

The Islands of Zeeland and South Holland in Roman Times

figs. 1-8; pls. iv-viii

The coastal area of what are today the islands of Zeeland and South Holland was already inhabited in various places several centuries before Christ. Traces of settlements have been found both in the Old Dunelands and in the fens behind them, which extended to the higher sands of Brabant and Flanders. It is still very difficult to make a comprehensive study of the many Iron-Age finds from this area because of the lack of a reliable typology and chronology of pottery. In that respect we are much better informed about the finds and settlements from the Roman period. Now that southwestern Holland has been fully inventoried, it has become possible to compile a provisional map showing the distribution of Roman finds and other material pertaining to the Roman period (fig. 1).¹

In Zeeland the earliest find of Roman origin – not counting the coins – dates from c. 70 A.D. It is a sherd from a terra sigillata bowl (type Drag. 29) of South-Gallic make, found in an indigenous settlement at Koudekerke on the island of Walcheren. In the early days of the Roman period – for Holland this has been established at c. 12–9 B.C. – the coastal area of Zeeland and environs was fairly densely populated. However, there seems to have been no question of Roman influence at that time although such a possibility exists in theory. The Romanization of the islands of Zeeland and South Holland (the 'delta' of the southwestern Netherlands today), was not undertaken on a big scale until the last quarter of the first

century, witness the many (well-datable) finds of 'Roman' pottery unearthed on the islands of Rozenburg (from or in the neighbourhood of the Helinium), Putten (Spijkenisse), Goeree (Ouddorp), Schouwen (Brabers near Haamstede; duneland of Westenschouwen), Tholen (the south coast near St Maartensdijk, and Poortvliet), North Beveland (Kats/Colijnsplaat), Walcheren (Koudekerke, Ritthem, Domburg), and western Zeeuws-Vlaanderen (Aardenburg). In the course of the second century Roman influence and the number of indigenous and Roman settlements steadily increased, reaching a culmination point between c. 170 and c. 270. Habitation was concentrated mostly near the coast; the less numerous settlements in the 'interior' should presumably be considered particularly in relation to the former courses of the rivers. A normal network of roads did not exist in the extensive fenlands, so that transport and contact with the world outside depended for the most part on the waterways. These waterways and the proximity of the North Sea were undoubtedly of decisive importance in the considerable development of the delta area in Roman times. Several large trade centres were flourishing in the Rhineland, such as Trier and especially Cologne.² A considerable portion of the trade products went through the Rhine-Scheldt delta to the west and south, to Britain and the coasts of the Atlantic. Of course much merchandise came along this route from the opposite direction, too, even from Spain (oil and wine, etc.).

1 The provisional distribution map (fig. 1) of the Roman findspots in the southwest of the Netherlands and part of Belgium is based on data supplied by: the Archaeological Working group for the Netherlands (AWN), sections Helinium, Lek and Merwede area, the Nieuwe Maas, and Zeeland; Municipal Works, Rotterdam, department of Archaeological Research; the Geological Service, Haarlem; the Foundation for

Soil Survey, Wageningen; the State Service for Archaeological Investigations, Amersfoort; the Royal Zeeland Society for Sciences, Middelburg; various museums and archaeological collections, private individuals, and publications. Cf. *Deae Nehalenniae* 1971, fig. 5, 48–9; with some modifications and additions.

2 Byvanck 1943, II, 547.

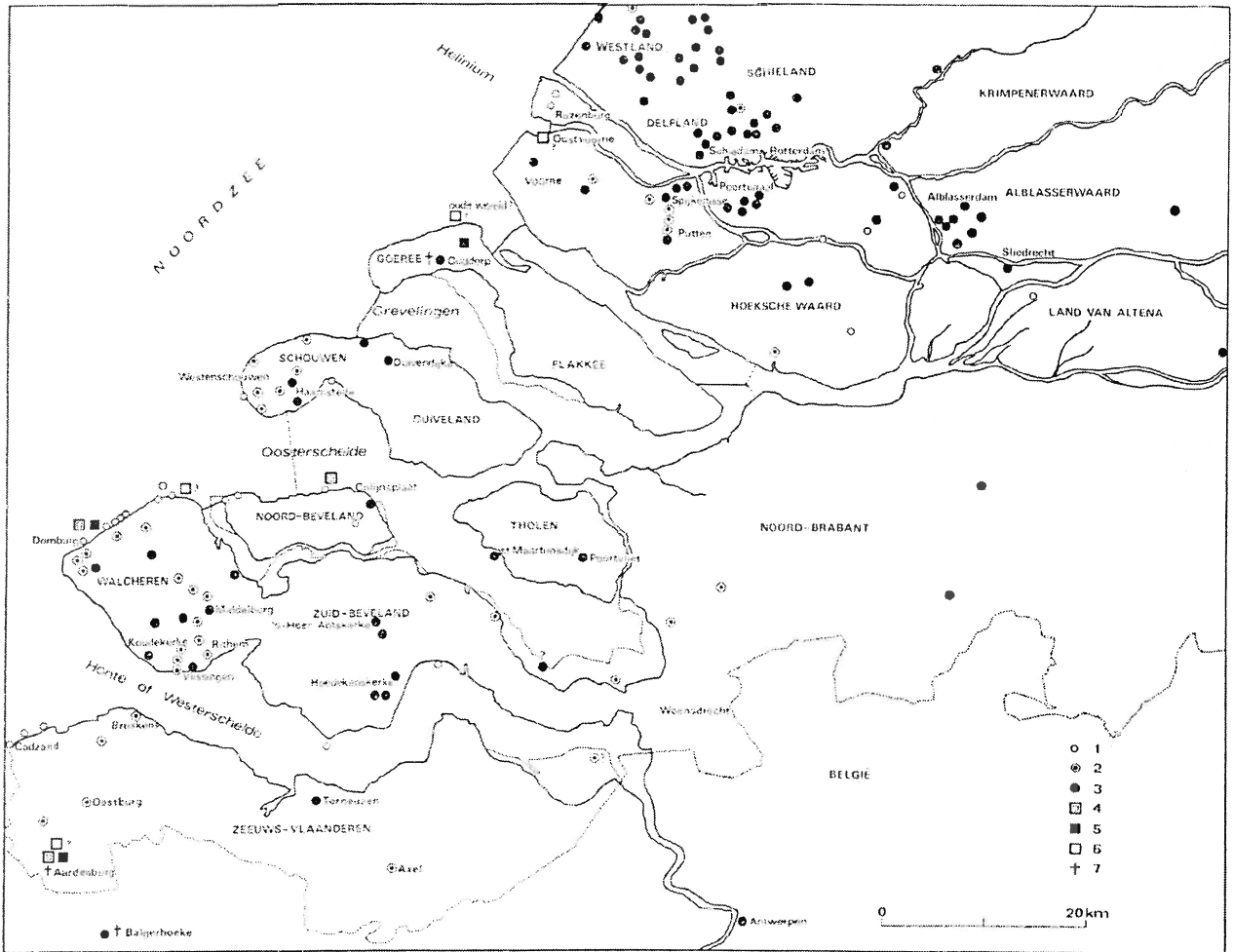


Fig. 1 Roman findspots in southwestern Holland and part of Belgium 1 silted-up find, 2 stray find, 3 settlement traces, 4 sanctuary, 5 vicus, 6 castellum?, 7 cemetery

Important trade routes and trading centres demanded protection. Indeed, traces of fortifications have been found, of which possibly one was built at Oostvoorne (to the south of the Helinium), others at Ouddorp ('The Old

World?'),³ and at the mouth of the Scheldt between Domburg and Schouwen,⁴ and possibly at Aardenburg, too. Danger probably threatened from the sea rather than from the interior. After several invasions by Chaukian

3 Trimpe Burger 1960-1, 201-2.

4 On a seventeenth-century map by Nicolaas Visser, a point is marked between Walcheren and Schouwen, with the remark: 'Den Roompot een voornaem Casteel bij the Rhomeynen gebouwd pleegh alhier te leggen' (Den Roompot, an important

Castel built by the Romans, used to be situated here). This map is reproduced in De Bruin Wilderom 1961, 56, fig. 14. Moreover it has repeatedly been suggested that a Roman fortification stood near the old Fort de Haak, to the north of Vrouwenpolder on Walcheren.

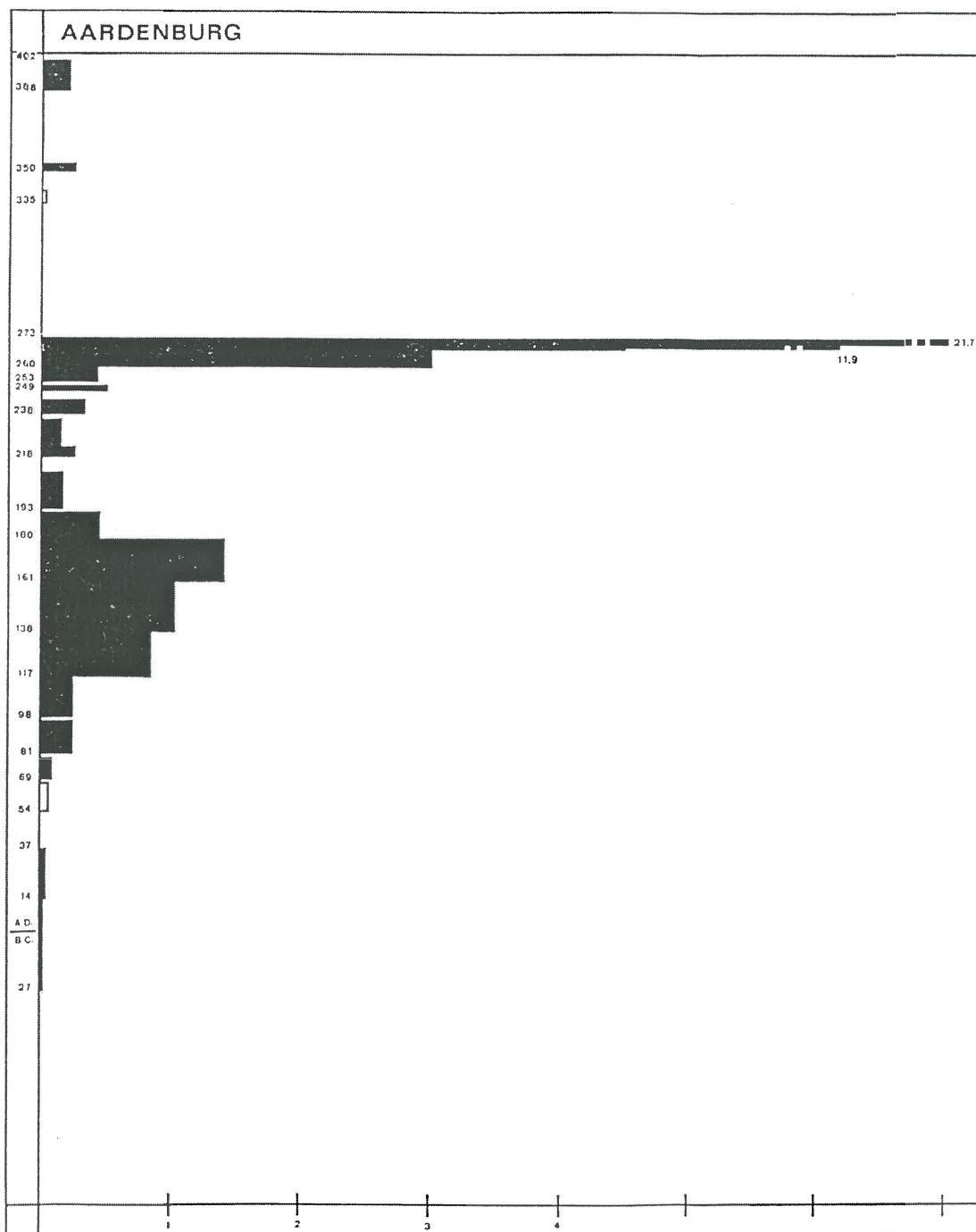


Fig. 2 Graph of the coins found in Aardenburg (after Boersma 1967, fig. 5)

pirates around 172-4, it was particularly the Franks and Saxons who, from the mid-third century onwards, ravaged the coast and undertook looting expeditions to the interior.⁵

The study of the numismatic evidence (fig. 2)⁶ and the dating of the imported Roman pottery show that the Roman influence in the delta area may be considered as having come to an end around the year 270, with the exception of a number of late third and fourth-century finds in the environs of Aardenburg and the Old Dune coast. A little further south, on what is today Belgium's coastal area, slightly more late-Roman finds occur (as in the Balgerhoeke grave-field,⁷ Damme,⁸ and the castellum Oudenburg annex cemetery⁹). Archaeological investigations in Aardenburg have indicated that this site was totally destroyed around the year A.D. 273.¹⁰ The remains of a trade settlement in Ouddorp give the same picture of fire and destruction, although the 'end date' could in this case be established with less accuracy due to insufficient numismatic material. It is not certain whether all settlements in the delta area were destroyed by human violence in the fatal period of the third quarter of the third century. Also rising soil-water, periodic flooding and siltation of the inhabited area (drinking water problems!) etc. could have made life difficult, at any rate outside the area of the Old Dunes and the Pleistocene sands higher up. At all events the influence of the sea in the low-lying coastal area increased significantly around the fourth(?) century (Dunkirk II transgression; end c. eighth century?) whereby the landscape underwent a profound metamorphosis. Some hundreds of years before, around the beginning of the first century, the landscape had been dominated by the Old Dunes and the hinterland of huge fens with their rich vegetation. Various small rivers wound their way through the fens to reach the sea via a number of breaks in the chain of dune formations and beaches. Thus at one time the 'Roman Scheldt' and the Striene flowed through Zeeland, and no doubt there were other drainage streams unknown to us that joined the main stream before reaching the sea. The existence of a former

river or estuary can often still be established by careful investigation of the soil.¹¹ Indications are even believed to have been found of man-made drainage systems.¹² During the so-called pre-Roman transgression period(s), the damming of the river-water and inland waters caused, at high tides, clay sediments to be deposited on the peat. Thus as early as in pre-Roman times in the northern part of Walcheren, under the influence of the mouth of the Scheldt, a broad section of the fenland was covered with sandy clay deposits; in places of deeper watercourses the peat has eroded. The same happened in the Westland, on the islands of Voorne-Putten, Goeree, and here and there on the coastal plains of Flanders. Towards the interior these deposits diminish or do not occur at all, depending on the breadth and depth of the estuary, the height of the land (peat) and the water-holding area inland. Moreover many of these older sediments were washed away over extended areas particularly during the Middle Ages (post-Roman transgressions, Dunkirk II and IIIA-III B), so that a reconstruction of the landscape with its ancient watercourses is fraught with difficulties. Human intervention, too, erased many important traces in later times, such as in the Middle Ages by the large-scale salt-making and in our time certainly by large-scale ground-works. Both the distribution maps (*cf.* fig. 1) of the findspots from the Iron Age and Roman times and the soil maps of the delta area require a circumspect interpretation, particularly regarding the reconstruction of the former courses of rivers. Reasons for the lack of findspots or settlements in a relatively large area can be any of the following:

- a they never existed (e.g. due to environmental factors),
- b they were erased by floods, siltage, peat-cutting,
- c the area has not yet been satisfactorily explored or surveyed (intensive soil survey for agricultural purposes, followed by redistribution of the land in particular, increases the chances of discovering new findspots).

Despite the above difficulties, soil experts believe they have found evidence of an old Scheldt channel which in Roman times presumably flowed through South Beveland to the west of North Beveland, to reach the North Sea

5 De Boone 1954, 29 et seq.; Mertens 1958, 15 et seq.; Mertens 1962; Mertens/Van Impe 1971.

6 Boersma 1967.

7 De Clippele 1968.

8 Favorel 1960, 13. The origin of the finds reported in Damme appears to be unreliable (oral information from H. Thoen, Seminary for Archaeology of the State University at Ghent).

9 Mertens/Van Impe 1971.

10 Excavations by the ROB since 1955; research not yet concluded; publications in preparation.

11 The delta area was surveyed by the Foundation for Soil Survey, Wageningen, and by the State Geological Service, Haarlem. A series of publications has been issued on their findings.

12 Ovaa 1971, 14.

between Walcheren and Schouwen.¹³ The southern river course thought to have flowed through South Beveland is more or less marked by finds in 's Heer Abtskerke,¹⁴ Hoedekenskerke (three findspots), Ellewoutsdijk (silt-up find – pl. iv: 2 – from the Western Scheldt), possibly Terneuzen, and possibly also by the numerous findspots in the eastern part of Walcheren. The remains of a most important sanctuary devoted to the goddess Nehalennia, found near Colijnsplaat in 1970/71, are, however, an unmistakable indication that a waterway must (also) have existed along the present northcoast of North Beveland.¹⁵ Was this the site of the main course of the Roman Scheldt? Or was it a tributary that formed a link between the Scheldt-mouth to the north of Domburg and the big rivers in central Holland? The soil experts, moreover, believe that the former Gouwe (between Schouwen and Duiveland) possibly already existed in Roman times.¹⁶ This waterway could in that case have been of great importance for the 'north-south connection,' perhaps of more importance than the Striene. The find circumstances of a habitation-site with the remains of a house (dating c. 100 A.D.) in the peat to the east of Colijnsplaat, along the banks of the present-day river Scheldt, show that the fenland in this area was accessible and habitable.¹⁷ The same is true for a Roman findspot on the southern bank of Tholen near St Maartensdijk. It is unlikely that there are still river sediments left in this area. The present, much broadened Eastern Scheldt has undoubtedly changed much of the old situation beyond recognition. The importance of the stream along the north coast of North Beveland over the centuries may be concluded from some of the medieval material. A large number of fragments of early ninth-century pottery have recently been found along the banks of the Eastern Scheldt, just to the east of

Colijnsplaat. Such sherds had previously been found only in Domburg, Westerschouwen (Old Dune coast), Aardenburg (Pleistocene sands), Oud-Duivendijke (a place in central Schouwen remarkable for its Roman and medieval finds), and, on the border between North Brabant and Zeeland, not far from the Scheldt, near Woensdrecht. This material is older than that of the so-called refuge fortresses at Middelburg, Oost-Souburg, Burgh, and Oostburg. A circumstance of special historical significance is that 'Het Fael,' an old Scheldt channel near Colijnsplaat, traditionally marked the borderline between what was called 'Zeeland be-ooster' (to the east) and 'Zeeland bewester Schelde' (to the west).¹⁸ The location of the Roman sanctuary finds at Colijnsplaat may be placed on the northern 'bank' of the Fael (Zeeland east of the Scheldt). The Roman sanctuary at Domburg, which was already discovered in the seventeenth century, lay on the southern 'bank' of the Scheldt. The location of the sanctuaries on either side of the Scheldt suggests that this river was an important boundary, *i.e.* between the provinces of Germania (Inferior) and Gallia (Belgica).¹⁹ The mouth of the Scheldt, between Walcheren and Schouwen, appears to have played an important part since prehistoric times. A fairly large late Stone-Age settlement is known to have existed on the south coast of Schouwen (Brabers, Haamstede);²⁰ in the Old Dunes of Schouwen objects from the Bronze Age, which probably came from Central Europe and England, have been found.²¹ There are numerous traces of Iron-Age settlements on either side of the mouth of the Scheldt, both in the area of the Old Dunes and outside. There is also plenty of material from Roman times (including the sanctuary at Domburg, which was most probably situated on the Old Duneland).²² On the north coast of Walcheren

13 Steur/Ovaa 1960.

14 This findspot was reinvestigated in 1972; see note 36.

15 Louwe Kooijmans 1971a, 12–21; 1971b.

16 Ovaa 1971, 19.

17 Trimpe Burger 1970b, 216–8.

18 Trimpe Burger 1970b, 219; Taal 1965 (with detailed bibliographical references); collection of maps in: Fokker 1909, *e.g.* appendix J (text p. 3 et seq.); Beekman 1948, 152–60.

19 Bogaers 1971, 42–3.

20 Trimpe Burger 1960–1, 198–9, fig. 5.

21 Trimpe Burger 1960–1, 199–200; Van der Feen 1952a; Butler 1958.

22 Smallegange 1696, 82: 'When at the end of the year 1646 the winds from the North East and from the East stormed for

a long time, the Dunes of Domburg were eaten away by the waves of the churning seas: so that at last on the fifth of January 1647, at the foot of the same Dunes, various stones were discovered, of extraordinary antiquity, with images and inscriptions of various Heathen Gods...' From the detail 'at the foot of the Dunes' it could be concluded that the sanctuary must have been situated at least one metre above sea level, *i.e.* on or in the Old Dunelands. It would therefore be conceivable that the sanctuary was visible in a broken-down or overgrown state, in the early Middle Ages. Particularly after the year 1000 the site was covered by young dune formations. The tree-trunks by the sanctuary which were also observed in the seventeenth century could be the remains of medieval vegetation, which however could well be a continuation of even earlier vegetation.

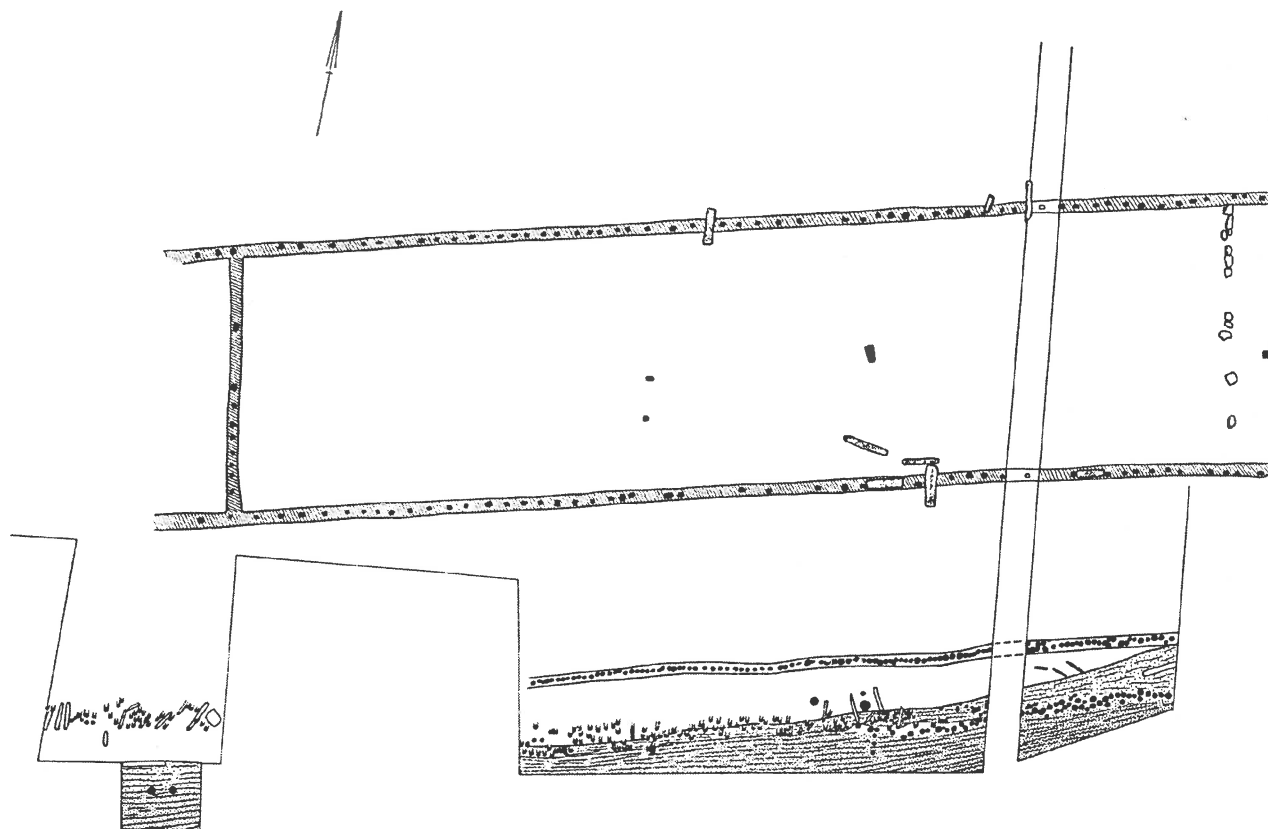


Fig. 3 Ouddorp, Goedereede, polder Oude Oostdijk; bank stabilization of heavy piles along a broad creek or canal from Roman times; excavation ROB 1958-9

six fragments of Roman rooftiles have until now washed ashore; these fragments bear the stamp of the C(lassis) G(ermanicae) P(iae) F(idelis), which is most probably an indication that the mouth of the Scheldt was strategically important.²³ The importance of the Scheldt as a trade-route is particularly evident from the inscriptions on the altars found at Domburg and Colijnsplaat, which were dedicated by sailors, merchants, and ship-owners. The inscriptions and decorations refer to traders in pottery, fish-sauce, (wine) and salt. And finally, between c. 500 and 900, in the early Middle Ages, a rich trade settlement

developed slightly to the northeast of present-day Domburg and the old Roman sanctuary.²⁴ The early medieval settlement with its grave-fields has, just as the Roman sanctuary, disappeared into the sea due to the erosion of the coast-line.

In the delta area a number of interesting Roman finds were discovered in several places around Ouddorp on Goedereede. As early as in 1618 reports were made of Roman antiquities found by the island population at a place called 'The Old World.'²⁵ Pieter Janze Twisch wrote: 'By Goeree, a small town after Den Briel, to the north towards

23 Van der Feen 1936, vii-x; Dumon Tak 1968.

24 Van der Feen 1952b, 153-5; De Man 1899.

25 Twisch 1617-20, II; Boers 1843; Byvanck 1947, 152.

the sea, an old broken-down town was discovered this summer, which has been covered with sand during several hundred years; it has now been exposed to view by the sea; one can see foundations of large houses, yes also broad streets, so that it may be concluded that it must have been an important place of whose downfall no mention is made either in Chronicles or Histories.' Twisch goes on to say that many 'antiquities' were found at that place, including coins with heads of Roman emperors, 'from which it may be judged that this town once belonged to the Roman territory.'

'The Old World' has disappeared into the sea. Its exact location is unknown. From the rather vague descriptions that survive of the 'Old World,' it is difficult to make out whether the so-called streets and houses belonged to a Roman settlement or to an early medieval habitation (*cf.* the combination of Roman and early-medieval finds on the beach at Domburg).

In 1958/59 an intensive investigation was undertaken of the traces of habitation from Roman times in the old Oostdijk polder to the north of the town of Goedereede, not far south of the place where 'The Old World' supposedly disappeared into the sea. The remains of a fairly extensive civilian settlement situated along a canalized navigation route were unearthed (fig. 3; pl. v: 2); to judge from the nature of the finds, this must have been a trade route.²⁶ The very numerous finds of imported ceramics in this settlement seemed to indicate the presence of a *negotiator cretarius*. That Ouddorp, too, maintained contacts with England in Roman times is confirmed by the typically English pottery finds (pl. vi: 1). The settlement at Ouddorp, which covers at least three different periods (fig. 3) dates from c. 75 A.D. to about the middle of the third century (or to A.D. 270?). The most important finds include two military roof-tile stamps (pl. vi: 2, 3), and a military inscription (pl. vi: 4), which could be an indication of a Roman fortification in the neighbourhood. It is tempting to identify the 'Old World' and its 'streets and houses' with this fortification. The tilestamp finds are unfortunately incomplete. The most likely interpretation would seem to be:

a [EX GE]R INF retrograde: [Ex(ercitus) Ge]r(manici) Inf(erioris), and

b [CGP]F: [C(lassis) G(ermanicae) P(iae)] F(idelis). The military graffito incised along the rim of a rubbing-bowl, runs: [c]ONT CASSI: [C]ont(ubernio) (or -ii) Cassi, of the 'chamber' or 'tent' companions of Cassius; Cassius being the name of the man at the head of a contubernium (c. 8-10 men).²⁷

Goedereede counts a third findspot of importance: that near Ouddorp. During deep turning of the soil by hand (soil improvement for agricultural purposes), Roman pots have been found on a bed of clay under a layer of sand that lies on the surface at that place.²⁸ The find circumstances are curious because these Roman objects were not covered by a layer of clay, as is the case with most finds in the delta area (deposit Dunkirk II), but by sand which, it seems, must have drifted from the dunes. If this assumption is correct, we have here an indication that the coast of Goedereede, as that of Walcheren and Schouwen, was permanently safeguarded also in post-Roman times by a row of dunes, except in those places where sea-arms, river estuaries, or broad creeks existed. It is remarkable that many pots were found in one piece under the sand, as in a grave-field.²⁹ The discovery of a Roman coat of mail is most exceptional.³⁰

In the delta area, on the island of Voorne, there is one place that merits special attention due to its extraordinary geographic location. It is the village of Oostvoorne, situated on the southern bank of the mouth of the Helinium, which was so very important in Roman times. In 1752, at exceptionally low tide, heavy pieces of mortared stone and the foundations of sturdy buildings were observed, which were possibly Roman in origin.³¹ A Roman castellum could very well have been situated at the mouth of the Helinium. During dredging operations for the construction of the Europoort, much material from the Helinium itself (Rozenburg island) was found, both from Roman times and from the early Middle Ages unfortunately almost all this has fallen into the hands of private individuals and antique dealers.

The most extensive settlement in the delta area, in so far as we can establish today, was situated in the west Zeeuws-Vlaams Aardenburg (Medieval name: Rodanborch). The traces of settlements in this place extend over an estimated area of one square kilometre. In Roman

26 Trimpe Burger 1960-1, 202.

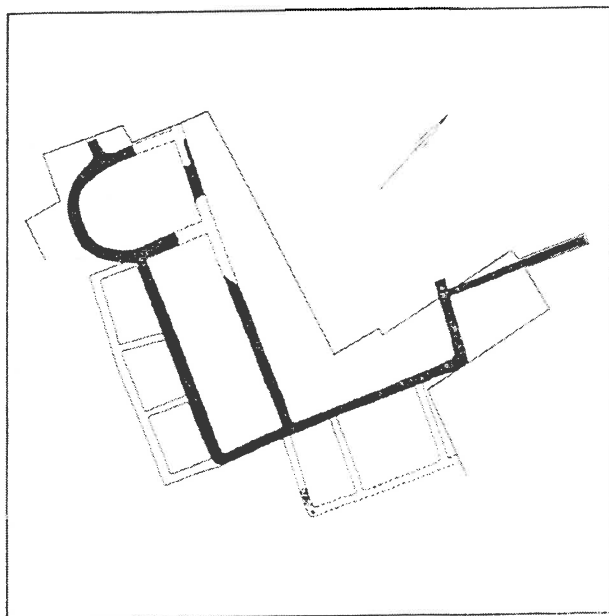
27 *Cf.* a similar military inscription found in Maurik: Bogaers/Haalebos 1972, 87.

28 Trimpe Burger 1960-1, 202.

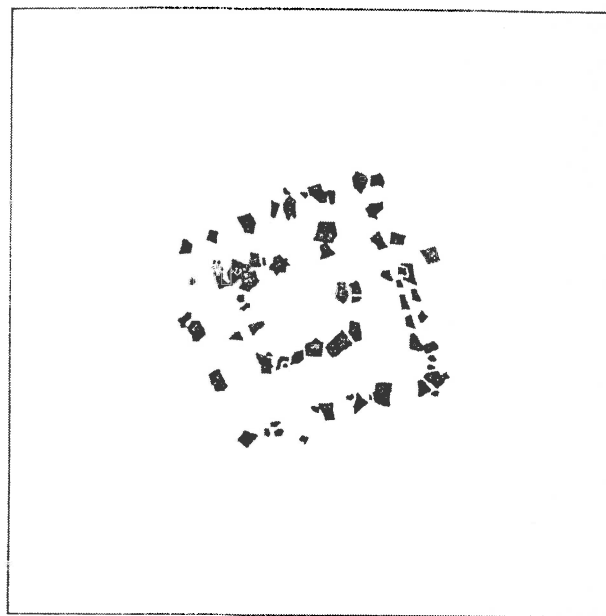
29 Byvanck 1947, 152.

30 Helpfully supplied by Dr P. Stuart, State Museum for Antiquities at Leiden (inv. nr. h 1902/3.1).

31 Hoek 1971, 9.



4a



4b

times Aardenburg was still situated on a small river that presumably flowed to the sea via a rather marshy area. The Roman settlement itself was built on a ridge of Pleistocene sand. Both geographically and historically there is much affinity between Aardenburg and Oudenburg near Ostende. Evidence of one or more Roman castella has been found during excavations in Oudenburg.³² It is assumed that also Aardenburg had military importance, particularly in the period between A.D. 170 and 273, when the coastal area suffered greatly under invasions from the sea. In view of the small number of finds from other periods, Aardenburg must have had little importance from *c.* 100 to 170, and from *c.* 273 to the collapse of Roman authority in the fourth century. Oudenburg, where many objects (pottery, coins) from the earlier and later Roman periods have been found, presents a different picture. Roman Aardenburg must have possessed many imposing buildings (fig. 4); the walls were built of stone and were well-founded on innumerable piles (pl. vii: 1). The building material consisted predominantly of blocks of chalk from Doornik. This grey-blue stone was also used for paving streets and squares. Rhineland tuff was used to a much lesser extent. Unfortunately many Roman re-

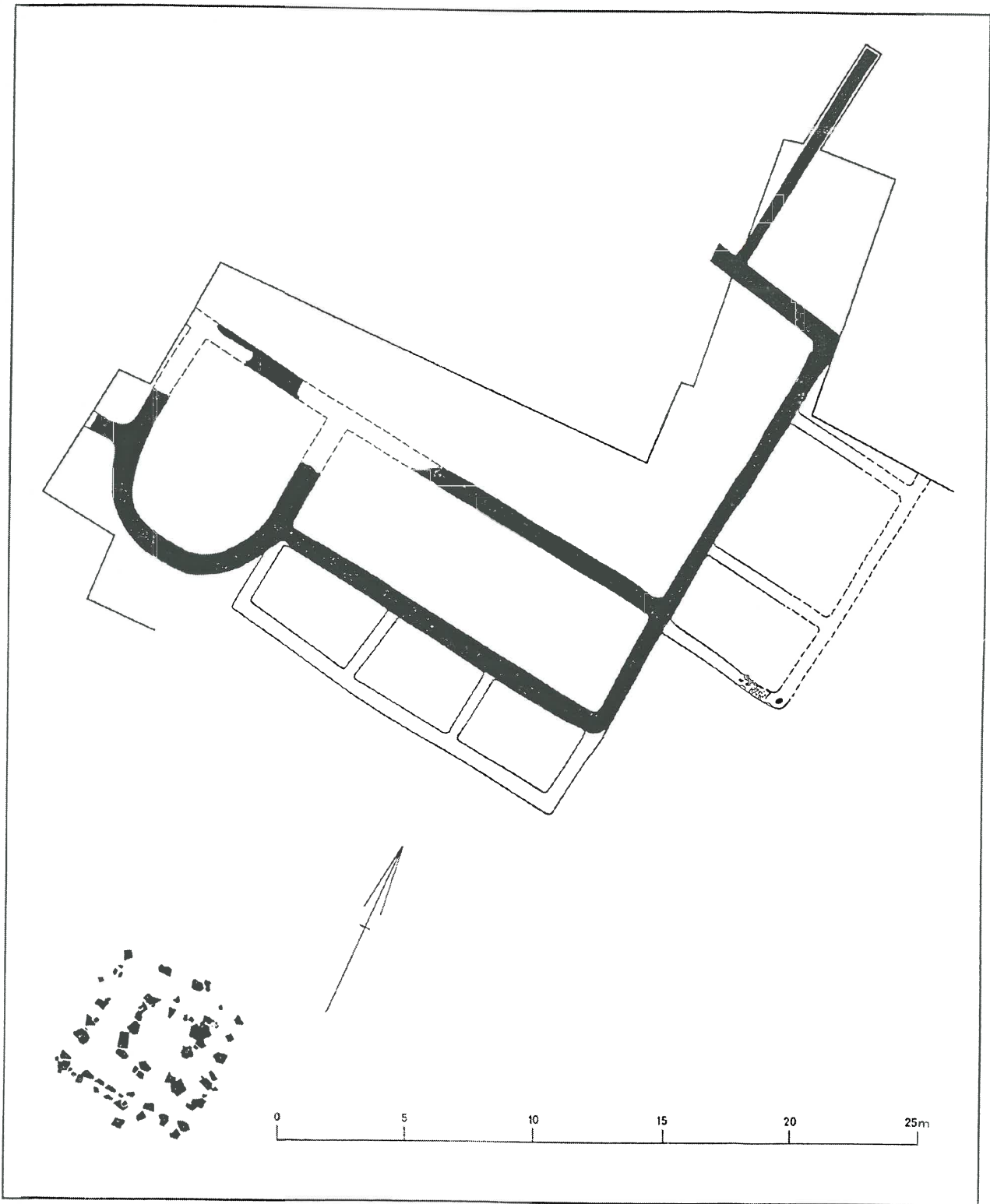
Fig. 4 Aardenburg; remains *c.* 100–200 m to the south of the St Bavo Church; a. Detail of pile foundations under a Roman building from the late second or early third century (*cf.* pl. vii: 1); excavation ROB 1961–3; b. Foundation of a small Celtic-Roman temple (5.5 × 5.5 m), building material stone from Doornik; dating late second or early third century, destroyed around 270–3 A.D.; excavation ROB 1961–3 (*cf.* pl. vii: 2); c. Relative position of the two buildings

mains were demolished in the Middle Ages. Like the former castellum at Oudenburg, Aardenburg was used as a stone-quarry in the period preceding *c.* 1250, when all sorts of building materials were in short supply and before brick was made in these areas.³³ The foundations of a Celtic-Roman temple (pl. vii: 2) of comparatively small dimensions (5.5 × 5.5 m.), unearthed at Aardenburg, are very interesting. The temple was destroyed by fire around A.D. 273, like many other buildings there. Under a 'fire-layer' containing dozens of broken roof-tiles, fragments of a very large (sacrificial?) bowl were found. Remains of altars have not been found – with the exception of a corner fragment – so that we do not know which divinity was worshipped in the sanctuary. However, bronze³⁴ and

32 Mertens 1958, 15 et. seq.

33 Aneca 1964.

34 Zadoks-Josephus Jitta/Peters/Van Es 1969, 14–5 (no. 6), 18–9 (no. 8), 36–7 (no. 15), 68–9 (no. 29), 124–5 (no. 53).



4^c

terracotta statuettes were found in Aardenburg, representing Bacchus, Mercurius, Isis-Fortuna, and Minerva. A particularly handsome ritual object is the trumpet-shaped candle-holder (pl. VIII: 1).³⁵

Although it is believed that Aardenburg must have had one or more fortifications in Roman times, no proof of this has, strictly speaking, been found as yet. But the presence of enormous quantities of building materials (stone) obtained from elsewhere do seem to suggest an organization, money, or power. The fairly numerous stamps on Roman roof-tiles (pl. VIII: 2), *i.e.* CIIIS and CIIIA (Cohors secunda...?) are most remarkable, and they are unparalleled outside Aardenburg. The fragmentary tile-stamp PRIM [--- (PRIMCORS?) (pl. VIII: 3) also raises some questions.³⁶

Little has been said in this short survey of the native population of the islands of Zeeland and South Holland in Roman times. The inhabitants of the coastal area lived – adjusting to the soil-conditions and often at the mercy of the sea – predominantly by farming, fishing, cattle-breeding, and hunting, and of course by trading local products such as baize, wool, hides, hams, goose-liver, fish-sauce, dried fish, and other items. There are indications to show that the coastal population produced salt on quite a large scale both from the ashes of burnt peat and from evaporated sea water.³⁷ The importance of the salt trade is shown by a number of altarinscriptions found on Colijnsplaat, which mention this trade (*negotiator salarius*).³⁸

Most probably the southern part of Zeeland, with Flanders, belonged to the civitas or to the department of the Menapii.³⁹ It is generally assumed that until well into the third century the capital of this civitas should be identified with the town of Kassel in Northern France (Castellum Menapiorum). In the late Roman period Doornik

35 Cf. Van de Weerd 1944, 358, ill. 74: 30; Radnóti 1969, Table 1.

36 See Bogaers 1974, 77, *afb.* 3:3.

37 In the summer of 1972 an investigation was undertaken of the Roman remains found by I. Ovaa (Foundation for Soil Survey, Wageningen) at 's Heer Abtskerke (South Beveland). The findspot proved – in so far as it was investigated – to consist almost entirely of thick, extensive layers of ash (from large quantities of burnt peat), between which a row of six small adjoining ovens was found (Ovaa 1972). The layers of ash strongly resembled the so-called 'zelas' layers from the Middle Ages. These are familiar in Zeeland in the neighbourhood of former salt works etc., places where salt was extracted on a large scale from peat and sea water. Layers of 'zelas' from Roman times have also been found in Aardenburg and Ritthem. In

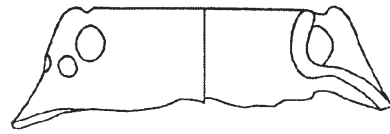


Fig. 5 Fragment of a 'Frisian' eared pot, found in Ouddorp, Goedereede, Oude Oostdijkpolder; dating based on find circumstances c. 75–89 A.D.; excavation ROB 1958–9

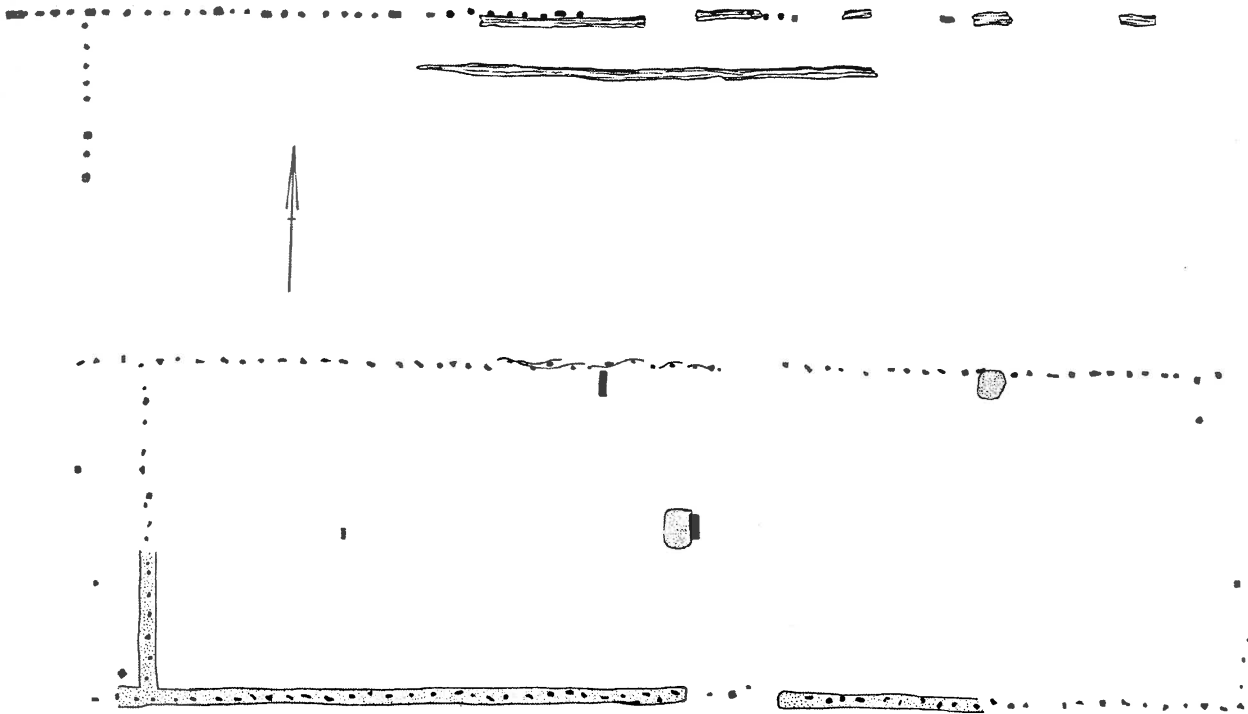
(Turnacum) became the capital. To the south of the Menapii, along the coast, lived the Morini. In the civitas of the Morini, Boulogne (Gesoracum, later Bononia) was highly important as a harbour and fleet-base (Classis Britannica!). Historical data concerning the islands of Zeeland and South Holland are both very scarce and very vague. Renewed study in recent years of all late Iron-Age and Roman finds from this area and direct surroundings (a publication by the present author is in preparation) has probably yielded some new links, although one should not be too quick to relate established 'culture areas' to the territory of a certain group of the population. An increase in trade relations with neighbouring areas tends, initially, to weaken the obtaining patterns of culture. Moreover, the frontiers were shifted because of wars, colonization and migrations. It would seem possible to use as a working hypothesis, the following remarkable data. The Helinium formed a natural barrier between two areas with fairly strong 'cultural' differences. To the north of the Helinium typically 'Frisian' pottery occurs in large quantities (*e.g.* 'Streepband' pottery)⁴⁰, to the south only one rim-fragment of a 'Frisian' eared pot (fig. 5) has been found to date, namely from the earliest

Ritthem it was found to contain some slags (iron?); see Trimpe Burger 1970 a, 3–4.

38 Bogaers 1971, 41.

39 According to Bogaers (1971, 42–3) the Marsaci, (whose territory may have been part of the civitas of the Menapii), probably lived in the area just to the south of the mouth of the Scheldt. To the north of this river mouth the civitas of the Frisiavones probably extended; actually the islands of Zeeland and South Holland could, according to Bogaers, also have been the home of the Sturii, who undoubtedly had no civitas of their own and possibly belonged to that of the Frisiavones (Bogaers 1967, 103, ill. 3); Halbertsma 1965–9, 69 *et. seq.*; Koch 1950; De Laet 1961.

40 Cf. Waterbolk 1962, 42, Abb. 34.



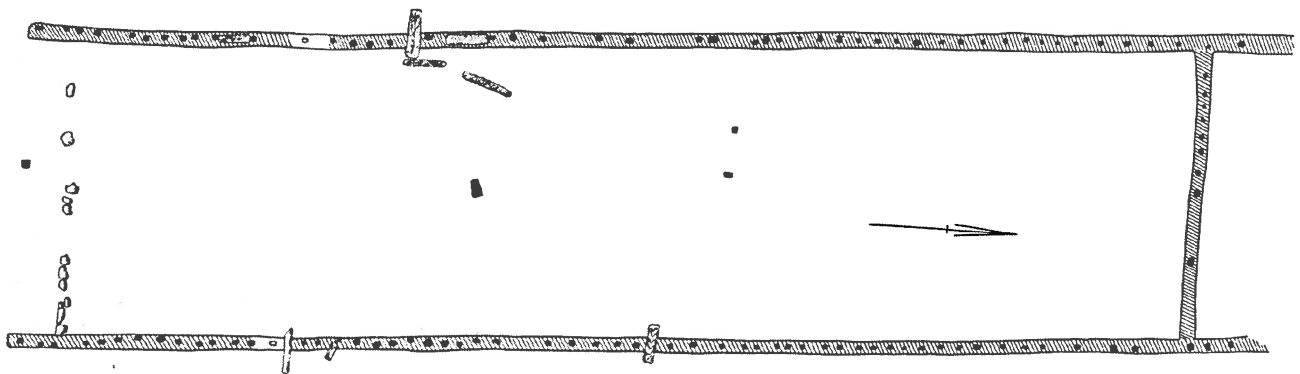
period (c. 75–80 A.D.) of the excavated settlement at Ouddorp on the island of Goedereede.

The Helinium also marks the border between the area with the widespread three-aisled house-type in the north and that of the two-aisled houses in southwestern Netherlands, e.g. at Spijkenisse (fig. 6), Ouddorp (fig. 7), Brabers (Haamstede; fig. 8), and probably Kats.⁴¹ In the delta area there is evidence of predominantly southern influ-

Fig. 6 Ground-plan of a house in Spijkenisse; length c. 23 m, breadth 7 m; one heavy deeply embedded oak pile in the centre of the building; dating probably early second century A.D.; excavation ROB and Department of Archaeological Investigations of Municipal Works, Rotterdam, with cooperation of AWN, Dept. 'Nieuwe Maas', 1966; cf. *NKNOB* 1966, 64

Fig. 7 Ground-plan of house from Roman settlement in Ouddorp, Goedereede, Oude Oostdijkpolder; length c. 26 m, breadth 7 m; one heavy pile in the centre of the building; dating c. 100 A.D.; excavation ROB 1958–9

41 Cf. Trier 1969, Table 2; Verwers 1972, 92, Abb. 58.



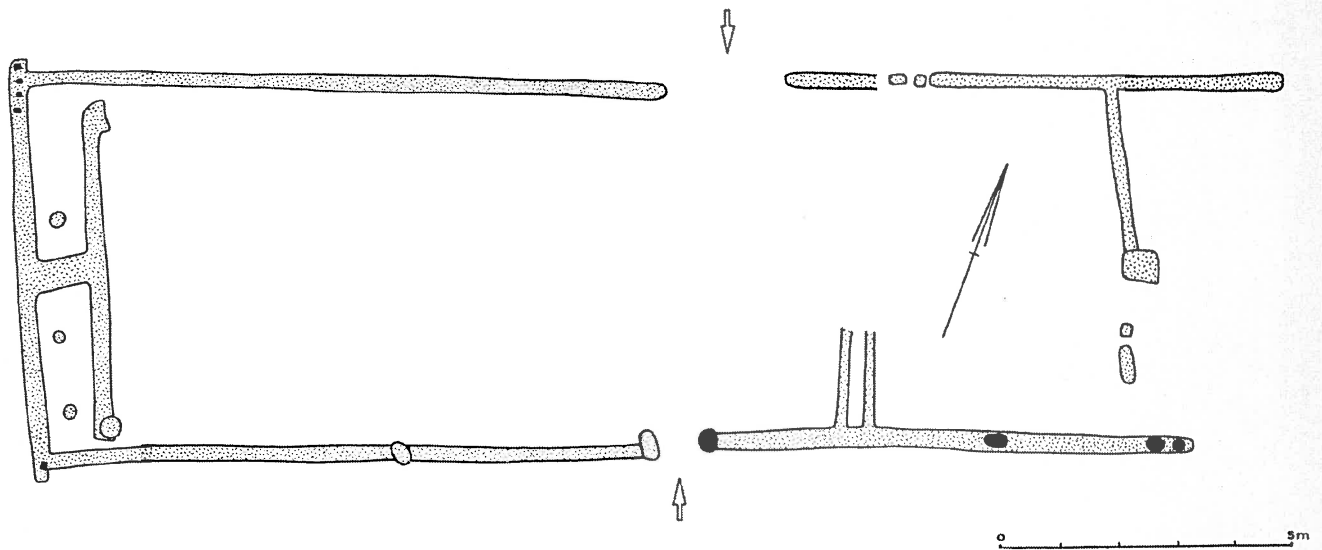


Fig. 8 Ground-plan of house from settlement at Brabers; dating probably second century; note that hardly any pile-holes occur in the wall-ditches

ences, or rather, a northern, 'Frisian' (?) influence did not extend further than the Helinium. On the basis of the occurrence of certain 'pottery associations,' the delta area in Roman times may, theoretically, be divided into three zones:

- a Belgian Flanders/Zeeuws-Vlaanderen
- b the area of the present-day islands of Zeeland (possibly excluding the eastern part of Tholen)
- c the territory of the South-Holland islands. Most of the pottery excavated in Flanders consists of native 'Flemish-Roman' ceramics (e.g. at Aardenburg some 75%); on the Zeeland islands this native pottery also occurs quite frequently (pl. viii: 4) but the percentage is somewhat smaller due to the considerable importation of Roman ware via the main waterways. It is, however, remarkable that this Flemish-Roman pottery is seldom found to the north of Schouwen; actually it is just as rare as in the coastal area to the north of the Helinium, with just a few finds at Voorburg (Aardenburg), Harnaschpolder to the west of Delft (pl. viii: 5), Schiedam, Vlaardingen, Rijswijk (South Holland), Valkenburg (South Holland), and Sliedrecht. There is much in favour of taking Zeeland and Flanders as constituting one cultural entity in Roman

times; besides that we still have the islands of South Holland as the homeland of a different people. This differentiation appears to have developed in Roman times (end first century?). In the late Iron Age, Flanders, the delta area, and part of the northern coastline probably formed one and the same 'cultural unit.' It should be noted that the finds encountered until now in Poortvliet on Tholen are to some extent different from those of the rest of Zeeland. A comparison with West-Brabant finds which are extremely rare, can therefore unfortunately not be drawn. Since major regional potteries appear to have flourished in the area provisionally ascribed to the Menapians, it is perhaps historically more justified to replace the term 'Flemish-Roman' pottery with 'Menapian' pottery. The border-line between 'Flemish-Roman' pottery and the so-called 'Belgian ware' in all its diversity is sometimes difficult to establish. It is, furthermore interesting to note that there is a distinct relationship as regards shape and decoration between the native-Roman pottery of the east coast of England, northwestern France, and that of the Flemish coast – the same picture is, incidentally, presented by the thirteenth and fourteenth-century types of pottery.

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