

Anglo-Saxon immigration or continuity? Ezinge and the coastal area of the northern Netherlands in the Migration Period.

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Abstract

In 2011, the Netherlands Organisation of Scientific Research (NWO), enabled the full study of the find material from the excavations that were conducted between 1923 and 1934 in the terp of Ezinge (province of Groningen), as part of the Odyssee-programme. In this paper, the results of the study of the handmade pottery from this settlement are used to shed new light on the habitation history of Ezinge and of the terp area of the northern Netherlands in general during the Migration Period, the 4th and 5th century AD. The area was largely abandoned in this period, but Ezinge is one of the few terps where habitation was continuous. This paper presents the results of this pottery study and compares them to other settlements with continuous habitation in the same period: Midlaren-De Bloemert in northern Drenthe, and the Feddersen Wierde in Lower-Saxony. The development of the so-called Anglo-Saxon pottery style of this period is actually an indigenous development, which is inspired by pottery and contacts from elsewhere. It is argued that differences in habitation history are probably related to differences in landscape, but also to the different social networks in which the settlements in the northern Netherlands participated.

Keywords: continuity, migration period, Anglo-Saxon pottery, Ezinge, Frisian identity, Roman Iron Age

1. Introduction

The coastal area of the northern Netherlands, the *terp* region,¹ has a long occupation history, starting in the middle pre-Roman Iron Age (fig. 1). Occupation is, however, not continuous over the ages. There are indications that habitation of many of the artificial dwelling mounds of the area (the terps) came to an end in the course of the 3rd century AD and that the area, at least the Frisian *terp* area, was virtually deserted in the 4th century. This hypothesis is largely based on the absence of finds and features from this period, as well as on significant changes in the material culture, settlement structure and burial ritual after this period (Bazelmans 2002; Nieuwhof 2011; Knol 2011). New inhabitants are thought to have arrived in the 5th century.

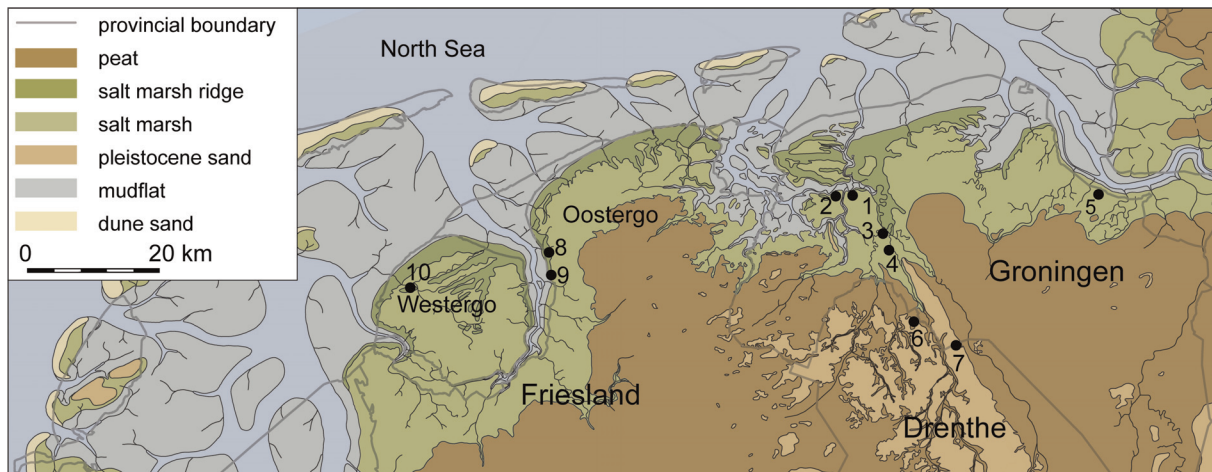


Figure 1 Palaeogeographical map of the northern Netherlands around AD 800. Location of places (not necessarily inhabited around AD 800) mentioned in the text: 1: Ezinge; 2: Englum; 3: Wierum; 4: Paddepoel; 5: Heveskesklooster; 6: Eelde; 7: Midlaren; 8: Jelsum; 9: Leeuwarden; 10: Wijnaldum. (After Vos & Knol 2005).

Their material culture resembles the material culture that is common in the coastal areas of northwestern Germany and Schleswig-Holstein, which are usually considered the homelands of the Saxons and the Angles. The supposed immigrants of the 5th century AD in the northern Netherlands are therefore usually called Anglo-Saxons, their material culture 'Anglo-Saxon'. They are believed to have come to our coastal area as part of the Anglo-Saxon migrations, most of which ended on the British coast.

This view is not generally accepted in all its details. Within the discussion, two areas of attention can be distinguished. In the first place, there are many uncertainties concerning the occupation history at the end of the Roman Iron Age. Was the area really abandoned, or can we just not recognize human presence in this period because of our limited knowledge of the material culture? Can we date the occupation hiatus? Were the northern Netherlands entirely abandoned or do regional differences occur? And what caused the abandonment of the area?

In the second place, the problem of ethnic identity is at stake. Although the material culture of the inhabitants of the 5th century is clearly related to the material culture of the home areas of the Angles and Saxons, it may be oversimplifying the matter to just call them Anglo-Saxons. The identity of the inhabitants before the hiatus is not entirely clear either. Can they all be considered Frisians, as is customary, or are there differences between areas in the present provinces of Friesland, Groningen and Drenthe? Is it possible at all to say something about their ethnic identity on the basis of their material culture?

In the discussion, arguments from both areas of attention are usually mingled. For example, in their recent critique on the above general model, Lanting and Van der Plicht (2010, 29; 130-131) state that not Anglo-Saxons but people from Groningen and Drenthe who had not left the area, reoccupied the abandoned terps of Friesland. Their alternative view is a sign that the occupation history of the coastal area of the northern Netherlands is still largely unknown. The few data we have can be interpreted in different ways.

New data have recently become available thanks to the Odyssee-programme of the Netherlands Organisation of Scientific Research (NWO), which in 2011 enabled full study of the find material from the terp of Ezinge in the province of Groningen, in particular the large assemblage of handmade pottery.² This paper aims at answering some of the above questions on the basis of the results from the research of the Ezinge pottery and of a comparison of this material with the pottery from two contemporaneous settlements, notably the northern-Drenthe settlement of Midlaren-De Bloemert (Nieuwhof 2008a) and the Feddersen Wierde on the coast of Niedersachsen (Schmid 2006).

2. Short history of the discussion on the occupation during the 4th century

The idea of an Anglo-Saxon invasion originates in the early days of terp archaeology. Already in 1906, the curator of the Frisian Museum during the first half of the 20th century, P.C.J.A. Boeles, brought forward the idea of an Anglo-Saxon invasion. His ideas were based on his recognition of a new material culture, in particular pottery and cruciform brooches. Boeles believed that the Anglo-Saxons had invaded a populated area and had absorbed the Frisian population that remained after their attacks, thus forming a new Anglo-Frisian population. Despite strong opposition, Boeles stayed with his views (cf. Bazelmans 2002). In the second edition of his magnum opus *Friesland tot de elfde eeuw* (Friesland until the 11th century) of 1951 (205ff), he once more summarized the discussion and his arguments, using the preliminary publication of the excavations in the terp of Ezinge by Van Giffen (1936) as a source of supporting evidence for his theory.

From finds in Frisian terps, it had become clear to Boeles that the pottery of the Frisians of the Roman Iron Age was never found together with Anglo-Saxon pottery and that typical Anglo-Saxon cemeteries (with Anglo-Saxon pottery and cruciform brooches) were introduced in the 5th century. In Ezinge, a loamy ash layer was reported to cover Roman Iron Age houses. Buildings above the burnt layer were small, Anglo-Saxon houses with sunken huts. Anglo-Saxon pottery was common in and around these buildings. This was interpreted by both Boeles and Van Giffen as an indication that there had been a hostile take-over by the Anglo-Saxons. Boeles' arguments did not convince Frisian nationalists, nor scholars who thought that migration was not the best explanation of changes in material culture. The debate continued until well into the 1970s (Bazelmans 2002). One of the last discussants was Waterbolk, who recognized that many terp settlements had been abandoned from the 3rd century onwards. However, while ignoring the 4th century, he inferred from the many finds from the 5th-7th centuries that habitation in Friesland in the Migration Period had been continuous (Waterbolk 1979, 17).

The discussion on the habitation of the terp region during the 4th century was rekindled in the 1990s by new evidence that supported Boeles' idea of an Anglo-Saxon immigration, though not of an aggressive invasion. It now had become clear that the area had been abandoned before these immigrants arrived. The new evidence came from the excavations in Wijnaldum (1991-1993; Gerrets & De Koning 1999) and from the study of indigenous handmade pottery by Taayke (1996). From the virtual absence of 4th century pottery, Taayke concluded that the terp area was gradually abandoned in the course of the 3rd century AD and that habitation had come to an end in the 4th century almost everywhere. He described this process under the somewhat ironic heading *Die Entfriesung der nördlichen Niederlande* (Taayke 1996, V, 193). However, from the occurrence of some new types of pottery Taayke argues that a small population probably remained on some terps in Groningen, in particular at Ezinge (Taayke 1996, III, 55; V, 195ff).³

3. Pottery assemblages from Ezinge, Midlaren-De Bloemert and the Feddersen Wierde

Ezinge thus played an important role in the discussion on the occupation history of the 4th century, despite the fact that the actual excavation results have only been published in a preliminary form (Van Giffen 1926; 1928; 1931; 1936; De Langen & Waterbolk 1989; Waterbolk 1991). It is therefore interesting to draw the new evidence from the Ezinge pottery research into the discussion and to compare this pottery assemblage to the pottery from contemporaneous settlements. Comparable pottery assemblages are only available from settlements outside the terp region of the northern Netherlands. Two of these have been selected: Midlaren-De Bloemert and the Feddersen Wierde. The short descriptions below will explain the reasons

for their selection, and outline the differences in the size of pottery assemblages and their representativity.

3.1 *Ezinge*

The terp of Ezinge had attracted the attention of Van Giffen in 1923, during commercial quarrying of the fertile terp soil. During the following years, Van Giffen and his assistants documented sections and carried out small excavations while quarrying continued. Between 1931 and 1934, Van Giffen managed to organize a large-scale excavation in Ezinge. One eighth (2 ha) of the terp was entirely excavated in 22 levels. The excavation attracted much international attention because of the modern excavation technique and the well-preserved organic remains, especially the many impressive remains of large, 3-aisled farmhouses. Ezinge must have been a relatively large village settlement. If we take the number of houses recognized by De Langen and Waterbolk in the excavated part of the terp as a lead (De Langen & Waterbolk 1989; Waterbolk 1991), the village varied between *c.* 5 and 20 houses.

Handmade pottery is the most sizeable find category in Ezinge with almost 20.000 pots and potsherds (1025 kg) from the entire habitation period between 500 BC and AD 1500. The (compared to modern terp excavations) large percentage of rims and complete pots (as many as 223 complete archaeological profiles) shows that pottery was probably collected selectively.

3.2 *Midlaren-De Bloemert*

Midlaren-De Bloemert is located *c.* 25 km from Ezinge in the Pleistocene sand area of northern Drenthe. The pottery assemblage of this settlement was studied by the author (Nieuwhof 2008a), making the results easily comparable to those from Ezinge. Moreover, apart from the fabrics, the pottery from this area strongly resembles the pottery of the Groningen terp region (Taayke 1996, II; III).

Midlaren-De Bloemert was excavated in 1969 and between 2003 and 2005 (Nicolay 2008a). The settlement was excavated almost complete, an area of 4.8 ha, in one level. It was a small settlement, with only one house at a time in the middle and late pre-Roman Iron Age, growing to two or three houses at most in the Roman Iron Age and diminishing to only one house per generation from the 4th century onwards (Nicolay 2008b, 215). In the vicinity, two small cemeteries with graves from the Migration Period, possibly belonging to this settlement, were found. The first was already discovered in 1856. The other was excavated as part of the settlement excavation (Tuin 2008).

The finds of handmade pottery from the settlement comprise 54.000 sherds (717 kg) from all occupation periods between the middle pre-Roman Iron Age and the late Middle Ages. This number includes a very small number of pots from the cemetery excavated by Tuin (2008). The cremation urns that were found in the second nearby cemetery (figs. 12 and 13) have previously been published by Pleyte (1882, 49-51, Pl. LVII and LVIII), by Tischler (1956, *Abb.* 43 and 44) and recently by Lanting & Van der Plicht (2010, 142-143).

3.3 *Feddersen Wierde*

The well-known terp settlement of Feddersen Wierde is located at a distance of over 150 km to the east of Ezinge and Midlaren-De Bloemert on the coast of Niedersachsen, in what might be called the Saxon home area. That makes it an interesting settlement for comparison. The pottery from the Feddersen Wierde has fully been published (Schmid 2006). Although it was

not collected per feature but per grid square of 5 x 5 m, the results are presented in a form that makes them comparable to the results from Ezingen and Midlaren-De Bloemert.

The Feddersen Wierde was fully excavated between 1955 and 1963 (Haarnagel 1979). It was a large settlement, with *c.* ten simultaneous farmhouses in the 1st century AD to over 25 farmhouses in the 3rd century AD. Habitation started in the 1st century BC; it ended in the course of the 5th century AD. The number of potsherds is not mentioned by Schmid, but from the numbers mentioned in his figures, a number of at least 12000 pottery individuals from the entire habitation period can be calculated.

4. Pottery types and pottery dates

The pottery of this period in the northern-Netherlands and the coastal area of Niedersachsen is largely handmade. In most settlements of the Roman Iron Age as well as the early Middle Ages, only a very small portion of the total pottery assemblage consists of imported, wheel-thrown pottery.⁴ There is no well-defined typochronology for the pottery from the northern Netherlands of the 4th and 5th centuries as there is for earlier handmade pottery in this region. The work of Taayke (1996), which has made pottery research of earlier material from the northern Netherlands into a rewarding line of research, does not include 'Anglo-Saxon' pottery. To understand and interpret the finds, we cannot do without at least a provisional typochronology for this period. The overview of types presented below consists of types that were used as from the late Roman Iron Age, which were described by Taayke (1996), supplemented by types described by Schmid (2006) in his publication on the pottery from the Feddersen Wierde. Pottery development will be followed into the 6th century; then the pottery in Anglo-Saxon style made way for early-medieval, so-called Hessens-Schortens ware. An overview of pottery types from the 3rd, 4th and 5th centuries is represented in fig. 2.

The use of the designation *Anglo-Saxon* for this pottery suggests a relation between pottery style and ethnic identity, which is better avoided. In the following, the pottery and decoration that used to be called *Anglo-Saxon* will be referred to as pottery and decoration in Anglo-Saxon style (abbreviated AS), rather than as Anglo-Saxon pottery. The combination of Anglo and Saxon is maintained, because without further study, it is hard to distinguish separate Anglian and Saxon styles.⁵

4.1 The 3rd century

During the 3rd century AD, typical 'Frisian' characteristics such as decorated rims (so-called *Wellenrand*-pots), which had been part of the pottery of the northern-Netherlands since the early pre-Roman Iron Age, disappeared from the repertoire (Taayke 1996, V, 179). The so-called Driesum style (Taayke 1996, V, 180) developed during this period (fig. 2, left column). In Friesland, this style represents the final phase of pottery development. The Driesum-style still has the angular shapes of the middle-Roman Iron Age, but rims get longer and thinner, carinated walls get more rounded. Wide-mouthed as well as narrow-mouthed pots (type Ge6), the latter in smaller numbers, occur. Besides large pots, there are well-finished, funnel-shaped beakers and miniature versions of Ge6 (K6). In northern Drenthe, pots in Driesum-style were used well into the 4th century.

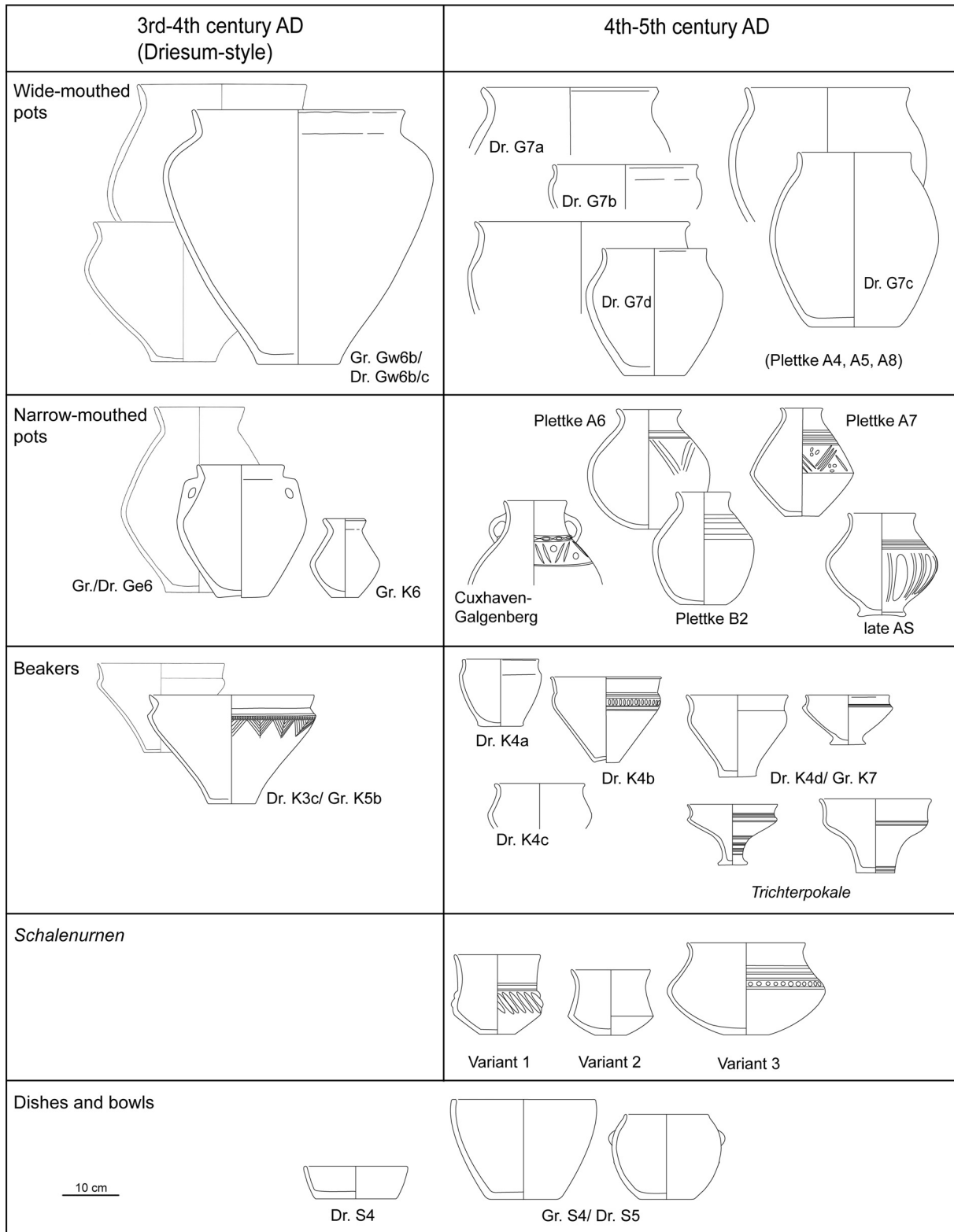


Figure 2 Overview of pottery types from the 3rd, 4th and 5th centuries in the northern Netherlands and north-western Germany; based on Taayke 1996, Plettke 1921 and Schmid 2006. AS: pottery in Anglo-Saxon style; Dr.: types from the typology of northern Drenthe (Taayke 1996, II); Gr.: types from the typology of central Groningen (Taayke 1996, III). (Drawing: author).

4.2 The 4th and 5th centuries

In the typology of central Groningen, Driesum style pottery is followed by two types: small pots of type K7 and large pots of type G7.⁶ Both types are defined on the basis of only a small number of finds. These types are more common in northern Drenthe, where a continuous development of pottery into the 4th and 5th centuries can be recognized (Taayke 1996, V, 180).⁷ Together with bowls and dishes, these forms can be considered the indigenous pottery of this period in the northern Netherlands.

Pottery in Anglo-Saxon style is defined here as pottery that comes from, or is inspired by contacts with, the Anglo-Saxon home area. This pottery comprises specific forms such as *Schalenurnen* and so-called Plettke-types (see below), both usually decorated in Anglo-Saxon style. Decoration in Anglo-Saxon style can also be applied to indigenous forms. Shapes from this period are shown in the right column of fig. 2.

Large pots

The large, indigenous pots from this period belong to type Dr. G7 (Taayke 1996, II, 25-30 and 57-58). This type consists of well-finished, usually stone-tempered, wide-mouthed pots with more or less S-shaped profiles. As far as known, bases are flat and rather wide. The lower half of the pots is often roughened with a finely textured, coarse slip. G7-pots are usually not decorated, but Anglo-Saxon style motifs do occur. Taayke distinguishes four subtypes, Dr. G7a, -b, -c and -d. They are dated to the 4th as well as the 5th centuries, Dr. G7c into the 6th century (Taayke 1996, II, 58).

Pottery from this period from German cemeteries and settlements was described by Plettke, as early as 1921. Just like the G7-types of the northern Netherlands, S-shaped profiles developed here from the more angular profiles of the Roman Iron Age in the 4th century. In Plettke's typology, which is still widely used in the Netherlands, these new, wide-mouthed forms are called A4, A5 and A8. This pottery is often, but not always decorated. The difference between various wide-mouthed Plettke-types is not very well defined. As a group, they fall under the definition of G7-pottery (Taayke 1996, II, 58; Schmid 2006, 64). Schmid dates them to the 4th and 5th centuries.

Narrow-mouthed types with round (Plettke types A6 and B2) or biconical (A7) wall profiles develop from this wide-mouthed pottery (Schmid 2006, 63). Schmid dates them to the late 4th century, biconical variants no earlier than the 5th century. Another narrow-mouthed type, 4th century-type 'Cuxhaven-Galgenberg', developed from earlier 'Töpfe der Westerwanna-Typ' (Schmid 2006, 64), Taayke's type Ge6, one of the Driesum-style types.

Beakers

Dr. K4/Gr. K7 (Taayke 1996, II, 39 and 61; III, 34 and 55) comprises well finished, wide-mouthed, shouldered beakers. The neck is concave or straight, the rim is usually rounded and sometimes thickened. Bases can be flat or raised and protruding. Decorated and undecorated beakers occur; decoration is often found on or under the shoulder, or on the lower, narrow part of the beaker above the foot. Decoration can be in the rather formal style of the middle Roman Iron Age or in the more expressive, Anglo-Saxon style. The type resembles the *Trichterpokale* of the Feddersen Wierde (Schmid 2006, Taf. 47, 69 and 70). In northern Drenthe, four subtypes are distinguished (Taayke 1996, II; V, Abb. 10). K4a is dated to the late 3rd and the 4th centuries. K4b is inspired by the *Rhein-Weser-Germanisches* type II as defined by Von Uslar (1938) and dated to the 3rd and 4th centuries (Taayke 1996, II, 61). K4c is dated from the late 3rd until the 5th century. K4d is a younger subtype, dated to the 4th and 5th centuries.

Bowls and dishes

In the middle of the 3rd century, bowls with an inward curving rim appeared in northern Drenthe as well as Groningen (Dr. S5/Gr. S4). Bowls are sometimes decorated or roughened, and may have small knob handles. In northern Drenthe, wide, low dishes with a vertical or slanting wall were in use besides bowls (Dr. S4). Both dishes and bowls were produced until well into the early Middle Ages. Fabric and finishing are the main characteristics that enable dating: through the years, fabrics became coarser (Taayke 1996, II, 62-63).

Schalenurnen

The wide-mouthed, carinated dishes of this period are known by their German name *Schalenurnen*. The term *Schalenurne* is used here for want of good alternatives; they were, however, not necessarily used as urns. Schmid (2006, 59) more neutrally calls them *schalenförmige Gefäße*. *Schalenurnen* are typical of the Anglo-Saxon style. Schmid (2006, 59-60) describes three variants. Variants 1 and 2, which are difficult to distinguish, are relatively high, cylindrical pots with a deep carination; variant 3 is wider and has a clearly convex and relatively high lower wall. Most *Schalenurnen* are decorated. Decoration is located on the shoulder and the wall above it, often almost up to the rim. *Schalenurnen* are dated from the 4th until the second half of the 5th century by Schmid (2006, 62-63).

Decoration

A large percentage of the pottery of this period is decorated. The decoration in Anglo-Saxon style consists of horizontal, vertical, slanting and curved grooves, chevrons, horizontal ridges, often with regular impressions, thickened areas, bumps (so-called *Buckel*), rosettes, stamps, and small or large, round or oval impressions. Besides these common motifs, a large number of rarer decorative elements occur, which might have been inspired by personal preferences of the potter or that possibly had a symbolic meaning. An example is the cruciform, linear impression that sometimes can be found on the base of pots. This motif already occurs on pottery centuries before the Christianisation of north-western Europe and probably has a non-Christian symbolic meaning. Not only rare motifs, but also the more common elements of the Anglo-Saxon style may have had a symbolic meaning for those who made and used it. To what extent decorative motifs can be used to date pottery is not clear.

Dates

Dates as presented above are based on associations of pottery types and on associations with other dated objects. They are rather wide, usually spanning two centuries. A number of new radiocarbon dates of pottery in Anglo-Saxon style was provided by Lanting and Van der Plicht (2010, 142; 2012, fig. 3). These dates are no less wide than the archaeological dates, but they can be used to verify them. The new, calibrated dates mainly fall in the 5th century, some into the early 6th century; most of these dates apply to pottery from the coastal area. The earliest radiocarbon-dated pots in Anglo-Saxon style are from the 4th century (Lanting & Van der Plicht 2010, 142ff; 2012, fig. 3). These early dates belong to the four dated *Schalenurnen* and to two round, narrow-mouthed pots in Anglo-Saxon style from the small cemeteries near Midlaren-De Bloemert. Radiocarbon dates confirm the archaeological dates of pottery in Anglo-Saxon style. *Schalenurnen* seem to occur especially in the 4th century and to end already in the early 5th century AD, but the number of dates is rather small.

4.3 The 5th and 6th centuries

In the 5th century, some gradual changes occur. Bases often get somewhat rounded (so-called *Wackelboden*, e.g. fig. 11, no. 108), profiles become less well-defined. These trends continue into the early Middle Ages. The production and use of decorated pottery diminishes, perhaps already in the second half of the 5th century. Shapes and decoration of pottery in Anglo-Saxon style are becoming increasingly uniform. Late Anglo-Saxon pottery as described by Knol (1993, 54) often is reddish grey, well finished with a dull surface; it has an S-shaped neck, a round or slightly biconical body and often a protruding foot (fig. 2, second row). Decoration consists of a narrow zone of horizontal lines on the shoulder, under which regular vertical lines, long *Buckel* and elongated impressions have been applied; stamps occur regularly. Radiocarbon dates of this late Anglo-Saxon-style pottery are between 1500 and 1570 BP, that is about the first half of the 6th century (Lanting & Van der Plicht (2010, 142-146)).⁸ The small number of finds and the dates indicate that this late Anglo-Saxon style pottery was not in use until AD 600, as was suspected by Knol (1993, 54). Around the middle of the 6th century, the use of decorated pottery in Anglo-Saxon style had virtually come to an end.

The handmade pottery of the Merovingian Period, so called *Hessens-Schortens* ware,⁹ is named after two excavations in Niedersachsen (Tischler 1956, 79-87), but it was common in a large part of northwestern Europe (Taayke 1996, V, 180-181; Bärenfänger 2001). Its fabric is the most conspicuous characteristic of Hessens-Schortens ware. It is usually coarse, barely finished pottery, which seems to be made without much care. Well-finished or decorated pots constitute a small minority. Besides the stone-tempered Hessens-Schortens ware, an organically tempered variant, so-called Tritsum-pottery, is sometimes found in the northern Netherlands (Taayke & Knol 1992). Despite its different appearance, it is most likely that Hessens-Schortens and Tritsum pottery developed from the pottery of the 4th and 5th centuries. Characteristics of older G7-pots, narrow-mouthed forms in Anglo-Saxon style and *Schalenuernen* also occur in Hessens-Schortens pottery. Calibrated radiocarbon-dates of pottery of the Hessens-Schortens family range from the 5th to the 8th century, according to Lanting and Van der Plicht (2010, 151). However, none of their calibrated early dates exclusively fall into the 5th century; they all might as well belong to the 6th century. Moreover, Lanting and Van der Plicht (2010, 134-135) equal Hessens-Schortens ware with undecorated pottery in Anglo-Saxon style, which is justifiable if we consider Hessens-Schortens ware as developing from the pottery of the Migration Period. The transition to Hessens-Schortens pottery is gradual; saggy and not so well-finished G7-pots are often surprisingly hard to distinguish from relatively well-finished and thin-walled Hessens-Schortens ware, if at all possible. Nevertheless, Hessens-Schortens pottery *sensu stricto* may still not occur before the end of the 5th century. Below, only typical coarse, thick-walled kind of pottery will be referred to as Hessens-Schortens ware.

The transition from the carefully made, beautifully finished, expressively decorated pottery of the 4th and 5th centuries to the coarse, rather formless and usually undecorated pottery that is Hessens-Schortens ware, is an interesting phenomenon. Pottery in Anglo-Saxon style seems to be a highlight in design and skill. Why would the potters who were able to make that, put aside their skills and start making the seemingly sloppy shapes of Hessens-Schortens ware? Yet, the transition between the two wares is gradual. At the end of the 5th century, the decorative motifs and the forms of the Anglo-Saxon style apparently were not appreciated anymore. They may have lost their possibly symbolic meaning or just their attractiveness. Young potters no longer used the forms and decorations of the older generation; these became outdated. Moreover, the number of pots per household seems to diminish in the early Middle Ages (Verhoeven 2008, 312). Fancy tableware and drinking vessels apparently were not of handmade pottery anymore. They may have been replaced by imported pottery or different materials such as maple mazers.¹⁰ Handmade pots had become mere practical utensils for the preparation of food.

5. Results

The above overview of the pottery of the 4th and 5th centuries forms the background for the results presented below. The pottery of this period found in Ezinge are presented in some detail, since it has not been published elsewhere. Results from Midlaren-De Bloemert and the Feddersen Wierde are summarized.

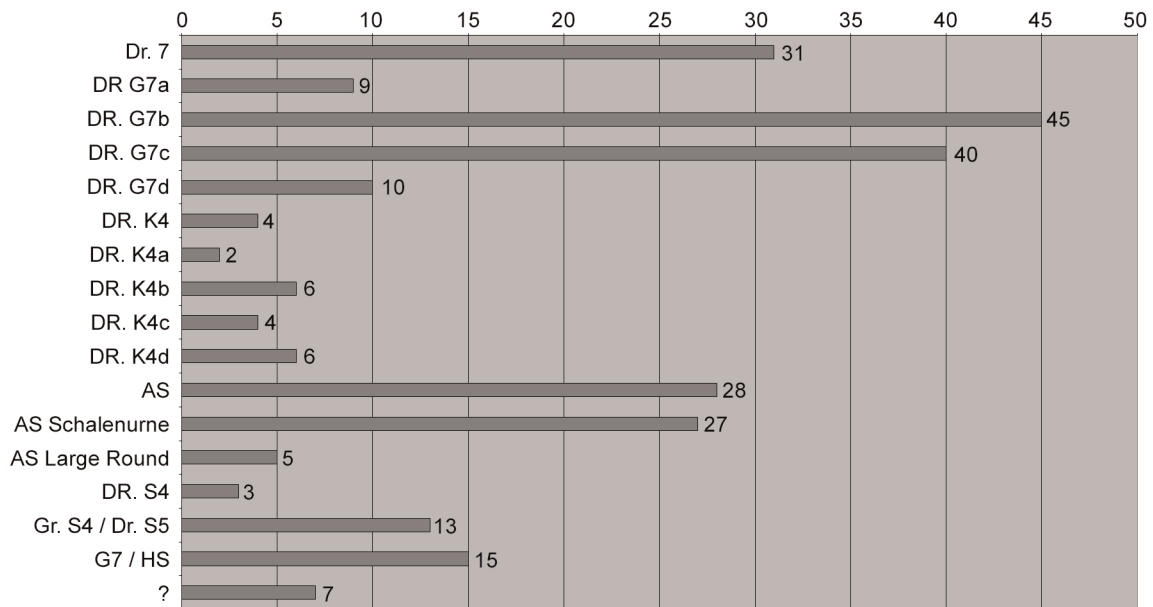


Figure 3 Minimum Number of Individuals of pottery from the 4th and the 5th century in Ezinge per type. Only pots represented by rim sherds are included. AS: pottery in Anglo-Saxon style; HS: Hessens-Schortens ware; Dr. refers to types from the northern Drenthe typology and Gr. to the central-Groningen typology defined by Taayke (1996).

5.1 Ezinge

The fragments of 365 individual pots from the 4th and 5th centuries were found in Ezinge. Of these, 255 are represented by rim sherds or complete archaeological profiles (fig. 3). The majority of the pots are of type G7 (n=135), in particular Dr. G7b and Dr. G7c. Pottery in Anglo-Saxon style mainly consists of *Schalenurnen* (n=27) and narrow-mouthed and unspecified forms (n=28). Some small pots (fig. 4) belong to this latter category; no. 850-3153¹¹ (fig. 4) is reminiscent of Driesum-style type Gr. K6. Besides G7 and Anglo-Saxon-style pots, 22 Dr. K4-beakers have been found, as well as 16 bowls and dishes (Dr. S4 and S5, fig. 8). Of an additional number of 110 recognizable, decorated wall sherds from this period, another 29 belong to *Schalenurnen* and seven to large pots in Anglo-Saxon style. Apart from a base with a footring (fig. 4, 1024-352), a small carinated pot with stamp decoration (fig. 4, 1292-4227) and a possible *Schalenurne* (fig. 6, 681-3275), also with stamp decoration, are in late-Saxon style.

Some exceptional decorations are found on large, decorated pots. No. 162-2577 (fig. 4) is a fragmented pot with several large round *Buckel* with an engraved cross, which are surrounded by stamps that resemble small hands. Another strongly fragmented, very large pot with a largest diameter of c. 50 cm (fig. 4, 614-2985), is decorated with long, rectangular appliqués on the upper part of the body; all appliqués have different engravings. An engraved cross was found on the base of one large pot (fig. 5, 656-3083).

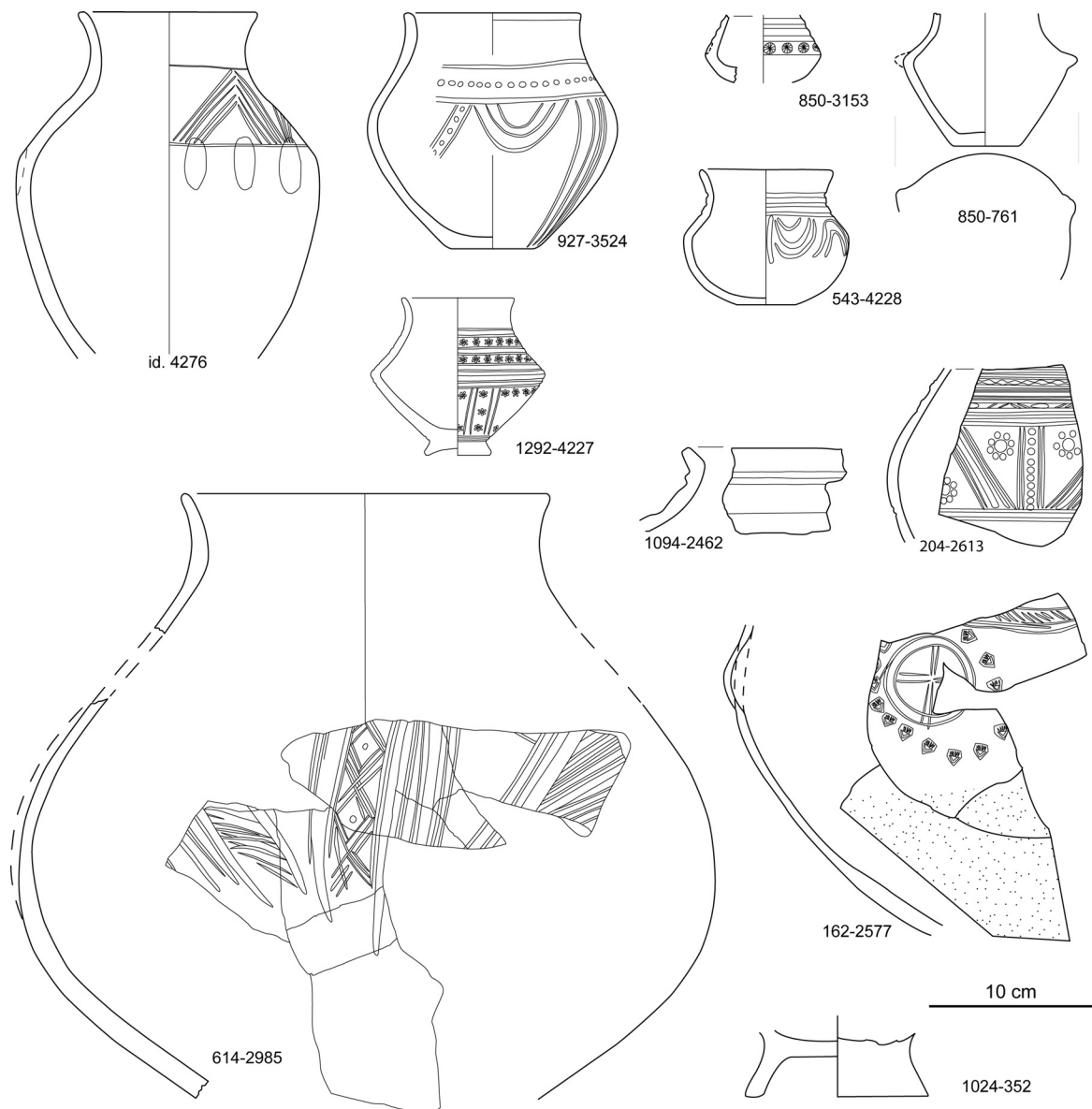


Figure 4 Pottery in Anglo-Saxon style from Ezinge; large and small forms. (Drawing: author).

Narrow-mouthed pots are rare, as far as the relation between the diameters of the rim and the body of pots can be established. Large, narrow-mouthed biconical pots were not found in Ezinge. The only biconical pots are an atypical narrow-mouthed pot, reminiscent of a *Schalennurne* (fig. 6, 101-4214), which might come from Schleswig-Holstein (cf. Plettke 1921, 50; *Taf.* 43, 9-11), and a very small, narrow-mouthed pot with stamp decoration (fig. 4, 1292-4227). A small number of narrow-mouthed pots with handles were made in the tradition of the middle Roman Iron Age Ge6-type. An example is find no. 307 (fig. 5), which consists of two such 'jugs' and two G7-fragments.

Schalennurnen are relatively numerous. Fabrics of most *Schalennurnen* appear quite normal in the total Ezinge assemblage. A small number of them with slightly deviating fabrics and colours may have been imported from elsewhere. All *Schalennurnen* are decorated, except for two complete, small pots (fig. 6, 695-3206; 1079-3225). Most of the *Schalennurnen* are decorated with the familiar impressions, chevrons, *Buckel*, grooves and ribs. A small number of them, conspicuous for their complete archaeological profiles (fig. 6, nos. 113-4213; 213-2044; 213-2045; 546-3569), belong to Schmid's variant 3; they are only decorated with a zone of simple, horizontal lines above the shoulder.

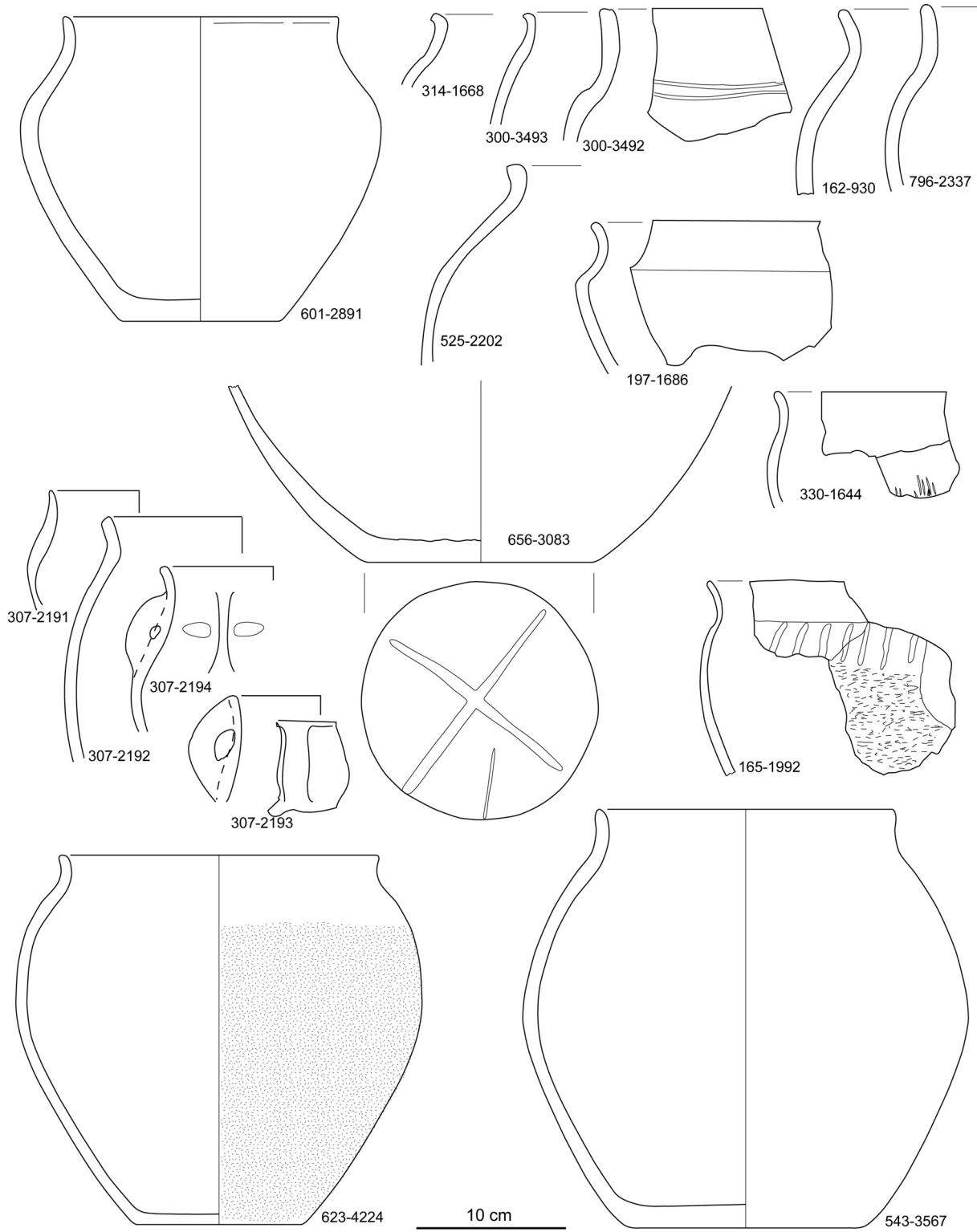


Figure 5 Pots, mainly of type G7, from Ezinge. (Drawing: author).

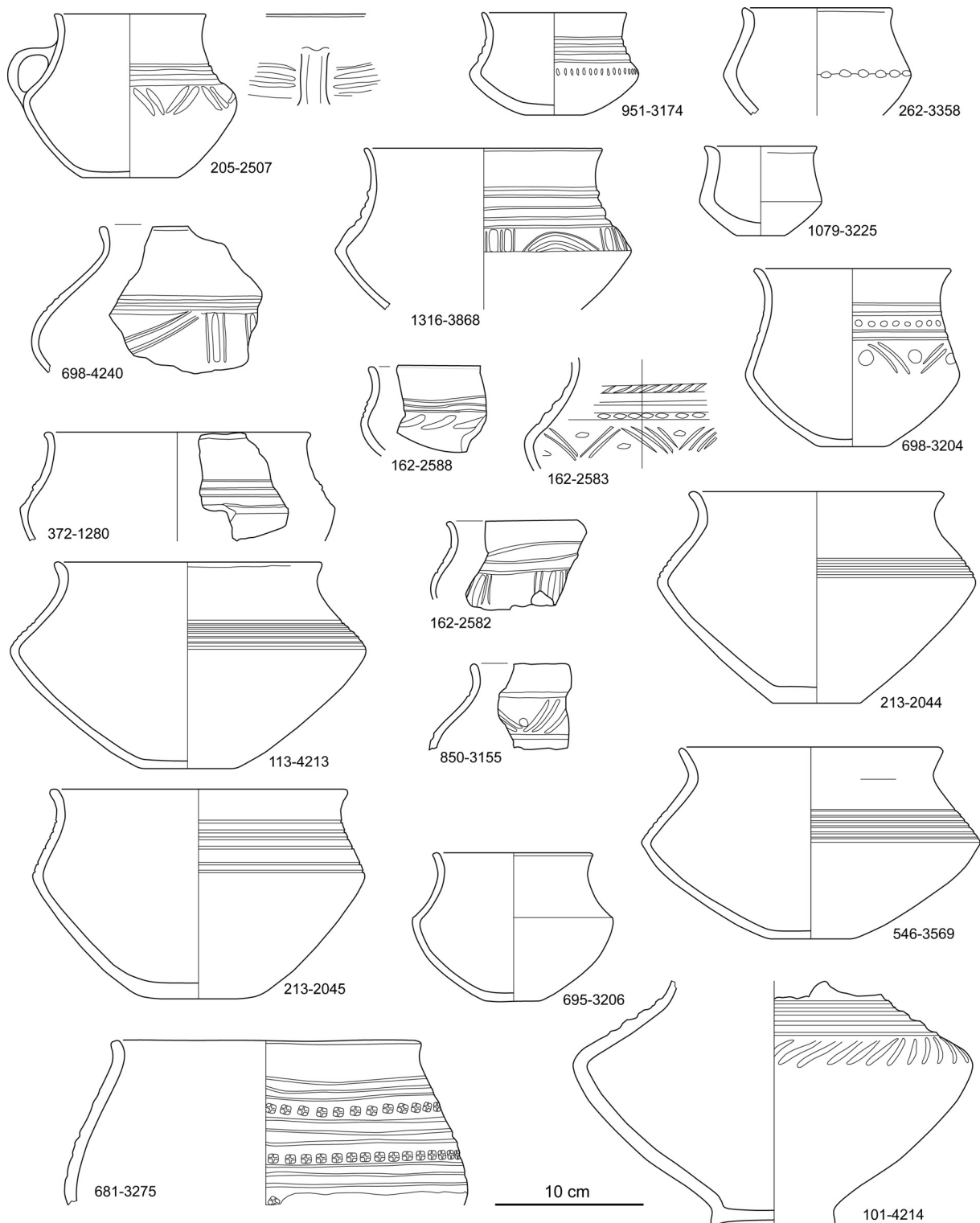


Figure 6 Schalenurnen found in Ezinge. (Drawing: author).

Beakers of type Dr. K4 do occur in Ezinge, but in a relatively small number. They form a heterogeneous group (fig. 7), which suggests that they do not belong to the common Ezinge repertoire. Only the Dr. K4b-beakers in Ezinge (fig. 7, 829-4223; 1428-3886) do not seem out of place since they clearly are the successors of Gr. K5b, and sometimes are difficult to distinguish from these earlier beakers. Some of the beakers have decoration in the earlier style of the middle Roman Iron Age (fig. 7, 1428-3886; 221-2027), which suggests a relatively early date. K4d-beakers 185-3373 and 606-1991 (fig. 7) have decoration in typical Anglo-Saxon style. Uncommon

beakers, such as K4b-like id. 3935 or K4d-like 744-3165 (fig. 7) might well come from elsewhere. The latter was found with an equally uncommon small cup with an ear (fig. 7, 744-3205). Another uncommon beaker (fig. 7, 361-4226), belonging to the Dr. K4-group, has a series of protrusions on the shoulder, which are decorated with crosses and circles. Of a well-finished beaker with number 257-2047 (fig. 7), only the lower part has survived; it is decorated with horizontal lines and zones of small crescents; similar crescents were also applied to the base of the beaker, in the four quadrants of a triple cross.

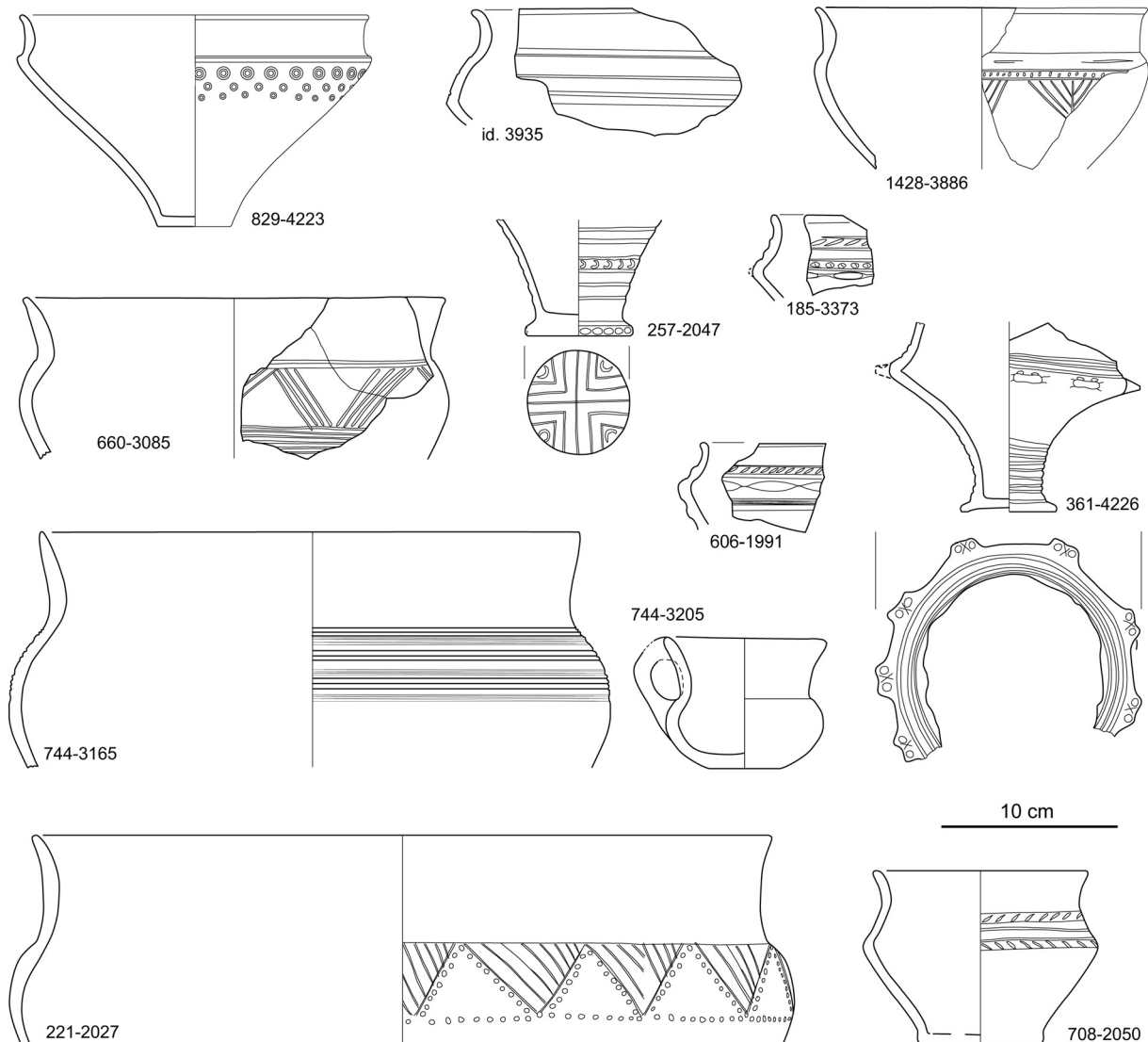


Figure 7 Beakers (mainly of subtypes of northern-Drenthe K4) from Ezinge. (Drawing: author).

The pottery finds from Ezinge in this period come from 153 different contexts. This large number makes it possible to examine associated types. Such an overview can be used to say something about the occurrence of different pottery types through time. Table 1 presents an overview of associated pottery types from the 4th and 5th centuries in Ezinge. Hessens-Schortens ware (HS) and some older types from the 3rd century (Gr. Gw6b, K5b and K6) have been included, in order to examine the transition between periods. Besides handmade pottery, imported wheel-thrown pottery found with handmade pottery in contexts from this period has been added, because it might add to our understanding: late Roman ware, in particular late Argonne-terra sigillata and African Red Slip ware (ARS) from Tunisia,¹² both dated to *c.* AD 400 (Volkers in prep.); terra nigra-like pottery (cf. Van Es 1967), which was found in five datable contexts in Ezinge; and various types of Merovingian wheel-thrown pottery from the

	Gw6b	K5b, K6	TN	K4b	K4c	S4	K4a	K4	S5	G7a	G7c	G7b	G7d	G7	K4d	AS	Late TS	G7/HS	MER	HS
TN		1		1								1			1					
K4b	1	1		1												3				
K4c												1				1	1			
S4	1									1	1			2		2				
K4a																2				1
K4																1				1
S5												2		3		3				1
G7a	3	1										1	3			1				
G7c	2	3				1						9	2		1	14	1	3	2	5
G7b	4	5	1		1	1			2	1	9		3	2		10	1			6
G7d	4	1								3	2	3			1	3		1	1	
G7	1	1				2			3		1	2				5				5
K4d											1					2				
AS	7	6	1	3	1	2	2	1	3	1	14	10	3	5	2		6	4	4	11
Late TS		1			1						1	1			1	6		1		
G7/HS	1										3		1			4	1			5
MER											2		1			4				2
AD	AD (150) 200-		(200) 250-			(200) 300-	(250) 300-			300-		(300) 350-					400-			

Table 1 Associated pottery from the 4th and 5th century in finds assemblages with more than one type from Ezinge. Types are in chronological order. Gw6b, K5b and K6 are earlier types from the central Groningen typology, K4, G7, S4 and S5 types are from the typology of northern Drenthe pottery by Taayke (1996). AS: pottery in Anglo-Saxon style; HS: Hessens-Schortens ware. Wheel-thrown pottery: Terra nigra-like pottery; late TS: late Argonne and north-African Red Slip ware (ARS); MER: Merovingian wheel-thrown pottery.

Rhineland (e.g. biconical and *Wölbwand* pots) that occur as from the middle of the 5th century (Thasing & Nieuwhof in prep).

For the interpretation of the data, possibly mixed contexts must be taken into account, as well as the numerical ratio between the types. The possibility of mixed contexts implies that it should not be attempted to read too much into the data. Nevertheless, the picture that arises from Table 1 seems rather consistent and supplements what we know about the pottery of this period.

Dr. K4b, S4, all G7-subtypes and pottery in Anglo-Saxon style (AS) were all found with Driesum-style types Gr. Gw6b, K5b and K6. The common association suggests that the latter types were used until well into the 4th century, which confirms the dates provided by Taayke (1996, V, Abb. 10). Terra nigra-like pottery was found in three contexts from this period, in two cases with early types, K5b and Dr. K4b. Wheel-thrown pottery in this case is not very useful in establishing a date for the handmade pottery, since the occurrence of this ware is not yet very well known. Associations do confirm the early date for terra nigra-like ware that can be inferred from two other Ezinge contexts, where it was found with pottery from the middle Roman Iron Age. It did probably not occur in the 5th century.

Dishes of type Dr. S4 were mainly found with G7b, G7c and AS and may not have occurred before the 4th century in Ezinge. That also goes for beakers of types Dr. K4a, -c and -d and for bowls of type Dr. S5. AS is so often found with Gr. Gw6b, K5b and K6-types, as well as with Dr. G7- and K4-subtypes, that it may be concluded that in Ezinge, AS was already common in the 4th century. Dr. K4b and G7 and its subtypes are the typological successors of Gr. K5b and Gw6b and demonstrate the continuous development of pottery forms. At the end of the 4th century, K4b had probably disappeared from the repertoire. The occurrence of G7a is almost identical to K4b and may not have been in use any longer. Most other types are mainly associated with each other and often with HS, which came into use at the end of the 5th century. That indicates that they were in use during a large part of the 5th century. Associations with late Argonne-terra sigillata and African Red Slip ware confirm that K4c, K4d, G7b and G7c

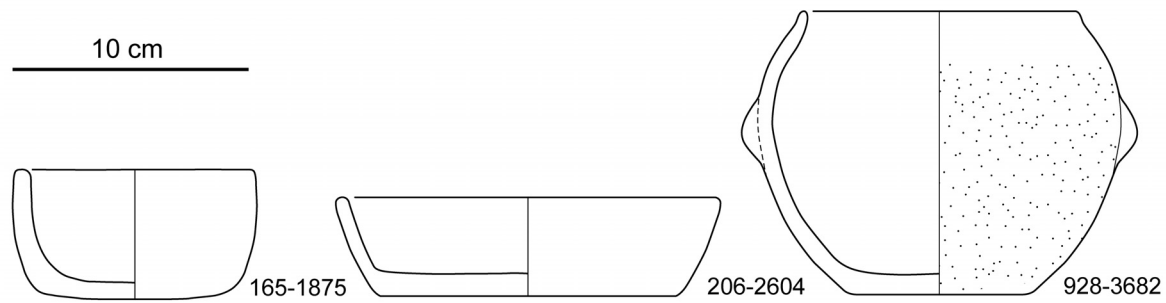


Figure 8 Bowls and dishes of northern-Drenthe type S4 (165-1875; 206-2604) and S5 (928-3682) from Ezinge. (Drawing: author).

were still in use in the 5th century. Merovingian wheel-thrown pottery was found associated with G7c, G7d and AS, which shows that these types still occurred in the second half of the 5th century. The finds from Ezinge do not permit a more accurate date of the types from this period.

To properly value the number of pottery finds from this period, it will have to be compared to finds from other periods. The histogram in fig. 9 represents the finds of handmade pottery from all occupation periods, a total Minimum Number of Individuals of over 3200. The histogram shows that the population of Ezinge probably decreased in the course of the Roman Iron Age, and even further in the 4th and 5th century (assuming that the number of pots per household remained the same), but associated pottery types indicate that this decrease was gradual. There are no indications that the population abandoned the terp in the 3rd century, and that people from elsewhere reoccupied the terp in the 5th century. The relatively low number of finds from the long period of the early Middle Ages not necessarily represents a diminishing population, but is caused by changes in the number of pots per household in this period (Verhoeven 2008) and by the location of houses on the terp. In the early Middle Ages, houses were relocated to the sides of the terp (Van Giffen 1936), which were not as intensively excavated as the centre.

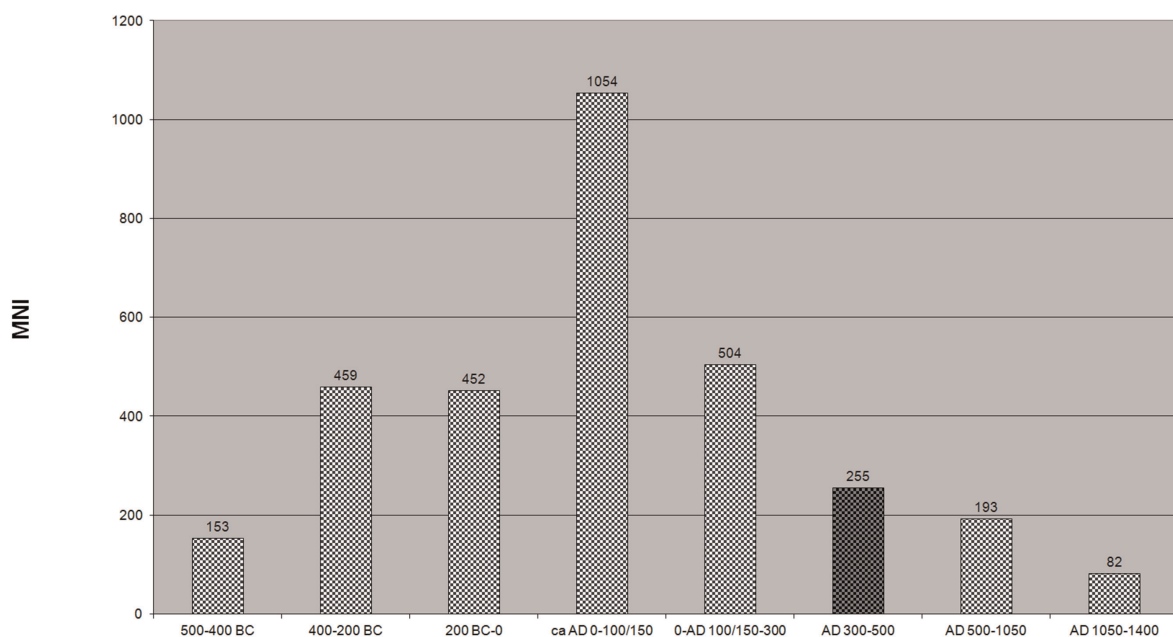


Figure 9 Overview of handmade pottery per period (MNI) found in Ezinge. Numbers are based on rim sherds.

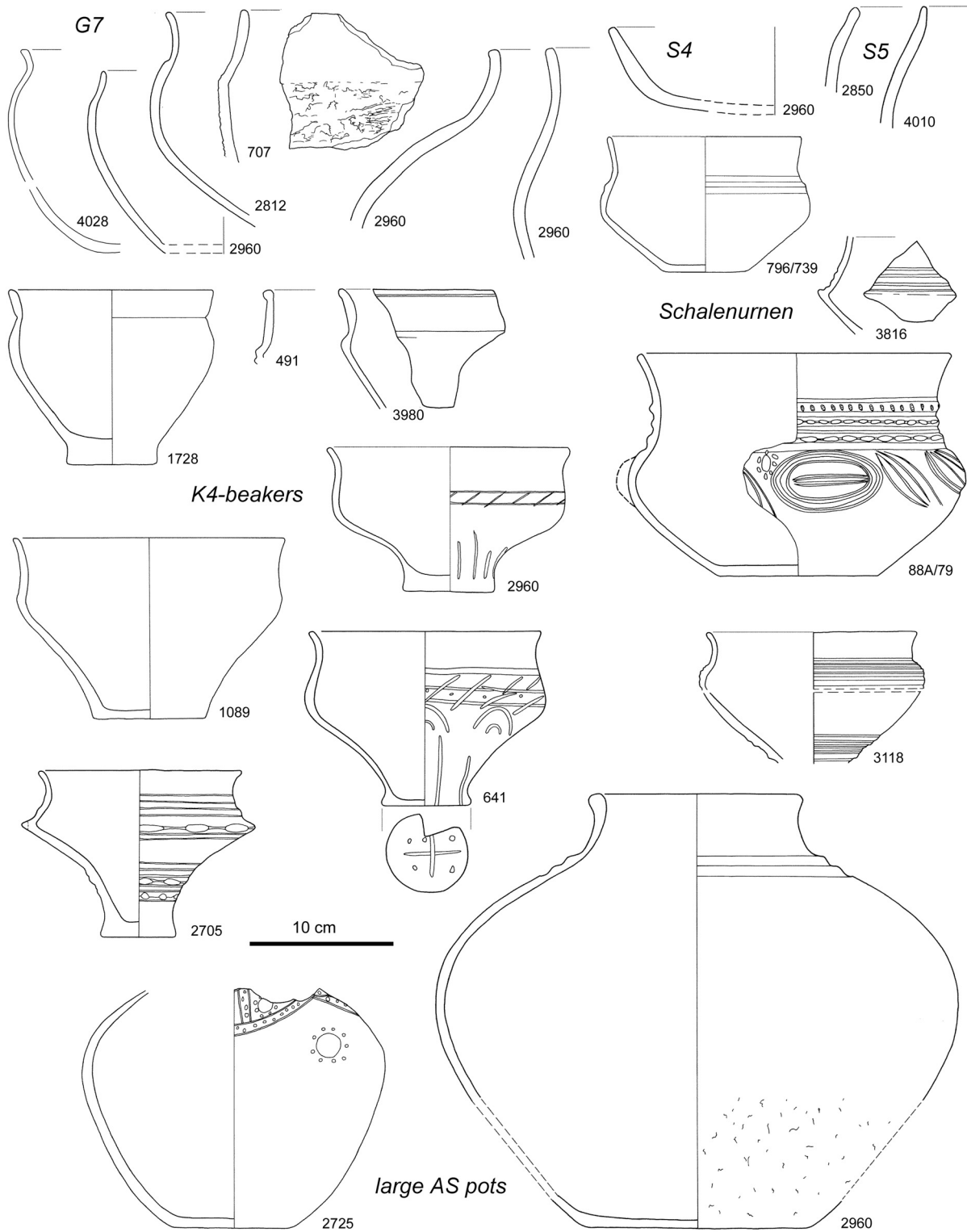


Figure 10 Representative selection of pottery from the 4th and 5th century from Midlaren-De Bloemert. Find no. 88A/79 was used as a cremation urn. All other pots are from the settlement. Numbers are excavation find numbers. (Drawing: author).

5.2 Midlaren-De Bloemert

As many as 563 individual pots¹³ (based on rim sherds as well as identifiable wall sherds) from the 4th and 5th centuries were found during the excavation of the settlement of Midlaren-De Bloemert (fig. 10; Nieuwhof 2008a; 2011). This assemblage confirms the continuing development of northern Drenthe pottery that was recognized by Taayke (1996, V, 180). The angular forms of the middle Roman Iron Age, with the Driesum-style as latest representative, gradually developed into K4- and G7-forms with S-shaped profiles. Decoration on the pottery of the middle Roman Iron Age is rather formal; it developed into the expressive and curvy decoration of the Anglo-Saxon style, which was applied to indigenous forms, especially beakers. Beakers of types Dr. K4c and -d and large pots of types Dr. G7b, -c and -d are most common. There is a small number of narrow-mouthed vessels in Anglo-Saxon style and *Schalennurnen* (fig. 10, numbers 796/739; 3816; 88A/79). One fragment of a vessel in late-Anglo-Saxon style was found in Midlaren, with Hessens-Schortens-type pottery (fig. 11).

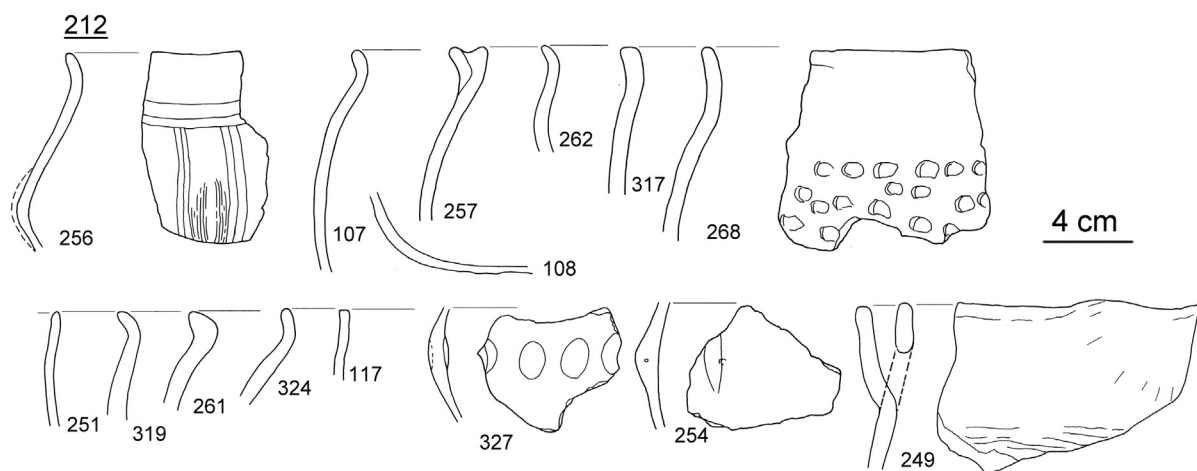


Figure 11 Finds assemblage (find no. 212) with a sherd in late Anglo-Saxon style (id. 256) and Hessens-Schortens pottery from Midlaren-De Bloemert. Numbers near the sherds are identity numbers. (Drawing: author).

The pottery from the nearby cemeteries differs from the pottery found in the settlement. In the cemeteries, pottery in clearly Anglo-Saxon style is dominant. Lanting and Van der Plicht (2010, 142; 2012, fig. 3) provide dates for a number of these pots. The earliest are dated to the 4th century (fig. 14). One of them, a beautifully decorated *Buckelurne* (no. 88A/79; fig. 10), was found during the excavation of 2005 (Tuin 2008). The others come from the cemetery that was discovered in 1856. The finds from this cemetery consist of two *Schalennurnen* and at least fifteen decorated pots of Plettke types B2/A6 and A7 (figs. 12 and 13).

The indigenous development of pottery forms and decoration shows that habitation was continuous in Midlaren. This is confirmed by the number of settlement features from this period (Nicolay 2008b). An overview of the number of pottery finds through time (fig. 15) indicates that the population probably did decrease at the end of the Roman Iron Age, but habitation did not come to an end. In the early Middle Ages, the number of houses and other settlement features does not change; as in Ezinge, the smaller number of pottery finds from this period is undoubtedly caused by a smaller number of pots per household.

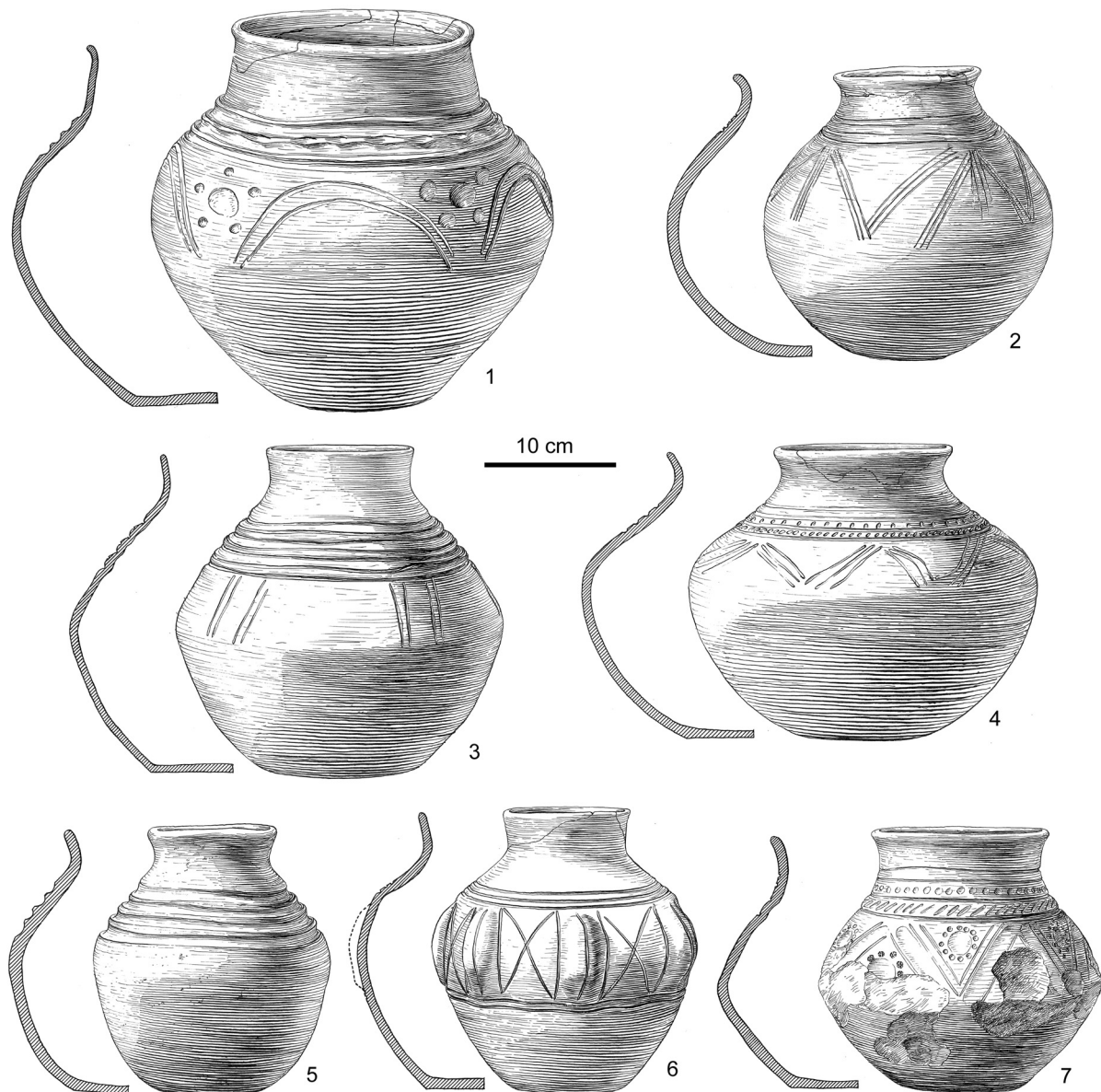


Figure 12 Pots in Anglo-Saxon style from a cemetery near Midlaren. 1: 1856/IV.2; 2: 1856/IV.5; 3: 1856/IV.8; 4: 1856/IV.7; 5: 1856/IV.6; 1856/IV.5; 6: 1856/IV.4; 7: 1856/IV.3. (Drawing: Jaap Ypey 1948).

5.3 Feddersen Wierde

Although precise numbers are not mentioned by Schmid (2006), it can be inferred from his figures (*Taf.* 63-90) that the remains of at least 2571 pots from the 4th and 5th centuries were found on the Feddersen Wierde. Just like in Midlaren, the middle Roman Iron Age *Trichterschalen* and *Trichternäpfe* (similar to type Dr. K3) were followed by *Trichterpokale* (c. type Dr. K4c and -d, see fig. 2). Large pots that resemble Driesum-style pottery (Schmid 2006, *Taf.* 54) were followed by forms that resemble the G7-forms of northern Drenthe (Schmid 2006, *Taf.* 78, 87 and 88) and by narrow-mouthed pots (round as well as carinated, decorated and undecorated, see fig. 2). Furthermore, many *Schalenurnen* occur in this period on the Feddersen Wierde. They are the most numerous category of pottery, followed by narrow-mouthed pots of type Cuxhaven-Galgenberg (Schmid 2006, *Taf.* 74 and 82).

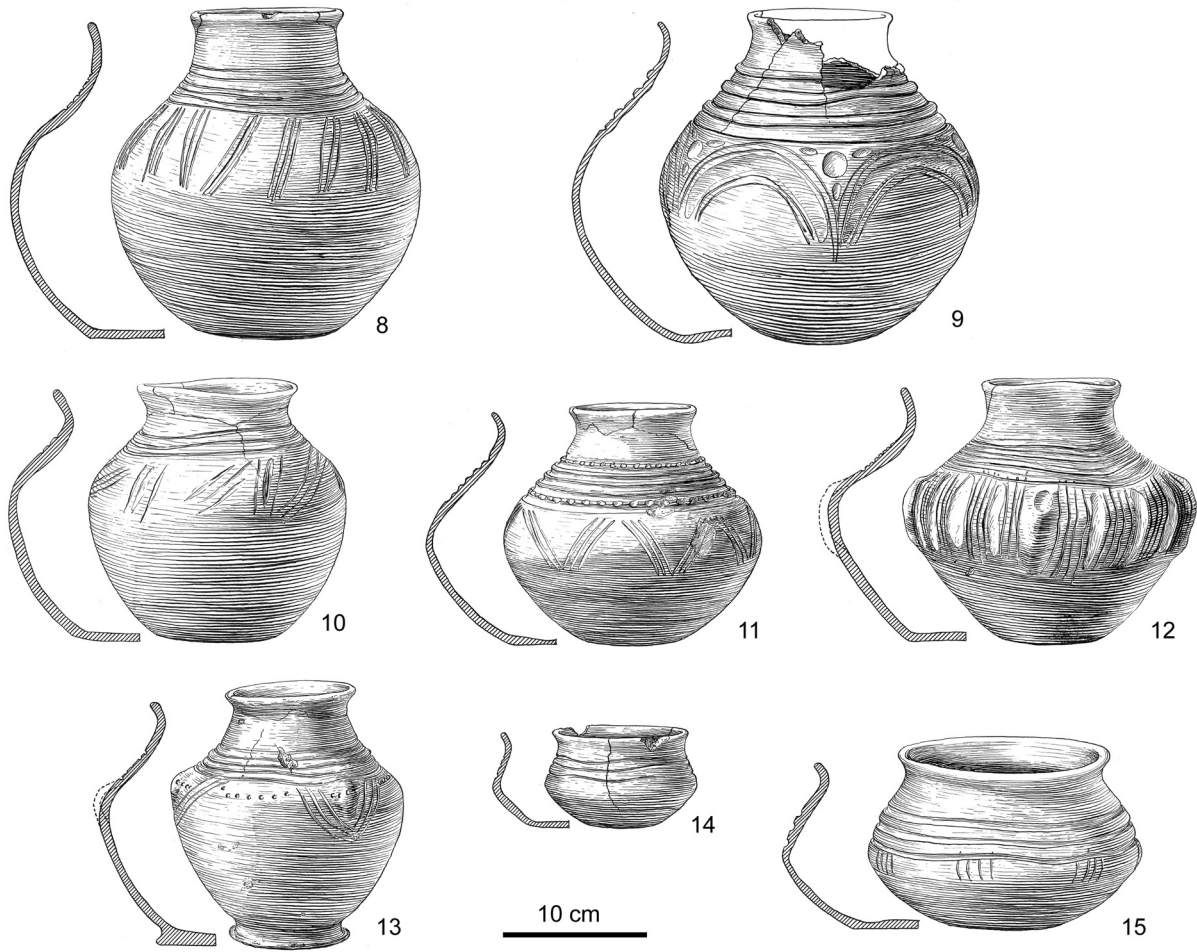


Figure 13 Pots in Anglo-Saxon style from a cemetery near Midlaren. 8: 1856/IV.9; 9: Z.H.v.I.-1; 10: 1856/IV.11; 11: 1856/IV.12; 12: 1856/IV.10; 13: 1856/IV.14; 14: Z.H.v.I.-2; 15: 1856/IV.13. (Drawing: Jaap Ypey 1948).

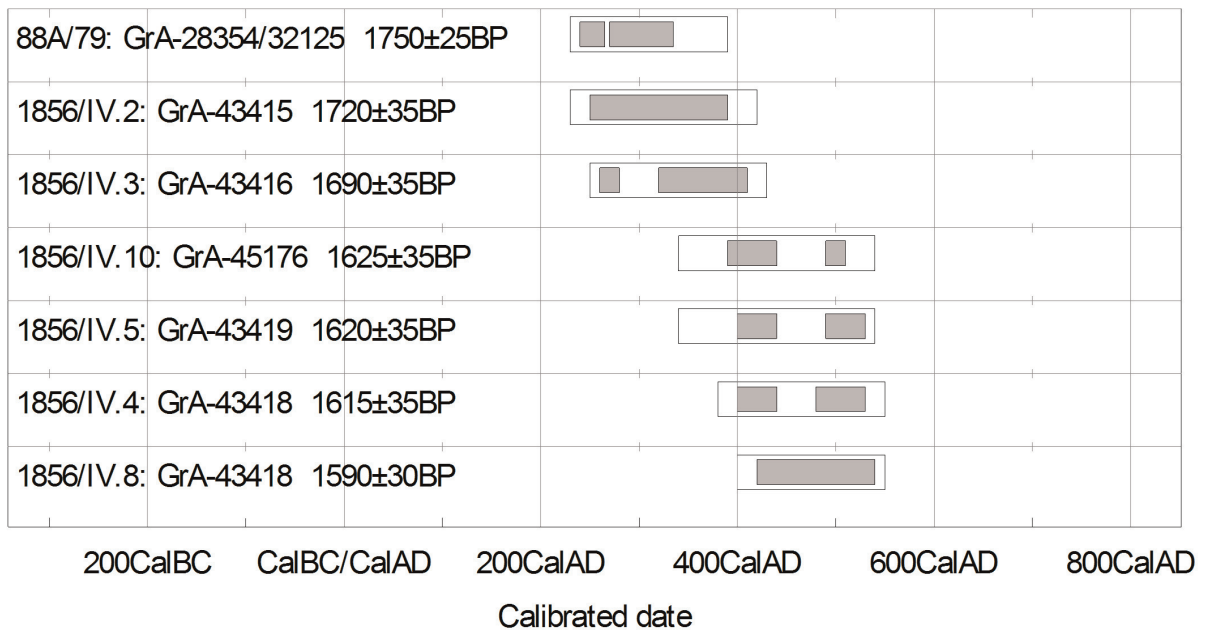


Figure 14 Radiocarbon dates of cremations from pots in Anglo-Saxon style from cemeteries near Midlaren (figs. 2, 3, 9). Data from Nieuwhof 2008a (88A/79) and Lanting & Van der Plicht 2010 (finds of 1856).

Hessens-Schortens pottery *sensu stricto* was not found on the Feddersen Wierde, which demonstrates that this only developed in the late 5th century. However, 'ovalen bauchigen Kümpfe' were regular finds in the highest excavation layers. These pots are usually thin-walled and well finished; in the northern Drenthe typology, they belong to types G7c and -d. Their forms remind Schmid (2006, 68) of Plettke's type D, which might be considered Hessens-Schortens ware. This suggests that also on the Feddersen Wierde, the transition to Hessens-Schortens ware was on its way before the terp was abandoned. Pottery in late-Anglo-Saxon style has not been found on the Feddersen Wierde, in accordance with the end of habitation there in the second half of the 5th century.

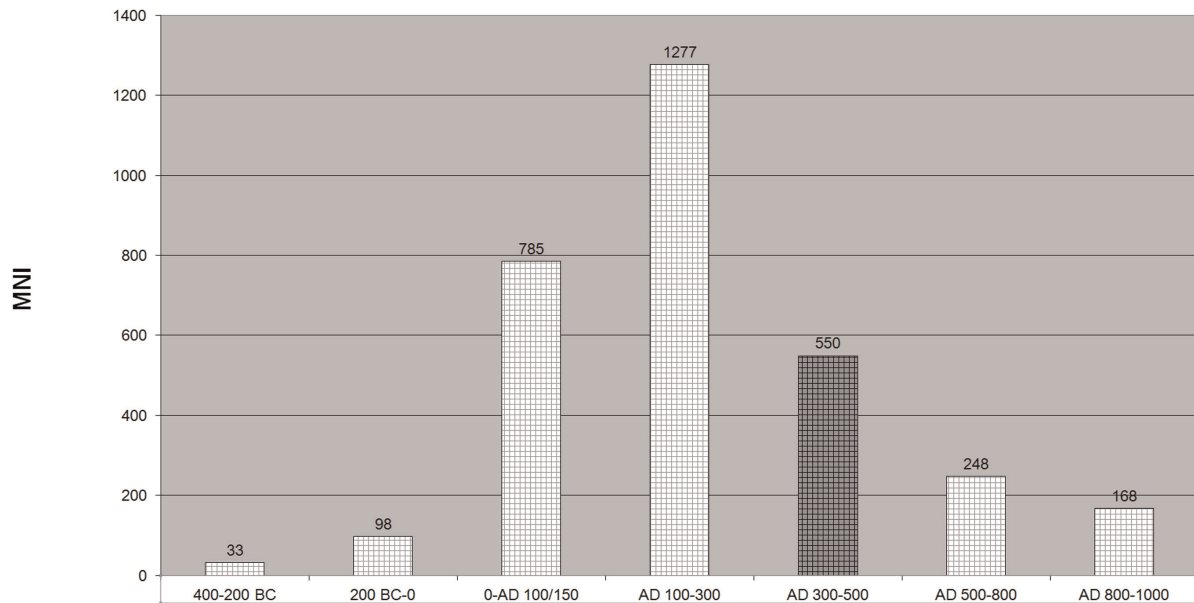


Figure 15 Overview of handmade pottery per period (MNI) found in Midlaren-De Bloemert. Numbers are based on rim sherds.

6. Discussion

6.1 The introduction of the Anglo-Saxon style

The Anglo-Saxon style was introduced to the northern Netherlands during the 4th or 5th centuries, the Migration Period. While it is generally believed that the new style came with immigrants from the Anglo-Saxon homelands in the 5th century AD, the pottery studies of Ezinge as well as Midlaren-De Bloemert show that the Anglo-Saxon style already occurs in the northern Netherlands in the 4th century. Since the evidence for continuous habitation is convincing, the introduction of the Anglo-Saxon style must reflect contacts between different settlements in different regions, rather than migration.

Strong resemblances between the pottery of Ezinge, Midlaren-De Bloemert and the coastal area of north-western Germany indicate that northern Drenthe and Groningen were both part of a socio-cultural network that extended far to the east (Nieuwhof 2011). This was so from the early Roman Iron Age onwards, when the so-called Wierum style was adopted from neighbouring Niedersachsen in Groningen and in northern Drenthe (Taayke 1996, V, 175). It continued during the middle Roman Iron Age, when both the Groningen terp region and northern Drenthe shared the pottery style of the *Nordseeküstennahen Fundgruppe* with northwestern-Ger-

many (Taayke 1996, V, 177; Schmid 2006, 38-39). The network apparently still functioned in the 4th century.

Despite the similarities, the pottery assemblages of Ezinge and Midlaren-De Bloemert differ. Both places clearly went through their own development and history. Although it might be expected that these settlements in the northern Netherlands had more in common than either of them with the Feddersen Wierde, there rather appear to be similarities as well as differences with each of the other settlements. The comparison indicates that the settlements in the northern Netherlands did not all come into contact with pottery in Anglo-Saxon style in the same way. Moreover, other influences, for instance from the south, also must have played a role.

The results from these three settlements need to be compared to better understand the differences between them. For the purpose of the comparison, all finds have been divided in four groups, related to form and probably function: large pots, Dr. K4-beakers, *Schalenuernen*, and bowls and dishes (Table 2). Large pots are further divided in local G7-pots and specific Anglo-Saxon style pots (usually narrow-mouthed Plettke-types, some without rim). An additional category, consisting of unidentified and exceptional pots, has been left out because their number for the Feddersen Wierde is unknown. This category consists of 35 specimens in Ezinge and 49 in Midlaren-De Bloemert.

	Dr. G7		AS large**		AS <i>Schalenuernen</i>		Dr. K4/ <i>Trichterpokale</i>		Dr. S4/5 (bowls and dishes)		Total n (100%)
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Ezinge*	150	58.1	12	4.7	56	21.7	24	9.3	16	6.2	258
Midlaren-De Bloemert*	228	44.2	10	1.9	14	2.7	147	28.5	117	22.7	516
Feddersen Wierde*	658	25.6	638	24.8	625	24.3	65	2.5	585	22.8	2571

* Numbers from the Feddersen Wierde come from the *Tafeln* in Schmid 2006, probably based on rim sherds. For Ezinge and Midlaren-De Bloemert, MNI is based on rim sherds as well as identifiable wall sherds from AS pots, Dr. K4-beakers and *Schalenuernen*. Miscellaneous and unidentified forms (35 in Ezinge, 49 in Midlaren) have been omitted since their number for the Feddersen Wierde is unknown.

** In particular narrow-mouthed, decorated pots in Anglo-Saxon style.

Table 2 Ratio of pottery forms (MNI) from the 4th and 5th centuries in four settlements: Ezinge, Midlaren-De Bloemert (both based on data from the author's research) and the Feddersen Wierde (after Schmid 2006). AS: pottery in Anglo-Saxon style; type codes are from the northern-Drenthe typology (Taayke 1996).

Table 2 shows that large pots are most numerous in all three settlements, but the percentage for Ezinge is significantly higher than for the other settlements (percentages of G7 and large AS combined sum to 63% for Ezinge, 46% for Midlaren-De Bloemert and 50% for the Feddersen Wierde). This ratio is contrasted by the percentage of bowls and dishes, which is low for Ezinge, but rather high for both Midlaren-De Bloemert and the Feddersen Wierde. This preference for bowls (this group mainly consists of bowls) may have been caused by influences from the south, where bowls were more numerous. Where they occur in large numbers, for instance in Wijster in southern Drenthe (Van Es 1967, type VIIB2), bowls often served as cooking pots (Taayke 1996, III, 63). In Ezinge, wide-mouthed G7-pots were apparently preferred for the same function. Within the category of large pots, type G7 is most numerous by far in Ezinge and Midlaren-De Bloemert, to the cost of pots in Anglo-Saxon style. At the Feddersen Wierde, there are as many G7-type pots as narrow-mouthed pots in Anglo-Saxon style. The difference may be related to a traditional preference for narrow-mouthed pots on the Feddersen Wierde, for example as containers for liquids. In Ezinge and Midlaren-De Bloemert, narrow-mouthed pots were apparently not thought useful during this period, although they had been part of the common repertoire of the middle-Roman Iron Age (type Ge6).

The sum of the percentages of *Schalenuernen* and Dr. K4-beakers in all three settlements is around 30% (31% in Ezinge and Midlaren-De Bloemert, 27% on the Feddersen Wierde).¹⁴ In this case, Midlaren-De Bloemert stands out: not many *Schalenuernen* have been found there, but

there is a striking number of Dr. K4-beakers. In Ezinge and on the Feddersen Wierde, the situation is reversed: many more *Schalenurnen* than beakers were in use there, although the percentage of Dr. K4-beakers is higher in Ezinge than on the Feddersen Wierde. Both *Schalenurnen* and beakers were probably used to serve food and drinks. In each settlement, a different choice was apparently made from the contemporary forms that could be used as tableware. The rest of the household pottery consisted of large cooking pots and storage vessels, narrow-mouthed pots, bowls and dishes in various ratios, depending on local preferences and customs, and external influences.

The pottery assemblages described here come from settlements, except for two complete pots found in a small cemetery during the excavation of the settlement of Midlaren-De Bloemert (a K4-beaker and a *Schalenurne* (88A/79, fig. 10). In the cemeteries near Midlaren-De Bloemert, pottery in Anglo-Saxon style is dominant, almost to the exclusion of indigenous forms. If these were considered in isolation (as they were before the settlement was excavated), it would be self-evident that these pots had come here with immigrants from the Anglo-Saxon area. The early dates of some of the cremation urns (fig. 14) indicate that the people of Midlaren became acquainted with the forms and decoration of the Anglo-Saxon style in the course of the 4th century. The pots in Anglo-Saxon style were either taken to the settlement, perhaps as gifts from visits or by visitors, or they were made in the settlement itself by foreign potters. As was already argued for earlier periods in Midlaren-De Bloemert (Nieuwhof 2008a, 295), female potters probably came to the settlement as marriage partners from elsewhere. The pots in Anglo-Saxon style hardly occur in the settlement itself. What was adopted was the decoration, to be applied especially on the Dr. K4-beakers. Although some exotic beakers were found in the settlement (e.g. find no. 2705, found together with AS-pot no. 2725, fig. 10), most decorated beakers belong to the common local repertoire.

A cemetery from this period has not been found near Ezinge; large pots in Anglo-Saxon style are rare in this settlement. Here, it can be inferred from associated pottery types that the Anglo-Saxon style was probably introduced in the 4th century in the form of *Schalenurnen*. This type became popular in Ezinge to the cost of Dr. K4-beakers, which did not develop into a common indigenous type here. Many of the beakers found in Ezinge have uncommon characteristics, either in decoration, shape or size, indicating that these beakers were not made locally. Nicely decorated pots may have been common gifts in exchange relations with other settlements. It is noticeable that a number of *Schalenurnen* in Ezinge is of Schmid's variant 3. On the Feddersen Wierde, this wide *Schalenurne* is far less common than the variants 1 and 2 (only 37 out of 625 *Schalenurnen* in this settlement). Finds of this type are concentrated in the area of the so-called *Herrenhof* and the associated assembly hall, which probably was the socio-political centre of the settlement (Schmid 2006, 60). It is possible that such *Schalenurnen* were specifically used as tableware in ceremonial meals, which took place in the assembly hall. They may have come to Ezinge via political contacts.

The early dates of the pots in Anglo-Saxon style found in Midlaren-De Bloemert and Ezinge show that the socio-cultural network of which these settlements were part, enabled the rapid spread of new stylistic elements. However, the forms available in the Anglo-Saxon home area were not adopted indiscriminately, as the differences between Ezinge, Midlaren-De Bloemert and the Feddersen Wierde show. In particular large, narrow-mouthed pots, which are very common on the Feddersen Wierde, hardly occur in the settlements of Ezinge and Midlaren-De Bloemert. The ordinary household ware for the preparation of food in these settlements barely changed under the influence of the Anglo-Saxon style, apart from the general development of forms that occurred everywhere in the inhabited parts of the northern Netherlands and north-western Germany during this period. The Anglo-Saxon style in the northern Netherlands was specifically adopted for pottery with special functions, such as tableware and cremation urns.

6.2 Habitation during the 4th century

The numerous pottery finds, the continuous development of pottery and the associations of 4th and 5th century pottery with older and younger types indicate that in Ezinge, habitation was continuous from the Roman Iron Age into the early Middle Ages. The introduction of pottery in Anglo-Saxon style is clearly not to be taken as evidence of immigration by Anglo-Saxons. The question arises whether this conclusion is compatible with the observation by Van Giffen (1936) that the settlement of the Migration Period was built on a burnt layer, which was taken by him and by Boeles (1951) as an indication that invading Anglo-Saxons had burnt the preceding village down and then took it over. As we have seen, this argument played an important part in the discussion on the events at the end of the Roman Iron Age in the terp region. The Odyssee-project, which was the incentive for this article, was only meant to study the find material and did not allow of a thorough investigation of the field drawings. De Langen and Waterbolk (1989, 104) already noted that the Anglo-Saxon village, as published by Van Giffen, in reality never had existed. All features were projected by him on one level, without taking the considerable differences in height into account. That in itself already questions the traditional interpretation of the burnt layer as evidence of an Anglo-Saxon take-over.

The small inland settlement of Midlaren-De Bloemert was also inhabited continuously during the 4th and 5th centuries. Even clearer than in Ezinge, a continuous development of pottery style, including the gradual adoption of Anglo-Saxon style decoration, can be traced there. The third settlement, the Feddersen Wierde, was inhabited continuously from the 1st century BC onwards, as can be inferred from unbroken series of settlement phases and continuous pottery development, as well as from the large number of finds from all periods. There, habitation came to an end in the course of the 5th century.

These three settlements were not isolated. They were situated in densely populated areas, especially the coastal terp settlements. If we want to learn more about the occupation history of different areas, finds from other settlements will have to be considered as well.

In northwestern Germany, the Feddersen Wierde is one of many terp settlements. The German terps were not quarried and levelled as many in the northern Netherlands were. The informative, large corpus of finds from the destructive quarrying phase and the overview of habitation history that it provides, is therefore missing in northwestern Germany. The number of excavated settlements is relatively small, as it is in the Netherlands. From the excavation results, a somewhat different picture arises. There is no evidence for discontinuity during the 4th century in northwestern-Germany, except perhaps for some terps in the Krummhörn, the salt marsh area east of the Ems estuary (Knol 1993, 19). Some areas were possibly abandoned in later periods, but there are considerable regional differences and presumed discontinuity may well be due to a *Forschungslücke* (Bärenfänger 2001, 296).

In the province of Groningen, a number of pots from the 4th century (types Gr. K7 and G7, Taayke 1996, III) is known from some quarried terps, indicating continuous habitation of these settlements. Only a small number of terp excavations have been carried out in this province. Ezinge is the only excavated settlement for which continuous habitation can be demonstrated on the basis of pottery types, continuous typological development and a sufficient number of finds. Another terp that was possibly inhabited during the 4th century is the small settlement of Heveskesklooster in the eastern part of Groningen, near the coast of the Ems estuary. It was excavated between 1982 and 1988. Boersma (1988, 74-76) assumes that Heveskesklooster was inhabited in the 4th century AD, on the basis of a pot from this period found in a well. This provisional conclusion still waits to be confirmed by the results of full pottery research.

The very small number of finds from the 4th century in the terp region of Groningen indicates that this region did not remain as densely populated as it was in the Roman Iron Age. Many settlements were abandoned there in the course of the 3rd or the early 4th century and

were only reoccupied on a small scale in the 5th century. The pottery assemblages and excavation results from the terps of Englum and Wierum (Nieuwhof 2008b; Nieuwhof *et al.* 2006) may serve as evidence. In Englum, the number of pottery individuals from the 3rd century is small compared to earlier habitation periods. There are no 4th century finds, and only ten sherds in Anglo-Saxon style. Habitation must have come to an end in the 3rd century; the terp was reoccupied in the 5th century, but only on a small scale. In the excavated part of the terp of Wierum, layers from the early Middle Ages directly cover layers from the middle Roman Iron Age. The excavation produced only one sherd in Anglo-Saxon style, which can be added to only three more, found during quarrying (Miedema 1983, Type XA). The 'frustrated terps' of Paddepoel in Groningen, excavated by Van Es (1970), were abandoned in the course of the 3rd century, after which they were silted over. Unlike Ezinge, Englum and Wierum, the Paddepoel terps were only small and not reoccupied later.

Midlaren-De Bloemert is one of a series of settlements with continuous habitation in the Pleistocene sand region of northern Drenthe, where Taayke identified 21 sites with pottery from the 4th and 5th centuries. Pottery from the middle Roman Iron Age was found in many of them. Moreover, pottery in Anglo-Saxon style was usually combined with indigenous types (Taayke 1996, II, 77-78). It may be concluded that habitation was continuous in this period in northern Drenthe. A recently excavated settlement in this area is Eelde-Groote Veen, which was inhabited during the middle Roman Iron Age. From the number of K4- and G7-sherds and a very small number of associated sherds in Anglo-Saxon style, it can be concluded that habitation came to an end around AD 400.¹⁵ Taayke argued for a change in settlement locations in this area around AD 500 (*ibid.*).

The Frisian coastal area was virtually empty as from the early or middle 4th century (the latter date is argued by Lanting & Van der Plicht 2010, 76). In the eastern part of the present province of Friesland, Oostergo, the number of pottery finds that can be dated to the end of the 3rd century is only 20% of that from the previous period (Taayke 1996, IV, 140). There is a dramatic decrease in the number of inhabited terps in this period. The terp of Leeuwarden-Oldehoofsterkerkhof, for instance, was abandoned no later than AD 300 (Dijkstra, Gerrets & Nicolay 2008, 317). A continuous development in pottery style cannot be established for Oostergo. Pottery finds dated to the 4th century are exceptional. A very small number of terps may, however, have been continuously inhabited. One of them is Jelsum, which was excavated in 1981 and again in 2010.¹⁶ During both excavations, a very small number of pottery finds from the late Roman Iron Age and the Migration Period were found; finds from both periods were possibly associated.¹⁷

There is no evidence of continuous habitation in the 4th century in the western part of Friesland, Westergo. Many terps were already abandoned in the 3rd century (Knol 1993, 19). The large archaeological collections of the *Fries Museum* and the *Noordelijk Archeologisch Depot* in Nuis do not include finds from the 4th century from this area. The terp Tjitsma near Wijnaldum, excavated between 1991 and 1993, was uninhabited between ca AD 325 and 425 (Gerrets & De Koning 1999). More recent excavations¹⁸ did not produce any 4th century finds either. It may be concluded that Westergo was deserted in the 4th century.

We do not know where the emigrants went after they left the terp region. An increase of settlements has not been observed elsewhere. Driesum-style pottery has not been found in other parts of the Netherlands, but it has been found in Zele in Belgian Flanders. This very well fits the hypothesis that part of the Franks, who during the 4th century were moving south, were migrants from the northern Netherlands (De Clerq & Taayke 2004). That does not necessarily imply that the entire population went south. Part of the migrants, especially from the Groningen region, may well have stayed in their own cultural and social environment, moving only a short distance to the east. Since they shared the same material culture, these migrants were not recognisable as separate groups.

6.3 *Reasons to leave or to stay*

Depopulation started in the 3rd century in Friesland as well as in Groningen. Most modern authors consider coinciding socio-political factors such as tribal unrest related to the collapse of the Roman Empire as the cause of the large-scale emigration, rather than natural conditions (e.g. Dijkstra, Gerrets & Nicolay 2008, 309). However, if socio-political unrest were the prime mover of depopulation, it is hard to understand why only the terp region was abandoned and not the Pleistocene upland. Although the destabilizing socio-political events of this period may well have played a role, environmental causes should not be totally ignored.

If natural causes indeed played a role, a period of marine transgression at the end of the Roman Iron Age, which in the past has often been mentioned as a reason for the abandonment of the area (cf. Knol 1993, 19-23), can be excluded. People in the terp region had been accustomed to living in an environment that was regularly flooded by seawater for centuries. Their terp settlements were well protected against floods (Bazelmans *et al.* 2012). However, drainage of inland parts of the salt marsh area became increasingly problematic in the middle-Roman Iron Age, due to the high cap ridges that had formed along the northern coast.¹⁹ As long as the area had been drained well, floods did not pose a major problem. A permanently waterlogged landscape and prolonged periods of inundation, however, were much more difficult to cope with. This might well have been the incentive of the emigration that started in the 3rd century or even earlier. It probably was a combination of factors at which we can only guess, which subsequently made the inhabitants of terps in well-drained areas leave as well.

It may be asked why some settlements in Groningen, such as Ezinge, were not abandoned in this period. The answer to this question is partly related to the surrounding landscape of these settlements, which must have been relatively well-drained, but that cannot be the only reason. People from terps in well-drained areas in Friesland, for instance Wijnaldum, did leave during this period. A second important factor is the social environment. As from the first century AD, the population of the Groningen coastal area had been part of a socio-cultural network that also included northern Drenthe and that reached far into Niedersachsen. This network saved the remaining population of Groningen terps in the 4th century from social isolation. Friesland had only come under the influence of this network in the 3rd century, as is indicated by the new Driesum-style pottery. However, it was an already depleted population that adopted the new style; these people were not part of this network in the same way as their Groningen neighbours. Existing social networks in the large salt marsh area of Friesland must have gradually weakened because of the exodus that started in the 3rd century. The increasing influence from the east could not prevent their collapse or stop the emigration process.

6.4 *Reoccupation*

The coastal area started to be reoccupied in the 5th century. Lanting and Van der Plicht (2010) argue that the Frisian coastal area was not reoccupied by immigrants from the Anglo-Saxon area, which is the traditional view, but by people from Groningen and Drenthe, areas which had not been abandoned. This is, however, not very likely. In the first place, the remaining population of the Groningen coastal area cannot have been numerous. It is well possible that people from the few inhabited terps started to colonize abandoned terps in the 5th century, but this cannot have been a large-scale phenomenon. In the second place, there are no indications that the population of Drenthe was large enough to fill the empty space of the entire coastal area. A 'settlement' like Midlaren-De Bloemert consisted of no more than one house per generation during the 4th and 5th centuries. Eelde-Groote Veen, where habitation ended around AD 400, probably was not any larger. Such settlements could not contribute much to the repopulation of the terp area. It therefore still seems most likely that a large part of the new settlers

came from the traditional homelands of the 'Anglo-Saxons': the extensive coastal areas of Niedersachsen and Schleswig-Holstein.

6.5 Identity

The identity of the inhabitants of the northern Netherlands, before as well as after the 4th century, must to a large extent have been defined by their involvement in one or several networks with a social, cultural or political character. What defined their ethnic identity is unknown. It was probably based on intangible cultural elements, such as more or less mythical stories about their descent, and not on aspects of their material culture such as the style of their pottery. Nevertheless, the events that took place in the 4th and 5th centuries in the northern Netherlands coastal area do suggest that in this case, pottery was an important aspect of at least cultural identity. The decoration possibly played an important role; it spread within a cultural network where its meaning was understood. This same network prevented the remainder of the population of the Groningen terp region from social isolation when a large part of the terp region was abandoned around AD 300. The cultural network clearly functioned as a social network as well. That implies that the people of this area must have identified themselves somehow as being part of this socio-cultural network. We can call this network 'Anglo-Saxon', but whether they considered themselves '(Anglo-)Saxons' after this network, or 'Frisians' on the basis of old stories about their origins, we do not know. The new inhabitants of the terp region were later called Frisians in historical sources. That may be taken to indicate that the name was associated with the geographic region, and was adopted by the newcomers, or that the name was given to the new population by the Franks, who knew the name from older written sources (Bazelmans 2002; 2009). Another possibility, which is not unlikely in the light of the above, is that the name was kept alive by the small remaining population, which apparently considered themselves Frisians, or by migrants who did not try their luck in the collapsing Roman Empire, but only moved within the Anglo-Saxon area. In any case, it indicates that ethnic identity is something fluid that may be reinvented over and over.

7. Conclusions

The occupation history of the coastal area of the northern Netherlands in the 4th and 5th centuries AD has been the subject of heated debate in the past. It still has not been decided whether migration or acculturation underlie the changes in the material culture that occur in the 5th century. In this article, the pottery from the terp settlement of Ezinge in the province of Groningen was compared to the pottery from some other settlements, in particular Midlaren-De Bloemert in northern Drenthe and the terp settlement of the Feddersen Wierde on the coast of Niedersachsen, in order to investigate the occupation history of the northern Netherlands in the 4th and 5th centuries.

The number of pottery individuals, associations of pottery and a continuous typological development indicate that both Ezinge and Midlaren-De Bloemert were inhabited continuously from the middle Roman Iron Age until the early Middle Ages. While these pottery assemblages show how continuity can be recognized, they implicitly also show what the characteristics of discontinuity in this period might be: no finds from the period of the hiatus, no continuous pottery development and no associations of pottery from the 3rd century with pottery in Anglo-Saxon style. These characteristics apply to a large part of the terp region of the northern Netherlands. Only some terps in Groningen and possibly in Oostergo remained inhabited during the 4th century.

The abandonment of the terp region already started in the 3rd century. It may have been caused by natural as well as social circumstances. The last inhabitants left no later than AD 350, if we follow Lanting and Van der Plicht (2010), but most terps were already deserted by that time. The area was reoccupied as from the early 5th century. From the small number of finds from this period in most terps, it may be inferred that reoccupation only started on a small scale. Since there are considerable regional and local differences, it is not possible to give a general date for the occupation hiatus.

The reason why some terp settlements in well-drained areas in the province of Groningen remained inhabited, whereas terps in well-drained areas in Friesland were abandoned, must lie in the social network these settlements were part of. Already from the beginning of the Roman Iron Age, Groningen and northern Drenthe had been part of a socio-cultural network, which reached far into the east and which shared the same style of pottery. Within this network, there was frequent social intercourse, which involved the exchange of gifts and marriage partners. It also enabled the rapid spread of stylistic elements. Soon after the Anglo-Saxon style developed in the 4th century in the Anglo-Saxon core area, *Schalenuernen* were adopted in Ezinge, while in Midlaren, decorated pots in Anglo-Saxon style were used as cremation urns. These forms and their decoration were adopted by the local population and combined with their local ware. The network that is represented by this pottery, provided a solid social background to the remaining inhabitants of the Groningen terp region during the 4th century.

The situation in the Frisian terp region was different. This area had only come under the influence of this eastern socio-cultural network in the 3rd century, at a time when part of the population had already left. This did not stop the emigration process. The Frisian terp region, especially Westergo, was virtually deserted as from the beginning of the 4th century.

The coastal area was reoccupied in the course of the 5th century, only on a small scale. The abandoned terps in Groningen may have been repopulated from still inhabited terps in the area itself, or from nearby Drenthe. However, the population of these areas was not large enough to occupy the entire terp region, including the Frisian terps. Immigrants from elsewhere, but within the same 'Anglo-Saxon' network, must have occupied many of the abandoned terps. The new settlers as well as the remaining inhabitants of Groningen terps and of northern Drenthe were part of the same network. Through this network, not only the Anglo-Saxon pottery style, but also other cultural elements such as a different settlement structure and a new type of burial ritual, which have traditionally been associated with Anglo-Saxon immigrants, spread over the entire repopulated area. Migration as well as acculturation thus played a role in the introduction of new cultural elements during the Migration Period in the northern Netherlands.

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Notes

1. *Terp* (pl. *terpen*) is the Frisian word for the artificial dwelling mounds of the northern Netherlands; it is the term most often used in international publications and will be used here (with English plural *terps*) for the *wierden* of the province of Groningen and the *Wurten* of the coast of Niedersachsen as well.
2. Publication of the results of the Odyssee-project *De grondsporen van Ezinge* in the *Jaarverslagen van de Vereniging voor Terpenonderzoek* is due in 2013.
3. Ezinge was not part of Taayke's sample area of central-Groningen; his argument was based on some Ezinge pots published by Van Es as part of his study on the pottery from Wijster (Van Es 1967).
4. In Ezinge, which might be considered exemplary, only ca 1% of the total pottery assemblage consists of wheel-thrown pottery, dated to the entire period from the Roman Iron Age until the late Middle Ages.
5. A PhD-thesis on Anglo-Saxon pottery, which will deal with the origin of this pottery and its decoration, is being prepared by Tessa Krol (University of Groningen).
6. K in the typology of Taayke represents small pots; G represents large pots.
7. The same types can have different codes in the four different sampling areas of Taayke's study of 1996. In this paper, types from northern-Drenthe are preceded by *Dr.*, types from central-Groningen by *Gr.*
8. Lanting & Van der Plicht (2010, 142ff) do not recognize pottery in late-Saxon style. However, their dates of cremations from pots with late characteristics are among the youngest of their series of dated 'Saxon' pottery: Ferwerd-Burmania II, 101 bis-1941; Wageningen e 1928/3.8; Monster, Peeters VIII; Monster, h 1956/7.9; Rijnsburg h 1921/10.1. A pot with a late appearance (vertical *Buckel* and stamp decoration) from Oosterbeintum, no. 521, is probably dated too young: 1430 ± 30 (Lanting & Van der Plicht 2012, 288-289, fig. 1.3).
9. *Hessens-Schortens ware* is the accepted term in the Netherlands. In Germany it is nowadays called *weiche Grauware*. This term is difficult to translate.
10. An early medieval maple mazer was found in nearby Englum (Bottema-McGillavry 2008, 181-182).
11. Pottery numbers in Ezinge are a combination of the excavation find number and a pottery identity number from the pottery research. If find numbers are unknown, only id.-numbers are given.
12. 25 sherds of ARS were among the terra sigillata and related Roman imported pottery.
13. Numbers presented here slightly differ from the numbers mentioned in the original publication (Nieuwhof 2008a) because of a revision of some of the determinations and a more explicit choice of rims herds and a selection of wall sherds.
14. The number of *Trichterpokale* for the Feddersen Wierde does not include K4b-beakers, since their number is not mentioned separately by Schmid, although he does show some of these beakers in *Taf.* 47. The percentage of K4-beakers from the Feddersen Wierde will therefore be somewhat higher.
15. Excavations 2008-2010. Personal communication E. Schrijer, Bureau De Steekproef.
16. Excavations in 1981 by the Fries Museum under the direction of E. Kramer and by the University of Groningen in 2010, directed by dr. J.A.W. Nicolay.
17. Taayke 1996, IV, 140; personal communication dr. J.A.W. Nicolay, T. Varwijk and M. Bakker (University of Groningen).
18. For instance the so-called *Steilkantenproject*, directed by dr. J.A.W. Nicolay (University of Groningen). Personal communication T. Varwijk and M. Bakker (University of Groningen).
19. The cap ridge of Westergo was described and mapped by Vos (1999, fig. 23). It is found along the entire coast, due to the continuous relative sea level rise.

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