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Digging for kings, finding pottery. Wijncaldum in the first millennium

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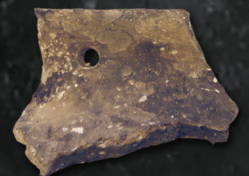
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THE EXCAVATIONS AT WIJNALDUM

VOLUME 2:
HANDMADE AND WHEEL-THROWN POTTERY
OF THE FIRST MILLENNIUM AD



Annet Nieuwhof (editor)



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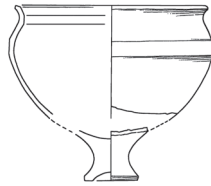
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The Excavations at Wijnaldum

Volume 2: Handmade and Wheel-thrown Pottery of the first Millennium AD



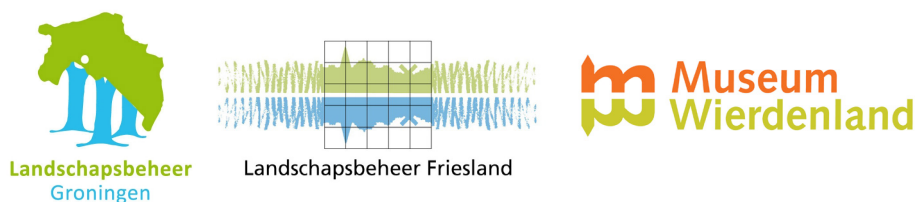
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Terpen en Wierden land

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Preface

Wijnaldum is nowadays an unassuming rural village in the north of the province of Friesland, no more than a small dot on the map of the Netherlands. But during the Early Middle Ages, this was a lively political centre, a kingdom, with intensive contacts with other kingdoms along the North Sea coasts, and with the Frankish realm to the south.

The search for the king that resided at Wijnaldum was the major goal of the excavations that were carried out at the terp Wijnaldum-Tjitsma between 1991 and 1993. These excavations yielded a wealth of information, although tangible remains of the king or a royal residence were not found. The first results and an overview of the habitation phases were published in 1999: Volume 1 of *The Excavations at Wijnaldum*. However, major material categories such as animal bones, metal objects and pottery were left waiting until a next volume. As time went on, researchers became occupied with other work, and Wijnaldum faded into the background.

In 2014, a grant from the Dutch *Waddenfonds*, in the context of the project *Terpen- en Wierdenland. Een verhaal in ontwikkeling* (The terp region. A developing story) made it possible to resume the analysis and publication of the results of the excavations at Wijnaldum, and publish a second volume on the ceramic assemblage. Resuming the analysis of the pottery was by no means easy. The digital archive had become partly inaccessible, and the first drafts of texts, which seemed of topical interest at the time, had lost their relevance due to advancing insights, and needed updates and additions. As one of the authors, Ernst Taayke, wrote to me: The Wijnaldum project is like a pot that has fallen to pieces; the broken pot is being reconstructed as completely as possible now, after 25 years, although we do not have all the shards anymore.

Despite some missing shards, we did succeed in completing this volume. It not only includes major chapters on the pottery of the Roman Period and the Early Middle Ages (Chapters 2-7), but also an extensive overview of the research carried out in Wijnaldum (Chapter 1), an illuminating account of new survey research at Wijnaldum, which provides additional information on the habitation history (Chapter 8), and a synthesis, which presents an overview of the habitation history at Wijnaldum, with special attention to the search for the king on the basis of finds of precious metals and of the pottery assemblage (Chapter 9).

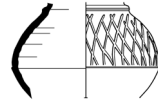


Several organisations financed and successfully cooperated in the Waddenfonds project *Terpen- en Wierdenland. Een verhaal in ontwikkeling*: the Terp Research group of the Groningen Institute of Archaeology (University of Groningen), the Province of Fryslân (Friesland), the Province of Groningen, Landschapsbeheer Groningen, Landschapsbeheer Friesland, the Museum Wierdenland at Ezinge, and the municipalities of De Marne and Eemsmond (now merged into the municipality of Het Hogeland), and Delfzijl. The present book was financed by this project. We thank these organisations for their generosity.

We would also like to thank all those who allowed us to use illustrations: the Fries Museum at Leeuwarden, Johan Nicolay, Saartje de Bruijn, Frans Andringa, Beeldredactie Leeuwarder Courant, Frans de Vries (Toonbeeld), the Northern Archaeological Depot at Nuis (notably Jelle Schokker for all kinds of help, and Henk Faber Bulthuis who made photos), Peter Vos and Sieb de Vries (Deltares/TNO), and Mirjam Los-Weijns and Siebe Boersma of the Groningen Institute of Archaeology (GIA, University of Groningen), who made and edited many object drawings. Siebe Boersma designed the layout of the book. Johan Nicolay read an earlier draft of the synthesis and gave valuable comments. Xandra Bardet not only read and corrected the English texts, but also pointed out inconsistencies. We owe them all our sincere gratitude.

On behalf of the authors,
Annet Nieuwhof
Editor

9. Digging for kings, finding pottery. Wijncaldum in the first millennium



Annet Nieuwhof, Danny Gerrets, Angelique Kaspers,
Jan de Koning, Gilles de Langen and Ernst Taayke

9.1 The scene

Wijncaldum is nowadays a small village in the north-western part of Friesland (Figure 9.1). There is nothing to suggest that this unassuming rural village once was a lively political centre with contacts far and wide. Today Wijncaldum is eclipsed by the advancing industrial estate of the town of Harlingen, which now has the major harbour in the region (Figure 9.2). Via the tidal inlet of the Vlie between the islands of Terschelling and Vlieland, this Wadden Sea harbour gives access to the North Sea

and beyond; and via the locks in the Afsluitdijk, to the IJsselmeer and ultimately to the central river area of the Netherlands and inland Europe.

These waterways already were of great importance during the first millennium, but there was no Afsluitdijk with locks and the IJsselmeer was still the open *Almere*, as it was called in the Middle Ages. The present terp village of Wijncaldum then was part of a series of closely-spaced, inhabited terps that were situated on a salt-marsh ridge running east-west. This salt marsh ridge had become fit for



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Fig. 9.1 Aerial photograph of the village of Wijncaldum, viewed towards the east (July 18, 2016). Beyond the village is the row of low terps, including the terp Tjitsma. The winding stream (upper left) is the remnant of the Ried, once a tidal creek that gave access to the Wadden Sea. Photo © Terpen- en Wiedenlandproject/Aerophoto Eelde.

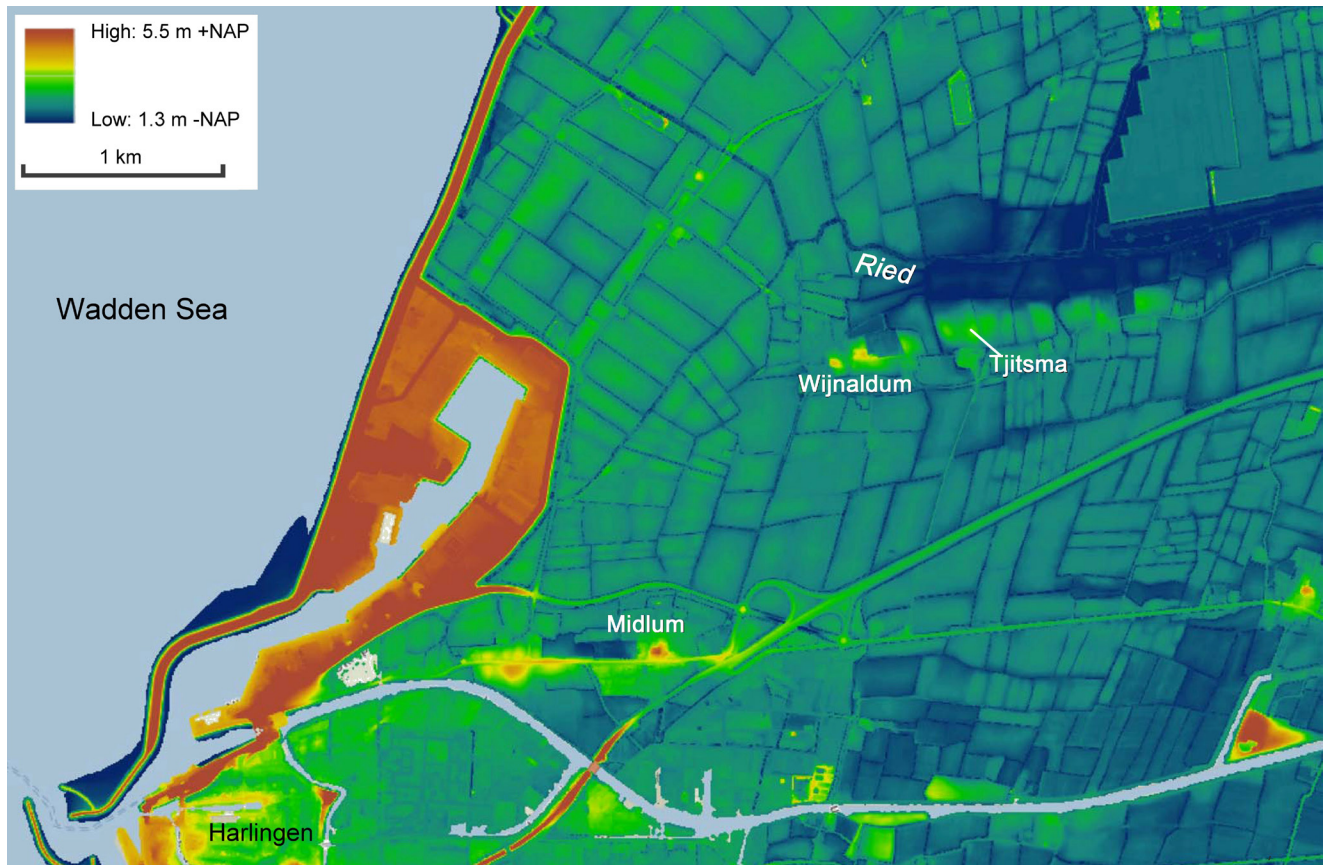


Fig. 9.2 Elevation map of northwestern Friesland with the terp alignments of Wijaldum and Midlum, the river Ried, and the town of Harlingen with its harbour and industrial area. Lidar map from the Actueel Hoogtebestand Nederland (AHN₃), adapted by A. Nieuwhof.

habitation by the early 1st century AD (see Figure 1.23).¹ The present farms no longer need the terps to keep dry and safe; they are situated near, but no longer on the terps. During the Early Middle Ages, however, this was still a salt-marsh area that was open to the sea. All buildings were therefore confined to the terps themselves.

Among these terps, we are best informed on the eastern crest of the terp Wijaldum-Tjitsma, where the excavations of 1991-1993, to which this book is devoted, took place. But it is more than likely that also the western crest and the other terps of the series were inhabited, and that in the Roman Period and during the Early Middle Ages this was a quite densely populated area.² Habitation did not, as was previously assumed on the basis of the pottery excavated at Wijaldum-Tjitsma,³ begin in the second half of the 2nd century, but probably even in the 1st century. This is the outcome of the recent field survey conducted by Angélique Kaspers (Chapter 8).

North of the series of terps of Wijaldum runs a now canalised stream, called the Ried. In the Roman Period and Early Middle Ages, this was a navigable tidal creek, which gave access to the Wadden Sea. There must have been a landing place, but as yet no traces of it have been found. The terp series of nearby Midlum (Figure 9.2) also had direct access to the Wadden Sea, and may have served as another landing place for Wijaldum and its

surroundings. The excavation did produce quite a few rivets from clinker-built ships; such ships are thought to have been in use in southern Scandinavia from the 2nd or 3rd century AD.⁴ At Wijaldum, the rivets come from features that were dated to between the 5th and the 9th century, and they must have belonged to a large number of boats of different sizes.⁵ These finds underline the maritime character of the settlement. There are no traces of boats that belong to the earlier phases of habitation in the Roman Period. The boat types of that period were probably dugout canoes and expanded log boats, but traces of these are rarely found.⁶ A board of an expanded logboat from the Roman Iron Age was found in the terp of Leeuwarden-Oldehoofsterkerkhof.⁷

In the archaeological literature, 'Wijaldum' has become shorthand for the northwestern area of Friesland (northern Westergo) that came to occupy an important social and political position in the world of the early-medieval North-Sea coastal regions. Wijaldum and its surroundings had a strategic position, at the junction of the western and northern Netherlands, and of the Frankish realm to the south and the Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian kingdoms along the North Sea coasts. Because of many striking finds of gold objects, including the famous royal Wijaldum brooch, which prompted the

1 Vos 1999; Vos & Gerrets 1999.

2 De Langen & Hommes 1998; De Langen & Nierstrasz 1998.

3 Gerrets & Vos 1999, 96; see also Taayke, this volume Chapter 3.

4 Rieck 2003.

5 Reinders & Aalders 2007.

6 Van de Moortel 2011; Nieuwhof & Reinders 2019.

7 Vlierman 2008.

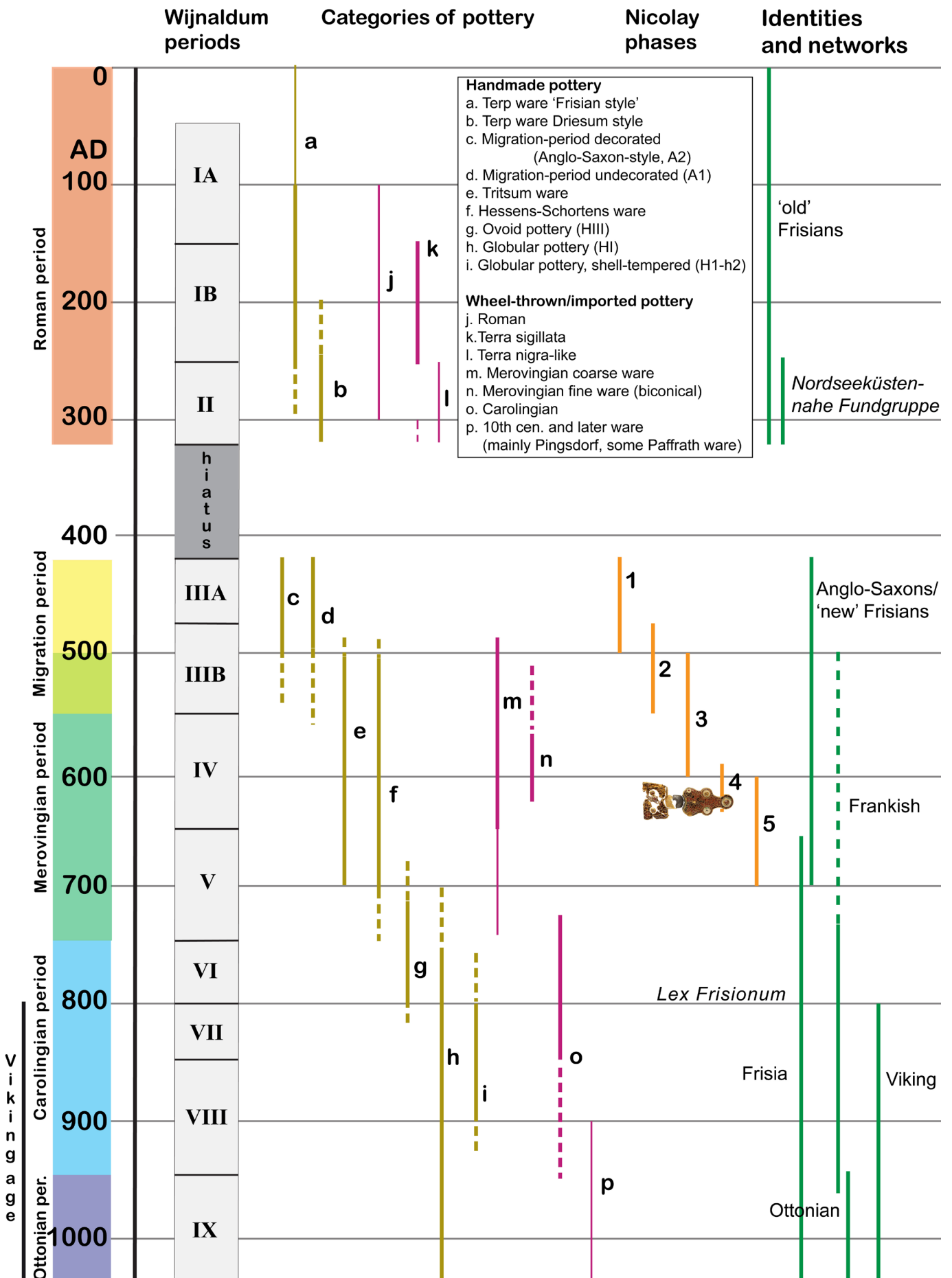


Fig. 9.3 Habitation periods, social identities and networks, and associated categories of handmade (a-i) and imported (j-p) pottery at Wijnaldum. Numbers 1-5 refer to phases in the development of jewellery in the Early Middle Ages, according to Nicolay (see text). Diagram: A. Nieuwhof.

excavations (see Chapter 1) and a filigree-decorated gold sword-hilt mount that must have belonged to a sword of similar splendour (Figures 1.26 and 1.28),⁸ this area is thought to have been the centre of one of the early-medieval kingdoms that emerged after the 5th-century migrations of the ‘Anglo-Saxons’. The coastal area of the northern Netherlands was one of their new homelands; they had found a virtually deserted area here, and formed new communities on the terps that had been abandoned by the Frisians of the Roman period, and also a new identity. In the course of the 5th and the 6th centuries the Anglo-Saxons developed into *new Frisians*, with their own distinctive style of ornamentation in jewellery.⁹ Friesland became the central area of ‘Frisia’ no later than the 7th century, flanked by West Frisia in what is now Holland, and East Frisia in present-day Groningen and Ostfriesland (Figure 1.1). It had its own law code, the *Lex Frisionum*, which was recorded in the late 8th century by order of Charlemagne.

Dike-building on the higher salt marsh presumably started not much earlier than 1100 with the erection of summer dikes, which at first did not yet permit settlement outside the terps.¹⁰ Farms moved off the terps in the period when Pingsdorf pottery was still in use, so no later than the 12th century. Since the dikes did not hold back high winter floods, the farmhouses were rebuilt on small house terps, which protected them from flooding. Several of such terps have been excavated near Wijnaldum, for instance one situated directly south of the village of Wijnaldum;¹¹ the Tjitsma farm south of the excavated area is also situated on a house terp. The dry and fertile abandoned terps changed into arable fields, and that is how they are still used today.

This concluding chapter will touch upon the main themes of the Wijnaldum research, in particular referring to the results of the pottery studies presented in this book and in Volume 1.¹²

9.2 Pottery and the history of habitation

In Volume 1 of the publication on the Wijnaldum excavations, eight habitation phases (Periods I tot VIII) were distinguished and described on the basis of the dates of the pottery and other artefacts, and of the stratigraphy.¹³ These phases are still valid and form the background to the development of the pottery at Wijnaldum that is presented here. Because of the new survey finds, however, we now know that habitation started earlier, in the 1st century AD; the previous Period I, which started around AD 175, is therefore now Period IB, while the newly discovered 1st-century habitation phase is called Period IA (Figure 9.3).

At the end, Period IX has been added, in view of the survey finds from post-Carolingian times.

The spatial distribution of settlement traces per period was mapped out right after the excavation on the basis of pottery dates (Figure 9.4). It shows that the earliest traces were found in the northwestern part of the excavated area, and that the settlement shifted to the south in the course of the first millennium. These data were also used in a series of reconstruction drawings of the settlement evolving over time (Figures 9.5-9.13). It should be kept in mind, however, that in many trenches only early-medieval levels were excavated, while deeper Roman-period levels were avoided to keep the number of finds manageable. Roman-period layers were excavated only in the two long perpendicular trial trenches (Figures 1.15-1.16) and in a few of the later trenches, though not all to the full depth (see also Chapter 8). Older, Roman-period features were spread over a wider part of the excavated settlement, as the recent field survey indicates (Chapter 8). For instance, there probably was an additional house platform from the Roman Period and Migration Period in the southern part of the excavated area, but that is not represented in the spatial overview of Figure 9.4 or in the drawings of Figures 9.5-13. While the excavation took place on the eastern crest of what is now the terp of Wijnaldum-Tjitsma (see also Chapter 1), the field survey included both the eastern and the western crests. Thanks to the field survey, we are now better informed about the western crest. The data indicate that habitation was spread over both crests throughout the centuries of habitation. During the Roman period, there may have been two separate clusters of houses, but in the Merovingian period, both present elevations formed a single terp settlement. In the Carolingian period, habitation was concentrated in the southeastern part of the excavated area, on the southern flank of the terp. The data from the field survey confirm the general southward shift of the settlement in the course of the first millennium (Chapter 8). A similar development can be observed in many other terps: in the Early Middle Ages, the farmhouses gradually shifted to the flanks of the terp, leaving the highest parts to be used as arable fields.¹⁴

Period IA (ca AD 50-150/175)

A few fragments of the regional handmade Terp pottery from the 1st centuries BC/AD were found during the excavation, which led to the assumption that the salt-marsh ridge of Wijnaldum was visited during the early-Roman period, but not yet inhabited (Chapter 3). The field surveys yielded quite a few more fragments from this period. These must partly come from unexcavated layers below the excavated area. Pottery from this period also comes from the western crest on the same terp, which was not excavated (Chapters 1 and 8). These finds show that very soon after the salt marsh had become inhabitable, settlers, probably coming from an older salt-marsh ridge to the south, built the first house platforms here. Prior to the

8 Nicolay 2008.

9 Nicolay 2014; 2017a.

10 De Langen & Mol 2016, 101.

11 Nicolay & Aalbersberg 2018.

12 Galestin 1999; Volkens 1999.

13 Gerrets & De Koning 1999.

14 De Langen & Mol 2016, 103-108.

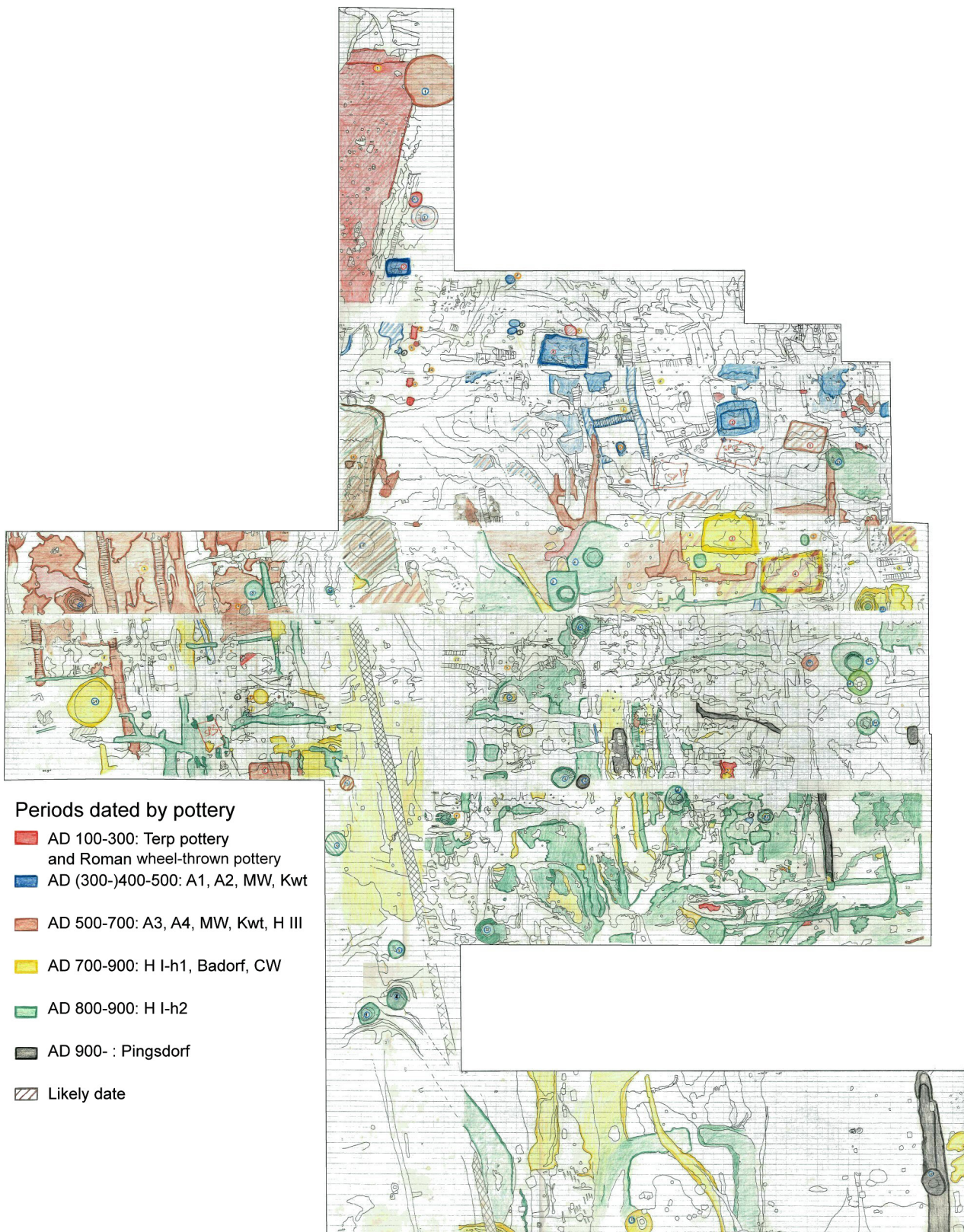


Fig. 9.4 Excavation map that shows the excavated features, including dated features associated with diagnostic kinds of pottery. The map clearly shows that different parts of the excavated area were occupied during consecutive phases, shifting from the northwest to the southeast. Roman-period traces from deeper layers are not represented in the drawing. Drawing J. de Koning.

first house platforms, they had built a low dike, probably to protect arable fields (Figure 1.24). The first phase of this dike, which must date from around the early 1st century AD, was found

under the earliest platform in the excavated area.¹⁵ When in the 1st century AD the first house platform was built

¹⁵ Gerrets & De Koning 1999, figs. 23 and 24. Bazelmans *et al.* 1999, 52; Nicolay & Aalbersberg 2018.

is hard to establish, as the same pottery types remained in use until ca AD 100. AD 50 is an estimate, but an even earlier start is possible.

Period IB (150/175-250)

(Figure 9.5)

This period is again characterised by handmade Terp pottery, but some *terra sigillata* fragments and very few finds of other types of imported Roman pottery also belong to this period.¹⁶ The starting date of this phase was initially set at AD 175, but, knowing that this phase was preceded by an earlier one, this date might be slightly too late. The finds and radiocarbon dates (see Table 2.3) do allow an earlier date, perhaps AD 150.

Period II (250-325)

(Figure 9.6)

The main kind of pottery is again Terp pottery, but in a different style. Around AD 250, the potters of Wijnaldum adopted the longer necks and more angular shapes of the terp pottery prevailing in more easterly parts of the terp region, in Groningen and the coastal area of Niedersachsen. The term Driesum style has become accepted for this style in the northern Netherlands (see Chapter 3). The long necks are a step in the development towards S-shaped profiles, which were to dominate 4th- and 5th-century handmade pottery in the northern and western Netherlands and adjacent Niedersachsen.¹⁷ A small group of early S-profile pottery (type Gw9) indicates that Wijnaldum was inhabited into the 4th century (Chapter 3). One type of wheel-thrown pottery was imported in this period: cups of so-called *terra nigra*-like ware, many of which come from late 3rd and early 4th-century contexts.¹⁸ These cups are very similar to handmade cups of this period, and are thought to have come from workshops north of the Roman Empire that produced pottery to 'Germanic' taste and for a 'Germanic' market (Chapter 3).

A habitation hiatus and the growing population of the Early Middle Ages

After Period II, Wijnaldum was abandoned, just like many other terps in the northern Netherlands, though at Wijnaldum this hiatus seems to have started somewhat later than at many other terp settlements. The abandonment of the northern salt-marsh region fits in with a general trend in the Netherlands, where many regions became

depopulated sometime during the late-Roman period.¹⁹ In inland Drenthe and adjacent Niedersachsen to the east and in Noord-Holland to the west, habitation did not come to an end, but was continuous, though possibly in a diminished form, at least until the mid or late 5th century.²⁰ Which suggests that large-scale emigration from the northern coastal region may have had different causes. It has earlier been suggested that tribal unrest and economic decline related to the collapse of the Roman period was behind the abandonment,²¹ but it may also at least partly be related to changes in the natural environment. One possible cause might be problems with drainage in older and lower parts of the salt marshes and peatland further south;²² in those parts, emigration already started in the early 3rd century. Drainage of this area was increasingly hindered by the high coastal deposits that were forming along the north coast.²³ Although the terps protected the inhabitants from normal floods, prolonged periods of inundation and a permanently waterlogged landscape, with endemic malaria as a possible side-effect, were more difficult to cope with. Wijnaldum, situated on one of the higher northern salt-marsh ridges, was not affected by problems of drainage. The depopulation of the more southerly parts of the salt marsh area, however, must have affected the social environment of Wijnaldum. It may have been disintegration of the social fabric that finally drove the people of Wijnaldum and their neighbours away.²⁴ Maybe it was the collapsing Roman Empire that attracted the emigrants, but we are uninformed as to their destination.

In Chapter 2, a diagram of the minimum number of pots per main habitation period (Figure 2.3) shows that most of the pottery found during the excavation belonged to the Carolingian period and, though far less, to the Roman period. A considerably smaller number of pots belong to the Migration and Merovingian periods. While the emphasis on early-medieval finds and features may explain the relatively small amount of Roman-period pottery (compared to other terp excavations), this focus makes the difference between the Migration and Merovingian periods on the one hand, and the Roman and Carolingian periods on the other, even more striking.

What the diagram shows is a trend that fits in with a more general pattern of the repopulation of the terp region in the 5th century: this was not a one-off, large-scale event. In the beginning of the 5th century, small groups started to repopulate the area, settling on abandoned terps. These

16 Many of the finds of imported Roman pottery, glass and metalwork were found in early-medieval features; it has been suggested that these may have been imported during the Early Middle Ages (Gerrets 1999, 335), but it is also possible that they were dug up from older layers; the argument that the 1st and 2nd century glass and copper-alloy finds cannot have been dug up because habitation started only later is no longer valid (see also Nieuwhof forthcoming, b). The dates mentioned here are not context dates but production dates.

17 For the similar Roman-period pottery of the province of Noord-Holland, see Nieuwhof & Diederik in prep.

18 Galestin 1999, 157-159.

19 Heeren 2015; Enckevort *et al.* 2017.

20 For the Late Roman period in Noord-Holland, see Nicolay & Van Eerden, in prep.; for Drenthe, see Nicolay & Den Hengst 2008; Jelsma 2015.

21 Cf. Bazelmans 2000, 47-52; Dijkstra *et al.* 2008, 309; Gerrets 2010, 159-164.

22 For the developments in the peatland bordering the salt marshes, see De Langen 2011, 79.

23 Northern parts of the salt marsh region are not only younger but also higher than its more southern parts, owing to due to relative sea-level rise in the coastal areas of the northern Netherlands amounting to ca. 0.05 to 0.13 m per century in the last part of the Holocene (Vos & Van Kesteren 2000; Meijles *et al.* 2018).

24 Nieuwhof 2013.

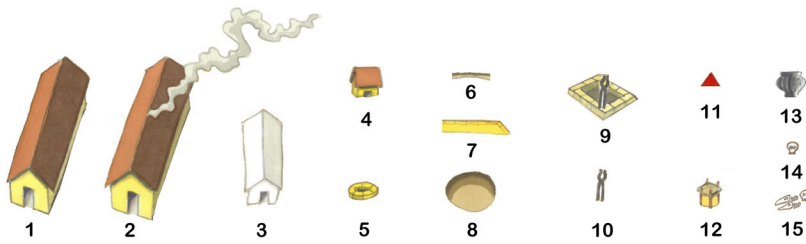


Fig. 9.5-13 Consecutive phases of the settlement of Wijnaldum on the basis of excavated features, with diagnostic brooch and pottery types for each period. 1: house; 2: house with hearth; 3: house (uncertain); 4: sunken hut; 5: well; 6: ditch; 7: sod-built platform; 8: pond; 9/10: metalworking area; 11: outdoor fireplace; 12: granary; 13: cremation burial; 14: infant burial; 15: horse foetuses and infant burial. Drawings: J. de Koning.

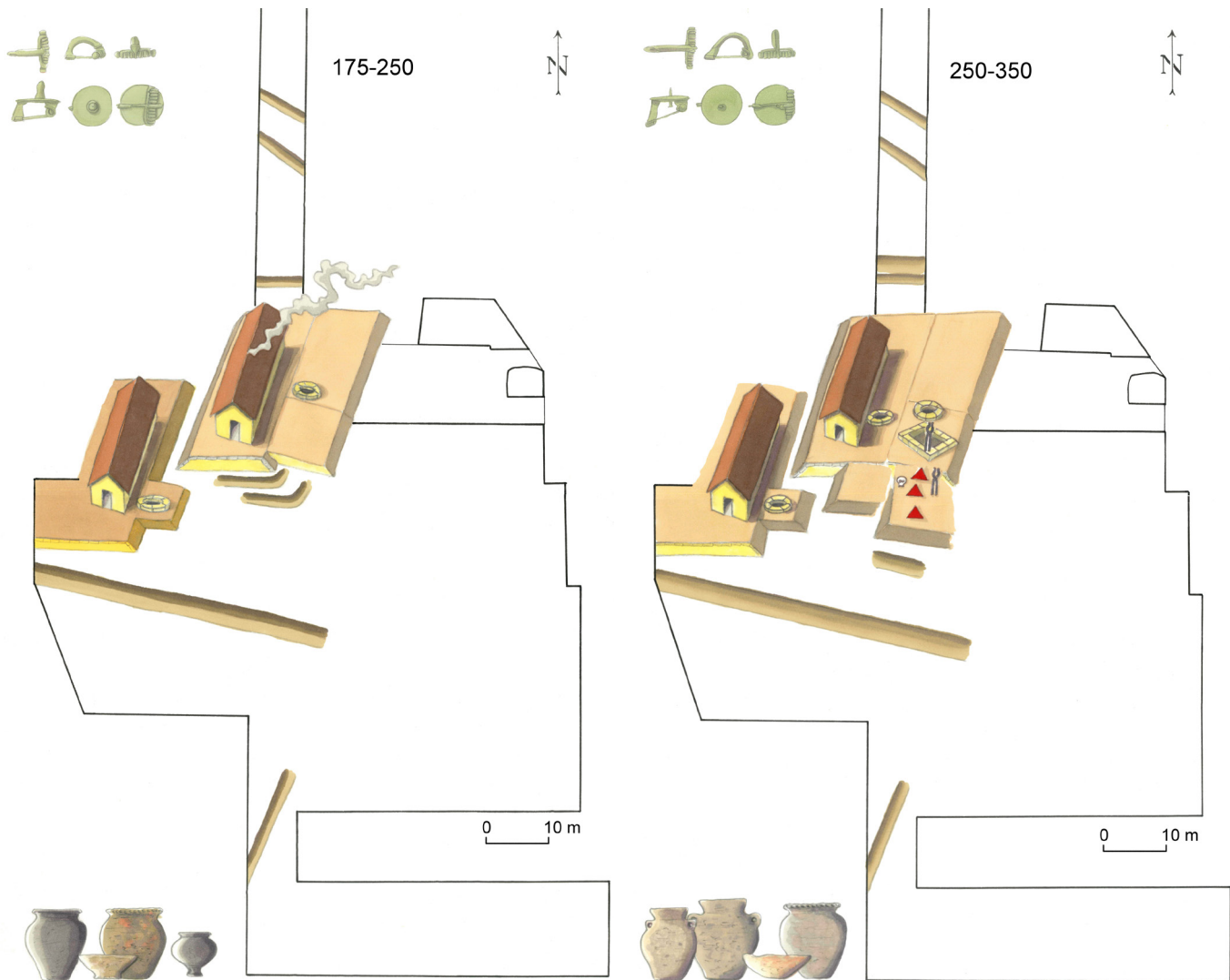


Fig. 9.5-6 Periods IB and II.

newcomers had pottery and jewellery in the Anglo-Saxon style and probably came from the coastal areas of the Elbe-Weser region and Schleswig.²⁵ The first new settlers in the early 5th century may have joined a small remnant population, with whom they had participated in the same socio-cultural network throughout the 4th century.²⁶ The immigrants also settled on the large abandoned terps along the Middelzee inlet²⁷ between Oostergo and Westergo and

in northern Oostergo, as can be inferred from early dates around AD 400.²⁸ Some of these terps may have been inhabited by a small remnant of the Roman-period population during the 4th century, as some pottery finds that are most probably from that period suggest (Chapter 4).²⁹ The population grew, probably also because new groups of immigrants joined the earlier ones in the course of the 5th

25 See Chapter 4; for their brooches, see Bos & Brouwer 2005.

26 Nieuwhof 2013; forthcoming a.

27 The Boorne in Figures. 1.1 and 1.2 (Chapter 1).

28 Nieuwhof 2015, 235-240 and fig. 12.6. The earliest radiocarbon dates are from Hogebeintum (28-422), Oosterbeintum (160) and Beetgum (46A-1001).

29 Nieuwhof 2016.

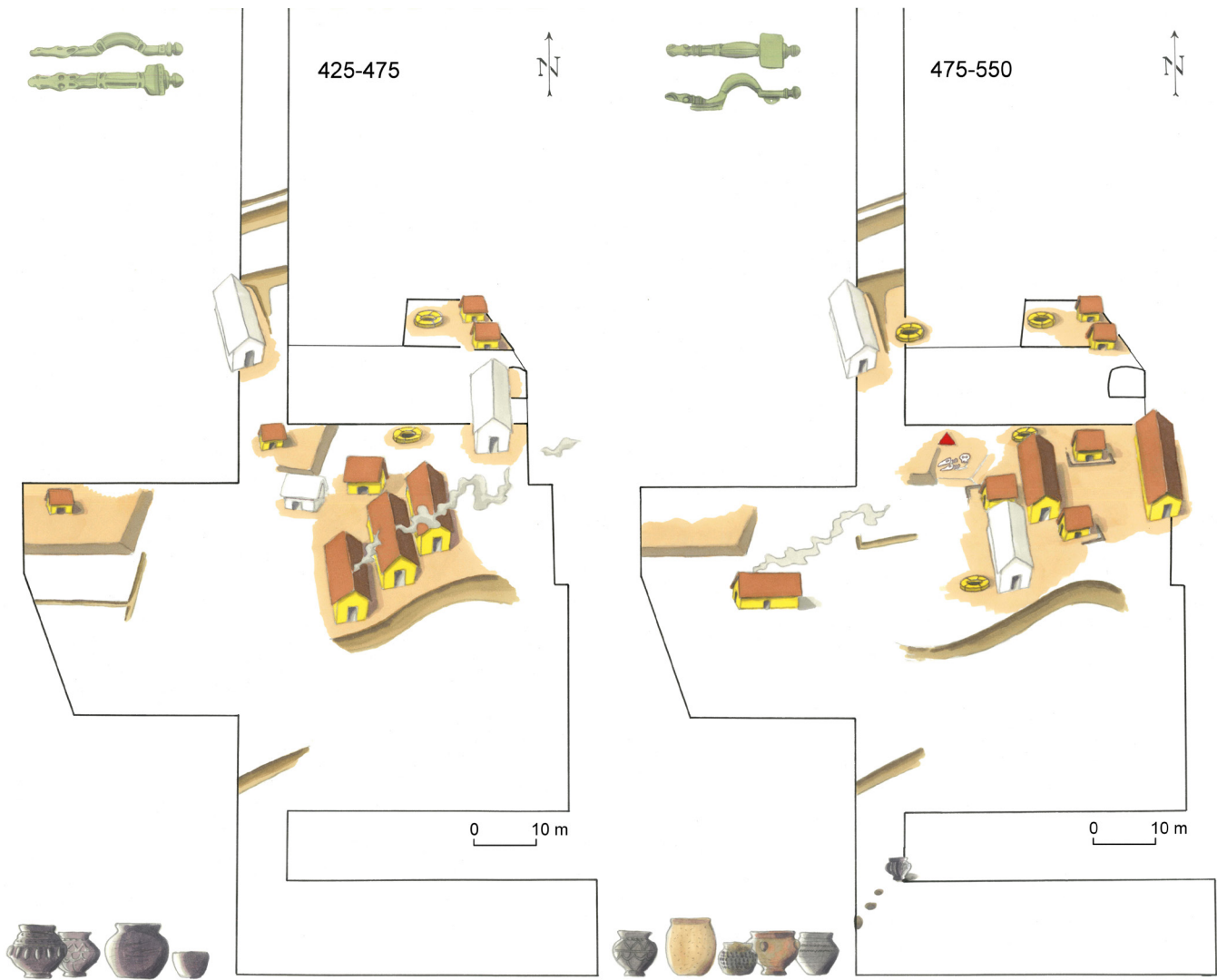


Fig. 9.7-8 Periods IIIA and B.

century. The newcomers also spread to Westergo, but many terps became reoccupied only later, even as late as the 6th century (Chapter 4). The repopulation of the terp region thus started on a small scale and was gradual. This agrees very well with the increase in the number of pots throughout the Early Middle Ages at Wijnaldum, which is shown in the diagram of Figure 2.3.

When exactly the terp of Wijnaldum-Tjitsma was reoccupied is difficult to tell. Ernst Taayke in Chapter 4 observes that early types of Anglo-Saxon style pottery are missing, which makes it certain that habitation started no earlier than ca AD 400. But a later date is possible. The original starting date of the new occupation in Volume 1 was established at AD 425. That was an educated guess based on radiocarbon dates of terp layers that directly covered middle-Roman period terp layers.³⁰ Lanting and Van der Plicht have argued for a later starting date, around AD 450, but the radiocarbon dates certainly allow a starting date around AD 425 or even earlier (see Table 2.3).³¹ The analysis of the pottery does not put that date into

question, so we shall hold on to ca AD 425. In the second half of the first millennium, habitation at Wijnaldum was uninterrupted.

Period III (ca 425-550)

(Figures 9.7 and 9.8)

On the basis of the stratigraphy, two consecutive sub-phases were distinguished within Period III: IIIA, from 425 to 475, and IIIB, from 475 to 550. In Volume 1, no chronological distinction was made between the hand-made types A1 to A4,³² but as we know now, these types are not all from the same period (see Figure 9.3 and Chapter 4). The pottery of the 5th century is pottery in Anglo-Saxon style, that is Anglo-Saxon-style ware in the narrow sense, the elaborately decorated pottery of type A2, and undecorated pottery from this same period, type A1. These types were both in the tradition of the S-shaped pottery profiles that developed around AD 300 from older Driesum-style ware throughout the northern Netherlands and Niedersachsen. These types gradually disappeared in the first part of the 6th century. The undecorated pottery

³⁰ Gerrets & De Koning 1999, 103.

³¹ Lanting & Van der Plicht 2012, 305.

³² Gerrets & De Koning 1999, 96-97.



Fig. 9.9-10 Periods IV and V.

of type A1 developed into types A3 and A4: coarse and squat, grit-tempered Hessens-Schortens ware and its local chaff/grass-tempered Tritsum-variant, which were functional but not as attractive as the earlier types. Some of the decorative elements of type A2 occasionally recur on this later pottery. The import of Merovingian coarse ware got going at the end of the 5th century. The shapes of types A3 and A4 have traits of both type A1 and Merovingian coarse-ware *Wölbwandtöpfe* (Chapter 6).

Period IV (550-650)

(Figure 9.9)

In Period IV, handmade pottery (types A3/4) was still being produced, but the pottery assemblage was now dominated by imported Merovingian wheel-thrown wares from the Rhineland, mainly coarse ware (*Wölbwandtöpfe*) but also biconical fine ware (Chapter 5). Wheel-thrown pottery makes up 63.7% of the total ceramic assemblage of this period (Chapter 6).

This is also the period to which the royal Wijnaldum brooch and sword belong. Many other finds and an artisanal area testify to a rich material culture in this period.

Period V (650-750)

(Figure 9.10)

In Period V, the percentage of imported pottery dramatically drops to just 1.2%. Handmade pottery with organic temper (Tritsum ware) disappears. The grit-tempered Hessens-Schortens type pottery develops into ovoid shapes (*Eitöpfe* or type HIII), and these, in turn, into globular pottery (*Kugeltöpfe* or type HI) in the first part of the 8th century.

Period VI (750-800)

(Figure 9.11)

In this relatively short habitation period, several changes occur. Globular and ovoid pottery take over from earlier Hessens-Schortens ware, together making up 86.7% of the pottery of this period. At the same time, imported wheel-thrown wares make a comeback, with Carolingian cooking pots and Badorf ware amounting to 13.3% of the total pottery assemblage. In addition to the locally made grit-tempered (and sometimes sand-tempered) globular pots, shell-tempered globular pots appear in increasing numbers. This ware seems to have originated in Ostfriesland, where almost 100% of the globular vessels

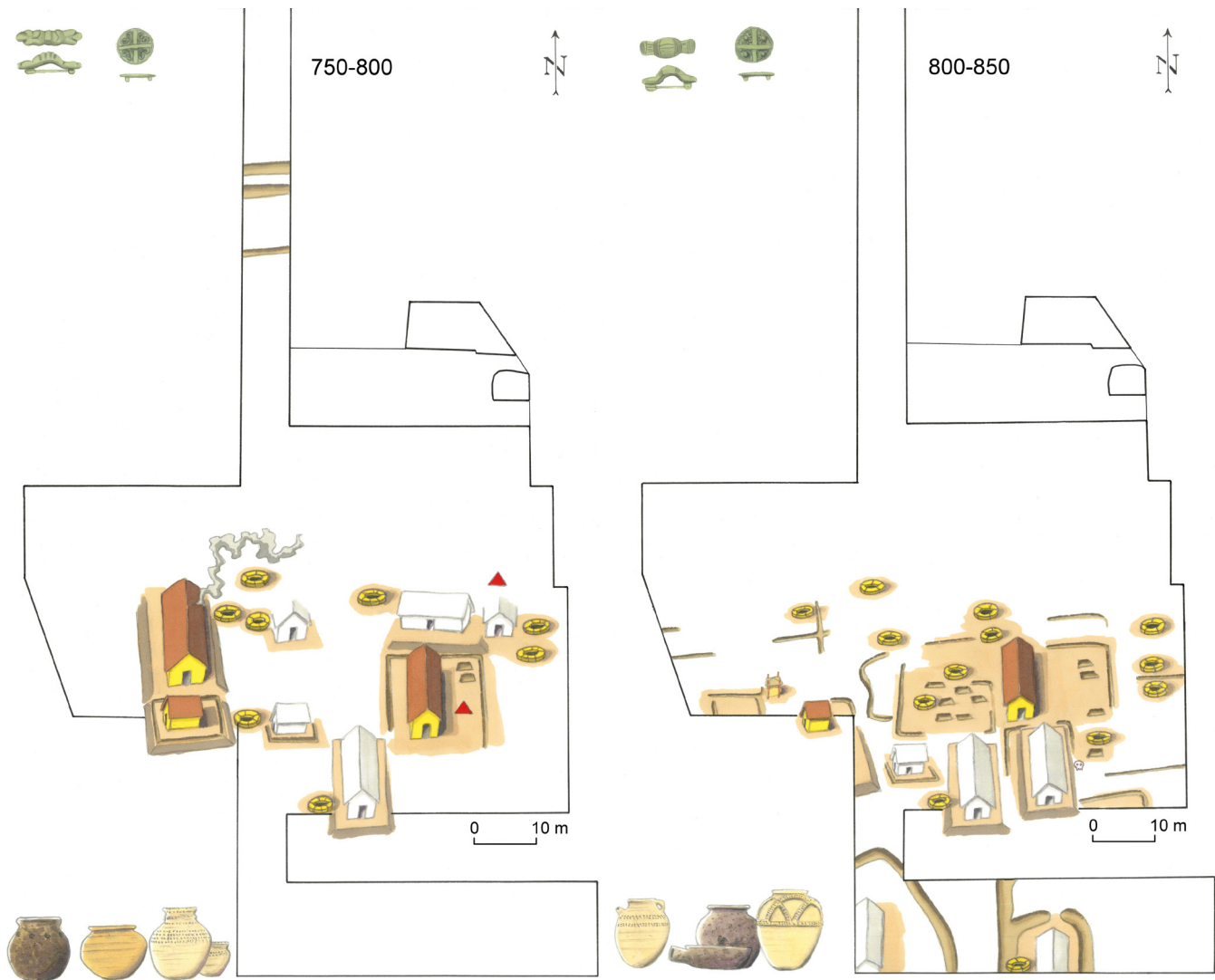


Fig. 9.11-12 Periods VI and VII.

are shell-tempered (Figure 7.33), but shell-tempered globular pots may also have been made locally at Wijnaldum (Chapter 7).

Period VII (800-850)

(Figure 9.12)

Some degree of standardisation in shell-tempered globular pottery suggests that domestic potting in this period may have given way to a degree of professionalisation and small-scale workshop production. Wijnaldum, where 40% of the globular pottery was shell-tempered, seems to have been the westernmost settlement where shell-tempered ware was made. Further to the west, on the island of Texel and in the present province of Noord-Holland, percentages are much lower, which makes local production unlikely.

Period VIII (850-950)

(Figure 9.13)

Just as in the previous period, handmade globular pots are the most common pottery in this period. But in the early 10th century, shell-tempered globular pots disappear from the repertoire. The assemblage includes a small number of Carolingian and later wheel-thrown pottery, mainly Pingsdorf ware, but also Paffrath ware. Both

kinds of ware were quite abundant in the assemblages from the field surveys.

Period IX (950-12th century?)

Period VIII was the last habitation phase that could be distinguished at Wijnaldum on the basis of the excavation data. The field survey, however, yielded a considerable amount of pottery from the Ottonian period and later, including late-medieval globular pottery (Chapter 8). Features from this added Period IX have suffered from erosion more than those of earlier periods. Until when habitation continued on the terp is not clear. The last farmstead may have moved to a separate house terp in the 12th century, just like other farms in the terp region (see above). Wheel-thrown pottery from the Ottonian period is found in the same areas as Carolingian pottery, that is in the excavated area on the eastern crest, and to its west and north. Later pottery may have ended up on the terp incorporated in manure, resulting in the more even distribution of pottery from the late and post-medieval periods.

9.3 Handmade and wheel-thrown pottery

Before and during the Roman period the pottery that was in use at Wijnaldum, and in the terp region as a whole,



Fig. 9.13 Period VIII.

was mainly handmade. The production of handmade pottery in the largely self-sufficient societies of the northern Netherlands was probably a domestic affair right into the Middle Ages. This pottery is thought to have been made by the women; they produced a variety of pots, sometimes with recognisable individual traits, for their own households.³³ There are several arguments for that assumption. Although types can be distinguished, handmade pottery is highly variable and far from standardised, so workshop production for a local or regional market is unlikely. The assumption that pottery was produced by women is based on analogy with comparable pre-modern societies, where men only enter the scene when pottery is produced in commercial workshops.

The production of pottery by women for their own use provides an explanation for the often rapid spread of stylistic elements. From the earliest settlement of the northern coastal areas in the Middle pre-Roman Iron Age, communities had participated in quite extensive socio-cultural networks within which intensive contacts were maintained, mainly over water. Ideas, technology, gifts

and people (spouses) were exchanged. There probably was a virilocal marriage system, meaning that women moved in with their husbands' families when they married. These women kept producing their own pottery, at least for some time. In this way, stylistic elements would have spread over long distances and influenced potters elsewhere.³⁴ In that same line, the later spread of Anglo-Saxon stylistic elements from the 5th-century first-generation Anglo-Saxon settlements in Frisia and England to the province of Zuid-Holland and elsewhere is attributed by Menno Dijkstra not to the alleged expansion of the Anglo-Saxons, but to the participation in social and marriage networks that connected these communities.³⁵

Society saw substantial changes in the course of the first millennium AD. The largely self-sufficient societies of the previous periods made way for a more stratified society, especially after the hiatus in habitation during the 4th century.³⁶ The local elite clearly profited from Wijnaldum's favourable position on a shipping route, which brought them gold and luxury goods, but also lots of pottery from the Rhineland. This was a trade that may have partly been regulated by the elite.³⁷ On a small scale, wheel-thrown pottery and *terra sigillata* had already been acquired during the Roman period,³⁸ but the import of wheel-thrown pottery really became important in the Merovingian period, when Merovingian coarse ware and, on a smaller scale, fine ware, became the main kind of pottery at Wijnaldum. It even replaced the high-quality characteristic 5th-century pottery in Anglo-Saxon style. Which suggests that there was a high demand for wheel-thrown pottery, and it is therefore remarkable that the technology of wheel-throwing pottery was not adopted by local potters; these kept alive the art of shaping pottery by hand, adopting traits of the earlier undecorated ware of the 5th century (A1) and perhaps also of Merovingian *Wölbwandtöpfe*, in their Hessen-Schortens and Tritsum-type pots. That nobody at Wijnaldum or elsewhere in the terp region thought of starting their own workshop and producing high-quality wheel-thrown ware indicates that the wheel-thrown quality was not considered particularly important; there was no compelling need for it and it may merely have been imported as containers for other traded goods, to be re-used as household pottery

The Merovingian period did not see the end of handmade pottery. When the import of wheel-thrown wares dropped to almost zero around AD 650, handmade pottery again became the most commonly used crockery. It evolved from Hessens-Schortens-type pottery into ovoid pots, and from them into globular pots or *Kugeltöpfe*, which were highly effective as cooking pots. Perhaps for this reason, they remained in use throughout the Middle Ages. From a certain degree of standardisation in shapes

34 Nieuwhof 2014, 121-124; 2015, 174-176; 2017.

35 Dijkstra 2011, 352-354.

36 See Nieuwhof & Nicolay 2018.

37 See Nicolay 2014, 226-232, on different kinds of exchange in the Early Middle Ages.

38 Galestin 1999; Volkers 1999.

33 Nieuwhof 2017.

at Wijnaldum, it may be inferred that small-scale professional workshop production may have partly taken root in the Carolingian period (Chapter 5), but the globular pots that were produced there were still handmade. In the Late Middle Ages, they went through a transition phase in which the rims were wheel-thrown but the globular bodies were still handmade, as these could not be made on the wheel.³⁹ It was not until the 13th and 14th centuries that the globular vessels were finally replaced by other types of pottery.

9.4 Digging for kings....

The excavations at Wijnaldum initially started as a quest for the king who must have resided here, the owner of the famous royal brooch. As the title of Chapter 1, *Tracing farmers while digging for kings* reveals, a royal residence or other direct evidence of a residing king such as a royal grave, did not come to light. Instead, simple buildings were uncovered that had agrarian and artisanal functions. As Gilles de Langen argues in Chapter 1, this need not be surprising. In this period, the elites in the Frisian coastal areas, including their leaders or kings, resided in settlements that were predominantly agricultural in character. Their political activities did not necessarily have permanent or physical consequences for the overall structure of a settlement. The function of a house that served as a *hall*, which was inhabited by the ruling family and where gatherings took place, would be expressed in the size of the house and in its deep postholes and heavy posts, rather than in an exceptional floor plan.⁴⁰

What was found, besides the remains of simple buildings, were traces of artisanal production. There is convincing evidence, especially from the late 6th century,⁴¹ of gold and silver smithing, including the brooch and the gold sword-hilt mount, which were made in a regional, that is 'Frisian' style,⁴² and a bronze die that was used in the production of this kind of jewellery. The smith was clearly a professional and specialised craftsman, not a local farmer who was a gold- and silversmith as a side job. Perhaps he was a travelling craftsman, or the owner of a workshop (one of the simple houses in the excavated area) who worked under the direct patronage of the king.⁴³ The residence of the ruling family cannot have been far from such a workshop.

Besides gold and silver smithing, there is convincing evidence of bronze-casting and of glass-bead production, two crafts that may have been combined.⁴⁴ There also is ample evidence of the production of antler combs, such as worked antler and unfinished combs, but the small number of these finds suggests local domestic rather than professional production.⁴⁵ Some bone and antler arte-

facts, in particular a tuning pin for a lyre, are associated with high status.⁴⁶ Other crafts such as iron forging were probably domestic industries, for a household's own use or perhaps local distribution. Also the production of woollen and (possibly) linen textiles may not have exceeded the needs of individual households. However, besides a modest number of ceramic and bone/antler spindle whorls, the remains of more than 150 early-medieval ceramic loom weights were found (Ch. 4).⁴⁷ Although these may have belonged to only a few looms, it is possible that the production of woollen cloth at Wijnaldum exceeded what was needed locally, and that woollen cloth was exchanged for pottery and other goods from the Frankish realm.⁴⁸

The political centre of Wijnaldum undoubtedly was not confined to a single terp, but must have extended to several terps on the Wijnaldum salt-marsh ridge or in the wider northern Westergo region. Such a central place probably included one or several landing stages, a hall and a ritual centre, and other buildings with different functions, including farmhouses and workshops such as those that were found during the excavation.⁴⁹

Gold and silver jewellery

Wijnaldum is one of several locations in northern Westergo in Friesland with high-status finds from the late 5th to the 7th century, especially from the late 6th and first half of the 7th century.⁵⁰ The famous royal brooch is the most striking of these finds. These high-status objects have been the subject of the extensive studies by Johan Nicolay over the past two decades.⁵¹ Nicolay convincingly argues that the unique royal jewels decorated with garnet cloisonné that were made and found in this area indicate that this was the core area of a socio-political network, a kingdom, which was tied together by allegiance and gift exchange between the king, the elite and their retainers.⁵² The farther from the king, the smaller the gifts. An inventory of the objects of precious metals from this period in the northern Netherlands, which in this model served as gifts, showed that different classes of objects can be distinguished, and that these were distributed over different areas (Figure 9.14): a core area in northern Westergo that is especially characterised by royal jewels, a wider zone with aristocratic jewels decorated with filigree (the wider terp region of Westergo and Oostergo), and an outer zone, with simpler and smaller ornaments and gold coins (the province of Groningen).

Besides regional differences, there also are changes over time in the wider North Sea area (Figure 9.15).. The new population of the 5th century operated in an Anglo-Saxon network, which connected them to their homelands in northwestern Germany, and to southern

39 Verhoeven 1998, 255.

40 Cf. Postma 2015, 173; Nicolay *et al.* 2018, 155-157; Nicolay 2020.

41 Gerrets 1999, 339; Nicolay 2014, 250.

42 Nicolay 2014, 259-260.

43 Gerrets 1999, 339.

44 Sablerolles 1999, 263-266; 268.

45 Prummel *et al.* 2011.

46 Prummel *et al.* 2011, 88.

47 For the bone spindle whorls, see Prummel *et al.* 2011.

48 Prummel 2001.

49 See Nicolay 2014, 228; also Segschneider 2002.

50 Nicolay 2014, Chapter 4.

51 Nicolay 2005; 2006; 2008; 2014; 2017a and b.

52 Nicolay 2014, 12.

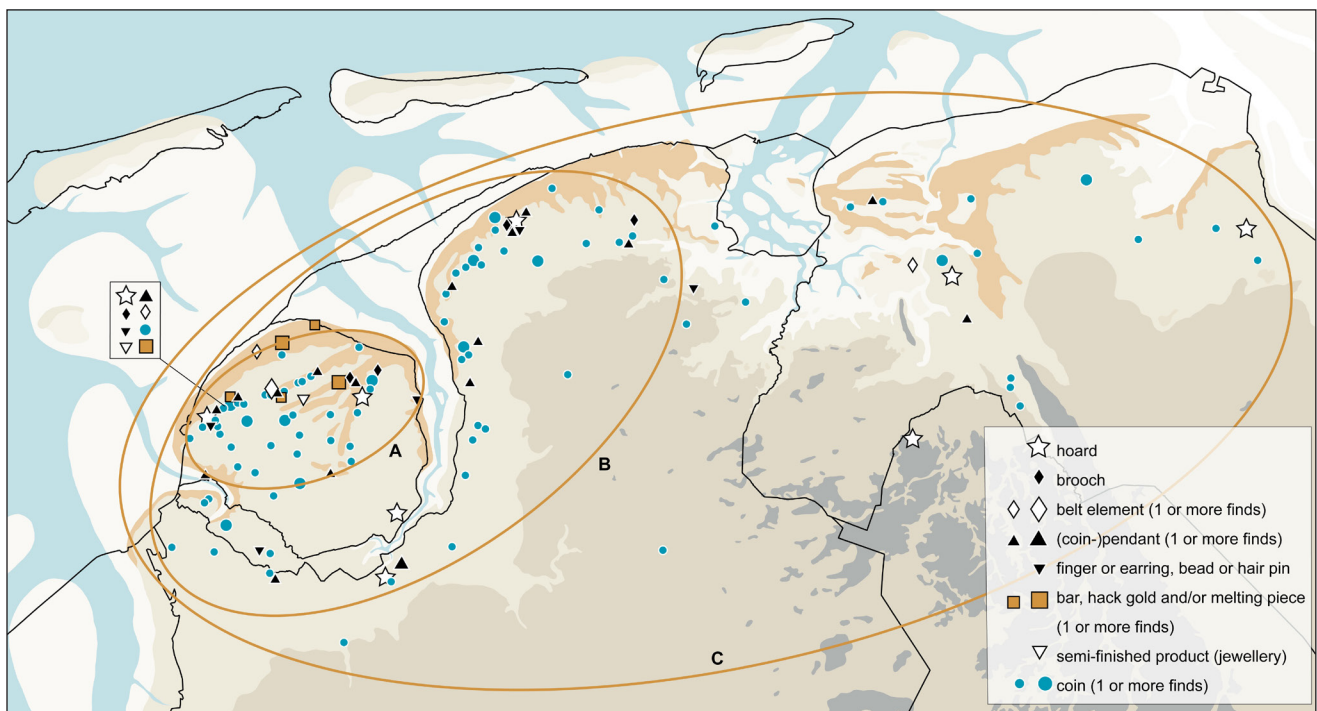


Fig. 9.14 The division of northern Friesland and Groningen into three socio-political zones according to Nicolay, characterized by royal jewellery in the core area (A), aristocratic jewellery in the intermediate zone around it (B), and simpler jewellery and gold coins in the outer zone (C). The rectangular frame shows the concentration of finds at Wijnaldum. The black outline is the present coastline and former sea dikes. Reprinted with permission from Nicolay 2014, 23, fig. 2.2.

Scandinavia and across the North Sea to England. New communities developed in the early centuries after the Anglo-Saxon migrations, in which ornamental jewellery served as status symbols as well as expressing different identities. Five phases can be distinguished between the 5th and the 7th century.

The new populations of the 5th century had bronze and sometimes silver brooches (Phase 1); this phase coincides with Periods IIIA and part of IIIB at Wijnaldum (Figure 9.3). Wijnaldum is one of just a few places in the northern Netherlands where a silver-gilt equal-armed brooch belonging to this phase was found.⁵³ The equal-armed brooches had late-Roman chip-carved decoration, which was highly appreciated by the Saxons; not only the decoration but also the silver was of Roman origin; much of it had come to the area as payments to Germanic leaders.⁵⁴

Phase 2 coincides with Wijnaldum Period IIIB. In this period, the cultural focus of the Anglo-Saxon elites shifted towards the southern Scandinavian kingdoms. True or alleged ancestral roots in these kingdoms were expressed in jewellery. Now gold was the main material; it was imported in the form of *solidi* from the eastern Roman Empire via southern Scandinavia; moreover, the type of ornamentations and the symbolic meaning of the motifs, in which Odin and his animals occupy an important place, are also typically Scandinavian.⁵⁵ So-called Jutlandic brooches, gold arm and neck rings and gold

bracteates belong to this period; several of these have been found in northern Westergo.⁵⁶

In the 6th century, Nicolay's Phase 3, the focus again turned to the south, where the Frankish kingdom had succeeded the former Roman Empire. Gold was replaced by Frankish silver, which was imported in the form of Frankish silver jewellery. Some of it was worn as such, but Frankish silver was often melted down and transformed into jewellery in regionally specific styles.⁵⁷ In northern Westergo, this shift happened in the mid-6th century. The new jewellery was still based on 'Jutlandic' square-headed brooches, but also had 'Frisian' elements.⁵⁸

In Phase 4, which only lasted from ca 590 to 630/640, the development of regional styles was further perfected. The Wijnaldum brooch is the summit of this style in northern Westergo, but there are several more disc-on-bow brooches decorated with garnet or with filigree, and there is the filigree-decorated gold sword-hilt mount that is thought to have belonged to a garnet-decorated sword.⁵⁹ Nicolay argues that the development of a distinctive Frisian style belongs to a period of consolidation of power positions around AD 600, in which there no longer was a need to emphasize the real or alleged ancestral roots in southern Scandinavia.⁶⁰

In the 7th century, a more general 'North Sea style' developed in Frankish gold and silver, which incorporated

53 Nicolay 2014, 87; 2017a, 76.

54 Nicolay 2017a, 76.

55 Nicolay 2017b.

56 Nicolay 2005; 2017a, 78-79.

57 Nicolay 2017a, 81.

58 Nicolay 2014, 87-88; 2017a, 81.

59 Nicolay 2008.

60 Nicolay 2014, 355.



Fig. 9.15 Early-medieval kingdoms in the North Sea area. Top: 6th century (Phase 3 in Figure 9.3); middle: ca AD 600 (Phase 4); bottom: ca AD 800. 1: probable central place; 2: elite centres and trading sites; 3: early emporia; 4: enclosures and elite centres in former Roman *castella*. Red dashed line: (approximate) boundaries. Reprinted with permission from Nicolay 2017a, fig. 5.9.

Byzantine elements (Phase 5).⁶¹ After this phase, the regional kingdoms, including the northern Netherlands, were incorporated into larger political entities: the Carolingian, Mercian and Danish kingdoms. The northern Netherlands become part of the Frankish realm after 734 (Friesland) and 784 (Groningen). However, this was not the end of what may be called the North Sea cultures.

As Nelleke IJssennagger has argued, early-medieval Frisia was connected with different spheres or networks throughout its history. Frisian, Viking and Frankish spheres partly overlapped, and Frisia became part of the Viking world as much as the Frankish world (Figure 9.3), as several finds from the northern coastal area, including some from Wijnaldum, testify.⁶² These connections built

⁶¹ Nicolay 2014, 325.

⁶² IJssennagger 2017, Appendix 2.

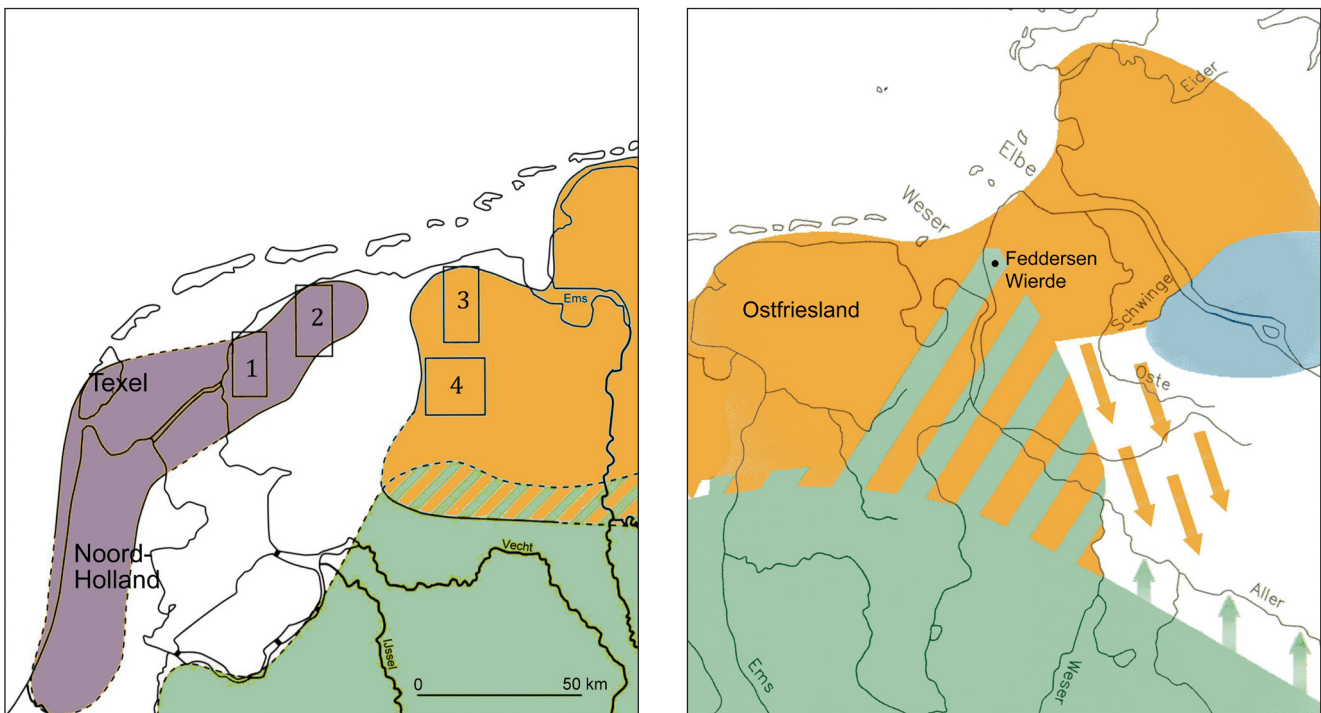


Fig. 9.16 Different pottery styles in the coastal areas of the northern Netherlands and Niedersachsen in the Roman period. Purple: Frisian-style pottery; Orange: *Nordseeküstennahe Fundgruppe*; green: Rhine-Weser-Germanic pottery; blue: *Stade-Harburger Gruppe*. Rectangular frames refer to sample areas (Taayke 1996): 1. Westergo; 2. Oostergo; 3. central Groningen; 4. northern Drenthe. Left map: northern Netherlands, after Taayke 1996, V, Abb.8; right map: northwest Germany, after Schmid 2006, Abb. 5. Adapted by A. Nieuwhof.

on the strong socio-cultural network in which the earlier Anglo-Saxon kingdoms had participated.⁶³

... finding pottery

The circulation of precious metals and ornaments as described above is highly relevant to understanding the socio-political status and position of Wijnaldum. However, artefacts of precious metals were certainly not the most numerous finds. While digging for kings, a lot of pottery was found. What does this large finds assemblage say about the status and cultural connections of Wijnaldum?

The pottery of the Roman period developed from earlier, pre-Roman-period types. Shapes are very similar to the pottery of Noord-Holland to the west,⁶⁴ and the pottery of Friesland and Noord-Holland is usually considered as one, Frisian-style pottery group (Figure 9.16). This does not apply to the eastern parts of the terp region. From the beginning of the millennium, the pottery of present-day Groningen and Drenthe belonged to what is called the *Nordseeküstennahe Fundgruppe*,⁶⁵ which prevailed along the entire coastal region of Niedersachsen, into the lands of the people that later came to be known as the Saxons and the Angles. This type of pottery also influenced the Frisian style, especially from the 3rd century, when the forms of the Driesum style (see Chapter 3) were introduced in Friesland and Noord-Holland.

The pottery of the new settlers after the habitation hiatus came from this same area, where the earlier Driesum-style ware had developed into decorated and undecorated

pottery in the so-called Anglo-Saxon style. The same development also took place in settlements in the northern Netherlands without the occupation hiatus, such as the terp settlement of Ezinge in Groningen, and the settlements of Midlaren and Wijster in Drenthe.⁶⁶ This indicates that the small remnant population participated in a socio-cultural network that extended far to the east, and that largely overlapped with the earlier spatial distribution of the *Nordseeküstennahe Fundgruppe*.⁶⁷ Although this remnant population had the same style of pottery as was found to the east, they cannot be the people that repopulated the entire near-deserted terp region; they were far too few to do so. It therefore is as good as certain that the newcomers were immigrants from the northeast. Since their pottery cannot be attributed to one specific area of origin,⁶⁸ they are generally known as Anglo-Saxons. As we know, small or large migrating groups of Anglo-Saxons also crossed over to coastal areas in eastern England, where the same types of typical Anglo-Saxon pottery are found.⁶⁹

At Wijnaldum, the new settlers arrived around AD 425. The relatively small amount of pottery from the Migration period (see Figure 2.3) indicates that the new population was still not numerous. At the end of the 5th century, the decorated Anglo-Saxon style pottery

63 IJssennagger 2017, 245.

64 Taayke 1996, V, Abb. 4-8; Nieuwhof & Diederik in prep.

65 Von Uslar 1977. See also Chapter 3.

66 Nieuwhof 2013; Van Es 1967.

67 Nieuwhof 2013.

68 Part of the ongoing PhD research of Tessa Krol is aimed at identifying the origins of different shapes and decorations of Anglo-Saxon style pottery in the Netherlands and elsewhere in the North-Sea coastal areas.

69 E.g. at Spang Hill (Hills & Lucy 2013).

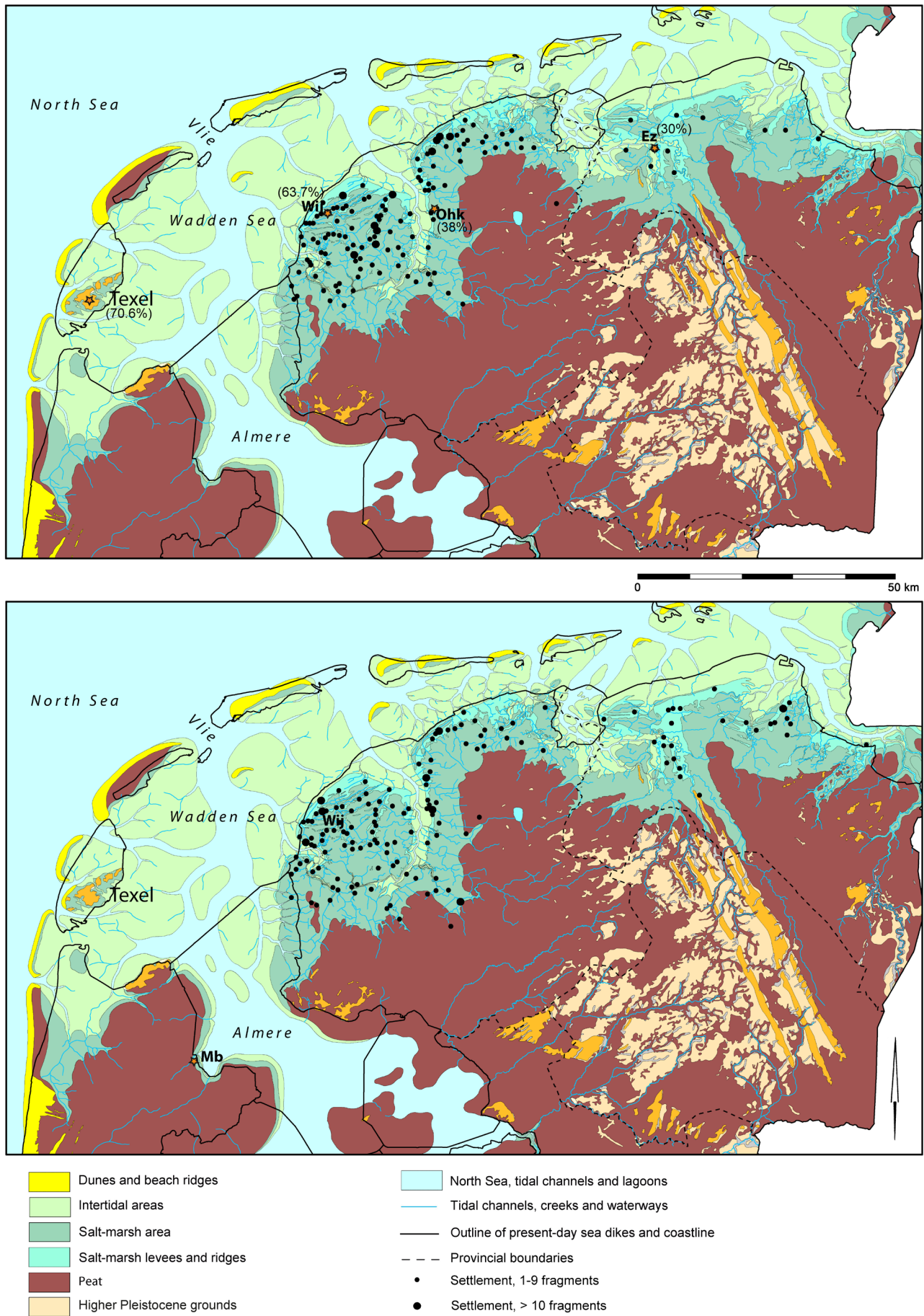


Fig. 9.17 The distribution of Merovingian (top) and Carolingian (below) pottery in the northern Netherlands (as known in 1993), against the background of a palaeogeographic map (the situation of AD 800) and the contours of the modern geography. Wij: Wijnaldum; Ohk: Leeuwarden-Oldehoofsterkerkhof; Ez: Ezinge; Mb: Medemblik. Basic map by P.C. Vos and S. de Vries, *Deltares*, edited by A. Nieuwhof; data from Knol 1993, figs. 55 and 56.

starts to diminish, to end around the middle of the 6th century.⁷⁰ Around the turn of the century the undecorated pottery of this period developed into Tritsum and Hessens-Schortens types of pottery. This development also seems to have been influenced by the introduction of imported wheel-thrown coarse ware from the Frankish Rhineland that started around this time. The handmade pottery of the Merovingian period may be considered the offspring of both undecorated handmade Migration-period pottery, and Merovingian barrel-shaped coarse ware, displaying traits of both parents.

Thanks to the research by Jan de Koning into the early-medieval pottery of Den Burg-Beatrixlaan on the island of Texel, on the other side of the Vlie,⁷¹ we have been able to relate this development to the repopulation of Texel at the end of the 5th century (Chapter 6). There the newcomers were no Anglo-Saxons but came from the south, as is evident from their Frankish-style material culture. Shortly after the arrival of the new inhabitants of Texel, large-scale importation of Frankish pottery also started at Wijnaldum. Wijnaldum, on the crossroads between inhabited areas in the northern and western coastal areas, and the production centres to the south and potential markets to the north, may have developed into a hub that controlled the importation of Frankish goods. It is this development that may have sparked the emergence of the coastal kingdom of northern Westergo.

It is remarkable that this development coincides with a very specific phase in the use of jewellery: Nicolay's Phase 2. Several bracteates characteristic of this period were found in northern Westergo.⁷² At the same time as the ornate Anglo-Saxon style was abandoned, the political elite turned to southern Scandinavia for its gold and religious symbols. The Anglo-Saxon material culture thus gave way to Frankish-style pottery, and to Scandinavian-style jewellery and religious symbolism, which was in fact often happened to be made in Frankish silver (Nicolay's Phase 3). It shows that the inhabitants of northern Westergo began to participate in the Frankish network to the west and the south, while the elite expressed their *not* being Frankish by claiming descent from Scandinavia in their jewellery.

As in other networks, exchange was the basis. Participation in the Frankish network involved the exchange of ideas, probably of people, and of goods. Luxury goods and precious metals in particular must have been exchanged as gifts among the elites, who redistributed part of these gifts among their retainers.⁷³ The abundance of finds of wheel-thrown pottery indicates that there was also some kind of trade within this network, in which Frankish goods were exchanged for northern products, perhaps textiles, salt, dried meat or dairy products. The elite of northern Westergo seems to have controlled this

exchange, as such pottery is not spread evenly over the northern coastal area. Their purpose was not only commercial gain and much less the acquisition of specific commodities such as wheel-thrown pottery; if that were the case, local potters could have started workshops of their own to make wheel-thrown pottery. For the elite, establishing a prominent position in the Frankish network and thereby in the northern coastal region must have been the principal goal of participating in it.

Wijnaldum or northern Westergo seems to have become the funnel through which Merovingian pottery was distributed within the northern Netherlands. Traders of Frankish goods such as pottery (or indeed its contents) may have depended on the Wijnaldum elite for access to markets in the northern coastal area. Texel, where 70.6% of the pottery of this period was imported, may have been an early distribution centre even in the late 5th century, followed by Wijnaldum, where in Period V 63.7% of the pottery was wheel-thrown; from there Merovingian pottery was distributed to settlements along the northern Frisian, Groningen and even East-Frisian coasts. As was shown by Egge Knol, Merovingian pottery did reach other settlements in Westergo and Oostergo, but the numbers of finds in Groningen and Ostfriesland are small,⁷⁴ and those in Drenthe are even smaller (Figure 9.17 (top); see also Chapter 6).⁷⁵ These numbers are, however, mostly based on accidental finds from the period of quarrying, and reliable percentages from excavations are few.⁷⁶

In the course of the 6th century, northern Westergo as a political centre gained importance in the Frankish network as well as in the northern Netherlands. Its position seems to have been consolidated in Nicolay's Phase 4, around AD 600, as can be inferred from the specific Frisian style in jewellery that had developed by then. This was the heyday of the kingdom of northern Westergo, of which Wijnaldum appears to have been the centre. Very soon after, however, the importation of Frankish pottery almost completely dried up. In Wijnaldum Period V, only 1.2% of the pottery was imported. Whether this dramatic drop was limited to Wijnaldum is hard to establish; this percentage is not based on specific types of pottery, but on assemblages in excavation contexts that belong to Period V; we do not have comparable data from other settlements. Nevertheless, this was also the phase when the specific Frisian style of jewellery disappeared; the former Anglo-Saxon communities in the North Sea area now adopted a Frankish style of jewellery, in which regional identities were no longer expressed. By the end of the 7th century,

70 Pottery in the so-called late-Anglo-Saxon style, which is known from several terp settlements, was not found at Wijnaldum (Knol 1993, 54-55). See also Krol *et al.* 2020.

71 De Koning forthcoming.

72 Nicolay 2017, 80, fig. 5.4.

73 Nicolay 2014, fig. 8.18.

74 Knol 1993, 192-193, tab. 18 and fig. 55; 243.

75 E.g. only seven fragments of Merovingian coarse ware were found during the large excavation at Midlaren-De Bloemert (Verhoeven 2008, 319).

76 One of the aims of the research project by Angelique Kaspers is to provide more reliable data on the distribution of Merovingian imported pottery.

Wijnaldum seems to have lost its prominent position in the Frankish and coastal networks.

The importation of pottery from the Rhineland did not come to an end completely, though, but it was no longer distributed through northern Westergo. Carolingian imported pottery seems to be more evenly distributed across the entire coastal area (Figure 9.17, bottom). At Wijnaldum, the percentage of imported pottery was restored to ca 13.3% in the Carolingian period, nothing exceptional in these parts.⁷⁷ Wijnaldum/northern Westergo no longer was the funnel through which all imported goods came to the northern Netherlands. Medemblik in West Frisia may have played a role in this trade, at least in the 8th century when it was a Carolingian toll point.⁷⁸ However, it did not control the distribution of goods in the northern Netherlands, in the way Wijnaldum had done before. The distribution map (Figure 9.17) suggests that individual traders may have taken these goods to all the different terp settlements and traded them directly with the local population, unobstructed.

In the 8th century, the northern Netherlands were incorporated into the Frankish realm. At the same time, a specifically northern type of pottery developed: the globular pot. It clearly developed from older ovoid shapes, and these in their turn from Hessens-Schortens type pottery. Contacts with the wider world are clear from the spread of globular pots across northwestern Europe,⁷⁹ and from that of shell-tempered globular ware. This probably originated in East Frisia. From there it spread to inland Germany, the coastal Netherlands, Dorestad and beyond; but outside the northern Netherlands, it mostly occurs in small percentages, except in Dorestad. The large proportion of this ware at Wijnaldum (40%) and a certain degree of standardisation suggest that it was locally made, perhaps in one or more workshops. In the 9th century, the strategic location of northern Westergo may once more have made it a hub, this time for the transit of shell-tempered globular ware from East Frisia to the west and south, including perhaps locally made pots in this ware (Chapter 7).

Globular pots were also made in the Rhineland, but which came first is not clear. Both northern and Rhenish globular pots have their origin in the early 8th century. Considering the indigenous development of handmade globular pottery from older types, it does not seem to have been influenced by imported pottery. Rather, Rhenish potteries may have started to make globular pots once it became clear that these were highly functional and sought after. In mainland northwestern Europe, handmade globular pots were to become the most common pottery throughout the Middle Ages.

⁷⁷ At Ezinge, for instance, 16% of the Carolingian-period pottery was wheel-thrown (Thasing & Nieuwhof 2016, 138).

⁷⁸ Besteman 1989; 1990.

⁷⁹ For the spread of handmade globular pottery, see Verhoeven 1998, Afb. 107.

9.5 Conclusion

When digging for kings, the ceramic assemblage is as important as the finds of gold and silver, as the pottery assemblage of Wijnaldum clearly shows. These material categories provide complementary evidence concerning social relations, gender-specific roles, participation in social, cultural and political networks, and political status and alliances. More than gold and silver, pottery also reveals something of the life of ordinary people, and it has great potential in the study of ritual practice; that is if the pottery is not only used for the purpose of dating, but also traces of use and (intentional) breakage are studied, including wall sherds. As was described in Chapter 2, this was not possible, since all fragments of handmade pottery other than diagnostic rim fragments had been 'deselected'.

Since Volume 1 of *The excavations at Wijnaldum*, several material categories have been published in different formats: the animal bones and bone and antler artefacts, the small but revealing assemblage of rivets⁸⁰ and of course the objects of gold and silver by Nicolay, as was discussed above. The next step in the analysis and publication of the excavations at Wijnaldum must be the study of the finds of metal other than gold and silver. This will undoubtedly bring new insights into the history of Wijnaldum in the first millennium and into the habitation history of the northern Netherlands as a whole.

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⁸⁰ Prummel *et al.* 2011; 2013; Reinders & Aalders 2007.

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Wijnaldum is nowadays an unassuming rural village in the north of the province of Friesland, no more than a small dot on the map of the Netherlands. But during the Early Middle Ages, this probably was a lively political centre, a kingdom, with intensive contacts with other kingdoms along the North Sea coasts, and with the Frankish realm to the south. The search for the king that resided at Wijnaldum was the major goal of the excavations that were carried out at the terp Wijnaldum-Tjitsma between 1991 and 1993. These excavations yielded a wealth of information, although tangible remains of the king or a royal residence were not found. What was found was a lot of pottery. The ceramic assemblage from the first Millennium consists of local handmade and imported wheel-thrown pottery, revealing contacts with the wider world.

The first results and an overview of the habitation phases were published in 1999, in Volume 1 of *The Excavations at Wijnaldum*. The ceramic assemblage, and its consequences for the habitation history of Wijnaldum, are the main subjects of this second volume of *The Excavations at Wijnaldum*.



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