

A LATE ROMAN *SOLIDUS* HOARD WITH *HACKSILBER* FROM ECHT (PROV. LIMBURG / NL)

In 2012 the Department of Arts, History and Ancient Studies of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam launched the 4-year research programme »Decline and fall? Social and cultural dynamics in the Low Countries in the Late Roman Empire (AD 270-450)«¹. One of the aims of the project, carried out in cooperation with the Universiteit Gent, is to present a synthesis of Late Roman gold circulation in the region between the rivers Scheldt and Lower Elbe. During our research several new gold hoards were found in the Netherlands. This article presents a recently discovered hoard at Echt (municipality of Echt-Susteren) in the Dutch province of Limburg (fig. 1), consisting of a combination of Late Roman *solidi* and pieces of cut silver. We will discuss the contents of the hoard, its archaeological context and its wider scientific relevance².

DISCOVERY OF THE HOARD

In 1990 a farmer from Echt found two gold coins while working on his land. He dropped one of them and despite frantic searching it was unable to recover it. The remaining coin was kept in his family. When Ger Boonen, the owner of the land, returned to the find spot early in 2014 with his nephew, who had a metal detector, they soon found five more gold coins. The discovery was reported to Jan Roymans (RAAP Archeologisch Adviesbureau) who, together with the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and the Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, carried out a control excavation at the site. The aim of the fieldwork was to recover remaining parts of the hoard and to investigate its archaeological context.

RESULTS OF THE CONTROL EXCAVATION

At the exact spot of the surface finds, a trench of approx. 60m × 15m was dug and investigated in April 2014. Underneath the modern topsoil of about 35cm an almost oval pit of some 120cm in length was unearthed, with a remaining depth of about 25cm (fig. 2), in which six additional gold coins, a

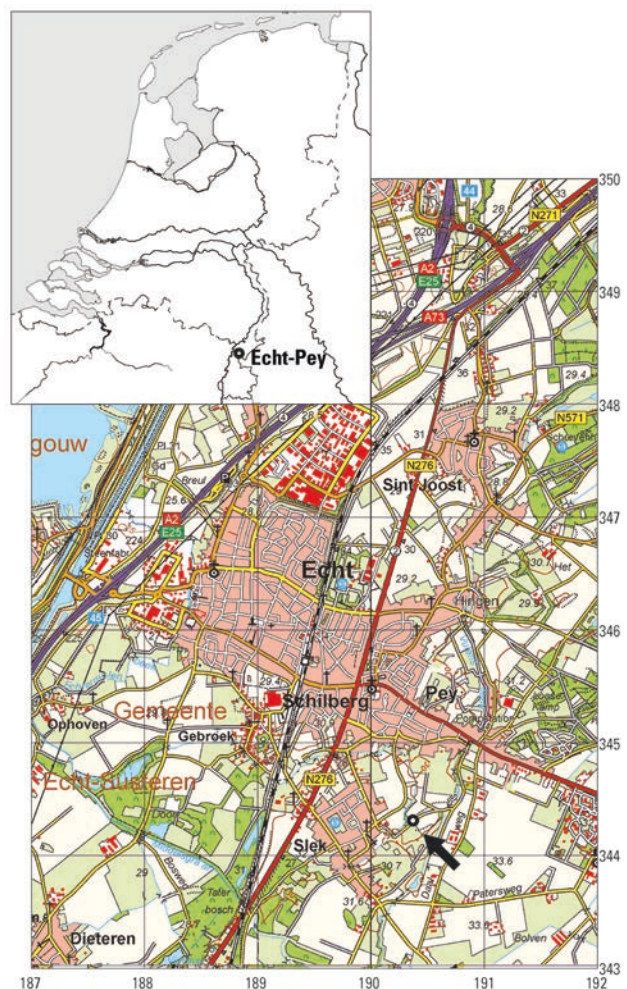


Fig. 1 The topographical location of Echt in the province of Limburg/NL. – (Map J. Fokkema, Amsterdam).

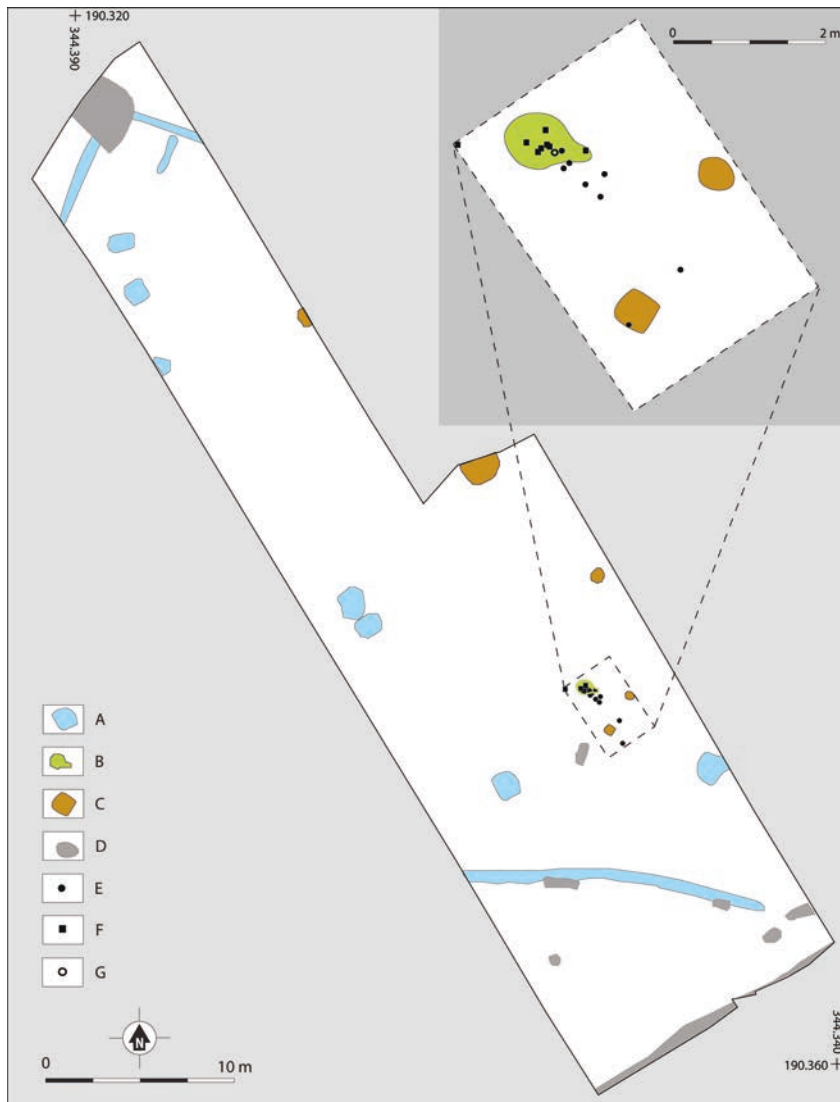


Fig. 2 The excavation of Echt (prov. Limburg/NL) with close-up of the pit in which the hoard was deposited: **A** medieval period. – **B** Roman period. – **C** Iron Age. – **D** modern period. – **E** *solidus*. – **F** silver. – **G** gold ring. – (Drawing S. Heeren).

small gold ring, a small silver ingot and ten pieces of cut silver were found. We assume that the complete hoard was originally buried in this feature and that modern ploughing activities had disturbed its upper part, as the result of which some gold coins ended up on the surface of the field. The pit did not contain pottery, nor the remains of a container in which the hoard was originally deposited. This may mean that the hoard was put down in the pit without a container, but the presence of a (now lost) container of organic material cannot be ruled out. The rather diffuse spread of the objects within the pit is not the result of the primary deposition but rather the effect of post-depositional factors, in particular bioturbation. Notwithstanding the post-depositional movement of the finds, we should also consider the likely possibility that the finds were deposited in two separate bags. The fact that the silver objects were discovered at the bottom of the pit and the *solidi* at a higher level may point in that direction.

An important result of the test excavation is that some pits and ditches of prehistoric and high medieval date were encountered, but there were no indications of activities in the (Late) Roman period³. Surface finds collected by amateur archaeologists on neighbouring fields lead to the same conclusion: Roman finds are completely absent in this area. A deposition of this hoard in a settlement, cemetery or sanctuary can there-

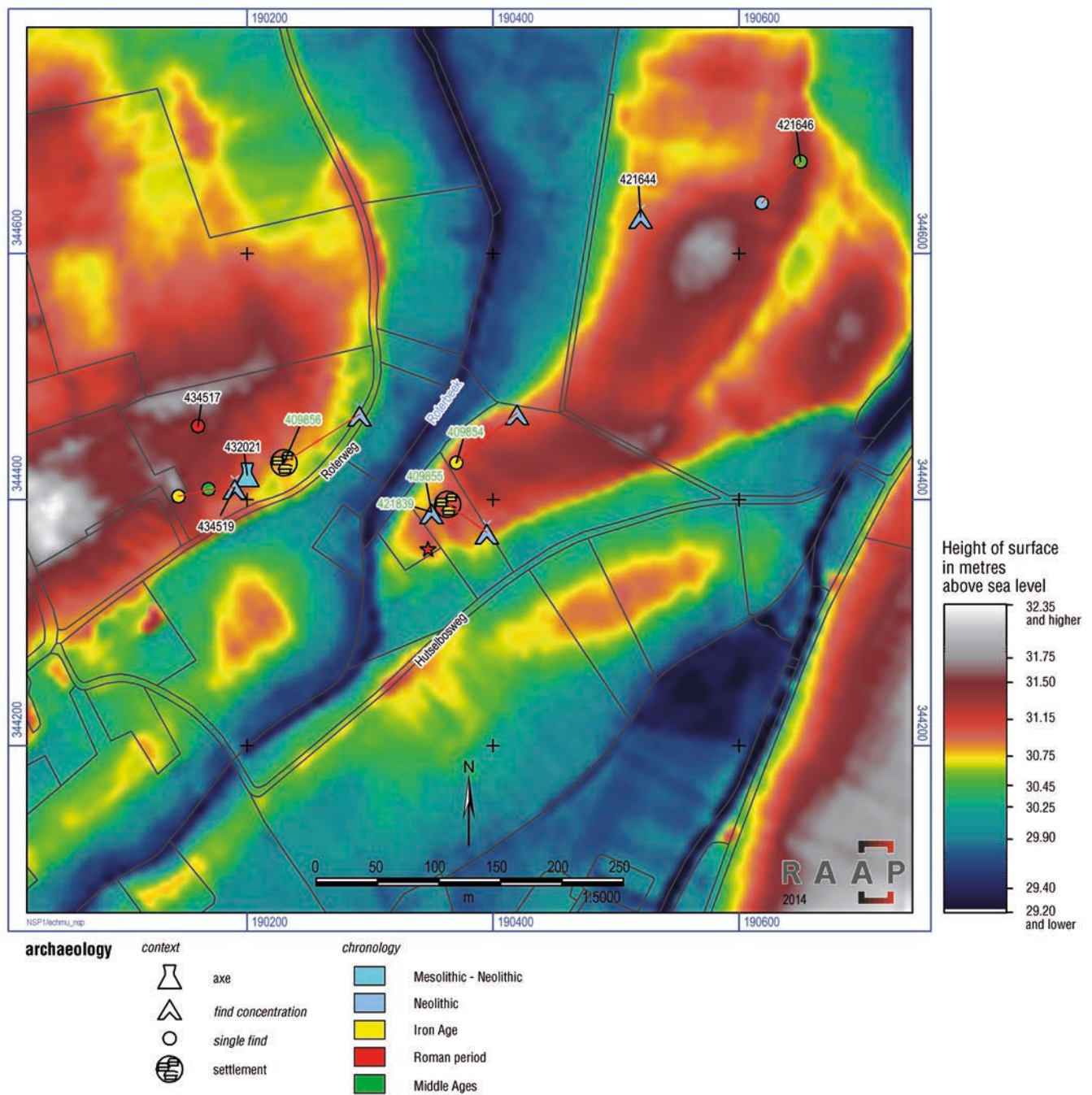


Fig. 3 Archaeological sites and LIDAR data of the area around the Echt hoard (prov. Limburg/NL), indicated by a red star. – (Illustration RAAP Archeologisch Adviesbureau b.v.).

fore be ruled out. The hoard seems to be a single deposition at an off-site location. A palaeogeographic landscape reconstruction based on detailed height measurements using LIDAR (fig. 3) shows that the hoard was buried at the tip of an elevated strip of land surrounded by marshy lowland. One might hypothesise that the hoard was deposited along a land route that followed the elevated plateaus of the area. Similar off-site locations have also been observed for a number of contemporary Late Roman gold hoards in the Lower Rhine region. Several scholars have taken this as an indication that these hoards were buried for religious reasons⁴.



Fig. 4 Overview of the gold hoard from Echt (prov. Limburg/NL) consisting of a combination of *solidi*, a gold ring, a silver ingot and fragments of hacked silver. – (Photo B. Brouwenstijn, Amsterdam).

COMPOSITION OF THE HOARD

Because the metal detector was used systematically during the excavation, including the careful removal of the topsoil, we assume that the hoard has been fully retrieved. The total weight of the hoard supports this assumption. The composition is as follows (fig. 4). To start with, the hoard contains 12 *solidi*, all in excellent condition (fig. 5). Table 1 presents an overview of the coins. The oldest pieces are five coins from Valentin-



Fig. 5 *Solidi* of Valentinian I and II, Theodosius and Constantine III from the Echt hoard (prov. Limburg/NL) . The numbers correspond to tab. 1. – (Photos Restaura). – Scale 3:2.

no.	emperor	obverse	reverse	mark	reference	years	weight (g)
1	Valentinianus I	DNVALENTINI ANVSPFAVG	RESTITVTOR REIPVBLICAE	$\frac{+ }{\text{ANTA}}$	RIC 9, Antiochia, 2a-var	364-367	4.44
2	Valentinianus I	DNVALENTINI ANVSPFAVG	RESTITVTOR REIPVBLICAE	$\frac{+ }{\text{ANTA}}$	RIC 9, Antiochia, 2a-var	364-367	4.48
3	Valentinianus I	DNVALENTINI ANVSPFAVG	RESTITVTOR REIPVBLICAE	ANTI	RIC 9, Antiochia, 2a-var	364-367	4.47
4	Valentinianus I	DNVALENTINI ANVSPFAVG	RESTITVTOR REIPVBLICAE	ANT	RIC 9, Antiochia, 2a-var	364-367	4.44
5	Valentinianus I	DNVALENTINI ANVSPFAVG	RESTITVTOR REIPVBLICAE	ANTZ	RIC 9, Antiochia, 2a-var	364-367	4.44
6	Valentinianus I	DNVALENTINI ANVSPFAVG	RESTITVTOR REIPVBLICAE	SMTR	RIC 9, Treveri, 14	367-375	4.41
7	Valentinianus I	DNVALENTINI ANVSPFAVG	VICTOR IAAVGG	TROBT	RIC 9, Treveri, 17b	367-375	4.42
8	Valentinianus II	DNVALENTINI ANVSPFAVG	VICTOR IAAVGG	$\frac{T R}{\text{COM}}$	RIC 9, Treveri, 90a	388-392	4.50
9	Theodosius I	DNTHEODO SIVSPFAVG	VICTOR IAAVGG0	$\frac{S M}{\text{COMOB}}$	RIC 9, Sirmium, 12a	393-395	4.41
10	Theodosius I	DNTHEODO SIVSPFAVG	VICTOR IAAVGGGA	$\frac{S M}{\text{COMOB}}$	RIC 9, Sirmium, 12a	393-395	4.39
11	Constantinus III	DNCONSTAN TINVSPFAVG	VICTORI AAVGGG	TROBS	RIC 10, 1514 (Trier)	408-411	4.47
12	Constantinus III	DNCONSTAN TINVSPFAVG	VICTORI AAVGGG	TROBS	RIC 10, 1515 (Trier)	408-411	4.49

Tab. 1 Description of the *solidi* from the Echt hoard (prov. Limburg/NL). The numbering of the coins corresponds to fig. 5.

ian I, struck at Antioch in AD 364-367. The two youngest coins were issued from Trier by Constantine III (407-411) and show no traces of wear.

Secondly, the hoard contains an undecorated gold ring with an outer diameter of 1.8 cm and a weight of 6.1 g. The function of this ring is unclear. Its small diameter and the absence of wear on the inner side make use as a finger ring unlikely. It has minor traces of wear on the outside. Small ring-shaped gold artefacts of different form have also been found in the hoard of Velp-Hervormde Kerk (prov. Gelderland/NL)⁵.

Finally, the hoard contains eleven silver objects: a small ingot, a piece of twisted wire originally from a bracelet, and nine pieces of cut and bent plate silver that once formed part of table vessels. Fragments are present of at least two decorated plates with beaded rims, and of a smaller undecorated plate or bowl.

The largest fragment of cut plate silver (**fig. 6**) shows figurative engravings below the beaded rim; it belonged to a plate of exceptional size and artistic quality. A replica of this fragment has been made in the Restaura restoration laboratory, allowing a clear view of the original form and decoration. Directly below the beaded rim there is a gilded band and the engraved figures are gilded as well. We see a horse and a rider holding – barely visible – the end of a spear in his right hand. Near the horse's front hoof the paw of a wild animal can be seen. This is no doubt a hunting scene, with a horse trampling a wild animal (lion?). Stylistically closely related to the Echt dish is the hunting scene from a copper alloy square plate at the Louvre museum in Paris⁶.

The exact diameter of the Echt dish could not be established, but must have been about 70 cm. The original weight is estimated at 5-6 kg. Measurements with XRF confirm the presence of mercury, which means that the technique of fire gilding was applied to this dish. Apart from the traces of mercury and the gilded surface, the basic plate is of almost pure silver (98 %).

The total weight of the eleven pieces of silver amounts to 163 g. The Roman pound is estimated at 327.45 g and could be divided into 12 *unciae* (ounces) of 27.28 g⁷. At 163.0 g, the silver from Echt is therefore almost

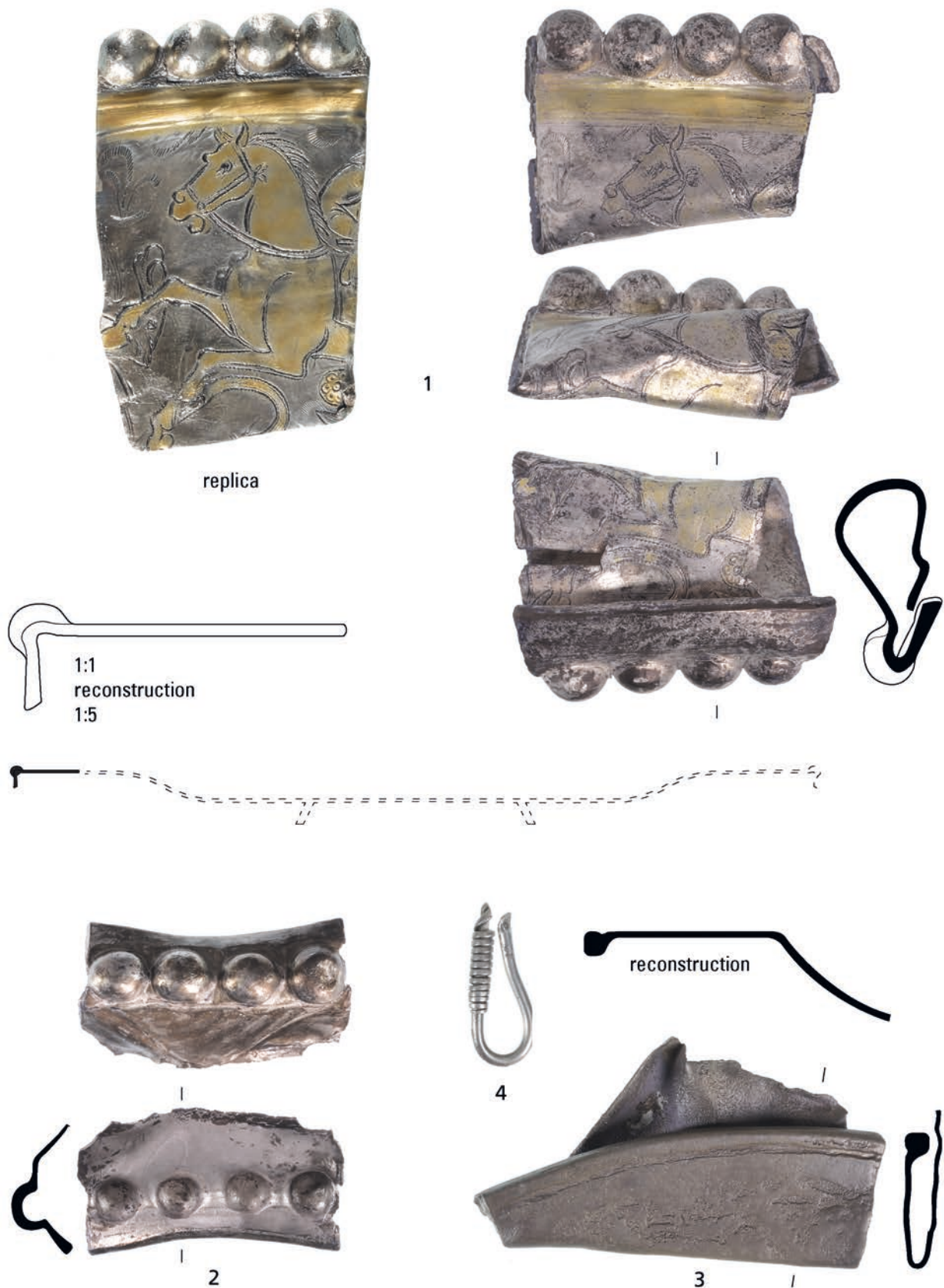


Fig. 6 Echt hoard (prov. Limburg/NL). Folded rim fragments and replica (1) of a gilded silver plate with an original diameter of approx. 70cm (top right); two other rim fragments (2-3) and a small twisted wire (4), probably from a bracelet. – (Photos Restaura). – Scale 1:1 unless stated otherwise.

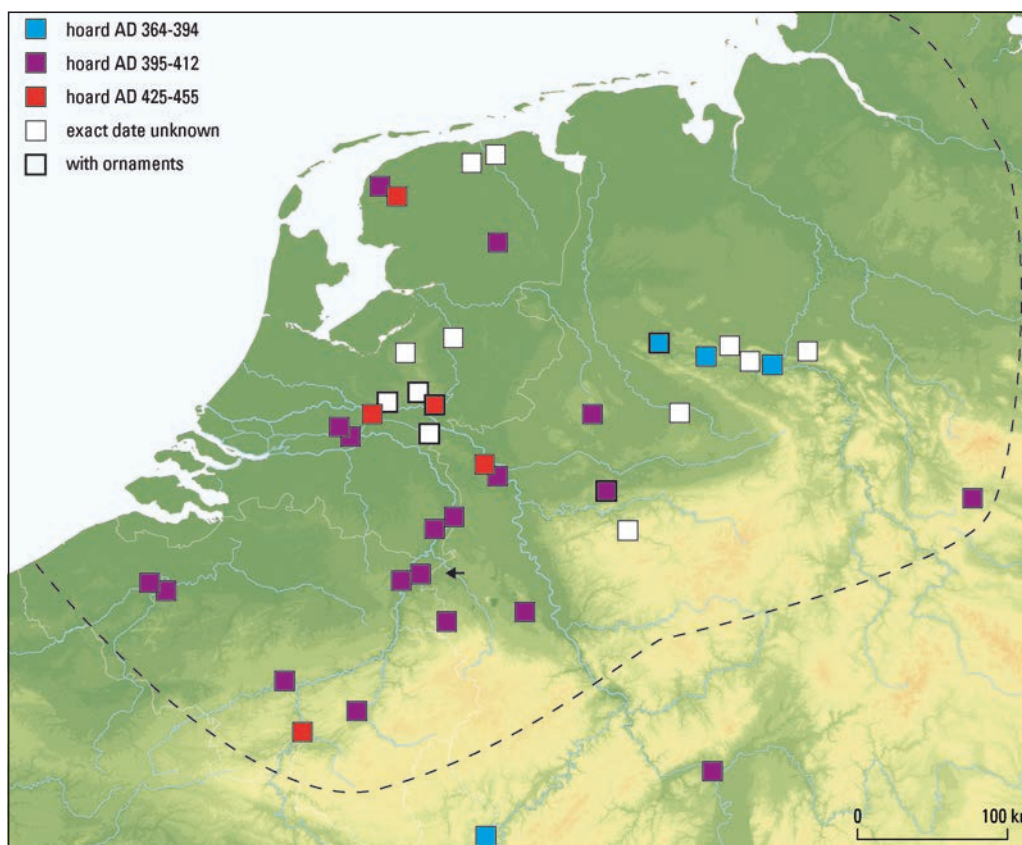


Fig. 7 The early 5th-century gold hoards in the Lower Rhine region and surroundings. The black arrow indicates the Echt hoard (prov. Limburg/NL). – (Map B. Brouwenstijn, Amsterdam).

exactly half a pound (6 ounces) of silver. The total weight of gold of the 12 *solidi* and the gold ring is 57.34g. This is not a round figure, but excluding the gold ring, 12 *solidi* is a meaningful number, since the *solidus* was specified to be 1/72 of a pound of gold (4.55g) – 12 *solidi* therefore represent 2 *unciae* of gold. Some of the *solidi* seem to be a little below their nominal weight (**tab. 1**) and perhaps the ring compensated for the light *solidi*. The number of 12 *solidi* (2 ounces) and the weight of the silver at exactly half a Roman pound (6 ounces) indicate that the value of the treasure was expressed in Roman standards. The metrology of the Echt hoard suggests that we are probably dealing here with a sum of money that was received by the owner in a single transaction, rather than gathered piece by piece over a long period of time.

COMPARABLE GOLD HOARDS FROM THE LOWER RHINE FRONTIER ZONE

The Echt hoard fits perfectly within the remarkable concentration of early 5th-century gold depositions in the Lower Rhine frontier zone of the Roman empire (**fig. 7**)⁸. These usually consist of a number of *solidi*, sometimes combined with gold jewellery. In six of these hoards the youngest coin is of Constantine III: Kessel and now Echt in the Meuse valley of the Dutch province of Limburg; Sint-Denijs-Westrem and Merelbeke II in Flanders (both prov. Oost-Vlaanderen/B); and Dortmund and Großbodungen (Lkr. Eichsfeld/D) east of the Lower Rhine⁹. The hoard of Großbodungen is of prime importance here since its composition closely resembles that of Echt; not only are the coin lists very similar but they also share the combination of *solidi* and

Hacksilber. Almost all of the hoards mentioned above were retrieved by non-archaeologists, with the result that almost no information on the exact find spot and site conditions is available. Until now, Echt is the only hoard for which a control excavation could be executed soon after discovery, making this the best-documented Roman-period gold hoard from the Netherlands.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT: CONSTANTINE III AND THE CHAOS OF THE EARLY 5TH CENTURY

The year 406 is often mentioned as the end of Roman rule in the Rhine provinces: huge numbers of Germanic people crossed the Rhine close to Mainz and penetrated deep into Gaul. It is, however, unclear to what extent the Lower Rhine area, largely controlled by Frankish federate groups, was affected by this event. The usurper and later co-emperor Constantine III, who came from Britannia, entered Gaul in 407 and ruled there until 411, played a special role here¹⁰.

According to the 5th-century Byzantine historian Zosimus, it was Constantine III who secured the Roman border along the Rhine against Germanic invaders¹¹. The accuracy of this statement has been doubted by archaeologists, since early 5th-century activity is not clearly attested at 4th-century *castella* along the Rhine¹². However, control of the border was not necessarily achieved by stationing Roman troops in the Rhine *castella*. The historians Orosius, Zosimus and Gregory of Tours describe how Constantine III tackled the problem of invading Germanic groups, primarily by sending envoys tasked with establishing alliances with Germanic peoples on both sides of the Rhine¹³. It can safely be assumed that he sealed these alliances with lavish gifts – in fact Constantine III bought the military support of Germanic groups and used these as *foederati* for the defence of the Rhine border against new Germanic invaders and to strengthen his own army in Gaul¹⁴. What we observe here is a strategy in which the defence of the Rhine frontier was not based upon direct control by regular Roman army units but on indirect control using autonomous Germanic groups.

The person who buried the Echt treasure most likely belonged to a Germanic band of warriors that had supported Constantine III. He had received the gold and silver as a reward for his services, either directly from the imperial treasury or indirectly through his Germanic war leader. The hoard will have been buried shortly after 411, in the military chaos that followed the defeat of Constantine III in southern Gaul. A newly formed force of Germanic federates, levied by the envoys Constantine III had sent, was on its way to relieve the siege of Constantine's capital Arles (départ. Bouches-du-Rhône/F), but came too late to prevent the death of Constantine. These forces were then adopted by Jovinus (411-413) and used to support his claim to the purple¹⁵. When new payments were not received, and perhaps as a result of new Germanic invasions, it seems that Constantine's federates left their new homesteads along the Rhine and the Meuse. The semi-religious depositions of gold hoards in the Rhine frontier may be related to these Germanic groups leaving their settlements.

As said above, the Echt hoard belongs to the surprisingly rich horizon of gold hoards and single *solidi* from the early 5th century that occurs both east and west of the Rhine in the Netherlands, Belgium and adjoining parts of Germany (fig. 7). Belonging to this horizon are hoards with a combination of coins and gold jewellery (Beilen [prov. Drenthe/NL], Velp-Het Laar, Dortmund), hoards with gold jewellery only (Olst [prov. Overijssel/NL], Rhenen [prov. Utrecht/NL], Velp-Hervormde Kerk, Oestrich [Rheingau-Taunus-Kreis/D], Nijmegen-Kraayenhoff [prov. Gelderland/NL]) and in Großbodungen and now Echt with a combination of *solidi* and cut silver¹⁶. The distribution of these hoards reflects the ultimate attempts of the Roman authorities to control the Meuse and Rhine valley and to recruit federate troops for the campaigns of individual Roman commanders.

NUMISMATIC ANALYSIS

Two »horizons« of gold hoards can be discerned in the Lower Rhine frontier zone. The first and by far the largest group consists of gold that was brought into circulation here in the first decade of the 5th century. In all of these hoards the youngest coin was of Arcadius (383-408), Honorius (395-423) or Constantine III (407-411), and in one case Jovinus (411-413)¹⁷. It is significant that all the coins of Honorius were struck before 408; his younger coins are absent. Older gold hoards are very scarce in the Lower Rhine zone¹⁸, although the younger hoards do contain many coins of Valentinian I and Valens (364-378), which appear to have circulated for a long period¹⁹.

A second hoard horizon, with far fewer examples, was deposited in the period under Valentinian III (425-455). The hoard of Velp-Het Laar, with a medallion of Galla Placidia, the mother of Valentinian III, the large hoard of Xanten-Hagebusch (Kr. Wesel/D) with more than 400 *solidi*, and the hoard of Lienden (prov. Gelderland/NL) in the Dutch river area are examples of this younger horizon²⁰. M. Martin attributes the deposition of all hoards, including those with a youngest coin of Arcadius, Honorius or Constantine III, to the reign of Valentinian III²¹. We disagree with this dating, since single coins of Valentinian III are present in the study area; the absence of *solidi* of Valentinian III in hoards is therefore a significant chronological marker and points to an earlier dating of these hoards.

A remarkable aspect of the Echt hoard is that many coins were minted in the east. Seven out of twelve coins (58 %) were produced at mints in the Eastern Roman Empire: five in Antioch and two in Sirmium. A similar case is the hoard of Kessel, in which seven out of 13 coins (54 %) are from eastern mints²². In the broadly contemporaneous hoards of Dortmund, Großbodungen and Menzelen (Kr. Wesel/D), the proportion of eastern coins is much lower. Dortmund has 304 (69 %) western and 139 (39 %) eastern *solidi*, Großbodungen 19 (90 %) western against 2 (10 %) eastern *solidi*, and Menzelen 115 (61 %) western, 41 (22 %) eastern *solidi* and 32 (17 %) pieces of unknown origin²³. This phenomenon has to be studied in more detail in the future, but it is a possibility that some of the soldiery that fought for Constantine III had done service in the eastern army before they joined up with Constantine III. Another explanation could be that gold flows from the Eastern Roman Empire ended up in the treasury of Constantine III.

HACKSILBER

Echt is the first hoard for the Netherlands with a combination of *solidi* and *Hacksilber*²⁴. The ten pieces are part of at least three silver vessels. The rim fragment of a gilded and richly decorated dish of extreme size represents a special case. Such dishes of exceptional size and artistic quality²⁵ had primarily a representative function as status symbols of the higher elite. They also functioned as high-quality gift objects, employed by the emperor in the diplomatic traffic with his client network, which also included Germanic war leaders. The *Notitia Dignitatum*, an imperial register of the military and administrative organisation of the empire around 400, mentions the *comites largitionum*, special officers with the task of organising army payments, gift exchange in the name of the emperor and the minting of gold coinage²⁶. Their emblem shows bags of gold coins and large silver plates with piles of gold coins, exposed before a table with an image of the emperor (fig. 8). This scene may also represent diplomatic payments to war leaders of Germanic federate groups. It is an interesting hypothesis that the plate of Echt originally came from the imperial treasury and was used as a diplomatic gift.

But against this background, how should we understand the cutting up of precious silver vessels? Since hoards with Late Roman *Hacksilber* are primarily known from areas outside the Roman Empire, scholars

initially thought that »barbarians« were responsible for cutting up the vessels: for them, only the silver weight mattered. However, the current opinion is that the use of *Hacksilber* as a currency emerged in a Roman context and was practised regularly in the Late Roman Empire, especially in the military sphere²⁷. Here, the value of silver was not expressed in coins but in weight. The fact that the total weight of the silver objects in the Echt hoard perfectly corresponds to a Roman weight standard supports this view. Against this background we can imagine that the Echt *Hacksilber* came from a Roman military context and was issued as pay to Germanic warriors in the frontier region. However, the composition of *Hacksilber* hoards varies between several areas and therefore the silver can have been used in different ways²⁸. Another scenario is also possible for the high-quality gilded vessel from Echt. This platter could have been presented, intact and as part of a larger set of gifts, to a Germanic war leader, who subsequently decided to cut it up in order to be able to pay his followers. The cutting up of this single platter alone would have produced over 100 pieces with a weight similar to that of the preserved fragment of Echt.



Fig. 8 Emblem of imperial officers responsible for organising army pay and gift exchange on behalf of the emperor, from the *Notitia Dignitatum*, c. 425. – The emblem shows bags with gold coins and silver plates with gold coins uncovered before a table with an image of the emperor. – (Image Bayerische Staatsbibliothek & Münchener Digitalisierungszentrum).

SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

The gold hoard of Echt is an important document for the study of the final phase of Roman authority in the Lower Rhine frontier zone. The scientific relevance of this find is high because the hoard was completely retrieved and its archaeological context is well documented. Unique for the area west of the Rhine is the combination of gold *solidi* and pieces of cut silver vessels. Furthermore, this find complex fits into a horizon of hoards with a clear peak in the early 5th century. This period is characterised by a massive drain of gold from the Roman centre to the Germanic periphery, which is indicative of the frantic efforts by the emperor and usurpers to maintain control of the Germanic frontier region and to recruit new forces for their military campaigns. The remarkable concentration of gold hoards in this period seems connected above all with the final efforts of Constantine III to regain military control of the Lower Rhine frontier region and with the chaos that resulted from the collapse of his authority in 411.

Notes

- 1) The Dutch part of this research programme is funded by the Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek.
- 2) We would like to thank J. Roymans (RAAP Archeologisch Adviesbureau) for organising the fieldwork. We also owe

thanks to the municipality of Echt-Susteren, the province of Limburg and the Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed for their financial contribution to the excavation, and to the Limburgs Museum at Venlo for financing the cleaning and conservation of the finds by Restaura (Haelen). The treasure

has been acquired by the Limburgs Museum at Venlo and is on display there. Finally we would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments.

- 3) For a detailed site publication, see Heeren/Roymans 2014. – Heeren/Roymans 2014 is a preliminary publication in Dutch.
- 4) Cf. Heidinga 1990, 16. However, see the discussion in Martin 2009.
- 5) Quast 2009, 212 nos 8-9 fig. 5.
- 6) Cahn/Kaufmann-Heinimann 1984, pl. 139.
- 7) Klose 2006.
- 8) For an overview of 5th-century hoards, see Kent 1994. For the hoards of the Lower Rhine region between 350 and 450, although lacking some of the material from the Low Countries, see Martin 2009.
- 9) Kessel: Prins 2000. – Sint-Denijs-Westrem: Thirion 1967, 148 (cat. 268). – Merelbeke II: Thirion 1967, 120f. (cat. 194); M. Thirion casts doubt on the solidus, see his note 2; J. Van Heesch, however, considers the hoard to be genuine (Van Heesch 1998, 270). – Dortmund: Berghaus 1986. – Großbodungen: Grünhagen 1954.
- 10) Drinkwater 1998.
- 11) Zos. 6.3.3; Oros. 7, 40; Gregory of Tours 2, 9.
- 12) Eck 2004, 686.
- 13) Hoffmann 1995, 560.
- 14) J. Werner (1958) already noted the relation between gold and silver coins of Constantine III on both sides of the Lower Rhine and Germanic warriors.
- 15) Hoffmann 1995, 561.
- 16) In addition to note 8: Beilen: Waterbolk/Glasbergen 1955; Zadoks-Josephus Jitta 1955. – Velp-Het Laar: Beliën 2008. – Olst and Nijmegen-Kraayenhoff: Braat 1954. – Rhenen: Roes 1947. – Velp-Hervormde Kerk: Jansen 1852. – Oestrich: Stieren 1936. – On the gold rings of the Velp type, see Heidinga 1990, 14-19; Quast 2009.
- 17) In addition to notes 8 and 15: Grandhan (prov. Luxemburg/B): Thirion 1967, 86 (cat. 110). – Kerpen-Langenich (Rhein-Erft-Kreis/D): Siepen 2012. – Dreumel (prov. Gelderland/NL): van der Vin 1988. – Würselen (Städteregion Aachen/D): FMRD VII, 4-9. – Nottuln (Kr. Coesfeld/D): FMRD VI, 4045. – Venlo (prov. Limburg/NL): unpublished, NUMIS 1035337 (NUMIS database: [https://nnc.dnb.nl/dnb-nnc-ontsluiting-frontend/#/numis/\[14.12.2015\]](https://nnc.dnb.nl/dnb-nnc-ontsluiting-frontend/#/numis/[14.12.2015])). – Obbicht (prov. Limburg/NL): Bloemers 1969. – Suarlée (prov. Namur/B): Thirion 1967, 154 (cat. 284). – Menzelen (Kr. Wesel/D): Kaiser-Raiß/Klüßendorf 1984.
- 18) Only three gold hoards from the period 374-395 are secure: Westerkappeln (Kr. Steinfurt/D; FMRD IV, 4074), Ellerbeck (Lkr. Osnabrück/D; FMRD VII, 1051) and Eidinghausen (Kr. Minden-Lübbecke/D; FMRD IV, 6097). – For Krietenstein (Lkr. Osnabrück/D; FMRD VII, 1066), Bückeberg (Lkr. Schaumburg/D; FMRD VII, 4068) Spradow (Kr. Herford/D; FMRD VI, 6058), Uddel (prov. Gelderland/NL; Byvanck 1947, 161), Winsum (prov. Groningen/NL; NUMIS 1011852), just one or two solidi are known, which are possibly a selection from larger assemblages and therefore not reliably attributed to the Valentinian period. – The hoard of Lengerich (Kr. Steinfurt/D), which included a gold crossbow brooch, other gold jewellery and a silver vessel, is probably older than the Valentinian period (Magnentius?), although in this case too, the date is not reliably attested since only one of ten solidi has been identified: Quast 2009, 223.
- 19) van der Vin 1988.
- 20) Velp-Het Laar: Beliën 2008. – Xanten: Bonner Jahrbücher 151, 1951, 250. – Lienden-Den Eng: Kist 1846, 426, with addition by Heuff 1906, 166 f.
- 21) Martin 2009.
- 22) Prins 2000, 321-325.
- 23) Kent 1994, xcix. ciii. clxxiii.
- 24) The German *Hacksilber* is preferred above the English hack-silver because the German term also covers bent and broken pieces while the English term only refers to hacked pieces; cf. Hunter/Painter 2013, xvii.
- 25) For complete examples, see Cahn/Kaufmann-Heinimann 1984; Guggisberg 2003.
- 26) Seeck 1876.
- 27) See the discussion in Grünhagen 1954; Guggisberg 2013; Painter 2013. – Cf. Amm. 20.4.18 according to which the emperor Julian promised each soldier 5 *solidi* and a pound of silver at his inauguration.
- 28) Rau 2013.

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Zusammenfassung / Summary / Résumé

Ein spätrömischer Solidus-Hort mit Hacksilber aus Echt (prov. Limburg/NL)

Nach der Entdeckung von Goldmünzen in einem Acker bei Echt wurde eine Ausgrabung durchgeführt, die den kompletten Hortfund und seinen archäologischen Kontext dokumentieren konnte. Der Hort besteht aus zwölf goldenen Solidi, einem Goldring, einem Silberbarren und zehn Stücken Hacksilber. Eines davon stammt von einer hinsichtlich ihrer Größe und Qualität exzeptionellen Silberplatte. Der Hort war in einer isoliert gelegenen Grube ohne nachweisbares Behältnis deponiert worden. Vergleichbare Schatzfunde begegnen in einer bemerkenswerten Konzentration entlang des Niederrheins und der benachbarten Gebiete Belgiens, der Niederlande und Nordwestdeutschlands. Die überwiegende Anzahl datiert in das frühe 5. Jahrhundert und ist mit einer Epoche der Auflösung der römischen Herrschaft in dieser Region verbunden, als germanische Föderaten vom Usurpator und späteren Mitkaiser Konstantin III. (407-411) dafür bezahlt wurden, die Rheingrenze zu bewachen.

A Late Roman *Solidus* Hoard with *Hacksilber* from Echt (prov. Limburg/NL)

Following the discovery of gold coins in an agrarian field at Echt, an excavation was carried out, resulting in the documentation of the complete hoard and its archaeological context. The hoard contained twelve gold *solidi*, a gold ring, a silver ingot and ten pieces of *Hacksilber*. One of the silver plates is a piece of exceptional size and quality. The hoard was placed in a pit, without a visible container, at an off-site location. Comparable hoards are found in a remarkable concentration along the Lower Rhine and adjacent areas in Belgium, the Netherlands and Northwest Germany. The majority of these hoards are dated to the early 5th century and are connected to the period of disintegration of Roman authority in this area, when Germanic federates were paid to guard the Rhine frontier by the usurper and later co-emperor Constantine III (407-411).

Un trésor romain tardif de *solidi* avec de l'argent découpé d'Echt (prov. Limburg/NL)

Suite à la découverte de monnaies d'or dans un champ à Echt, une fouille a été menée et a permis de documenter un dépôt complet avec son contexte. Le trésor contenait douze *solidi* en or, un anneau en or et un lingot en argent ainsi que dix pièces d'argenterie découpée. Un de ces plats en argent est d'une taille et d'une qualité exceptionnelle. Le trésor a été caché dans une fosse, sans contenant visible, en-dehors d'un site. D'autres dépôts comparables ont été retrouvés concentrés le long du Rhin et de la frontière avec la Belgique, les Pays-Bas et le nord-ouest de l'Allemagne. La plupart de ces dépôts datent du début de 5^e siècle et sont connectés avec la période de désagrégation de l'autorité romaine dans ces régions, lorsque les fédérés germaniques ont été payés pour garder la frontière par l'usurpateur et futur co-empereur Constantin III (407-411).

Traduction: L. Bernard

Schlüsselwörter / Keywords / Mots clés

Niederlande / Spätantike / Hort / Solidus / Hacksilber / Föderaten
Netherlands / Late Antiquity / hoard / *solidus* / hacked silver / federates
Pays-Bas / Antiquité tardive / trésor / *solidus* / argent haché / peuples fédérés

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