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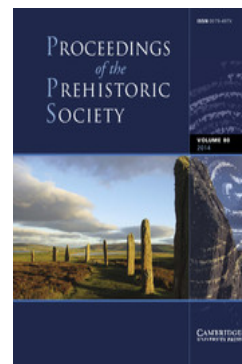
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## Circles, Cycles and Ancestral Connotations. The Long-term History and Perception of Late Prehistoric Barrows and Urnfields in Flanders (Belgium)

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## Circles, Cycles and Ancestral Connotations. The Long-term History and Perception of Late Prehistoric Barrows and Urnfields in Flanders (Belgium)

By ROY VAN BEEK<sup>1</sup> and GUY DE MULDER<sup>2</sup>

*The perception of and interaction with ancient relics in past societies has been intensively debated in the archaeology of north-western Europe. This paper aims to make a contribution to this debate by reconstructing the long-term history of late prehistoric barrows and urnfields in Flanders (Belgium). The period between the Late Bronze Age and High Middle Ages (c. 1100 cal BC–AD 1300) is centred on. Contrary to Germany, Scandinavia and especially Britain, data from the Low Countries (Belgium and the Netherlands) have so far barely played a role in wider international and theoretical discussions on the role of the past in the past. Previous studies on reuse practices in the Low Countries mainly focused on the Meuse-Demer-Scheldt region of the southern Netherlands and north-eastern Belgium, which partly overlaps Flanders. These studies are combined and summarised. Their main outcomes are tested by means of a detailed inventory of reused late prehistoric cemeteries in Flanders. This study differs methodologically from most others in that it both offers an evidence-based overview of regional diachronic trends (documented at 62 barrow cemeteries and 13 urnfields) and discusses the developments at six sites yielding high resolution data. The observed reuse practices and site biographies appear to be remarkably dynamic and more diverse than previously suggested.*

**Keywords:** The past in the past, reuse practices, late prehistoric cemeteries, Flanders, Meuse-Demer-Scheldt region, long-term history, site biographies

An often cited phrase by the geographer Meinig is ‘life must be lived amidst that which was made before’ (1979, 44). Surviving relics of past societies act as visible ‘timemarks’ in the landscape (Chapman 1997). They refer people back to the past and prompt a reaction (Holtorf 1998, 34). These interactions elucidate how the past was perceived. The role of the past in both past and present (cf. Bloch 1977) has been studied intensively in disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, and history. In archaeology, the most popular field of study is the reuse of burial monuments. This paper aims to reconstruct the long-term history of late prehistoric barrows and urnfields in the Low Countries (Belgium and the Netherlands). The main

focus is on the Belgian Flanders region (Fig. 1). The term ‘reuse’ is defined here as any type of activity at older (burial) sites indicating a deliberate interaction with these ancient remains, regardless of the intentions underlying these acts.

Research into the perception of late prehistoric monuments in the Low Countries has almost exclusively focused on the Meuse-Demer-Scheldt region (MDS region) of the southern Netherlands and north-eastern Belgium. The available studies (eg Roymans 1995; Fontijn 1996; Gerritsen 2003; 2007) have played only a minor role in wider international and theoretical discussions. Furthermore, most focus on specific time frames. As a first frame of reference to this paper, they are integrated in an overview of documented general trends in the perception of older monuments between late prehistory and the Middle Ages. This concise summary offers comparative material to the numerous publications on other parts of

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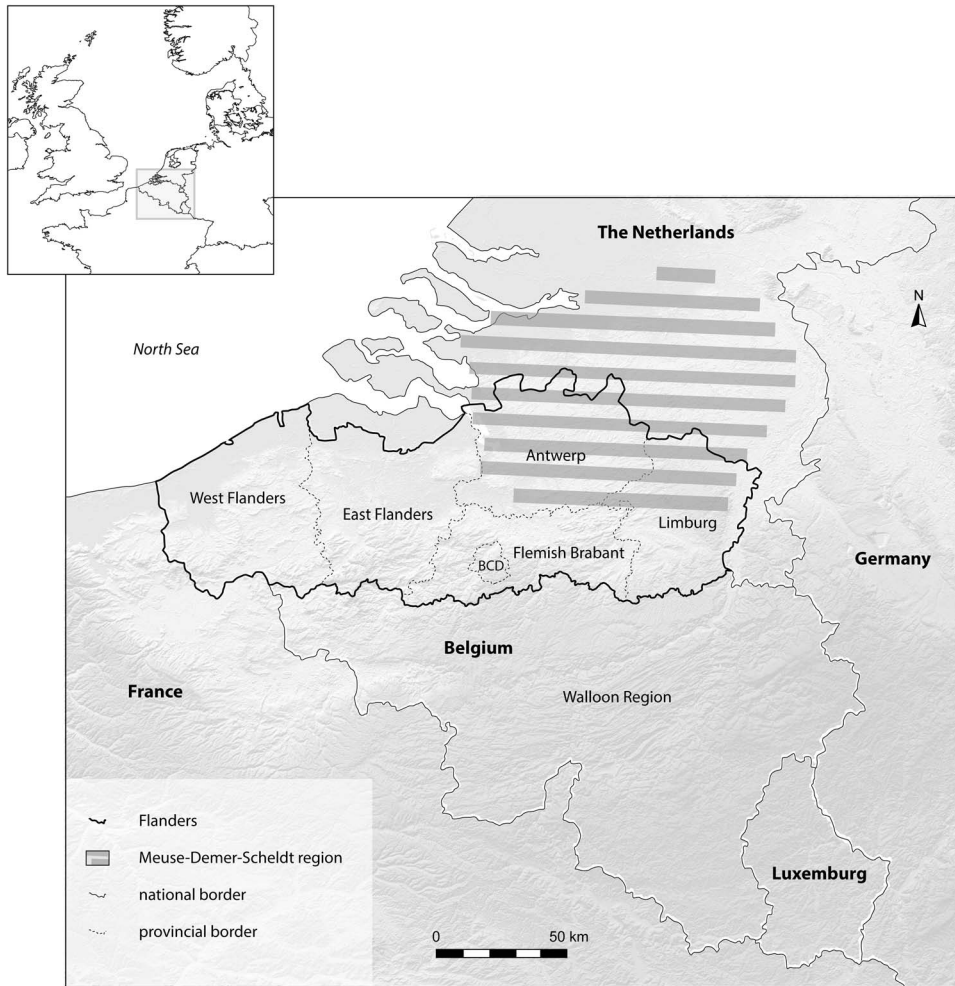


Fig. 1.

Location of Flanders and the Meuse-Demer-Scheldt region in the Low Countries and north-western Europe. BCD = Brussels Capitol District

north-west Europe, such as Germany (Holtorf 1998; Sopp 1999), Scandinavia (eg Parker Pearson 1993; Pedersen 2006; Thäte 2007; Artelius 2013) and especially Britain (eg Bradley 1987, 2002; Hingley 1996; Williams 1997; 1998; Semple 1998).

Earlier hypotheses on reuse in the Low Countries agree that the perception of ancient cemeteries varied through time. The reuse frequency decreased in the Early Middle Ages. The High and Late Middle Ages are perceived as a period of drastic reinterpretation and reorganisation of the landscape and the ancient relics it contained. These hypotheses are based on the MDS region and have not been tested yet in other parts of the Low Countries. It is important to establish

whether they are valid and if so for which region, as research in other parts of Europe clearly demonstrates spatial diversity in reuse patterns (eg Williams 1997, 19–21; Holtorf 1998, 34; Sopp 1999; Artelius 2013, 23, 34). This test is done by a detailed inventory and analysis of reused barrows and urnfields in Flanders. Both regions partly overlap: the southern part of the MDS region is situated in Flanders (Fig. 1). The central research questions are: which diachronic trends occur in the perception and reuse of late prehistoric barrows and urnfields in Flanders and how do they relate to earlier hypotheses on reuse, especially in the Low Countries? The period between the Late Bronze Age and High Middle Ages (*c.* 1100 cal BC– cal AD 1300) is centred on.

This study differs methodologically from most others in that it both offers an evidence-based overview of regional diachronic trends and discusses the developments at a selection of six sites yielding high resolution data. So far, regional overviews reconstructing the integral ‘life histories’ of prehistoric monuments are rare, let alone studies combining data from different scale levels (cf. Bradley 2002, 124–30). The observed reuse practices and site biographies appear to be remarkably dynamic and more diverse than previously suggested.

#### ONCE MORE THE PAST IN THE PAST

The role of the past in various cultures has been studied intensively in anthropology, sociology, history, and psychology (eg, Silverman 2002; Artelius 2013, 23). The research topic was introduced in British archaeology in the 1980s (Evans 1985; Bradley 1987). Its popularity increased rapidly. Here we introduce some approaches, concepts, and trends that are useful for the present research. Many concepts used in archaeology originate in other disciplines.

Past societies did not live in ‘empty’ or ‘untouched’ spaces, but in landscapes of ancient sites that were still meaningful (Holtorf 1998, 31). Evans states that each culture creates its own context, which is reflected in the respective abandonment, reoccupation, veneration, or desecration of earlier sites (1985, 85). Some practices left traces in the archaeological record, which can be diverse. Most obvious are juxtaposed relics from differences phases. Bradley (1987, 1) for example mentions Iron Age hillforts near Neolithic causewayed enclosures, Romano-Celtic temples within hillforts and churches built near Roman buildings. Williams (1997, 6–7) notes that Early Medieval burials are associated with various older site types.

Another type of research focuses on the reuse of ancient material culture. Examples are the copying of Neolithic pottery decorations in Iron Age Scotland (Hingley 1996) and the reuse of Roman objects as Early Medieval grave gifts (eg, Hunter 1974; White 1990; Eckart & Williams 2003). Other studies integrate archaeological phenomena and historical, folkloric, or toponymic data. Examples are links between place names and archaeological sites (Gelling 1978; Meaney 1995), Christian legislation on ‘heathen’ burial practices (eg, Von Uslar 1972; Sippel 1980) and the reuse of barrows as execution or exhibition sites (Reynolds 1997; Meurkens 2007).

A survey of publications on the perception and reuse of cemeteries demonstrates regional differences in research history. Research in Britain has been extensive. Most influential theories and concepts originate here. Studies on reuse practices in the Anglo-Saxon period are particularly abundant (Van de Noort 1993; Thäte 1996; Williams 1997; 1998; Semple 1998). Late prehistory and the Roman period have received less attention (but see Bradley 1987; Hingley 1996). In Scandinavia, the research topic has recently become popular (Pedersen 2006; Thäte 2007; Wickholm 2008; Artelius 2013). The emphasis is on the 1st millennium AD (but see Parker Pearson 1993). Recent Danish studies demonstrate how barrows structured later (prehistoric) movement (eg, Holst & Rasmussen 2013; Løvschal 2013). Studies on Early Medieval Germany are available as well (Thäte 1996; Härke & Williams 1997). However, this country stands out in that both Holtorf (1998, on megaliths in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern) and Sopp (1999, on different types of burial sites in northern Germany) published regional overviews of the long-term history of prehistoric burial sites (cf. Bradley 2002, 124–30). Studies on this spatio-temporal scale are lacking elsewhere. Most analyses focus on single sites, smaller areas or specific time frames. Some publications discuss other parts of western (France: Patton 1996; Zadora-Rio 2003, 8; Low Countries: next section) and central Europe (Chapman 1997), but these regions have been less influential in international debates.

Several authors attempt to explain the widespread reuse of cemeteries. Some suggest the practice had various – spatially and temporally diverse – functions (Thäte 1996, 224; Williams 1997, 17–22; Holtorf 1998, 34). Nevertheless, most explanations share many similarities. Minor differences aside, they can be reduced to just a few interpretations that are partly interrelated and not mutually exclusive. All agree that something could be gained from the forging of links with ancient remains (Gerritsen 2003, 145). The creation of these links are generally seen as deliberate acts, and more specifically as intentional manipulations of the distant past (eg, Bradley 1987, 4–5; Silverman 2002, 5). Parker Pearson (2003) speaks of ‘the powerful dead’ to indicate that burials could be used in strategic ways by the living. Another common idea is that the ‘meaning’ of monuments was not static but continually reworked and redefined (eg, Lowenthal 1985; Bradley 1987; Williams 1997, 25; 1998, 95, 100).

The strategic site location of burials near older ones is frequently interpreted as an expression of political authority, serving to legitimise, confirm, or strengthen power structures (eg, Evans 1985, 88–9; Lowenthal 1985, 197–200, 325; Bradley 1987, 4–5; Lucy 1992). Many researchers suggest that the practice communicated the socio-cultural identity of a group or lineage (Hingley 1996, 241; Williams 1997, 24–5; Parker Pearson 1993, 94–5; Artelius 2013, 21, 37). Both theories are often combined, and suggest that these sites served as territorial markers (Evans 1985, 88; Williams 1997, 24–5; Artelius 2013, 35–7). The creation of funerary links does not necessarily imply direct genealogical ties with the people buried previously at these locations. Various authors agree that fictitious links were created between the present and the ‘mythical’ past (Evans 1985, 90; Bradley 1987, 4; Gosden & Lock 1998). Specific groups may have justified their political authority by claiming to descend from mythical ancestors, heroes or gods (Hunter 1974; Bradley 1987, 4; Lucy 1992, 95; Spencer 1995).

Various archaeological studies reference the concept of ‘invented tradition’ that was introduced by the historian Hobsbawm (Evans 1985, 89; Bradley 1987, 3–4; Hingley 1996, 240; Holtorf 1998, 32). It is defined as a ‘set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past’ (Hobsbawm 1983, 1). This suggested continuity is largely fictitious, and served to structure and stabilise social life in a constantly changing world (*ibid.*, 2). Accordingly, the reuse of ancient cemeteries may be a response to social change in periods of stress (Evans 1985, 89; Lucy 1992, 95; Holtorf 1998, 32). This hypothesis is especially encountered in studies exploring relationships between reuse and Christianisation (Van de Noort 1993; Thäte 1996, 114; Härke & Williams 1997, 25).

#### MONUMENT REUSE IN THE LOW COUNTRIES: PREVIOUS RESEARCH

As mentioned, research into the perception of late prehistoric monuments in the Low Countries has mainly focused on the MDS region of the southern Netherlands and north-eastern Belgium. Publications on other regions are either site-based or only briefly

touch upon the subject (cf. Gerritsen 2007, 338). As an exception to this rule, Vermeulen and Bourgeois (2000) studied the relationships between late prehistoric burial sites and Roman-period habitation and burial in the region of ‘sandy Flanders’. They mainly focused on matters of continuity rather than actual reuse practices, but the sites they list form valuable input for the inventory of reused sites in Flanders assembled for this study.

The discussion in the MDS region exclusively concentrates on the perception of Late Neolithic (2850–2000 cal BC), Early (2000–1800 cal BC) and Middle Bronze Age (1800–1050 cal BC) barrows and Late Bronze Age (1050–800 cal BC) and Early Iron Age (800–500 cal BC) urnfields. Contrary to many other parts of Europe, other long-standing prehistoric monuments (eg, long barrows, megaliths) are lacking.

The first influential study was published by Roymans (1995). Using archaeological, historical, and folkloric data, he argues that urnfields assumed a prominent but dynamic position in the ‘mythical geography’ of later communities. Fontijn widened the scope of the discussion by noting that the site location of various urnfields was determined by older barrows. Theunissen (1999, 102–3; Bronze and Early Iron Age), Gerritsen (2003, 140–5; 2007; mainly Iron Age), and Hiddink (2003, 45–52; Roman period) address reuse patterns in specific times frames. All agree that the perception of ancient cemeteries was variable. Gerritsen notes that ‘ancestors do not seem to have formed a stable category in the socio-cosmic order of local communities’ (2003, 150).

The published reuse trends allow a general distinction in five phases to be drawn up<sup>1</sup>:

1. Late Bronze Age (1050–800 cal BC) and Early Iron Age (800–500 cal BC);
2. Middle (500–250 cal BC) and Late Iron Age (250 cal BC–58/12 BC);
3. Roman period (58/12 BC–AD 450);
4. Early Middle Ages, divided into a Merovingian (AD 450–750) and Carolingian (AD 750–900) phase;
5. High (AD 900–1300) and Late Middle Ages (AD 1300–1500).

The interpretations and concepts in the MDS studies are largely similar to those in other parts of north-western Europe. In the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age, reuse of older barrows was a common

and diverse practice (Theunissen 1999, 102–3; Gerritsen 2003, 140–5; 2007, 346). The main types of reuse are:

1. interring (urned) cremations in an existing barrow;
2. digging of a ring ditch around the top or base of an existing barrow;
3. incorporation of a barrow in its entirety into a new mound;
4. burying near or around older barrows;
5. incorporating barrows in orientation lines or infrastructure. This is done by raising post alignments, establishing paths, erecting monuments in between existing ones, or orientating field boundaries towards them.

It is generally assumed that reuse for burial had a mythical rather than a genealogical background (Fontijn 1996, 79–80). According to Gerritsen ancient

monuments were important in the self-definition of local communities, and reuse practices were part of a legitimization strategy with respect to land claims (2003, 142–4; 2007, 341). Additionally, pre-existing sites came from an unknown past and possibly had to be ‘familiarised’ to be incorporated in the contemporary cultural landscape (Gerritsen 2007, 351–2). At some northern Dutch sites the morphology of field systems is partly determined by older barrows, but this pattern has not been documented in the MDS region (*ibid.*, 348).

The transitional phase from Early to Middle Iron Age brought important societal changes (Roymans & Gerritsen 2002; Gerritsen 2003). Most urnfields were abandoned. They were replaced by small, inconspicuous burial sites. Also, the interaction with older burial sites changed (Fontijn 1996, 84; Gerritsen 2003, 145). Evidence for a positive appraisal is lacking. Parts of some urnfields were overbuilt (Fig. 2), or – more

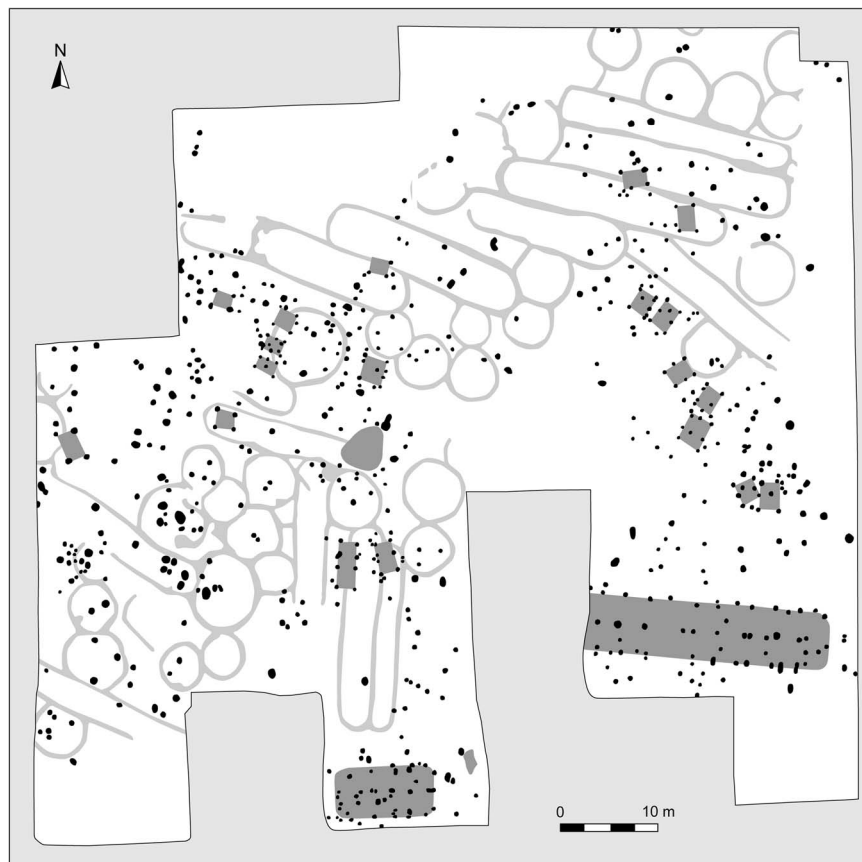


Fig. 2.

The Late Bronze Age urnfield of Hilvarenbeek-Laag Spul (light grey), situated in the Dutch part of the MDS region, was overbuilt by a settlement in the Middle and Late Iron Age (dark grey and black). After Gerritsen 2003 (fig. 4.30, 196)

frequently – farmsteads were constructed close to burial monuments (Gerritsen 2003, 148, 197). Older cemeteries may not have been used to support territorial claims, legitimate authority, or construct social identities in this phase. This function may have been taken over by settlements, arable land and cult sites (*ibid.*, 189).

The studies on the Roman period and Middle Ages focus on the perception of urnfields. In the Roman period, when the MDS region was incorporated in the Roman Empire, various cemeteries were linked to urnfields. Roymans concludes that these were valued positively and fully incorporated in the cultural landscape (1995, 9). Gerritsen (2003, 197) and Hiddink (2003, 45–52) largely agree, but observe more differentiation. A few urnfields were partly disturbed by settlements. Hiddink suggests that these acts might have served to end territorial claims (2003, 52). The simultaneous occurrence of ‘disturbance’ of urnfields and their reuse as cemeteries is still poorly understood.

Spatial relations between Roman-period cemeteries and urnfields vary (Hiddink 2003, 47–48). They may be situated adjacent to each other or overlap. In the latter case, burials are placed in open spaces or within older monuments. One urnfield is even fully ‘overbuilt’ by younger burials. The offered explanations for these practices are familiar: they may have served to create mythical ancestors, in order to substantiate territorial claims (Hiddink 2003, 45).

The known Merovingian cemeteries are not linked to urnfields. However, some Merovingian burials occur in or near older barrows (Roymans 1995, 9). Also, a few Early Medieval cemeteries overlap with Roman-period burial sites (Hiddink 2003, 48–9). Nevertheless, the reuse frequency of older sites is far lower than before. The MDS region was Christianised in the late Merovingian period. It is assumed that from this moment (*c.* AD 700) onwards, cemeteries moved towards churches (Roymans 1995, 9). This gradual process is still poorly documented in the Low Countries. There is no evidence for deliberate levelling of urnfields in the Carolingian period. This may indicate they were respected, or at least tolerated, in cultivated areas (*ibid.*, 10).

Roymans describes the High and Late Middle Ages as a period of drastic reinterpretation and reorganisation of the landscape. A basic landscape structure developed into two major zones: an ‘inner’ and an ‘outer’ circle (Fig. 3; Roymans 1995, 18–19). The inner circle consisted of the part of the landscape shaped and

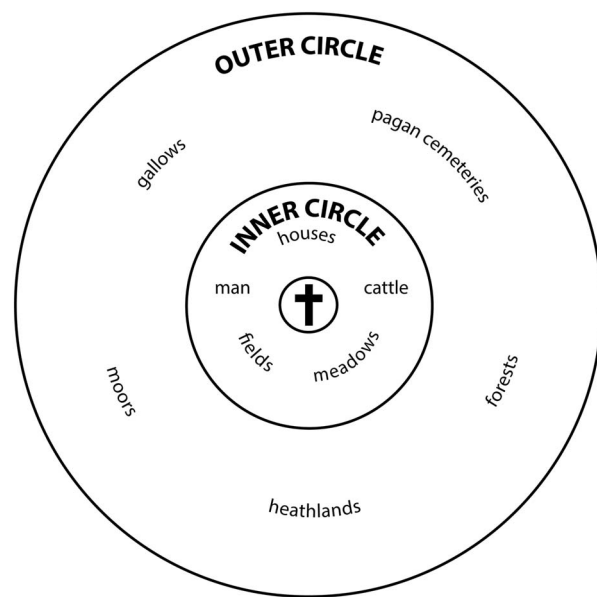


Fig. 3.

Ideological ordering of the Medieval landscape into an inner and outer circle, based on folkloric evidence from the MDS region. After Roymans 1995 (fig. 13, 18)

cultivated by man, with church and cemetery at the centre. The outer circle is formed by the uncultivated parts of the landscape, mainly heathlands and bogs, and had negative connotations. Prehistoric cemeteries were systematically erased from the cultivated inner circle, through a ‘ritual purification’ of pagan elements. Economic motives played only a secondary role as a driving force (*ibid.*, 10–12). Roymans’ arguments are based on historical and folkloric evidence, combined with archaeological data on some leveled urnfields.

#### FLANDERS: LANDSCAPE AND RESEARCH HISTORY

Flanders is divided in two parts by the river Scheldt. During the Bronze Age the river flowed in a northern direction to the North Sea. Its course corresponded roughly to the modern eastern Scheldt (Vos & Van Heeringen 1997, 60–1). The largest part of the research area consists of Pleistocene coversands belonging to the Lower Rhine Plain (Ameryckx *et al.* 1985, 243–8). The southernmost part of Flanders forms a transitional zone to heavier soils. Here, the region east of the Scheldt is covered by loess soils that continue into northern France (Sommé 1973, 94–5; 1976). The region west of the river is characterised by loamy soils that, in a

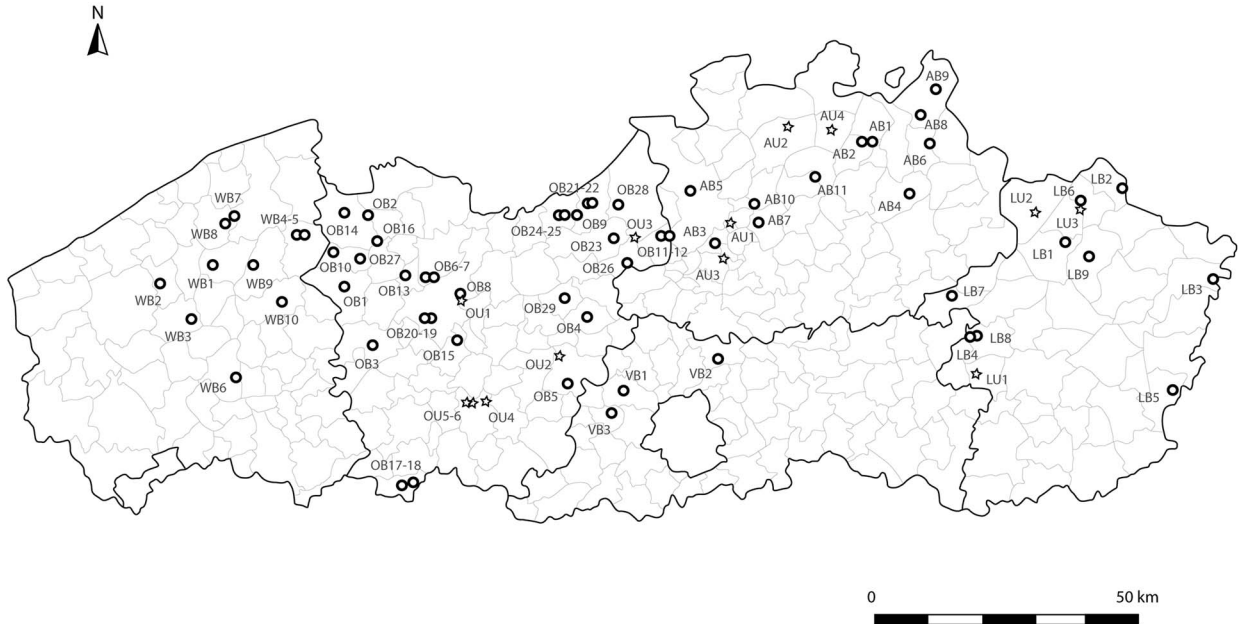


Fig. 4.

Overview of all late prehistoric barrow sites (dots) and urnfields (stars) in Flanders yielding evidence for any kind of reuse between late prehistory and High Middle Ages. The site numbers refer to Appendices A and B

southerly direction, gradually transition into loess. In the coastal parts of Flanders heavy clays occur.

The research history of late prehistoric burial sites in Flanders differs regionally. As will be explained below, we can distinguish a western (provinces of West and East Flanders) and an eastern region (provinces of Antwerp, Limburg, and Flemish Brabant; Fig. 1). Also, the level of knowledge about barrows (Late Neolithic–Middle Bronze Age) and urnfields (Late Bronze Age–Early Iron Age) differs. The site categories are not mutually exclusive. Barrows still occur in urnfield contexts, but these monuments are generally smaller and lower than before. Unless stated otherwise, the term ‘barrow’ is used here for monuments pre-dating the Late Bronze Age. Barrows occur isolated or in clusters, frequently displaying linear alignments. Based on Dutch research (Lohof 1991, 225; Theunissen 1999, 35–6) it is assumed that only part of the population was buried in a barrow. The relative importance of cremation and inhumation probably fluctuated across space and time, but poor preservation conditions hinder detailed reconstructions (see below).

Urnfields are considered to be collective cremation cemeteries. They vary considerably in size (up to a few

hundred burials) and life span (eg, Desittere 1968; De Mulder 2011; Van Beek & Louwen 2013).

In the western part of Flanders, a few barrows were excavated in the early 19th century in the Flemish Ardennes near Ronse (Fourny 1985), and one after World War 2 at Ruien (De Laet & Roosens 1952). Besides these visible examples, no barrows were known until the start of a long-term aerial photography project in the 1980s (Ampe *et al.* 1996; De Reu 2012). Over a thousand levelled barrows were discovered, that are recognised by the soilmarks of their ditched peripheral structures. We will return to the reasons behind this large-scale destruction later. Over 40 excavations in this region have yielded information on barrows (De Reu 2012, 68–91). This number is rapidly increasing. The number of known urnfields is much lower (De Mulder 2011, 52–65). They are far less likely to be discovered by aerial photography as not all burials have (ring) ditches. Those that do are much less monumental than before. Most urnfields were discovered long before the 1980s, for example during sand extraction. Our understanding of these sites is relatively poor; hardly any have been excavated completely.

Research in the eastern part of Flanders followed a different path. In the provinces of Antwerp and the



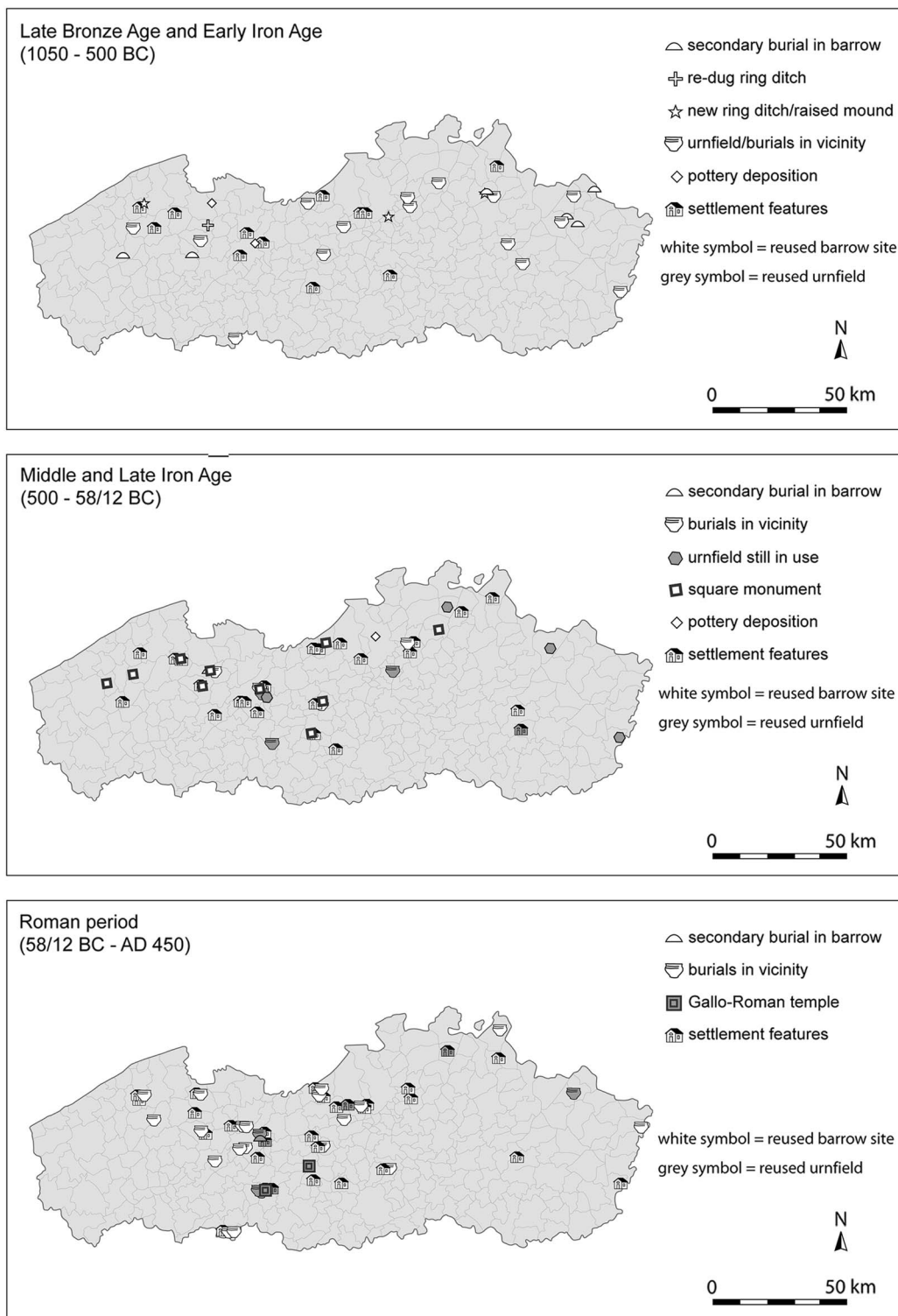


Fig. 5a.  
Distribution pattern of documented reuse practices in Flanders in late prehistory and the Roman period

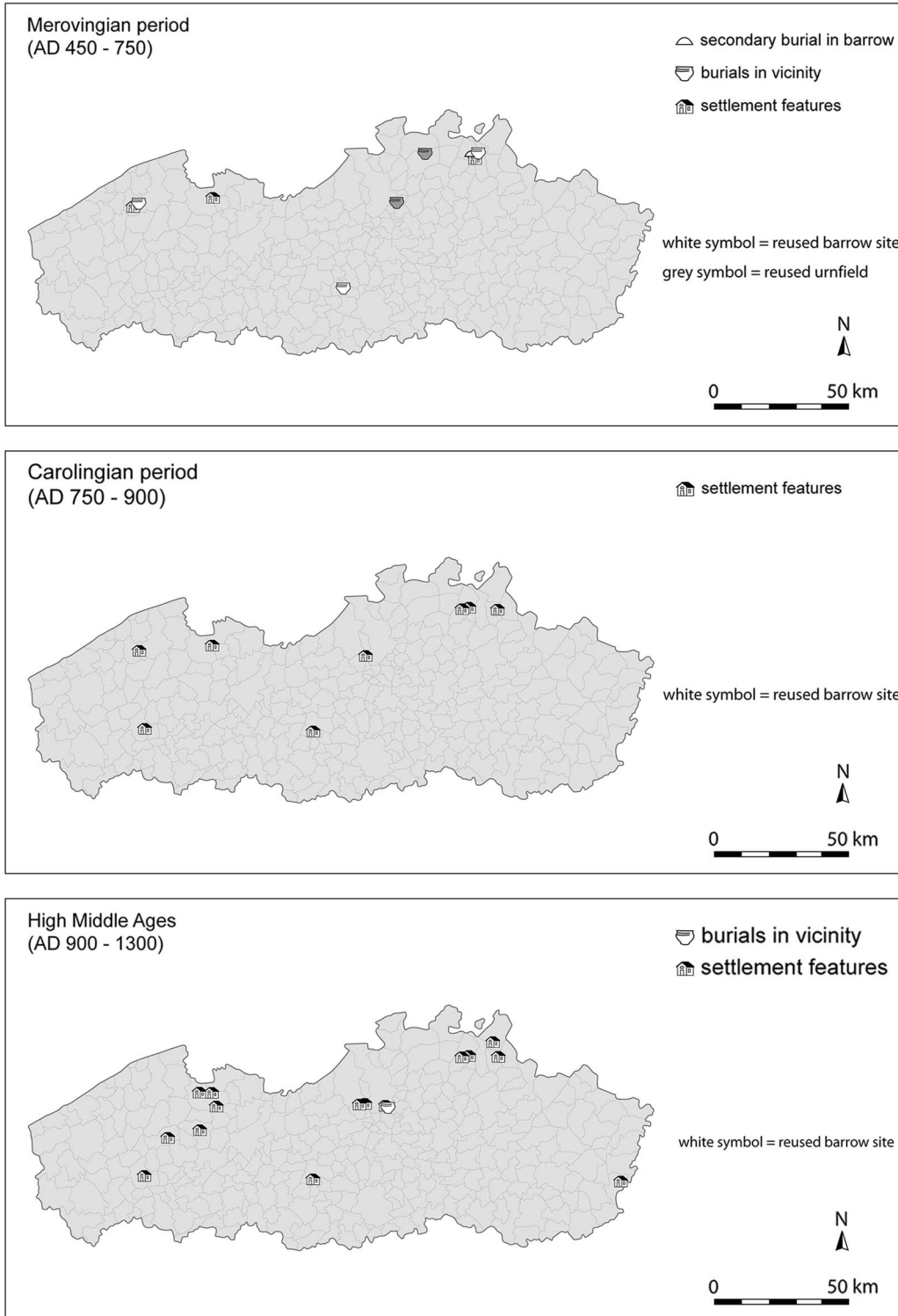


Fig. 5b.

Distribution pattern of documented reuse practices in Flanders in the Early and High Middle Ages

northern part of Limburg, both part of the MDS region, many more barrows survived. These monuments, often situated on (former) heathland, attracted early archaeological attention. Various barrows and urnfields have been excavated in the Campine region in particular (eg, Van Impe 1976a; Theunissen 1999, 42–6; De Mulder 2011, 66–99).

The geographical differences in preservation and research history significantly influence the composition of our dataset. Due to the poor preservation conditions specific types of reuse cannot be demonstrated in the western region. This goes for any activity involving the mound body (eg, secondary burials). In fact, hardly any primary burials have been preserved, which very often gives rise to dating problems. Conversely, most excavation data are quite recent and frequently large-scale. Data on the eastern region also have their limitations. The quality of early barrow excavations is generally low. Research rarely involved the environment of monuments, implying that potential archaeological features in their vicinity were overlooked. As a result, detailed and reliable comparisons of reuse patterns in different parts of Flanders are hampered.

#### REUSE PATTERNS IN FLANDERS

So far, 62 barrow sites and 13 urnfields in Flanders have yielded information on reuse of one type or another (Figs 4 & 5; Appendices A & B). The applied selection criteria are that younger archaeological features are within a distance of 100 m from the burial monuments they ‘interact’ with, and that they are dated precisely. Various sites did not make the final inventory, as the exact date, position, or character of younger features was not fully clear. Nevertheless, almost all well-excavated late prehistoric burial sites yield evidence for later activity. As discussed above, the inventory is biased by differences in preservation and research history. Also, it is often difficult to assess how long monuments remained visible. At some sites settlement features from different phases are present. If a barrow was levelled in Carolingian times, this would imply that High Medieval settlement features at the same site are not meaningful for this study. However, the levelling of monuments does not always leave archaeological traces – let alone datable ones.

Ideally, younger features would reflect a recognisable attitude towards ancient relics. This is not always the case however. Placing burials in or near a

barrow clearly represents a deliberate interaction. However, the presence of settlement features within a 100 m radius is less unambiguous. Is their location intentional or coincidental? We can only attempt to tackle this problem by identifying and analysing recurrent patterns and trends (Figs 5 & 6). When searching for general patterning in reuse, the sometimes complex sequences at individual sites should not be overlooked (Bradley 2002, 127). Therefore, we combine both. We first discuss the general trends represented in the inventory, and then give a concise summary of the finds at six informative sites that have been investigated since 2000. The latter highlight the large diversity in life histories of late prehistoric cemeteries in Flanders.

#### *Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age*

In the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age, reuse of older barrow sites occurred frequently. Most common is the placing of new burials in their vicinity. At some sites large urnfields developed, whereas others rather saw incidental reuse. In the western part of Flanders, the latter type appears dominant. The urnfield of Temse-Veldmolenwijk (De Mulder 2011, 444) is the only exception. Other documented instances of reuse involve secondary burials in barrows, the raising of mounds and incidentally the redigging of an old ring-ditch. At Edegem-Buizegem a Late Neolithic burial monument was integrated in a large barrow dated typologically to the Early Iron Age (Vandeveldel *et al.* 2007; see below and Fig. 11).

Reuse practices occurred throughout the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age. Time differences between the construction of the initial monuments and reuse practices are generally considerable, supporting the theory of fictitious and mythical rather than genealogical ties. Ancient cemeteries were not only reused for burial. Deposits containing (nearly) complete pottery are known from the sites of Gent-Hogeweg (Dyselinck 2013) and Adegem-Vliegplein (Bourgeois *et al.* 1994; in a ring-ditch).

Settlement features occur at at least eight barrow sites. Well-documented examples are Waardamme-Vijvers (Demeyere & Bourgeois 2005), Gent-Hogeweg (Dyselinck 2013), and Sint-Gillis-Waas-Kluizemolen (Meganck *et al.* 2001). At these sites Early Iron Age farmhouses and outbuildings are located between or close to older barrows. A few ring-ditches are cut by younger features, but evidence for deliberate levelling

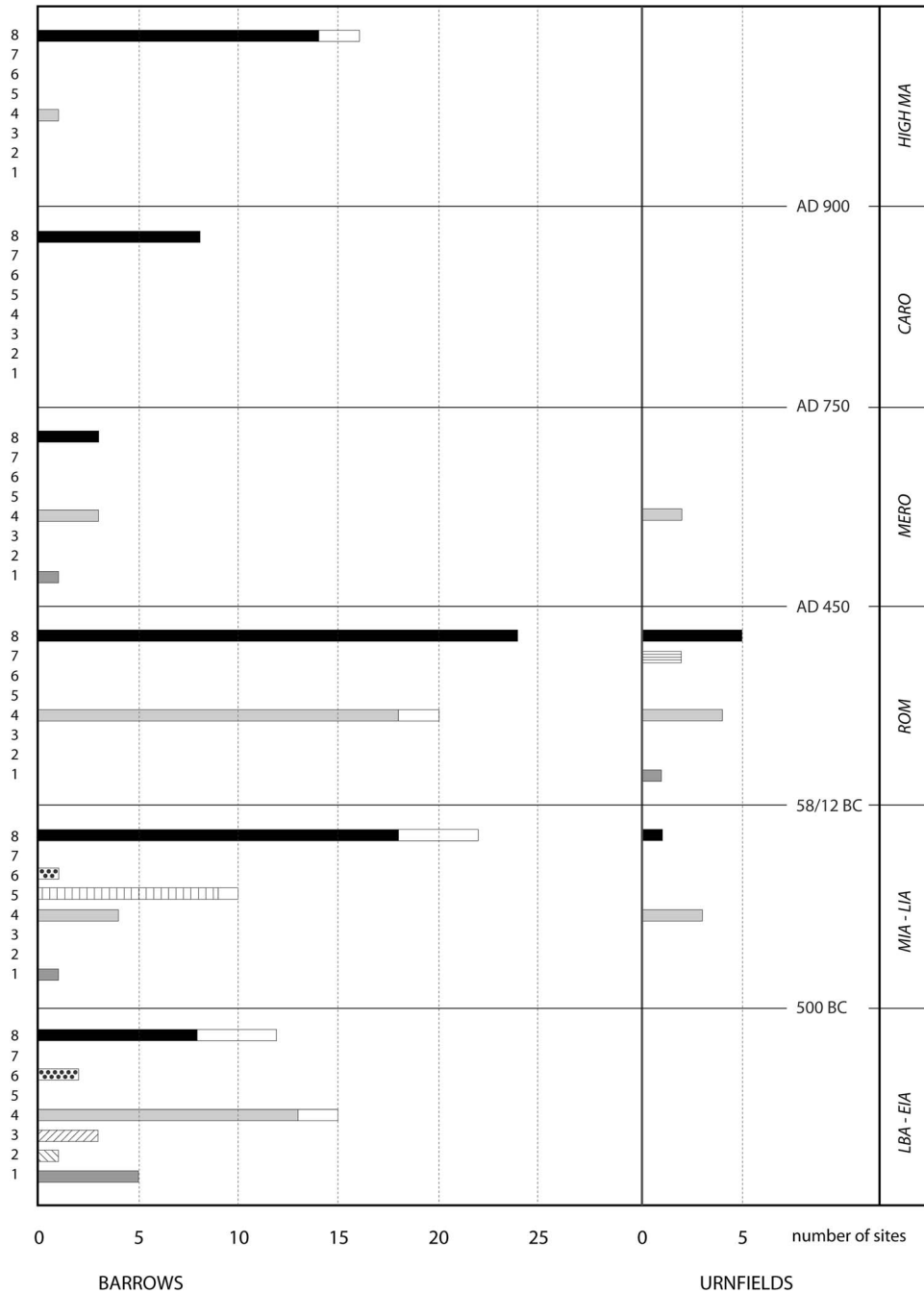


Fig. 6.

Diachronic trends in reuse of barrow sites (left) and urnfields (right) in Flanders between the Late Bronze Age and High Middle Ages. Various sites yield evidence for different types of reuse, often in different phases (see also Appendices A & B). Reuse types: 1. Secondary burial in mound body or ring-ditch; 2. Redigging of existing ring-ditch; 3. Digging of new ring-ditch and/or raising of existing barrow; 4. New burials in vicinity; 5. Square monuments in vicinity; 6. Pottery deposition; 7. Gallo-Roman temple; 8. Settlement features

is lacking. The contrary is rather true: the presence of younger (mainly Roman-period) burials in the direct vicinity of some barrows indicates that many probably remained visible for centuries. Apparently the reuse of cemeteries as settlement locations was no taboo.

#### *Middle and Late Iron Age*

Both barrow cemeteries and urnfields have yielded evidence for reuse in the Middle and Late Iron Age. The picture that emerges is more diverse and complex than expected based on (previous) MDS studies.

Middle and Late Iron Age cremation burials have been found at six or seven urnfields. The sites of Destelbergen-Eenbeekeinde and Neerharen-Rekem were probably used continuously until the Middle Iron Age (De Mulder 2011, 167–70, 188–9). Therefore these practices do not formally classify as reuse. However, they do indicate that the transition from Early to Middle Iron Age did not represent an abrupt break. That some urnfields remained meaningful places can also be deduced from incidental later Iron Age burials at Kontich-Duffelsesteenweg (De Mulder 2011, 171–3) and (again) Destelbergen. Such finds are probably under-represented, as these burials are inconspicuous: they often lack grave gifts and ditched structures. Barrow sites were reused for burial as well. Examples are less numerous than in the previous phase. Besides the site of Ursel (Bourgeois *et al.* 1989; two cremations in a ring-ditch), no secondary burials in mound bodies are documented. At the site of Merksplas-Heizijde a complete pottery bowl and ditch were buried near a barrow in the Middle Iron Age (Gheysen & De Mulder 2010).

A conspicuous type of reuse is formed by square ditched structures, which have been found at nine or ten barrow sites. Dating evidence mainly points to an origin between the Middle Iron Age and the 1st century AD, but a younger (Roman-period) date cannot always be discounted. According to their morphology and relation to older structures, they can be classified in three groups. The first consists of small monuments erected near barrows. Two examples are found at the site of Oedelem-Wulfsberge (Bourgeois *et al.* 2001; Cherretté & Bourgeois 2002; 2003; see below and Fig. 7). The second group consists of the sites of Ursel-Rozestraat (Bourgeois *et al.* 1989) and Dendermonde-Hoogveld J (Vandecatsye & Laisnez 2009; Vandecatsye 2010; see below and Fig. 9). Here, Bronze Age barrows are enclosed by large square structures dated to the Middle

or Late Iron Age. These are accompanied by (partly) contemporary cremation cemeteries. Thirdly, at Aalter-Woestijne an impressive palisaded ditch system incorporating two square structures was built at a barrow site in the Middle and Late Iron Age (Van de Vijver *et al.* 2013a; see below and Fig. 8). These indicate large-scale landscape reorganisation, without disturbing the ancient funerary monuments.

All of these practices indicate that some barrows and urnfields remained important elements in the Middle and Late Iron Age cultural landscape. They were revisited, added to, or even completely restructured. However, Middle and Late Iron Age settlement features occur frequently at these sites as well. They vary from a few dispersed pits to complete farmsteads. At some sites, such as Deinze-RWZI (De Clercq & Van Strydonck 2002) and Gent-Hogeweg (Dyselinck 2013), the farmhouses appear to respect the barrows. Conversely, part of the urnfield of Herk-de-Stad-Donk was overbuilt during the Middle and Late Iron Age (Van Impe 1983; Gerritsen 2003, 148; De Mulder 2011, 441–2). The same happened to the cemetery of Wijnegem-Blikstraat in the Late Iron Age and Roman period (De Mulder 2011, 181–4).

#### *Roman period*

Roman-period burials are very commonly encountered at both barrow sites and urnfields (cf. Vermeulen & Bourgeois 2000). This site location often appears deliberate, indicating that many burial monuments were still visible in the Roman-period landscape. Secondary burials in mound bodies or ditches have not been documented, bar one find at Destelbergen-Eenbeekeinde (see below). The reuse intensity was probably at least as high as before, whereas the variety of reuse practices decreased significantly. The character and lay-out of the Roman-period cemeteries is diverse. At some sites older monuments were clearly used as focal points, whereas others exhibit a spatial separation of burials with different dates. At the site of Weelde-Schootseweg two Middle Bronze Age barrows were completely overbuilt by a cemetery dated between the 1st century BC and the 2nd century AD (Annaert *et al.* 2012).

Settlement features frequently occur at late prehistoric cemeteries. As in the Middle and Late Iron Age, a few sites probably reflect deliberate levelling of burial monuments. At Zele-Kamershoek an Early or Middle Bronze Age ring ditch is found amidst a dense cluster of settlement features dated to the 2nd and



Fig. 7.

Schematic overview of the most important features at the site of Oedelem-Wulfsberge (prov. West Flanders).  
After Cherretté & Bourgeois 2003 (fig. 1, 34)

3rd centuries AD (De Clercq *et al.* 2005). Part of the urnfield of Destelbergen-Eenbeekeinde was overbuilt between the 1st and 3rd centuries AD (De Mulder 2011, 167–70). A large burial monument was respected; a cremation burial was found in its ring-ditch. It is part of an early Roman cemetery that developed at the same site. ‘Ambiguous’ attitudes towards ancient monuments have been demonstrated more often. At Ronse-De Stadstuijn Roman-period cremation burials have been found *c.* 30 m away from three older barrows. A fourth barrow at a few hundred metres’ distance, however, fell prey to the contemporary settlement dated between the first and the 3rd century AD (Pede *et al.* 2013a; 2013b). At Aalter-Woestijne, two ancient barrows were deliberately incorporated in the enclosure of a Roman-period farmstead, whereas

two others were levelled when a nearby road was built (Van de Vijver *et al.* 2013a, b; see below; fig. 8).

#### *Merovingian and Carolingian periods*

Early Medieval features at late prehistoric burial sites are rare. Interaction with these monuments appears to have been less intensive than in previous phases. However, there is a clear difference between the Merovingian and Carolingian periods. In the Merovingian period, three barrow sites and two urnfields are reused for burial. In contrast, not a single Carolingian burial has been found. Three barrow sites have yielded Merovingian settlement finds and eight sites Carolingian features.

The barrow sites reused for Merovingian burials are Varsenare-d’Hooghe Noene (Hollevoet 1997/8),



Fig. 8.

Schematic overview of the most important features at the site of Aalter-Woestijne (prov. East Flanders). High and Late Medieval settlement features are not indicated. Modified after Van de Vijver *et al.* 2013a (fig. 2, 5) & 2013b (fig. 1, 153)

Asse-Krokegemsesteenweg (Magerman *et al.* 2008) and Beerse-Krommenhof (De Smaele *et al.* 2011; Delaruelle *et al.* 2012). At the first two sites a small number of burials were found near barrows. The Beerse cemetery, which will be discussed in more detail below, is the most spectacular (Fig. 10). At least 36 inhumation burials are found in and near ten older barrows. The reused urnfields of Borsbeek-Vogelenzang (De Boe 1970; De Mulder *et al.* 2012) and Brecht-Eindhovenakker (Van Impe 1976a; 1976b; De Mulder 2011, 454) were excavated longer ago, and have yielded less detailed data. At Varsenare and Beerse Merovingian settlement features are found as well. These are not intrusive into the older

monuments. The same goes for the site of Adegem-Vliegplein (Bourgeois *et al.* 1994).

At least some barrows were levelled at some point during the Carolingian period or High Middle Ages. A Bronze Age barrow at Varsenare was likely levelled around the 9th century (Hollevoet 1997/8). At the sites of Erembodegem (Van de Vijver *et al.* 2008; 2009), Oud-Turnhout-Bentel (Hertogs *et al.* 2013), Rumbeke-Mandelstraat (Demeyere & Lammens 2007) and Beerse-Mezenstraat (Delaruelle *et al.* 2008), barrow remains are recorded in areas with dense clusters of Carolingian and High Medieval settlement features. At least at the first two sites, these monuments are (partly) overbuilt. The exact moment when this

happened is difficult to pinpoint. Also, it is hard to establish whether these acts reflect practical or ideological motives. Nevertheless, both the general trends in reuse and individual sites like Varsenare and Beerse-Krommenhof clearly indicate a fundamental change in attitude towards ‘pagan’ monuments after the Merovingian period.

#### *High Middle Ages*

High Medieval settlement features have been recorded at *c.* 15 locations. Their character is variable. Most sites that represent local habitation, as demonstrated by farmhouses, outbuildings, and other features, were already settled in the Carolingian period. Others consist of diffusely distributed features indicating habitation nearby. At a few sites, such as Kruikebeke-Hogen Akkerhoek (Van Vaerenbergh 2005; Van Vaerenbergh & Van Roeyen 2007) and Maldegem-Burkel (Crombé *et al.* 2005), large ditches are found that are probably part of field systems or allotments.

Evidence for a positive appraisal of late prehistoric cemeteries in the High Middle Ages is very rare, but there may be an exception. At the site of Edegem-Buizegem (see below and Fig. 11), a 10th–12th century churchyard is situated right next to one of the largest barrows known in Flanders (Vandevelde *et al.* 2007). This might indicate that this monument, or this site, was still perceived as a meaningful place.

Irrefutable archaeological evidence for the large-scale levelling of ‘pagan’ cemeteries for ideological reasons, as suggested for the MDS region in the High Middle Ages, is lacking. The scale of the disappearance of monuments in the western part of Flanders should probably rather be attributed to the drastic socio-economic transformation that this region underwent at this time. Almost all barrows and urnfields were erased from the landscape here. The situation in the MDS region is different. Here, this theory can be neither dismissed nor confirmed based on archaeological evidence (see discussion).

#### KEY SITES IN FLANDERS

##### *Oedelem-Wulfsberge (prov. West Flanders)*

At Oedelem-Wulfsberge (Fig. 7) an Early and/or Middle Bronze Age barrow cluster was excavated, consisting of five circular structures forming an alignment (Bourgeois *et al.* 2001; Cherretté & Bourgeois 2002; 2003). In approximately the 4th or 3rd century

BC two square monuments were added. One of them is positioned between two barrows and therefore elaborates on the alignment. The second lies next to the barrow line. Possibly about the same time a rectangular building was placed at the centre of the easternmost, double-ditched barrow. Its function is unclear, but it might be related to the square structures. Upon the transition from the Late Iron Age to the Early Roman period, the cemetery was enclosed by a ditch system belonging to a settlement (*ferme indigène*). The lay-out of the settlement seems to elaborate on, or at least respect, the late prehistoric landscape organisation.

##### *Waardamme-Vijvers (prov. West Flanders)*

The oldest structure excavated at the site of Waardamme-Vijvers (Demeyere & Bourgeois 2005) is a Late Neolithic farmhouse. It is followed by a group of at least six Early and Middle Bronze Age barrows, five of which form an alignment. Two small ring-ditches have been found north and south of the alignment, but both their date and function are unclear. As one of them is cut by an Early Iron Age outbuilding, the possibility that they are Bronze Age funerary monuments cannot be ruled out. This outbuilding is part of an Early Iron Age settlement consisting of a farmhouse with related structures, which are situated between the ancient barrows without cutting them. A cluster of at least ten Roman-period cremation burials is found just south of the alignment, probably implying that the monuments were still visible and attractive landscape elements.

##### *Aalter-Woestijne (prov. East Flanders)*

At the site of Aalter-Woestijne (Fig. 8) a large-scale excavation revealed four Early or Middle Bronze Age barrows, again forming an alignment (Van de Vijver *et al.* 2013a; 2013b). They may be related to a farmhouse excavated to the south. A total of five ditched monuments were erected at three different locations in the Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age. Two small circular ditches and a rectangular one form a small cluster, whereas two rectangular monuments are isolated. One of the latter appears to be aligned on the older barrows. In the Middle or Late Iron Age, the landscape was drastically reorganised. An impressive ditch system hundreds of metres long was dug. The most noticeable features are a double ditch with a





Fig. 9.

Schematic overview of the most important features at the site of Dendermonde-Hoogveld J. After Vandecatsye and Laisnez 2009 (appx 5, map 1)

palisade between, and a single ditch with a multiple post setting along its north side. Two rectangular ditched structures are attached to them. The function of these ditches and squares is not fully clear. They may be part of a settlement, but their size, morphology, and location, unparalleled in Flanders, make a symbolic or ceremonial function a more attractive interpretation. None of the older funerary monuments is disturbed. A cluster of small Iron Age buildings has been found, but no farmhouses. In the Roman period, two barrows were incorporated in an enclosed settlement. Further south, a small cremation cemetery was founded close to one of the rectangular barrows. Contrarily, two late prehistoric monuments were probably destroyed to make space for a road. Finally, some High Medieval farmsteads and the remains of a Late Medieval castle have been found.

#### *Dendermonde-Hoogveld J (prov. East Flanders)*

At the site of Dendermonde-Hoogveld J (Fig. 9) an Early or Middle Bronze Age barrow was excavated (Vandecatsye & Laisnez 2009; Vandecatsye 2010). An Early Iron Age urn burial was found to the west. At some

point between the 4th and 1st century BC two connected square ditches were dug, one of which encloses the barrow. A fourth use phase consists of nine Late Iron Age or (Early) Roman-period cremation burials. Three water wells and five small buildings may date to the same period. It is not clear whether they reflect a settlement, or other activities linked to the barrow and squares. An almost complete pot was deposited in a post-hole of one of the buildings. The life history of the Dendermonde site shows similarities with the well-known multi-period site of Ursel-Rozestraat (Bourgeois *et al.* 1989; Gerritsen 2003, 152–5). Here, a double-ditched Bronze Age barrow was enclosed by a square ditched monument in the final century BC or the first century AD. A second rectangular enclosure appeared slightly further north. In the same period a cremation cemetery developed. Some burials are found within the squares and in the outer ring-ditch of the barrow.

#### *Beerse-Krommenhof (prov. Antwerp)*

At Beerse-Krommenhof (Fig. 10) a Late Neolithic and Bronze Age barrow cluster was excavated, consisting of at least ten monuments (De Smaele *et al.* 2011;



Fig. 10.

Schematic overview of the most important features at the site of Beerse-Krommenhof. After De Smaele *et al.* 2011, Delaruelle *et al.* 2012 and excavation maps provided by S. Delaruelle, AdAk (Archeologische Dienst Antwerpse Kempen)

Delaruelle *et al.* 2012). The cemetery was reused in the Merovingian period, between *c.* AD 600 and 775. Most of the 36 inhumation burials are situated in barrows, or right beside them. The site was settled between the Late Merovingian period and the High Middle Ages. The oldest settlement features are contemporary with the youngest burials. The cessation of burial practices at the start of the Carolingian period reflects a change in attitude towards the late prehistoric monuments, or at least a shift in the practices that were used. However, there is no clear evidence that the barrows were levelled or disturbed at this point. The buildings rather appear to respect them.

#### *Edegem-Buizegem (prov. Antwerp)*

At the site of Edegem-Buizegem (Fig. 11) a Late Neolithic barrow with palisaded ring-ditch was found (Vandeveldt *et al.* 2007). Later, this barrow was fully incorporated in an impressive barrow with a ring-

ditch measuring 53–54 m. This monument possibly dates to the Early Iron Age, based on striking similarities with the Dutch site of Oss-Vorstengraf. Here a Bronze Age barrow was incorporated in an Early Iron Age monument with a diameter of 53 m containing an elite burial (Fokkens *et al.* 2012). In the Low Countries, this particular reuse practice has only been documented at these two sites. Unfortunately, no central burial was found at Edegem-Buizegem, probably due to poor preservation conditions. It is not exactly clear how long this monument remained visible in the landscape. Some Medieval settlement features have been found, the oldest of which probably date to the 9th century AD. A water well is situated just inside the large ring-ditch, and some features of a possible farmhouse cut it. They indicate the presence of a settlement. Probably around the 10th century a parochial church was founded just east of the excavation area. Its churchyard is roughly dated between the 10th and 12th centuries. Various burials are found

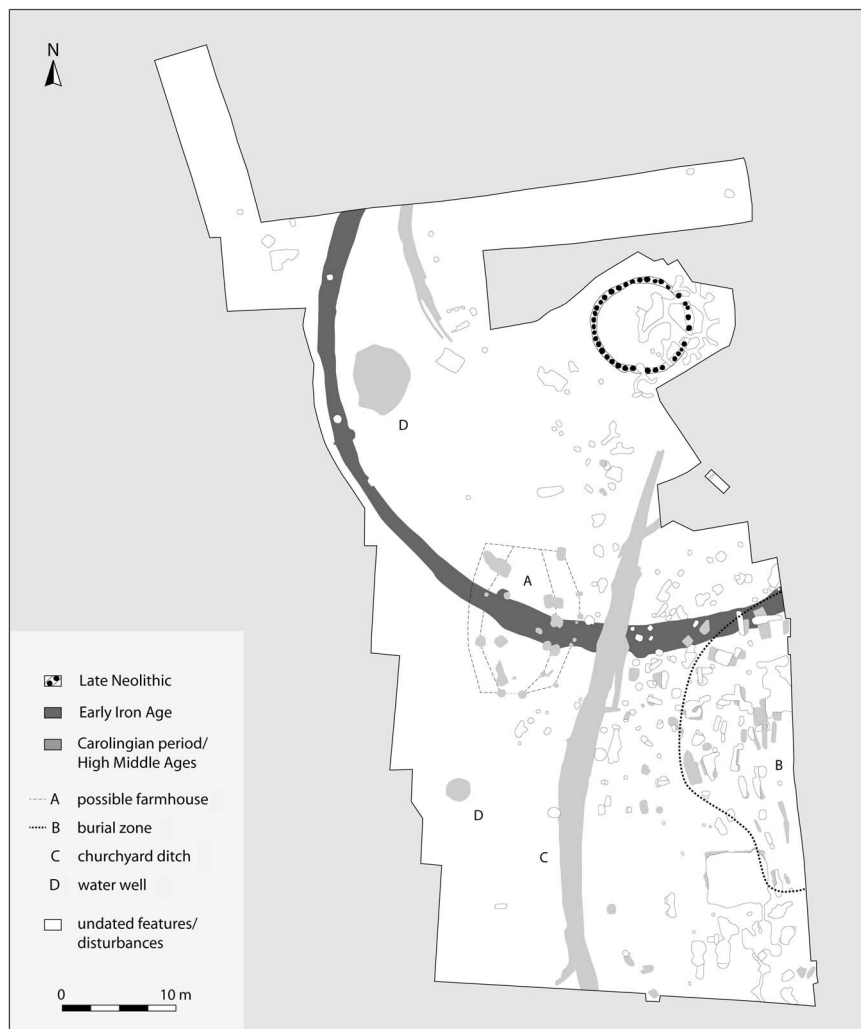


Fig. 11.  
Schematic overview of the most important features at the site of Edegem-Buizegem. Modified after Annaert *et al.* 2007 (fig. 44, 55)

immediately south of the large barrow. Some of them cut its ring-ditch. We cannot be sure, but it seems plausible that the site location of the church and churchyard were influenced by the history of this place.

#### SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This paper aimed to reconstruct diachronic trends in the reuse of late prehistoric barrow sites and urnfields in Flanders. The study differs methodologically from others in North-west Europe in that it combines an evidence-based overview of regional diachronic trends

(Figs 5 & 6, Appendices A & B) with a discussion of a select group of sites yielding high-quality data. It has been demonstrated that this type of research is indispensable in obtaining detailed images of the varied, complex, and ambiguous life histories of cemeteries on different spatial and temporal scales. Almost all barrow sites in Flanders have yielded information on reuse of one type or another, indicating that they were interacted with frequently – rather than being remote, forgotten, or restricted places. So far, there are no clear indications that barrows were perceived other than urnfields in later phases.

To some extent, the documented trends are comparable to those in the MDS region. This is not surprising: both regions overlap and previous studies have partly used the same data. However, there are differences as well. Some are due to significant differences in preservation and research history, but various others reflect actual differences.

The Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age are characterised by a wide variety of reuse practices. Most have clear funerary connotations. Both sites and individual monuments are reused. Actual genealogical ties with the ‘ancestors’ buried at these cemeteries can never be proven. These ‘fictitious links’ and ‘invented traditions’ keep occurring throughout late prehistory and early history. The occurrence of (mainly Early Iron Age) settlement features at barrow sites has not been described before. Evidence for levelling is lacking, but it certainly was no taboo to settle in close proximity to ancient monuments.

The Middle and Late Iron Age patterns are more complex than expected. Some funerary monuments were overbuilt, which may indicate a negative appraisal, but reuse for burial was by no means uncommon. Therefore the hypothesis that the focal role of burial sites was taken over by settlements, cult sites, and arable land (Gerritsen 2003, 189) at the very least requires nuancing in the case of Flanders. Various sites still attracted specific, non-domestic activities. Most of these seem to have focused on the burial sites rather than on individual barrows. The same goes for the Roman and Merovingian periods as well. This might indicate that specific places had become more important than individual monuments.

The various types of square monuments appearing at older burial sites in the Middle and Late Iron Age are hardly known from the MDS region (except Ursel). At least some of them are used for burial. Evidence for this is lacking at others, possibly due to preservation conditions. However, their morphological diversity may indicate that they fulfilled different functions. They exhibit many resemblances with the variety of square ‘cult sites’ documented across north-western Europe (eg, Smith 2001; Fontijn 2002; Groenewoudt 2011; Bradley 2011). The relationships between both categories deserve a more thorough investigation in future research. For now, these monuments clearly indicate that older cemeteries were reused, added to and even drastically modified (Aalter-Woestijne) in the Middle and Late Iron Age. Parallels for the remarkable Aalter-Woestijne site are hard to find, but at the

southern Dutch site of Ifteren-Emmaus two large, interconnected square monuments were erected in the Late Iron Age (Meurkens & Tol 2011). These were used for burial and show resemblances with enclosed cemeteries in northern France (Meurkens & Tol 2011, 200–4).

Archaeological, historical and palynological evidence demonstrates that Flanders underwent intensive socio-economic transformations in the Early and Middle Roman Period (De Clercq 2009, 465–81). In order to increase agrarian production, large-scale reclamations took place. Nevertheless, these drastic changes do not seem to have led to a large-scale, deliberate destruction of late prehistoric monuments – contrary to the processes that took place in the High and Late Middle Ages in the western parts of Flanders (see below). Reuse of ancient cemeteries for burial is still very common. Others are overbuilt, however, and a few sites show a combination of both practices. This ambiguous attitude towards ancient relics, manifested even on a site level, has an opportunistic feel to it. Some burial monuments were focal points for renewed funerary activity, whereas others were seemingly in the way of farmsteads, fields, and roads. Apparently there was no need to save all ‘ancestral’ monuments at these sites. The creation of links to them was optional rather than a strict rule.

The Merovingian period is the last phase to produce irrefutable evidence for a positive appraisal of late prehistoric monuments. After that, barrows and urnfields gradually lost their important position. The Christianisation process certainly played a part in that process, as postulated by Roymans (1995). However, it brought about no abrupt break. Some early churches are located at pre-existing burial sites. At the site of Ouwen (prov. of Antwerp) for example, a wooden church was built on top of a Merovingian cemetery containing a number of elite burials in the late 8th or early 9th century (Mertens *et al.* 1977; Annaert & Vervoort 2003; Vandeveldel *et al.* 2007, 54–7). A famous foreign example is the Danish site of Jelling (eg, Randsborg 2008; Holst *et al.* 2012). In general, fixed churchyards only developed in most parts of North-west Europe between the 10th and 12th centuries AD (Zadora-Rio 2003).

In previous research the High and Late Middle Ages in the MDS region are interpreted as a period of drastic landscape reorganisation (Roymans 1995). This certainly holds true for the whole of Flanders. However, the character of these processes differed

regionally. The population in the western part of Flanders increased significantly from the Carolingian period and especially the 11th century onwards (eg, Thoen 1997). An accelerated agricultural expansion took place. This was necessary to provide for rapidly growing cities like Ghent and Bruges, that were developing into major urban centres. This resulted in a structured and intensively exploited cultural landscape, in which all available land was reclaimed and parcels were split up time and again (Thoen 1997). Contrary to the Roman-period phase of agrarian expansion, now almost all remaining late prehistoric monuments were levelled. Compared to these drastic changes, the landscape transformations in the MDS region occurred at a slower pace and at a lower scale level. These differences are key to the differential survival of late prehistoric cemeteries in both regions.

This paper focused on identifying long-term trends in a large region. Therefore it was not possible to analyse observed patterns in specific time frames within their own cultural framework. It should be kept in mind that more or less similar reuse practices appearing at different times and places may have completely different backgrounds and meanings. This hinders meaningful intra-regional comparisons – besides the already mentioned fact that regional diachronic overviews are lacking in most parts of North-west Europe. In general studies on Early Medieval reuse practices are well-represented, possibly because sites yielding evidence on that are numerous, and sometimes spectacular. Prehistoric and Roman-period practices have received far less attention. Sopp's northern German study offers probably the best options for comparison (1999, 131, Abb. 17) for our study, but his research area is hundreds of kilometres away. Some main trends he signals are roughly similar to those in Flanders, but there are various differences as well. It is not useful to go into detail here, but just to give an example: compared to Flanders reuse in northern Germany was far more intensive in the Iron Age and Early and High Middle Ages.

The fact that more or less similar reuse practices took place over prolonged periods of time throughout North-western Europe, has led to the development of a series of largely interrelated explanations that are applied in various contexts. It is certain that many barrows and urnfields remained meaningful places in Flanders until at least the Merovingian period, that

these were incorporated in the cultural landscape and that fictitious links were created with the 'ancestors' present there. But based on archaeological data it is impossible to decide whether these practices served to, for instance, 'familiarise' ancient monuments, legitimise political authority, or strengthen territorial claims. Interestingly, researchers outside the Low Countries tend to focus on reuse acts that could be interpreted as 'positive' appraisal forms (but see Holtorf 1998, 32–3). However, various Flemish cemeteries were partly overbuilt over the course of time, or people lived between them. The same locations were used for burial later on, leading to varied, complex and ambiguous site biographies.

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>The chronological framework applied here is not used throughout Flanders. In the area west of the MDS region, roughly between the North Sea and the river Scheldt, the Late Bronze Age starts at 1100 cal BC. The main difference with 'our' chronology is the traditional division between an Early (800–475/450 cal BC) and Late Iron Age (475/450–8 cal BC), previously called Hallstatt and La Tène period (eg, De Laet 1982).

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APPENDIX A: CATALOGUE OF REUSED BARROW SITES IN FLANDERS

All square structures are listed as Middle or Late Iron Age phenomena, but in a few cases a younger date cannot be ruled out. LBA-EIA = Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age; MIA-LIA = Middle and Late Iron Age; ROM = Roman period; MERO = Merovingian period; C = Carolingian period; HMA = High Middle Ages.

BARROW SITES																							
	secondary burial in barrow	re-dug ring ditch	new ring ditch/raised mound	urnfield/burials in vicinity	pottery deposition	settlement features	secondary burial in barrow	burials in vicinity	square structures	pottery deposition	settlement features	secondary burial in barrow	burials in vicinity	Gallo-Roman temple	secondary features	secondary burial in barrow	settlement features	burials in vicinity	settlement features	burials in vicinity	settlement features		
WEST FLANDERS	LBA-EIA						MIA-LIA							ROM			MERO					C	HMA
WB1 Aartrijke-Gemeneveld			●					●															
WB2 Koekelare-Boetikel								●															
WB3 Kortemark-Koutermolenstraat	●														●								
WB4 Oedelem-Drie Koningen					?										?								
WB5 Oedelem-Wulfsberge								●		●													
WB6 Rumbek-Mandelstraat																					●		●
WB7 St Andries-Expressweg			●												●		●						
WB8 Varsenare-d'Hooghe Noene										?							●		●		●		
WB9 Waardamme-Vijvers						●									●								
WB10 Wingene																							?
EAST FLANDERS																							
OB1 Aalter-Woestijne			●					●		●		●	●										●
OB2 Adegem-Vliegplein				●																●	●		●
OB3 Deinze-RWZl																							
OB4 Dendermonde-Hoogveld J			●					●	●			●	●										
OB5 Erembodegem-Bedrijvenzone Z					?			●		●			●							●			●
OB6 Evergem-Molenhoek																							
OB7 Evergem-Ralingen						●				●													
OB8 Gent-Hogeweg			●	●			●	●		●													
OB9 Kemzeke-Verkeerswisselaar																							
OB10 Knesselare-Flabbaert																							
OB11 Kruikebe-Hogen Akkerhoek						●				●													●
OB12 Kruikebe-Houten Kruis						?																	●
OB13 Lovendegem-Brouwerijstraat																							●
OB14 Maldegem-Burkel																							●
OB15 Merelbeke-Axxess										●													●
OB16 Oostwinkel-Veldhoek																							●
OB17 Ronse-De Stadstuin																							
OB18 Ronse-Muziekberg						?																	
OB19 St Denijs-Westrem-Flanders Expo										?					?								●
OB20 St Denijs-Westrem-Vliegveld										●					●								
OB21 St Gillis-Waas-Reepstraat						●									●								
OB22 St Gillis-Waas-Reinakker								●															
OB23 St Niklaas-Europark Zuid																							
OB24 Stekene-Dorpsstraat						?																	
OB25 Stekene-Kerkstraat										●													
OB26 Temse-Veldmolenwijk						●									●								
OB27 Ursel-Rozestraat		●					●	●	●														
OB28 Vrasene-Profruco										●													
OB29 Zele-Kamershoek																	●						
ANTWERP																							
AB1 Beerse-Krommenhof																	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
AB2 Beerse-Mezenstraat										●											●	●	●
AB3 Edegem-Buizegem																					●	●	●
AB4 Kasterlee-Partisaensberg	●		●	●																	●	●	●
AB5 Merksplas-Heizijde									●														
AB6 Oud Turnhout-Bentel						●																●	●
AB7 Ranst-Zevenbergen						●				●													
AB8 Ravels-Kerkakkers										?													?
AB9 Weelde-Schootsseweg															●								
AB10 Wijnegem-Blikstraat						●			●								●						
AB11 Zoersel-Oostmallebaan								?															

THE PREHISTORIC SOCIETY

BARROW SITES		secondary burial in barrow re-dug ring ditch new ring ditch/raised mound urnfield/burials in vicinity pottery deposition settlement features secondary burial in barrow square structures pottery deposition settlement features secondary burial in barrow Gallo-Roman temple settlement features burials in vicinity settlement features burials in vicinity settlement features burials in vicinity settlement features										
LIMBURG		LBA-EIA	MIA-LIA			ROM	MERO	C	HMA			
LB1	Eksel-De Winner	●		●								
LB2	Hamont-Haartheide	●										
LB3	Maaseik-Aan Moorsch Bosch						?					
LB4	Meldert-Zelemsebaan					●						
LB5	Neerharen-Rekem			●					●			
LB6	Neerpelt-Grote Heide			●								●
LB7	Tessenderlo-Engsbergen			●								
LB8	Lummen-Meldert			●								
LB9	Peer-Mollem	●										
FLEMISH BRABANT												
VB1	Asse-Krokegemsesteenweg								●		●	
VB2	Eppegem-Kreupelstraat				?							
VB3	Ternat-Sibbekensvelstraat					●			●			

APPENDIX B: CATALOGUE OF REUSED URNFIELD SITES IN FLANDERS

Reused urnfields that are located near older barrows are recorded in appendix A. LBA-EIA = Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age; MIA-LIA = Middle and Late Iron Age; ROM = Roman period; MERO = Merovingian period; C = Carolingian period; HMA = High Middle Ages.

URNFIELDS		continuously used urnfield secondary burial in barrow burials in vicinity square structures pottery deposition settlement features secondary burial in barrow burials in vicinity Gallo-Roman temple settlement features secondary burial in barrow settlement features burials in vicinity settlement features burials in vicinity settlement features										
EAST FLANDERS		MIA-LIA			ROM	MERO	C	HMA				
OU1	Destelbergen-Eenbeekeinde	●		●		●	●					
OU2	Hofstade-Steenberg						●					
OU3	Temse-Velle						●					
OU4	Leeuwergem-Spelaanstraat			●			●					
OU5	Velzeke-Paddestraat					●						
OU6	Velzeke-Provinciebaan					●	●	●				
ANTWERP												
AU1	Borsbeek-Vogelenzang								●			
AU2	Brecht-Eindhovenakker								●			
AU3	Kontich-Duffelsesteenweg			●								
AU4	Rijkevorsel-Helhoekheide	●										
LIMBURG												
LU1	Herk-de-Stad - Donk					●			●			
LU2	Lommel-Kattenbosch	?										
LU3	Overpelt-Kruiskiezel					●						

## RÉSUMÉ

*Cercles, cycles et connotations ancestrales. Histoire à long terme et perception des tertres et champs d'urnes de la dernière partie de la préhistoire en Flandre (Belgique)*, de Roy van Beek et Guy de Mulder

Dans l'archéologie de l'Europe du nord-ouest, on a intensément débattu de la perception et de l'interaction des sociétés du passé avec les reliques anciennes. Cet article a pour but d'apporter une contribution à ce débat en reconstruisant l'histoire à long terme des tertres et des champs d'urnes de la fin de la préhistoire en Flandre (Belgique). Nous nous concentrons sur la période entre l'âge du bronze final et le haut Moyen-Âge (env. 1100 av. J.-C.–1300 ap. J.-C.). Contrairement à l'Allemagne, la Scandinavie et surtout la Grande-Bretagne, les données des Pays-Bas (Belgique et Royaume des Pays-Bas) n'ont jusqu'à présent pratiquement joué aucun rôle dans les discussions plus générales internationales et théoriques sur le rôle du passé dans le passé. De précédentes études sur les pratiques de réemploi dans les Pays-Bas se sont surtout concentrées sur la région Meuse-Demer-Scheldt, dans le sud du Royaume des Pays-Bas et le nord-ouest de la Belgique, qui déborde en partie sur les Flandres. Nous combinons et résumons ces études. Leurs principaux résultats sont testés au moyen d'un inventaire détaillé du réemploi des cimetières de la dernière partie de la préhistoire en Flandre. Cette étude diffère de la plupart des autres en matière de méthodologie par le fait qu'elle offre à la fois une vue d'ensemble reposant sur des témoignages des tendances diachroniques régionales (documentées dans 62 cimetières à tumulus et 13 champs d'urnes) et une discussion des développements sur 6 sites produisant des données à haute résolution. Les pratiques de réemploi observées et les biographies de sites semblent être remarquablement dynamiques et plus diverses qu'on ne l'avait suggéré auparavant.

## ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

*Kreise, Kreisläufe und Ahnenkonnotationen. Die Langzeitgeschichte und -wahrnehmung jüngerer prähistorischer Grabhügel und Urnenfelder in Flandern (Belgien)*, von Roy van Beek und Guy de Mulder

In der Archäologie Nordwesteuropas wurde intensiv debattiert, wie prähistorische Gesellschaften altertümliche Relikte wahrnahmen und mit ihnen interagierten. Dieser Artikel liefert einen Beitrag zu dieser Debatte, indem er die Langzeitgeschichte jüngerer vorgeschichtlicher Grabhügel und Urnenfelder in Flandern (Belgien) rekonstruiert. Die Zeit zwischen der Spätbronzezeit und dem Hochmittelalter (ca. 1100 v. Chr. bis 1300 n. Chr.) steht dabei im Mittelpunkt. Im Gegensatz zu Deutschland, Skandinavien und insbesondere Großbritannien spielten Daten aus den Niederlanden und Belgien bislang kaum eine Rolle in allgemeinen internationalen und theoretischen Diskussionen über die Rolle der Vergangenheit in der Vergangenheit. Frühere Untersuchungen zu Praktiken der Wiedernutzung in den Benelux-Ländern konzentrierten sich hauptsächlich auf die Region Meuse-Demer-Scheldt in den südlichen Niederlanden und im nordöstlichen Belgien, die teilweise mit Flandern überlappt. Diese Untersuchungen werden hier zusammengeführt und zusammengefasst. Ihre wichtigsten Ergebnisse werden mit Hilfe einer detaillierten Bestandsaufnahme von wieder verwendeten jüngervorgeschichtlichen Gräberfeldern in Flandern getestet. Diese Studie unterscheidet sich methodologisch insofern von den meisten anderen, als dass sie sowohl eine evidenzbasierte Übersicht über regionale diachrone Trends präsentiert (dokumentiert anhand von 62 Hügelgräberfeldern und 13 Urnenfeldern) als auch die Entwicklungen auf sechs Fundplätzen diskutiert, die hochauflösende Daten geliefert haben. Die beobachteten Praktiken der Wiedernutzung und die Biographien der Orte scheinen bemerkenswert dynamisch zu sein und weit diversifizierter als bisher angenommen.

## RESUMEN

*Círculos, ciclos y connotaciones ancestrales. La historia y la percepción de los túmulos prehistóricos tardíos y los campos de urnas en Flandes (Bélgica)*, por Roy van Beek y Guy de Mulder.

La percepción e interacción con reliquias antiguas en las sociedades del pasado ha sido ampliamente debatida en la arqueología del noroeste de Europa. Este artículo pretende contribuir a este debate mediante la reconstrucción de la historia a largo plazo de los túmulos prehistóricos tardíos y de los campos de urnas en Flandes (Bélgica).

Se centra en el período entre el Bronce Final y la Alta Edad Media (c. 1100 BC–AD 1300). Al contrario que en Alemania, Escandinavia y especialmente en Gran Bretaña, los datos procedentes de los Países Bajos (Bélgica y Holanda) han pasado desapercibidos en debates internacionales o teóricos de mayor escala sobre el papel del pasado en el pasado. Los estudios previos sobre prácticas de reutilización en los Países Bajos se han centrado principalmente en la región Meuse-Demer-Scheldt del sur de Holanda y noreste de Bélgica, que se solapa parcialmente con Flandes. Estos estudios han sido tenidos en consideración y resumidos. Sus principales resultados son evaluados por medio de un detallado inventario de los cementerios prehistóricos tardíos reutilizados en Flandes. Este estudio difiere metodológicamente de la mayoría en que ofrece una visión de la tendencia diacrónica regional basada en la evidencia (documentada en 12 cementerios tumulares y 13 campos de urnas) y discute sus resultados en seis yacimientos que disponen de datos de alta resolución. Las prácticas de reutilización observadas y las biografías de los sitios parecen ser notablemente dinámicas y más diversas de que lo que previamente se había sugerido.