, 216 no. 1272; https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1824-0446-10 (last access: 21.7.2025). British Museum London, acc.-no. 1824.0446.10.
31	unknown provenance (now in British Museum, London, United Kingdom)	Cup in left hand; right leg raised; very decayed	l.: 35 mm	–	WALTERS 1899, 221 no. 1314; https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1975-0107-13 (last access: 21.7.2025). British Museum London, acc.-no. 1975.0107.13.
Type 4: Silenus					
32	Fiesole, Italy	Reclining on wineskin, bald, bearded, horse ears	h.: 33 mm; l.: 48 mm	Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque nationale de France (Caylus collection)	BABELON / BLANCHET 1895, 174 no. 387; https://medailleresantiques.bnf.fr/ws/catalogue/app/collection/record/2155?vc=ePkH4LF7w1I9gconuEeQk6GRuSmoaEEKXWgiT06szCktBte4MB8CAAMfHQM\$ (last access: 21.7.2025). Paris, BnF, Département des monnaies, médailles et antiques, bronze 387.

Tab. 1 (continued).

Catalogue Number	Site	Noticeable features	Measurements	Context details / associated finds	Reference
Type 4: Silenus					
<i>w/o no.</i>	<i>Mathay (now in Montbeliard, France)</i>	<i>Reclining on wineskin</i>	<i>h.: 40 mm; l.: 62 mm</i>	–	<i>LEBEL 1962, 29; pl. 35,39.</i>
<i>w/o no.</i>	<i>Paestrina, Italy (now in British Museum, London, United Kingdom)</i>	<i>Reclining, bald, bearded</i>	<i>h.: 32 mm; l.: 67 mm</i>	–	<i>WALTERS 1899, 234 no. 1422; https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1873-0820-102 (last access: 21.7.2025). British Museum London, acc.-no. 1873.0820.102.</i>
Type 5: Asclepius					
<i>w/o no.</i>	<i>unknown provenance (now in British Museum, London, United Kingdom)</i>	<i>Himation; patera in right hand; head of coiled snake in left hand; feet damaged</i>	<i>h.: 35 mm; l.: 63 mm</i>	<i>purchased from Sir William Hamilton, 1772</i>	<i>WALTERS 1899, 234 no. 1430. https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1772-0302-145 (last access: 21.7.2025). British Museum London, acc.-no. 1772.0302.145.</i>
Type 6: Fortuna					
33	Colchester, United Kingdom	Fortuna identification not certain	h.: 32.5 mm; l.: 41.2 mm; thk.: 9.9 mm	found at Colchester, purchased 1870 from Rev J. H. Pollexfen	British Museum, acc.-no. 1870.0402.17; https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/H_1870-0402-17 : “Female” with bun at back of head; patera in r hand; l hand resting on ? (“animal with its neck extended to her chest”).
34	Cologne, Germany	<i>Cornucopia</i> in crook of left arm; rudder in right hand; <i>modius</i> on head; bun at back; <i>chiton</i> and <i>himation</i>	h.: 26 mm; l.: 40 mm	–	ITTER 1994, 345 fig. 22–23; 1999, 733–734 fig. 10. Material analysis shows slightly more lead in this figure than others from Cologne but no mention of solder on base (Thomas 2002, 306 fig. 5). RGZ Köln, inv.-no. 1925.649.
<i>w/o no.</i>	<i>La Cruz del Santo, Sotos del Burgo, Spain</i>	<i>Reclining on cushion, left hand raised to head, right hand holding rudder</i>	<i>l.: 85 mm; h.: 45 mm</i>	<i>found when Roman walls, pottery and animal bones uncovered on farm</i>	<i>ORTEGO 1949, 416–418, figs 3–5; GALLIAZZO 1979, 73.</i>

Tab. 1 (continued).

Catalogue Number	Site	Noticeable features	Measurements	Context details / associated finds	Reference
Type 6: Fortuna					
<i>w/o no.</i>	Lyon, France	Patera in right, cornucopia in left hand; hair parted and knot at back	l.: 62 mm		WALTERS 1899, 146 no. 812; https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1851-0813-18 (last access: 21.7.2025). British Museum London, acc.-no. 1851,0813.18. Originally identified as <i>Tellus</i> .
35	Xanten, Germany	Garment on lower body and left shoulder, twisted at waist; <i>cornucopia</i> in left arm, prob. rudder in right hand; right arm angled away from body	h.: 29 mm; l.: 30 mm	Schnitt 1106, no context date given; pre-dates destruction of legionary fortress at Xanten / <i>Vetera</i> in 70 CE.	MENZEL 1986, 39 no. 85; pl. 46; KAUFMANN-HEINIMANN 1998, 58; fig. 26.8. Landesmuseum Bonn.
Type 7: Minerva					
36	Vindonissa, Switzerland	Helmet, Aegis and shield; patera in right hand; feet peeking from clothing	l.: 49 mm	vicus S of legionary fortress; cemetery and settlement (S of Zürcherstrasse, V.020.4)	TRUMM 2021, 67–69 fig. 4. Vindonissa Museum, inv.-no. V.020.4/4149.1.

Tab. 1 (continued).

Catalogue Number	Image	Noticeable features	Measurements	Context details / associated finds	Reference
Type 8: Genius					
37	Aquilaia, Italy	Veiled, togate with incense box in left hand	–	–	KUNKEL 1974, 94 pl. 52 no. F III.22.
38	Besançon, France	Very corroded but ‘veiled and clothed’.	h.: 36 mm	–	LEBEL 1961, 60 no. 191 pl. 71.3. Musées d’Art et du Temps, Besançon, inv.-no. 2013.0.344.
39	Castelvenere di Pirano, Trieste, Italy	Veiled, <i>acerna</i> in left hand	h.: 40 mm	sold to museum by local villager 1898	CÀSOLA GUIDA 1978, 97 no. 78; BRAVAR 2002, 488 fig. 6,9. Triest., Mus., inv.-no. 5199.
40	<i>Herculaneum</i> , Italy	Lying to left; veiled with <i>acerna</i> in right hand (but probably mirrored)	no measurements provided	pre-79 CE?	KILIAN 1781, 14 pl. 9; https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/kilian1781bd6_text/0018/image (reference kindly provided by Sabine Faust).
41	Libarna, Italy	Veiled; <i>acerna</i> in left hand			BOLLA 2002, 129 no. 3 (not illustrated, cites “MERCANDO 1998c, 413 fig. 27” but this reference is not in the bibliography).
<i>u/o no.</i>	<i>Lyon, France</i>	<i>Veiled and robed, patera in right hand</i>	<i>l.: 63 mm</i>	<i>1st century CE on basis of (hair) style; collection Lambert 1850</i>	BOUCHER 1973, 138 no. 211; 1976, 242 pl. 81 no. 404. <i>Musée des Beaux-Arts Lyon, inv.-no. L53.</i> https://heritage.suffolk.gov.uk/Monument/MSF8976 (last access: 21.7.2025); pers. com. Anna Booth and Andrew Dearlove HER: MNL 142.
42	Mildenhall, United Kingdom	Togate and veiled; on rock or pillow, holding <i>acerna</i> in left hand	h.: 39 mm; l.: 51 mm	metal-detected; site 1 st –4 th centuries CE	
43	Naples Museum, Italy (provenience unknown but likely Vesuvian)	<i>Patera</i> in right hand	h.: 35 mm; l.: 51 mm	with two reclining figures (Mercury and ?) and eight busts	KUNKEL 1974, 96 no. F IV 12; http://arachne.uni-koeln.de/images/Abbildungen/dai-rom-fotothek-1967/Bestand-D-DAI-ROM-67.2394.jpg (last access: 21.7.2025). Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, Inst.Neg. Rom 67.2394.

Tab. 2. Reclining Genii (Type 8) and Lares (Type 9).

Catalogue Number	Image	Noticeable features	Measurements	Context details / associated finds	Reference
Type 8: Genius					
44	Perugia, Italy	No further details	–	No further details.	BOUCHER 1976, 242; GALLIAZZO 1979, 73
45	<i>Piuntium</i> (Podstrana), Croatia	<i>Patera</i> in right hand; very schematic clothing	–	–	Photo Sabine Faust Split, Archäologisches Museum.
46	Strasbourg, France	<i>Cornucopia</i> in left and <i>patera</i> in right hand; local manufacture?	h.: 40 mm; l.: 60 mm	1 st century CE on basis of (hair) style	BOUCHER 1960, 318 fig. 126; 1976, 242 pl. 81,403.
47	Venice, Italy	<i>Patera</i> in right hand and <i>acerna</i> in left hand	–	–	KUNCKEL 1974, 96 pl. 57 no. FIV 18.
48	Verona, Italy	<i>Patera</i> in right hand, <i>cornucopia</i> in left arm	h.: 30 mm; w.: 46 mm; t.: 8 mm	crocetta; stylistically thought to be late Republican	BOLLA 2007, 258–260 pl. 3, 15. Verona Genius – Archaeological Museum Verona, inv.-no. VR 33582. Originally described as female, perhaps Fortuna or Abundance.
49	unknown provenance (now Berlin, Germany)	<i>Patera</i> in right hand; in left hand?; veiled	h.: 34 mm; l.: 48 mm	Staatliche Museen, Antikensammlung, bought before 1825	https://id.smb.museum/object/692153 (last access: 21.07.2025); Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Antikensammlung, inv.-no. Fr. 2133.
50	unknown provenance (now Berlin, Germany; collector lived in Rome so could well be Italian).	<i>Patera</i> in left hand; attribute in right hand unclear; fully clothed but not certainly veiled	h.: 30 mm; l.: 51 mm	Staatliche Museen, Antikensammlung Collection Bartholdy, Prussian diplomat & collector (1779–1825), bought 1827	https://id.smb.museum/object/692152 (last access: 21.07.2025); Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Antikensammlung, inv.-no. Fr. 2132.
51	unknown provenance (now Louvre, Paris, France)	<i>Patera</i> in right hand; crocetta in left?; veiled	h.: 31 mm; l.: 42 mm; d.: 7 mm; wt.: 33.6 g	Collection E. A. Durand, bought 1825	https://collections.louvre.fr/ark:/53355/cl010294442 (last access: 21.07.2025). Louvre, Département des Antiquités grecques, étrusques et romaines, inv.-no. 656 (N 7079).
52	unknown provenance (now München, Germany)	<i>Patera</i> in right hand; attribute in left not clear	h.: 30 mm; l.: 44 mm	Staatliche Antikensammlung München, Germany (Sammlung Thun)	WÜNSCHE 2003, 75 no. 44.

Tab. 2 (continued).

Catalogue Number	Image	Noticeable features	Measurements	Context details / associated finds	Reference
Type 9: Lar					
53	Rome (now in Paris, France)	Belted tunic; possibly a wreath on head; <i>patera</i> in right, <i>cornucopia</i> in left hand; feet are shod	h.: 31 mm	Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque nationale de France; Coll. Auguste Opperman	BABELON / BLANCHET 1895, 205 no. 460; https://medaillesetantiques.bnf.fr/vs/catalogue/app/collection/record/2218?vc=ePkH4LF7w11-9geompBCEJmQTMwNwlQrzAgAdGRJE (last access: 21.07.2025). Paris, BnF, Département des monnaies, médailles et antiques, bronze.460.
54	unknown provenance, probably Netherlands	Belted tunic; <i>patera</i> in left and <i>cornucopia</i> in right hand	h.: 33 mm; w.: 44 mm	–	Sabine Faust: from Dutch metal-detectorist forum „Holländerforum“, which no longer exists.
55	unknown provenance, antiquities trade (Bulgaria)	Belted tunic; <i>patera</i> in right, <i>cornucopia</i> in left hand; cap?; whole figure curved	–	Now in Sofia, Bulgaria for sale on ebay	https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/176881517868?chn=ps&norover=1&mkcid=2&itmid=176881517868&targetid=4585581971777941&device=c&mkttype=&googleloc=&poi=&campaignid=555133859&mkgroupid=1311718526188111&rlsarget=pla-4585581971777941&abclid=10053750&merchantid=87779&msclkid=455149a25cd6188edb1f2e6cf6685bab (last access: 21.7.2025).

Tab. 2 (continued).

Catalogue Number	Image	Noticeable features	Measurements	Context details / associated finds	Reference
Type 10A					
56	<i>Aquae Helveticae</i> , Baden, Switzerland	Both hands empty? Parted hair = female	l.: 40 mm	vicus / spa near <i>Vindonissa</i> ; Excavation ABB, House 2; “Humus bis erste Steinbauperiode, 2. Phase” = 70/80–90 CE	KOLLER / DOSWALD 1996, 122 fig. 96; TRUMM 2021, 67–69 fig. 4; Vindonissa Museum, inv.-no. B.88.4/12.35.
57	Bembridge, Isle of Wight, United Kingdom	Chest, shoulder blades and couch indicated	l.: 33 mm; w: 34 mm	Found in same field as two busts (?furniture mounts); (IOW- A7CF33 and IOW-C28CE6), but some years apart	Worrell 2005, 468–489 fig. 22. PAS: IOW-2F
58	Earl Soham, United Kingdom	Twisted garment; head, hands and feet missing; rivet on rear?	incomplete; h.: 24.7 mm; w.: 31.7 mm; thk.: 7.2 mm; wt.: 28.44 g	–	PAS: SF-B079B1
59	Isle of Wight, United Kingdom	Base has rough surface, with small flat and smooth area	h.: 31.6 mm; w.: 34.4 mm; thk.: 10.5 mm; wt.: 23.03 g	–	PAS: IOW-16C188
60	Fort Vechten, Netherlands	Youthful face with cap-like hair; thick folds of garment around waist; right hand raised	h.: 10 mm; l.: 42 mm; w.: 31 mm	From collection (1841) of antiquarian society of Utrecht; no precise findspot preserved	PAN-00134087 (pers. com. Stefanie Hoss) Previously: Provinciaal Utrechts Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen.
61	unknown provenance, antiquities trade	Bun at back, possibly female; twis- ted clothing round waist; empty hands	h.: 33 mm; l.: 45 mm	same object 2016 and 2019	https://www.acsearch.info/search.html?id=3218326 and https://www.acsearch.info/search.html?id=6438200 (last access: 21.7.2025).
62	unknown provenance (bought in Konz, Germany)	Right hand on raised knee empty; large eyes; clearly defined hair	l.: 41 mm	Schweizer Privatsammlung Bonsera. Bought ca. 2011 at Petermännchen- Messe in Konz from German private collector Saarland.	On Drouot Antiques website (link no longer available); pers. com. Sabine Faust.

Tab. 3. Draped reclining figures: divine or human banqueter of Type 10.

Catalogue Number	Image	Noticeable features	Measurements	Context details / associated finds	Reference
Type 10A					
63	unknown provenance (probably Netherlands)	Right hand raised, poss. with attribute; garment twisted at waist	l.: 50 mm?	–	Sabine Faust: From Durch metal-detectorist forum „Holländerforum“, which no longer exists.
64	unknown provenance, private collection	Right arm and hand clearly defined; large eyes; bun at back and hairstyle may indicate female	–	–	Pers. com. Sabine Faust.
65	unknown (now Bonn, Germany)	On ring! Diagonal lines on back; some attribute in right hand	h. (total): 69 mm; d. (ring): 39–42 mm; h. (figure): 27 mm?	–	MENZEL 1986, 165–166 pl. 141, 462.
Type 10B					
66	Bordeaux, France	Very worn	l.: 38 mm	US 20185, feuille K	RAUX 2009, no 673. https://artefacts.mom.fr/en/result.php?id=STE-4008&find=STE-4008&pagenum=1&a ffmode=vign (last access: 29.5.2024).
67	Cirencester, United Kingdom	Dotted hair; very shortened legs; stylised drapery	lost	AHVIII, 26, late 1st century CE; Leaholme, Insula V shops and ear-lier fort; 26 = burnt clay and stone hearth (HOLBROOK 1998, 190)	HOLBROOK 1998, 318 fig. 192.
68	Langstone, United Kingdom	Very worn; curved	h.: 32 mm; w.: 29.5 mm	–	WORREL 2005, 451–452. NMGW-F4A3F6
69	Rickingham Inferior, United Kingdom	Chest and navel very clearly indicated	l.: 40.7 mm; w.: 40.6 mm; thk.: 8.1 mm; wt.: 17.39 g	–	PAS: SF-7E1F81

Tab. 3 (continued).

Catalogue Number	Image	Noticeable features	Measurements	Context details / associated finds	Reference
Type 10B					
70	Shenstone, United Kingdom	Possibly something in left hand; rib on rear may be part of vessel rim or slotted into groove	h.: 30 mm; l.: 26 mm but damaged; thk.: 6.27 mm; wt: 10.2 g	–	WMID-6553C1
71	Usk, United Kingdom	Highly stylised garment	l.: 36 mm ; h.: 29 mm	pre-Flavian Fortress Pit 2 67 B 36	WEBSTER 1995, 49 fig. 17.
72	<i>Verulamium</i> / St Albans, United Kingdom	Hands empty with large fingers; 'moustache'	?	With coins of Tiberius-Claudius and mid-1 st century pottery. Possible votive deposit in River Ver	NIBLETT / THOMPSON 2005, 95 fig. 4,29.
73	unknown provenance, poss. Baldock, United Kingdom	Lines of clothing turn downwards rather than toward feet	h.: 37 mm; l.: 35 mm	metal-detected?	MILLS 2000, 141 (does not indicate findspot); FAUST 2008/09, 297.
74	unknown provenance	Twisted clothing on waist marked by incised lines	h. (?): 39 mm	–	Ebay OFFERING PIECE 010827, 25.11.2008 (Sabine Faust).
75	unknown provenance (private collection, possibly Netherlands)	Highly stylised	–	–	Sabine Faust: From Durch metal-detectorist forum „Holländerforum“, which no longer exists.
76	unknown provenance (probably Germany)	Horizontal lines on back = couch or clothing?	?	metal-detectorist forum, 2012	http://www.bodenfundforum.com/index.php?/topic/48269-roemisches-stuck-richtig-behandeln/?hl=flussgott#entry404536 (last access: 29.5.2024).
77	unknown provenance (probably Netherlands)	Angled arm; very stylised clothing	h.: 35 mm; l.: 32 mm	–	Sabine Faust: From Durch metal-detectorist forum „Holländerforum“, which no longer exists.

Tab. 3 (continued).

Catalogue Number	Image	Noticeable features	Measurements	Context details / associated finds	Reference
Type 10C: Male					
78	Amurias, Spain	<i>Patera</i> in right hand, empty left hand; bald head?	–	Museu d'Arqueologia de Catalunya	https://artefacts.mom.fr/en/result.php?id=STE-4008&find=STE-4008&pagenum=1&affmode=vign (last access: 29.5.2024).
79	Clermont -Ferrand, France	Published as <i>Genius</i> but appears to be human diner to me	l.: 33 mm	–	BOUCHER 1982, 36 no. 46. Musée Bargoin, inv.-no. 5726.
80	Colchester, United Kingdom	Right hand not modelled, left hand empty; “smiling”; bun at back of head horizontal lines on back?: garment or couch?	h.: 31 mm ; w.: 34.5 mm ; thk.: 7.5 mm ; thk. (at base): 5.5 mm	–	GREEN 1976, 216, pl. XIIIc; cited as BM accession No 70.4-2.17 but in fact in Colchester Museum COLEM: JOS.1077.
81	Trier, Germany	Belted garment; solder on base	h.: 32 mm; l.: 38 mm; thk.: 5 mm	Mosel, possibly 1996	FAUST 2008/09, 297–298 no. 5; Private collection; GDKE / Rheinisches Landesmuseum Trier, EV.2006:108; Sabine Faust. Pers. com. Sabine Faust.
82	unknown, antiquities trade	Could hold attribute in left or right hand?	h.: 35 mm	–	Website no longer available, pers. com. Sabine Faust.
83	unknown, trinity Antiques	<i>Patera</i> in right hand; locks at front but plain top of head	h.: 34 mm; l.: 30 mm	–	FEUGÈRE 2011, 25 fig. 3. Refers to STE-4008 on Artefacts Website, but it does no longer occur there.
84	unknown provenance (probably France)	Opening below arm	–	–	
Type 10C: ?Female					
85	Aurun, France	with <i>patera</i> in right hand; left hand rests on ‘garland that girds the hips; hair in bun at back; ‘priest’	h.: 34 mm; l.: 50 mm	from Saint-Jean suburb of Aurun, 1894	LEBEL / BOUCHER 1975, 79 no. 128. Musée Rolin, inv.-no. 367.V.89.
86	Kempten, Germany	Hairstyle = female; attribute in left hand?	–	–	WEBER 2000, 77–78 fig. 120.

Tab. 3 (continued).

Catalogue Number	Image	Noticeable features	Measurements	Context details / associated finds	Reference
Type 10C: ?Female					
87	Osburg near Trier, Germany	<i>Patera</i> in right hand; belted garment, with thick folds around waist; hair indicates female	l.: 40 mm	–	Private collection, EV 2013,69a, pers. com. Sabine Faust; GDKE / Rheinisches Landesmuseum Trier, Foto: Th. Zühlmer.
88	Pompeii, Italy	Silver! <i>Patera</i> in left hand, resting on pillow; unknown object in right hand; hair in bun; chiton and cloak	l.: 46 mm	Found in May 1911 at the amphitheatre, in 'soil dumped from excavations'	STEFANI 2000, 427 fig. 11; EBER forthcoming. Magazzini, inv.-no. 945.
89	unknown provenance (now private collection)	Hairstyle indicates female	–	–	Pers. com. Sabine Faust.
90	unknown provenance (now in Naples, but likely Vesuvian)	Poorly preserved but may be clothed female. Attributes in hands unclear	–	with two reclining figures (genius and Mercury) and eight busts	Inst.Neg. Rom 67,2394. Permalink: http://arachne.uni-koeln.de/images/Abbild42ungen/dai-rom-fotothek-1967/Bestand-D-DAL-ROM-67.2394.jpg Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli.

Tab. 3 (continued).