

***Triplism* revised. Case studies: Roman Hispania, Gaul, and Britannia**

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Abstract :

In this brief article, we propose a revision of the concept of *triplism* developed between the decades of 1920 and 1930 and understood as inherent to the culture of Celtic societies of all periods and regions. We base our analysis on the concepts of hybridization (JIMÉNEZ, 2011), entanglement (STOCKHAMMER, 2012a; 2012b; 2013), and on the analysis of the epithets used in the votive epigraphs dedicated to plural feminine deities and produced during the period of Roman domination of Hispania, Gaul and Britannia. We point out the impossibility of maintaining the same practice unaltered for several centuries, and in a great geographical extent. In view of the socio-cultural and political changes resulting from intercultural contacts, we defend the existence of several forms of *triplism*, which consist of different forms of production and application of the same practice.

Keywords : *Triplism* – Entanglement – plural feminine deities

Understanding *triplism*

The term *triplism* is traditionally employed applied to designate the extreme power of deities or triplicate elements in material culture (CUNLIFFE, 1997: 187). Used by some researchers² to classify and analyze a religious phenomenon of Celtic populations in general (i.e. of all periods and regions), *triplism* is an extremely intricate notion, being based on the linguistic theory of families of Indo-European languages as well as in Comparative Literature, Anthropology, Archaeology, and History. Such an argument, modeled on the famous invasionist theory³, has been present in Celtic studies since the 1920s, being one of the longest-lasting concepts of the field. Today, however, it no longer has credit, and that is the main reason why the studies of *triplism* need revision.

One of the researchers who started these studies was Dumézil, with his trifunctional hypothesis⁴ about the Indo-European populations, which we will not examine in this article. Other authors like Lambrechts (1942), Vendryes (1960), Rees and Rees (1961), and MacCana (1970), based on texts by Greek and Latin authors, on Welsh and Irish Vernacular Literature, and on the observation of archeological material produced among the Celtic populations, agreed that the number three and its multiples seemed to be associated to the worldview of Celtic peoples. According to them, these numbers are strongly rooted in their everyday life, making them live with and disseminate these symbols in an almost organic manner that goes beyond intentional propaganda, being more of a way of living.

We have seen, however, that – since then – *triplism* has been used in a rather superficial way and treated, generally, only on great manuals on “Celtic Civilization” and presented as a trait inherent to the culture of these populations, without being questioned. These manuals understand *triplism* as the same phenomenon, from the Iron Age to the Christian period, when it is associated to the Trinity. The authors that most recently propose to deal with the subject, like Green (1992, 2004, 2007), MacKillop (1998, 2005), and García (2011-2012) use what could be considered evidences of *triplism* in a way that does not consider the different sociocultural and political contexts. They do not consider the differences between Pre-Roman tribal organization and Roman domination; the place of production (Gaul, Britannia, Hispania, and the Germanias); the

kind of production (textual, iconographic, epigraphic, etc.); or the period of production (Iron Age, Antiquity, Middle Ages).

If we examine, however, the social, cultural, political and spatial transformations that Celtic societies went through, we realize it is improbable that one practice could remain the same in the span of eight centuries and a geographic expansion of over four million square kilometers. That means that, if *triplism* actually existed in these societies, its production and use suffered transformations to adapt to the needs of each time or region.

We realized, from our analyzes, that what could be considered *triplism* in the European Iron Age cannot be the same thing that is produced and used during, for instance, the period of Roman indoctrination. The *triplism* produced in Britannia did not have the same characteristics of the one produced in Gaul, Hispania or in the Germanias. We propose, therefore, a new outlook on *triplism*, escaping from the common generalizations of specialized literature. We defend the existence of *triplisms*, for it is not a single phenomenon, fixed and homogeneous, like most authors presume, but actually several uses of the same practice.

We have identified, therefore, two types of *triplism*. First, the concept of *triplism*, developed and studied by the authors mentioned above, understood as a religious phenomenon inherent to the Celtic populations. Second, the plurality of *triplisms* that we observe in items of material culture, particular to the different experiences of each period and region, which can only be analyzed through case studies. In our particular research, we analyze *triplisms* through the iconography and epigraphy of the *Matres*, *Matronae*, and other plural feminine deities⁵, produced during the period of Roman domination of the Western Provinces – Hispania, Gaul, the Germanias, and Britannia. We observe that, in each region, these objects suffer processes of contact and domination, and we cannot forget the spatial, cultural and political transformations resulting from them.

Understanding our proposal

Far from dismissing the term *triplism*, our aim is to keep in mind the discussions that have happened on the subject this far, trying to understand it inside specific political, geographical, and socioeconomic contexts: Roman domination of Western

Europe provinces. To do so in this article, we will analyze titles and epithets given to the plural feminine deities found in votive epigraphs in the provinces of Hispania, Gaul, and Britannia. This material was produced between the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD.

We believe it is crucial, for the best understanding of the practice of *triplisms*, the study of objects from the material culture inside the contexts of their production, dissemination, and consumption. These provinces, before the conquest, were not inhabited by homogeneous societies. Likewise, the conquest and occupation by Rome happened differently in each region, concerning both colonial and local actions. The results were hybrid societies (JIMÉNEZ, 2011:113). Therefore, the objects we study for this work – epigraphic material produced during the Roman period – are entangled, i.e., they are unique and full of singular characteristics, for they are the result of the creative power unleashed by intercultural encounters (STOCKHAMMER, 2013:14-15). We have observed that each province we studied developed their own characteristics concerning epigraphic production of plural feminine deities, and concerning *triplism* itself.

In Hispania, for instance, we noticed the scant number of images when compared to the inscriptions, epigraphy being the most common form of venerating these deities in the Iberian Peninsula. These inscriptions are concentrated in the North and Northwest regions, with only three instances found in the South.

In Gaul, besides finding different epithets, we also observe the existence of different titles, such as *Matronae*, *Matres*, *Proxumae*, *Nymphae*, *Iunonae*, *Suleviae*, and others. Even though examples are spread among different regions, most of them concentrate in *Gallia Narbonensis*, the place with oldest Roman occupation.

The epigraphs in Britannia are dedicated to the *Matres*, in their majority, by members of the Roman army stationed along the Adrian Wall; they also appear in the region of Cirencester, Gloucestershire. Like in Gaul and in Hispania, most contain only the title of *Matres*, without any epithets. Few, but recurrent epithets are used, like *Ollototae*.

Plural Feminine Deities: titles and epithets

In Hispania, researchers have found 25 inscriptions of devotion to plural feminine deities, all of them under the title of *Matres*, and – among those – fifteen

inscriptions⁶ present fourteen different epithets. Differently from other regions, like Gaul or Germania, where some epithets are recurring, such as *Augustae* and *Aufaniae*, in Hispania the epithets are unique, i.e., they appear in one inscription each. Except for *Endeiterae*, that appears in two inscriptions. It is also important to highlight that most epithets possess a topographic value, or were derived from Indo-European linguistic roots, if we consider the etymology.

Some of the dedicants were members of the local elite, who had received citizenship and the *tria nomina*, but there were also among them women – well born, slaves and freed slaves – peregrines, freed male slaves, and slaves, besides two priests of the Imperial Cult.

Concerning the place of finding, most of the epigraphies were found in places near rivers and springs. According to Blasco (2015), this points to a connection between these divinities and wet or hydric environments. Five epigraphies containing epithets – *Matres Brigeacis*, *Matres Callaicis*, *Matres Endeiteris*, *Matres Dureræ* e *Matres Tris* – and two others containing only the title *Matres* were found in a forensic context, in the proximities or inside urban structures interpreted as a forum. This practice demonstrates that these dedicants had high social status, or they appropriated new practices started with Roman occupation. This did not stop, however, essentially local epithets to remain associated to the *Matres*, presenting to us a picture of an entangled cult.

We identified twelve inscriptions that present indigenous epithets⁷, i.e., epithets related to local toponyms, theonyms, and ethnonyms. Among them, five were found in the region of the *Conventus Cluniensis*, in *Hispania Tarraconensis*, three of them from *Colonia Clunia Sulpicia*. This region, together with North Meseta, is considered the center for the cult of plural feminine deities in the Iberian Peninsula. Most of the archeological traces come from these regions.

Some divinities that have indigenous epithets seem to relate to other, local divinities, showing the same root. That is the case of the *Matres Callaicae* or *Gallaicae* and of the local god *Bandue Calaico*. According to Blasco (2015), possibly both the group of divinities and the local god have their theonyms connected to the *Callaici/Callaeci* tribe, with origin in the regions of Braga and Lugo, being their protectors.

T(itus) Fraternalis / Matribus / Gallaicis /v(otum)s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito)

(CIL II 2776)

In a counterpoint to the *Matres* worshiped in the North and Northwest, there are three examples in Baetica, to the South, whose epithets seem to originate outside the peninsula, and for that reason are considered foreign⁸ by some researchers. However, when analyzing in detail the inscriptions and their dedicants, we realize that, even if the epithets are foreign to the peninsular context, the epigraphic production is markedly local. They were produced in loco, and possibly worshiped by individuals from Hispania itself.

One of these epithets, *Aufaniae*, was widely found in in Germania Inferior, especially in the regions of Cologne and Bonn, as one of the epithets mostly used to classify the title *Matronae*. On the inscription found in Carmona, presented here, we verify the substitution of the title *Matronae* for *Matres*, what gives the epithet – even though its origin is outside the peninsula – local characteristics. Thus, we believe the dedicants, *Marcus Iulius Gratus*, appropriated the epithet and made use of it in the way he knew, making the *Matres Aufaniae* local deities, different from those of Germania.

Matribus Au/[f]aniabus M(arcus) /Iul(ius) Gratus
Marcus Iulius Gratus [made this] for the Matres Aufaniae
(CIL II suppl. 5413)

In Gaul, fifteen epithets were found, distributed among the regions of the Alps, Gallia Narbonensis, Gallia Lugdunensis, and Aquitania. Like in Hispania, many epithets were used in one region only, generally are topographic, what gives a tutelary function to these deities.

A particular characteristic of the Gallias is the variety of titles without epithets. They are *Matronae* – found mainly in the region of the Alps, an area of intense traffic of legionnaires and merchants coming from Rome – *Matres*, *Nymphae*, *Iunonae*, *Proxumae*, and *Suleviae*. That shows the singularity of each group of deities, and that they are distinct groups. An interesting hypothesis regarding the groups of plural deities examined here refers to the existence of monolatry⁹, i.e., even if the dedicants admitted the existence of several plural divinities with similar attributes and characteristics, they kept their individual worship to a determined group of deities.

When we make a chart of the inscriptions of Gaul, we observe the existence of four great groups of deities that receive epithets: deities whose epithets possess a

topographic characteristic; deities whose epithets were imported; deities whose epithets were Roman/Romanized; and plural hydric deities¹⁰.

Like in Hispania, the deities that receive topographic epithets are generally associated to a local population or specific region. Like in Hispania, some of them are worshiped along with local male deities, as companions to these gods, what leads us to believe in some sort of union or “marriage”¹¹ between female fertile divinities – reminding of Mother Earth, the personification of arable land – and a fertilizing god.

In Gaul, we identify nine topographic epithets¹², distributed between Narbonensis, Lugdunensis, and Alpina, most of them coming from Gallia Narbonensis. We also notice that seven of these epithets were used only once, what shows the extremely local and tutelary character of the cult.

It is interesting to highlight that most dedicants consist of slaves and freed persons – including those enriched or bearing the *tria nomina* –, both men and women. Considering we cannot find these epithets in other provinces outside of Gaul, this might mean these deities were worshipped mainly by locals.

The location of the epithet *Griselicae*, in Gréoux-le-Bains, for instance, where there is a spring of sulfurous waters (JORIO, 2014:77), as well as the title *Nymphae*, relate these deities to hydric cults¹³. According to Jorio (2014:77), excavations made in the area between 1974 and 1988 found a temple there, of Galo-Roman style and very lavish structure, dedicated to the *Nymphae Griselicae* and to the local god *Griselus*. The luxury of the temple, which possessed an aqueduct and a stairway that gave access to a marble pool (JORIO, 2014:77), show that the dedicant, Annia, daughter of Faustina, even if freed, had wealth. We present the hypothesis that the temple and the votive epigraph might have been produced in gratitude for her financial success.

[Annia] / fil(ia) Faustina / T(iti) Vitrasii Poll[i]/onis co(n)s(ulis) II praet(or)is /
[q]uaest(or)is Imp(erator)is pontif(ic)is / [proc]o(n)s(ulis) Asiae / uxor / Nymphis /
Griselicis
(CIL XII 361)

As we have seen, in Hispania the imported epithets received new meanings to adapt to local worship, with the substitution, for instance, of the title *Matronae* for *Matres*. In Gaul five imported or partially imported epithets were found, one in Gallia Narbonensis – *Almahabae* (CIL XII 330) –, one in Gallia Alpina – *Salvennae* (AE 1904

140) –, and the other three, in a triple devotion, in Gallia Lugdunensis – *Aufaniae*, *Pannoniae*, *Dalmatae* (CIL XIII 1766).

In this particular case, the three groups of deities worshipped – *Aufaniae*, *Pannoniae* and *Dalmatae* – come from the Germanias, the *Matronae Aufaniae* being one of the groups of plural deities with most evidence of worship in Germania Inferior, the *Matronae Pannoniae* and *Dalmatae* come, probably, from Pannonia and Dalmatia, respectively.

Differently from the cult to the *Aufaniae* in Baetica, associated to the title *Matres*, in Lyon the usual title *Matronae* was kept for these three groups of plural deities. The explanation probably lies in the dedicant, *T. Claudius Pompeianus*, *Tribunus Militum*, of the Minerva I Legion, who, when in expedition to the Germanias, brought with him the devotion to these deities; this shows their foreign origin.

*Pro salute dom(ini) / n(ostr)i Imp(eratoris) L(uci) Sept(im)i Severi / Aug(usti)
totiusq(ue) domus / eius Aufanis Ma(tron)is et Matribus / Pannoniorum et / Delmatarum
/ Ti(berius) Cl(audius) Pompeianus / trib(unus) mil(itum) leg(ionis) I Min(erviae) / loco
exculto cum / discubitione et tabula / v(otum) s(olvit)
(CIL XIII 1766)*

Still on the epithets found in Gaul, we identify two widely used ones with Roman origin – *Augustae e Victrices* (JORIO, 2013 – 2014:112).

The epithet *Augustae* was found in fourteen inscriptions in Gallia Narbonensis¹⁴, with titles *Matres* and *Nymphae*; in five inscriptions in Gallia Lugdunensis¹⁵ with the title *Matres*; and in an inscription in Aquitania, with the title *Iunones*¹⁶.

The *Numen* of the Emperor is associated to many of these inscriptions, what, according to Jorio (2014:83), transforms the dedication into a particular form of the Imperial Cult. We also verified this in an inscription in Hispania dedicated to the *Matres Augustis*¹⁷, which, even without making direct reference to the Emperor, was dedicated by members of the priesthood of the Imperial Cult.

We believe that was the way for the local inhabitants to understand the sense and need of the cult to the emperor, linking to it their own devotion to the maternal deities. We can still argue for a sacred marriage, mentioned earlier, where a female deity with a fertility function connects with a fertilizing local god. In the case of the *Matres Augustae*, for instance, the local god would have been substituted for the Emperor's *Numen*, conqueror and fertilizer of the new colonized land.

In Gaul, we observe the wide use of other titles besides *Matres* and *Matronae*: *Nymphae*, *Proxumae*, *Inonae*, and *Suleviae*, related mainly to healing and hydric cults. Due to their attributes and functions being similar and connected to fertility and life cycle, many times they are treated as equivalent to the *Matres* and *Matronae*. In an inscription, found in La Garde-Adhémar, in Gallia Narbonensis, the *Nymphae* merge with the *Matres* deities.

Matris / Nymphis [---] [ern]us Poly[car]pus v(otum) [s(olvit) l(ibens)] m(erito)
(JORIO, 2013 – 2014:112)

However, bearing in mind that rituals have an adaptive characteristic (BELL, 1992; 1997), and that entangled rituals, religious practices, and objects are produced from intercultural relationships (STOCKHAMMER, 2012; 2013), we argue that local deities merged with the classic *Nymphae*, and also with other deities and entities, and gave origin to deities different from the preexisting ones. That would be the reason they would have to be treated by their dedicants as new groups of goddesses, under new names. Such merging also occurred in Britannia, where local *Matres* received the epithet *Parcae*. Other groups of plural deities were found, besides the *Matres*, like the *Suleviae*, the *Nymphae* and the *Parcae*.

In Britannia, the votive epigraphs dedicated to plural feminine deities concentrate in two areas. The first area is in the North, along the Adrian Wall – where most of the dedications were made by stationed legionnaires. The second area is in the Southwest, which would have received a more effective Roman occupation in the first years of conquest, due to agreements of colonial agents with local leaders (WEBSTER, 1993:113).

Differently from the provinces examined before – where we verify the existence of a variety of epithets, many of which were used in only one inscription – we find less epithets in Britannia, used in more than one inscription. From them, we identify five categories of plural feminine deities that receive epithets. They are the foreign *Matres*; hydric deities; the *Matres Parcae*; *Matres* worshipped along with a masculine deity; and *Matres* of the Community/locality. These deities, in their majority, receive the title *Matres* or *Deae Matres*; however, like in Gaul, *Suleviae*, *Parcae* and *Nymphae* are also used as titles.

Britannia has the particular characteristic of the recurrence of epigraphs dedicated to overseas or foreign deities – *Ollototae* and *Transmarinae*. Eight epigraphs were found that refer to *Matres* of other regions, such as Italia, Gallia, Germania, and Africa. Two of them are clearly dedicated to *Matres* of other provinces¹⁸. Three receive the epithet *Ollototae*¹⁹ and two the epithet *Transmarinae*²⁰, while an inscription, seen below, presents a double devotion to the *Matres Ollototis* or *Transmarinis* and to *Jupiter Optimus Maximus*. This last one is a local form of Imperial Cult, as we have seen in Gaul and Hispania.

*I O M et Matribvs Ollototis sive Transmarinis Pomponivs Donatvs B F Cos pro
salvte sva et svorvm V S L M
RIB 1030*

The inscriptions that mention foreign deities are almost all dedicated by members of the army, and deposited in areas near the Adrian Wall. That is the case of the double dedication mentioned above, where the epigraph was produced on the request of a *beneficiarius consularis* and, it seems, deposited at the fort of Binchester. This happens because the legionnaires and colonial agents stationed in Britannia came from other provinces, like Gaul, Hispania and the Germanias. They had the need to relate to the deities of their land of origin, or from other regions they passed on their campaigns.

The connection between the *Matres* and *Jupiter Optimus Maximus* also points to a sacred marriage, mentioned before, also observed in Gaul and Hispania. In Britannia, four other cases, besides the one mentioned, were found. In the first, the *Matres* are worshipped with the god Mercury²¹ (*RIB 3057*); in two others they are worshipped along with the *Genius Loci* (*RIB 130*) – *Matres* and *Genius Loci* and *Matres Ollototis* and *Genius Loci* (*RIB 1032*); and a last case where the *Genius Loci* appears in double dedication with the *Nymphae* (*RIB 3316*).

The connection or marriage of female deities with the *Genius Loci* or a local god is recurrent. Yet, in Britannia, more precisely in the region of Cirencester, Gloucestershire, we verify a particular event. Three reliefs present multiplied *Genii*, called *Genii Cucullati* (due to their use of capes and hoods), that appear in trios, while there is a single goddess.

In opposition to the *Matres Ollototis*, two inscriptions were dedicated to the *Matres Communis* (*RIB 1541*; *RIB 1453*), also near the Adrian Wall. One of them found

in a Roman bath in Chester and another in Carrawburgh. It was not possible to discover their dedicants, due to the erosion and fragmentation of the pieces. These would not necessarily be legionnaires, even if these epigraphs were found in a military context. We must bear in mind the formation of communities in the settlement area of the army.

These communities formed not only in Britannia, but also in other regions of troop settlements, like in Germania (WORAM, 2016:2). These communities had intense commercial activity, and were composed by the legionnaires' families and by those who tried to profit from the permanence of the soldiers in the region. It seems the dedicants of these epigraphs were trying to worship or placate local goddesses in favor of themselves and their communities.

The *Suleviae* and *Nymphae*, deities found in several regions of Gaul, are also found in Britannia. Mostly locals worshiped the *Suleviae*, in Britannia. Four epigraphs dedicated to them; in one it is impossible to identify the dedicant; two were dedicated by Sulinus, a local sculptor – one in Ashcroft, Cirencester (*RIB 105*) and another in Bath (*RIB 151*); and one by Similis, of the *cantiacorum* tribe – in Colchester (*RIB 192*). Similis uses *Suleviae* as epithet for the title *Matres*. This demonstrates the cult to the *Suleviae* in Britannia was local and, like in Gaul, these deities seem to be linked to hydric worship.

Matribus Sulevis Similis Atti filius civis Cantiacus votum libens solvit
RIB 192

Concerning the *Nymphae*, 13 inscriptions²² were found, with two associating them to Coventina (*RIB 1527*; *RIB 1526*) – local goddess widely worshiped in Carrawburgh by Batavi legionnaires; one to the local goddess Brigantia²³ (*RIB 2066*); and another presents a double dedication to the *Nymphae* and to *Genius Loci* (*RIB 3316*), which we mentioned above. Like in Gaul, these deities present strong connection with waterways. A sanctuary dedicated to the *Nymphae* and to *Genius Loci* – where the epigraph described above was deposited – is located in Carrawburgh, next to the well of Coventina. That might have favored the association made by their dedicants between this goddess and the *Nymphae*.

Another epithet seen with the title *Matres*, and up to now only found in Britannia, is PARCAE, alluding to these entities of Greek and Roman mythology. Two epigraphs were found in the Northern region, one in Skinburness, Cumbria (*RIB 881*) and another

in Carlisle (*RIB 951*). It is not possible to know the dedicant of the first, due to the erosion of the piece; the second is a pledge in favor of the health of a woman who had *duanomina*, Sanctia Gemina.

Matribus Parcis pro salute Sanctiae Geminae
RIB 951

The *Parcae* in mythology had the functions of weaving the thread of life, and cutting it in the moment of death – the *Matres Parcis*, probably had the same functions. These merged, thanks to their dedicants, with the maternal functions of fertility and life. Another two inscriptions, also found in the Northern region, were dedicated only to the *Parcae* (*RIB 247*; *RIB 953*), what shows the entanglement of the cult. We argue that, due to their dedicants – a guild treasurer and local inhabitant with mention of parentage, respectively – and to the dating of the pieces – possibly 3rd century – these dedications, even with the presence of the title *Parcae*, were made in favor of a group of local deities. They were worshiped locally, in answer to the needs of their dedicants, and would therefore be distinct from the *Parcae* of the Greek Roman Pantheon.

Parcis Deabus et Numinibus Aug(ustorum) G(aius) Antistius Frontinus curator
ter(tium) ar(am) d(e) s(uo) d(edicavit)
(RIB 247)

Parcis pro Bodo (filio) Natalis pater v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito)
(RIB 953)

Partial conclusions

From the different epithets found in Hispania, Gaul, and Britannia, I have briefly tried to present a panorama of the diversity of the phenomenon called *triplism*. The archeological and epigraphic remains allow us to show both the local variety and the transformations over time. During the period of Roman domination in these provinces, for instance, we notice the development of hybrid societies caused by intercultural contact that happened, and the spatial reorientation done both by colonial agents and by locals, as both groups tried to adapt to the new reality.

Therefore, we argue for the production and consumption of *triplisms*, a phenomenon applied to religious practices and entangled objects, as result of intercultural encounters. In this article, we examined epigraphs, but there are also evidences in iconography and in ritual tools. These, according to Stockhammer, are unique innovations created by specific cultural, social, religious, and political contexts.

We verify the emergence of new deities among these entangled practices and objects, deities created by their dedicants to answer specific needs. In Gaul and Hispania, for instance, we observe isolated epithets, used only once and by only one dedicant, showing local worship and the specialization of the deity. In Britannia, the dedication to foreign deities point to a need of the dedicants – most of them legionnaires – of relating to groups of deities from their native land or from other regions they passed in their campaigns.

From these observations, we argue that the epithets – instead of classifying and assigning different functions to the same group of deities – demonstrate the existence of several different groups. While these deities have similar attributes – fertility, motherhood, protection, among others – they are not the same. As the epigraphic remains attest, their dedicants evoke them not only under different epithets, but also under different titles, such as *Matres*, *Matronae*, *Nymphae*, *Parcae*, *Suleviae*, *Proxumae*, *Iunonae*, etc., what could actually be evidence of monolatry.

In some cases, especially in Gaul and Britannia, we observe the use of the title *Matres/Matrae*, followed by the epithets *Nymphae*, *Parcae* and *Suleviae*, or the title *Nymphae* associated feminine deities like Coventina and Brigantia. Such cases demonstrate the entanglement of cults, which developed according to local experiences and specific characteristics.

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² Lambrechts (1942); Vendryes (1960); Rees e Rees (1961); MacCana (1970); Green (1992, 2004, 2007); MacKillop (1998, 2005); García (2011-2012).

³ We will not examine the invasionist theory in any depth; as reading reference, see Karl (2010).

⁴ Dumézil (1924; 1930; 1958), in his research, used the three highest castes of Vedic society – Brahmins (priests), Ksatriyas (warriors), and Vaisyas (artisans/merchants) – to base his ideas on the existence of a trifunctional structure of Indo-European societies.

⁵ We define plural feminine deities as groups of two or more goddesses, whose iconography was produced, used and disseminated during the period of Roman occupation of the Western provinces. These deities generally have attributes connected to fertility, to motherhood, or refer to the Afterdeath or the Otherworld.

⁶ *Matres Brigeacis* (CIL II 6338 l), *Matres Callaicis* (CIL II 2776), *Matres Endeiteris* (AE 1988 768), *Matres Ibanduicolis* (AE 1973 20), *Matres Monitucinis* (Hispania Epigráfica), *Matres Apillaris* (Hispania Epigráfica), *Matre Useis* (AE 2003 967), *Matres Tris* (BLASCO, 2015:218), *Matres Dureris* (Hispania Epigráfica), *Matres V* (AE 1999 924), *Matres Ciuitates* (BLASCO, 2015:192), *Matres Aufanis* (CIL II suppl. 5413), *Matres Augustis* (Hispania Epigráfica), *Matres Veteris* (CIL II 2128).

⁷ *Matres Brigeacis* (CIL II 6338 l), *Matres Callaicis* (CIL II 2776), *Matres Endeiteris* (AE 1988 768), *Matres Ibanduicolis* (AE 1973 20), *Matres Monitucinis* (Hispania Epigráfica), *Matres Apillaris* (Hispania Epigráfica), *Matre Useis* (AE 2003 967), *Matres Tris* (BLASCO, 2015:218), *Matres Dureris* (Hispania Epigráfica), *Matres V* (AE 1999 924), *Matres Ciuitates* (BLASCO, 2015:192).

⁸ *Matres Aufanis* (CIL II suppl. 5413), *Matres Augustis* (Hispania Epigráfica), *Matres Veteris* (CIL II 2128).

⁹ See CARDOSO, C. F. *O Politeísmo do Antigos Egípcios sob o Reino Novo (1530-1069 A. C.)*. In: LIMA, A. C. C. e TACLA, A. B. (eds.) *Cadernos do CEIA. Experiências Politeístas*. Niterói: Universidade Federal Fluminense. 2008, pp. 63-66.

¹⁰ We consider plural hydric deities the groups of plural feminine deities that possess attributes, titles, or epithets that connect them to wet or hydric environments – or to water worship – such as the Nymphae, the Suleviae, and Coventina.

¹¹ See Bina (2005).

¹² BAGINIAE (AE 1889 183; AE 2000 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890) – according to Jorio (2013 - 2014:77), would be related to the local ethnic group of the *Baginensis* and to the local god *Baginus* – CLUTOIDAE (CIL XIII 2802, 2805), VEDIANTIAE (CIL V 7873; CIL V 7872; JORIO, 2013 - 2014:109), GRISELICAE (CIL XII 361), GLANICAE (JORIO, 2013 - 2014:77), NEMAUSICAE (JORIO, 2013 - 2014:77), NEMENTIALAE (CIL XII 2221), ULBENAE (CIL XII 333), ROMANISCAE (JORIO, 2013 - 2014: 75, 80).

¹³ We call water worship any cult done in springs, wells, fountains, rivers, etc. In the same manner, we use the term hydric deities, or deities with hydric characteristics, to refer to the deities that relate in any way to these cults.

¹⁴ CIL XIII 1723, CIL XIII 5371, CIL XII 3109, CIL XII 3108, CIL XII 2850, CIL XII 2672, CIL XII 2593, CIL XII 2448, CIL XII 2388, CIL XII 2220, CIL XII 1823, CIL XII 1824, CIL XII 1825, CIL XII 1826.

¹⁵ CIL XIII 1759, CIL XIII 1760, CIL XIII 1762, CIL XIII 1765, CIL XIII 1764.

¹⁶ CIL XIII 914.

¹⁷ *Matribus Augustis* / [-] *Iulius Amabilis et /C(aius) Marius Cursor / Aug(ustales) pri(mi) de s(uo) d(ederunt)* (Hispania Epigráfica; BLASCO, 2015:174).

¹⁸ RIB 88; RIB 653.

¹⁹ RIB 574; RIB 1031; RIB 1032.

²⁰ RIB 1224; RIB 1318

²¹ In Britannia, Mercury also occurs in statuettes along with the local goddess Rosmerta, what demonstrates an alliance or wedding, in this case between a Greek-Roman masculine deity and a local feminine deity (WEBSTER, 1997).

²² RIB 460; RIB 744; RIB 753; RIB 1228; RIB 1526; RIB 1527; RIB 1547; RIB 1789; RIB 2066; RIB 2160; RIB 2340; RIB 3189; RIB 3316.

²³ Both Coventina and Brigantia are cases that demand a deeper study; because of the limitations of this work, this study will not be done here.