

A LATE ROMAN GOLD NECK RING WITH INSCRIPTION FROM WALCHEREN (PROV. ZEELAND / NL)

In 2016, amateur archaeologist Michiel Bil found a Late Roman gold neck ring with an inscription on the agrarian land in Veere, a part of the former island of Walcheren (prov. Zeeland/NL) while searching with his metal detector. Metal detection is a legal activity in the Netherlands, provided that the digging is confined to the 30 cm topsoil, the landowner has given permission, and any finds are declared to archaeologists. In the days after the discovery, M. Bil contacted several archaeologists and declared the find (and his complete collection of other items) to Portable Antiquities of the Netherlands (PAN), the recording scheme for privately-owned archaeological finds.

DESCRIPTION

The bent and twisted wire ranges from 5 to 6 mm in cross-section and has a total length of 47.2 cm (fig. 1). The intact object would have been a round or oval neck ring of about 20 cm in diameter. Although the usual name for these items is torque, the plain ring is not twisted in any way and therefore the neutral term »neck ring« is maintained here. The usual closing mechanism of such neck rings is a knob that is inserted through an eye, but in this case, the eye is broken off. This could mean that the neck ring was in a closed position in the ground and was torn as the result of ploughing or mechanical digging – it was found close to a modern watercourse. The ring is flat and undecorated, except for a thin transverse wire close to the knob (fig. 2). The inscription is made of punctured dots and reads VICTORINVSFVIMB (fig. 3). The S of Victorinus is retrograde. The neck ring is registered as PAN-10398 and can be viewed online¹.



Fig. 1 The gold neck ring from Veere (prov. Zeeland/NL). – Portable Antiquities of the Netherlands PAN-10398. – (Photo J. van der Klooster, Portable Antiquities of the Netherlands; CC BY-NC-SA-4.0).



Fig. 2 Detail of the gold neck ring from Veere (prov. Zeeland/NL). – Portable Antiquities of the Netherlands PAN-10398. – (Photo J. van der Klooster; CC BY-NC-SA-4.0).



Fig. 3 Inscription on the gold neck ring from Veere (prov. Zeeland/NL). – (Courtesy Zeeuws Museum / A. van Riet; CC BY-NC-SA-4.0).

FIND SPOT

While the exact location of the find within the municipality of Veere is not disclosed, its landscape setting merits a brief description. The present-day Dutch province of Zeeland consists almost entirely of coastal wetland deposits of Holocene date, protected by a coastal dune barrier. In the Late Roman period, the former low-lying peatlands were decaying due to the steadily rising sea level, the climate deterioration and the Roman exploitation of the landscape, a process which on Walcheren already was progressing from the end of the 2nd century onwards². Sand- and mudflats intersected by major tidal channels started to form on Walcheren as early as the 4th century, leaving only the coastal barrier unaffected³. The earliest post-Roman occupation of the developing salt marshes on Walcheren is attested in the 7th century⁴.

The neck ring was found near the surface of a field, in what was once the sandy soil of a channel infill, but given its relatively good preservation, it may have been recently redeposited due to the agricultural activity or maintenance work on a nearby drainage ditch. Whatever the case, the neck ring was likely deposited at the height of marine influence on Walcheren, in a very wet, largely uninhabited and only periodically accessible coastal marshland.

COMPARABLE FINDS

The hoard of Velp (prov. Gelderland/NL), discovered in 1851, contained, among other items, six neck rings with a central broadened element in diamond-shape, trapezoid cross-section and stamped decoration (fig. 4)⁵. The closing mechanism consists of a mushroom-shaped knob on one end and a pear- or key-



Fig. 4 The neck rings from the Velp hoard of 1851 (prov. Gelderland/NL) now in Moscow. – (After Menghin 2007, 41 fig. 7; Courtesy National Museum of Antiquities Leiden / P. J. Bomhof).

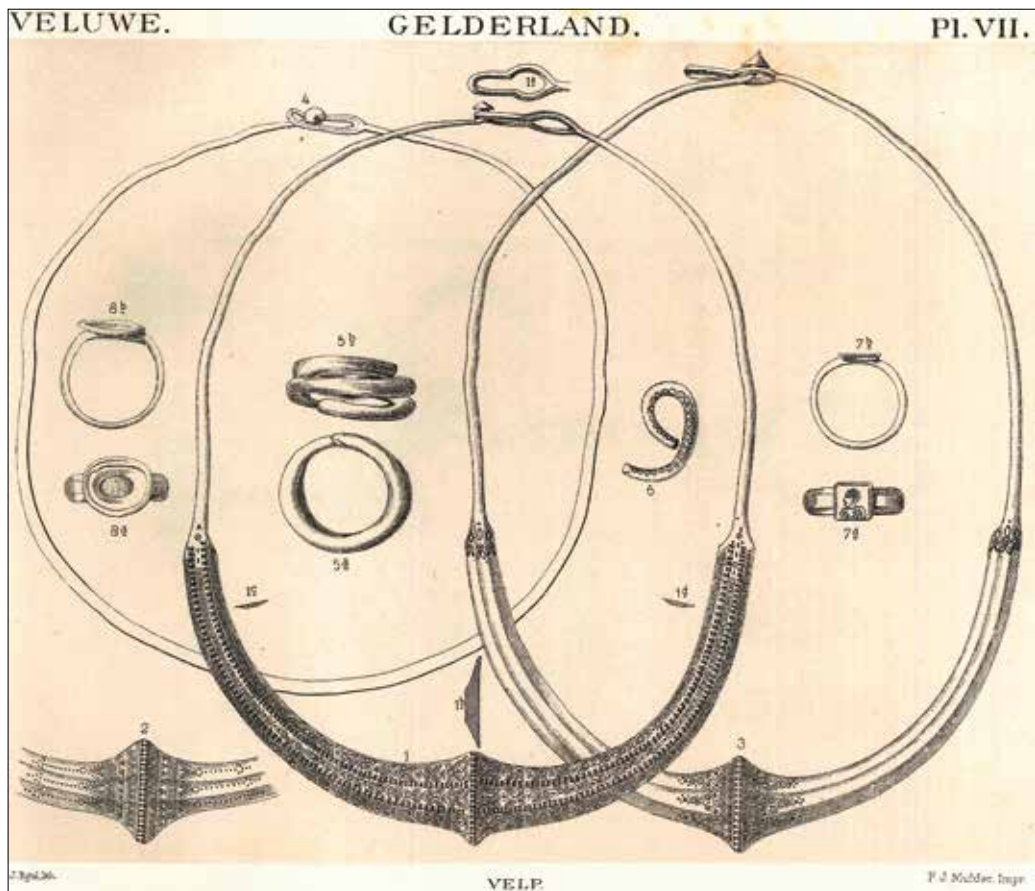


Fig. 5 Drawings of the Velp finds (prov. Gelderland/NL). – (After Pleyte 1877, vol. 2, pl. VII).



Fig. 6 The two neck rings and necklace fragment found at Rhenen-Achterberg (prov. Utrecht/NL) in 1938. – (Courtesy National Museum of Antiquities Leiden / P. J. Bomhof).

hole-shaped eye on the other. This type of ring was given the name »Velp type«⁶. The same hoard also contained an undecorated neck ring of round cross-section, closely resembling the specimen from Veere discussed here, as well as several finger rings (**fig. 5**)⁷. Hereafter, we will refer to the decorated rings with a diamond-shaped broad centre as Velp A type and the plain undecorated ones as Velp B type. In the hoard of Dortmund/D, three decorated rings (two of Velp A type, one divergent) were accompanied by hundreds of *solidi*, the youngest of which were minted by emperor Constantine III (407-411)⁸. The hoard of Beilen (prov. Drenthe/NL) contains four decorated rings of Velp A type plus an undecorated one of octagonal cross-section, an arm ring of smaller diameter, plus *solidi*, the youngest of which were issued by Arcadius and Honorius, resulting in a date of 395 or later⁹. What is peculiar in the hoard of Beilen is that the neck rings are bent round twice, resulting in a small diameter, most likely for the use as arm rings. Besides the undecorated ring from Velp and Veere, a similar exemplar was found at Körbecke (Kr. Soest/D). More undecorated rings are known, but these have differing cross-sections, such as the one from Beilen, which is comparable to a find from Pouan (départ. Aube/F). This last one is dated to the mid-5th century¹⁰. Another relevant discovery concerns three pieces of gold jewellery found at Rhenen-Achterberg (prov. Utrecht/NL) in 1938 (**fig. 6**)¹¹. Two rings are of Velp A type, and there is a central piece of a decorated necklace of another type, missing its two connecting parts to the left and right. The central piece has five sockets



Fig. 7 Detail of the inscribed back of the necklace fragment found at Rhenen-Achterberg (prov. Utrecht/NL) in 1938. – (Courtesy National Museum of Antiquities Leiden / P. J. Bomhof).

for gemstones, of which two are filled with imitation stones, and three are open. The back of this piece is inscribed with the text ERE•F•–V• / γXXII•M• / PRO•CLV (fig. 7).

Finally, we need to introduce another type of ornament, the arm rings with buffer-shaped terminals, called *Kolbenarmringe*. There are several *Kolbenarmringe* with inscriptions mentioning a number and the abbreviation MB: a complete specimen from Cove (Scottish Borders/GB) has the inscription IIIIMB, a fragment of a similar arm ring from Boltinggård Skov (Fünen/DK) mentions P•III and a broken and twisted piece of such a ring from Newgrange (Meath/IRL) is marked with •SCBONS•MB¹². The Danish *Kolbenarmring* from Boltinggård Skov was discovered together with a neck ring of which the hook-and-eye closing mechanism was made of wire winding. This type of ring combined with a *Kolbenarmring* is more often found in southern Scandinavia, eastern Germany, Poland and the northern Balkans (Slovakia, Romania)¹³. An assemblage from Cottbus/D is particularly relevant since it contained three *Kolbenarmringe* and a neck ring of the above-discussed Velp B type, together with a snake bracelet¹⁴.

WEIGHTS

What makes the find from Veere so remarkable, besides its inscription, is its weight of 153 g. The examples for comparison are considerably lighter. The six decorated rings of Velp weigh between 57.3 and 87.7 g and the undecorated specimen has a weight of 41.6 g¹⁵. The decorated rings from Beilen weigh between 67.8 and 105 g, while the undecorated ring of octagonal cross-section weighs 43.2 g¹⁶. In both hoards, the undecorated rings are lighter than the decorated specimens. The observation that the undecorated neck ring from Veere is two or three times heavier than some of the decorated rings is remarkable. Rings of this weight, or even somewhat heavier (up to 200 g), are known only from Austria and Hungary¹⁷.

Some authors assume that the neck rings are made of melted *solidi* and that their weight corresponds to a Roman weight standard¹⁸. The question of whether or not the gold is from melted *solidi* will be studied below. Whether the ring from Veere equates with a Roman weight is a distinct possibility, but hard to prove, since the eye has broken off. Roman weights were expressed in pounds, divided into 12 ounces¹⁹. Half a pound or 6 ounces amounts to approx. 163 g, which is close to the 153g of the find. Would the 10 g difference between the half a Roman pound and the current weight of the neck ring represent the weight of the missing eye?

ALLOY

Due to the exceptional nature of the artefact, as well as the unexpected find spot, we thought it would be useful to test its composition. We hoped that a comparison of the object with known compositions of Late Roman gold coins would provide some chronological information about the ring. To test the authenticity of the find, medieval and modern gold were also included in our analysis. For this purpose, portable XRF (pXRF) measurements of the neck ring were compared with 25 gold coins from Late Roman (n=15), late medieval (n=6) and modern (n=4) date from the collections of the Coin Cabinet of the Royal Library of Belgium²⁰.

From a methodological viewpoint, pXRF can be problematic, among other reasons because the measured surface of a metal artefact does not necessarily reflect the bulk of the material with great accuracy²¹. On the other hand, the portability of the measuring device and the low price, speed and non-destructive nature of the analyses make it an ideal method for exploratory studies. In addition, surface (XRF) measurements of relatively pure gold alloys have been shown to be reliable thanks to the material's low susceptibility to corrosion processes²². A further limitation of the present analysis is the small size and exclusively numismatic character of the comparative dataset, meaning that the following results should be considered indicative only. In all, 25 coins were analysed, of which 15 are from the 4th and 5th centuries. The limitations of the dataset are partly due to a number of pre-assumptions regarding the neck ring, notably that it would date around 400 (corresponding the Velp A type rings), and that it was produced by remelting Roman gold coins, as suggested by various scholars (see above). A final caveat is that the measurements have been used in a semi-quantitative way, partly in response to the complications of interpreting XRF surface measurements. In other words, the measurement data were not transformed to absolute compositions. However, despite these limitations, the results were sufficiently intriguing to warrant the inclusion in this paper, all the more so because we are not aware of similar analyses of Late Roman neck rings from Western Europe.

There is no indication that the neck ring does not belong to the Roman period. Cadmium was detected at levels too low for quantification. This is lower than in any coin in the comparison sample, where cadmium is most notably present in modern gold. This observation alone is a strong indication of authenticity because cadmium was only introduced with modern gold soldering²³. Furthermore, the low ratios of copper and mercury to gold allow us to relate the neck ring to the Late Roman coins and distinguish it from the younger coins. Finally, the neck ring measurements stand out from the coins through the high variability of iron-to-gold values. This is possibly due to the soil residue still present at the surface at one or two of the measured spots²⁴. Calcium, another element most likely associated with soil, was not included in the deconvolution of the full dataset. However, an inspection of the raw spectra does reveal a correlation between iron and calcium values measured on the neck ring.

The measurements of the various Late Roman coins are sufficiently distinct to allow for further discussion, in particular in relation to the list of Roman gold coin compositions between 63 and 491 published in the

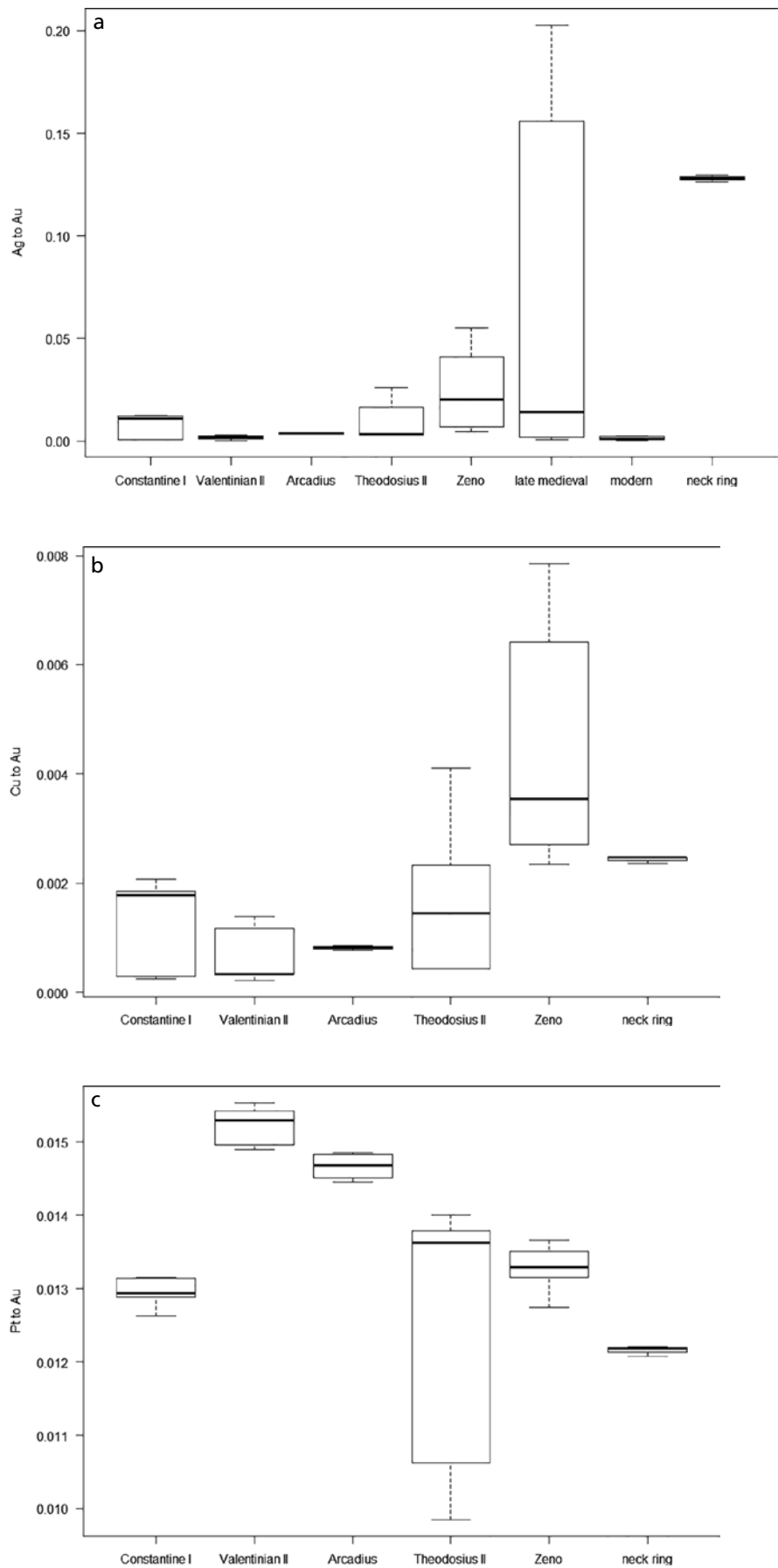


Fig. 8 The proportion of silver to gold (a), copper to gold (b) and platinum to gold (c) in the neck ring and comparison groups. – (Illustration P. Deckers).

landmark study by Callu et al.²⁵ In terms of the silver content, the pXRF results broadly reflect the attested variation, with the coins of Constantine I (306-337), containing up to 2-3 % silver, clearly standing out from the lower silver content (<1 %) of coins of later emperors (although a number of coins of Theodosius II and Zeno appear to feature a higher silver content than expected). Compared to the Late Roman coin sample, the silver content of the neck ring is significantly higher (**fig. 8a**), and could be estimated at about at least 10 %. Other studies also mention that Late Roman gold jewellery is considerably less pure than contemporary coins, with the measured gold content as low as 90 %²⁶.

Concerning the gold fraction of the neck ring, copper and platinum, in particular, provide interesting indications with regards to the monetary metal used to cast it. Neither element was found to be meaningfully correlated with silver in the measurements of the neck ring. This makes it unlikely that the addition of silver affected the ratios of these elements to gold.

The copper content varies significantly across Late Roman coins. Although potential leaching of copper from the surface needs to be taken into account²⁷, Callu et al.'s observation that copper content dropped following the monetary reform of Valentinian I in 368 appears to be reflected in our measurements, as well as a gradual decline in purity during the following century. The copper-to-gold ratio of the neck ring is higher than that of coins dating shortly after this reform (**fig. 8b**), suggesting that it was produced from the gold stock dating to either after or before the final third of the 4th century. Based on the copper contents listed in Callu et al., we suggest a *terminus post quem* in the 220s.

The comparatively low platinum content of the neck ring allows us to refine this dating. According to Callu et al., a new source of platinum-rich gold was introduced into Roman coinage in 346. This is clearly visible in the results of this analysis as a large increase in the platinum-to-gold ratio between the coins of Constantine I and Valentinianus II, dating to shortly before and after this introduction respectively. In younger coins, the platinum content gradually diminishes again, but it does not reach the consistently low level of the period up to 346. The neck ring has a slightly lower platinum content than the three coins of Constantine I analysed here. This difference can be disregarded in the light of the variation in platinum content shown by Callu et al.²⁸ The platinum-to-gold ratio of the neck ring (**fig. 8c**) is therefore consistent with dating before 346.

In summary, the pXRF analysis gives us no reason to doubt the authenticity of this neck ring, and the measurements of the comparative sample closely reflect the attested variation in the composition of 4th- and 5th-century Roman gold coinage, in particular where it concerns the ratios of copper and platinum to gold. Although the high silver content precludes that the ring was produced solely or directly from remelted gold coins, the neck ring convincingly resembles monetary gold circulating between the 220s and 346.

MEANING OF THE INSCRIPTION VICTORINVSFVIMB

Victorinus is a personal name and is set in the nominative. In the Roman period, the F behind the name almost always stood for *fecit* (»made this«), although there is one Late Roman inscription where it is explained as *faber* (»craftsman« or »worker«). A dish found in Serbia bears the inscription OFMAXIMVSFASIRVAS. This text is completed as *Officina Maximus Faber A Sirmium Vascularis*, translated as »from the workshop of Maximus, a craftsman at the vessel smith from Sirmium«²⁹. The OF for *officina* is always followed by a name in the genitive and in this case a nominative, which must be a spelling error by the Late Roman manufacturer. The reason for choosing *faber* here and not *fecit* is that *officina* has already been mentioned, and these last two are not used together; the large corpus of potters' stamps in Samian ware does not contain stamps where these two terms are combined³⁰. This is probably the rationale behind reading the F in the Serbian inscription as *faber*, plus the connection to the other person mentioned, the Vascularius.

VI could indicate the number six. Precious metal objects such as silver tableware or silver ingots were regularly inscribed with their weight³¹. It has already been explained above that the weight of the ring approximates to 6 Roman ounces. A potential problem is that no sign for *uncia* follows the supposed number, although this was almost always the case on silver vessels. On the other hand, the text from the gold necklace of Rhenen features a weight following the maker's name and in the case of Cove the letters MB follow a weight corresponding to the actual weight of the object as well. It is therefore clear that VI, interpreted as a weight in the current text from Veere, would follow a common formula.

The last two letters of the inscription are MB. There are several examples of this letter combination. The specimens of Cove and Newgrange have been discussed already. Robert Janiszewski publishing those pieces does not elaborate on their meaning³². The same finds were discussed by Dieter Quast, who suggests that it might be a manufacturer's mark³³. Two other examples come from Serbia. Identical inscriptions OFLAVNICANIMBN appear on a silver ingot and silver plate, both found in Serbia³⁴. Ivana Popović proposes that the Serbian cases should be read as *Officina Flavii Nicani Magistri Bisselarii [sic!] Nummulariorum*³⁵. There are considerable problems with the last three words. *Bisellarii*, who are known from Italy, were high magistrates who were entitled to sit on a double seat, a *bi-sella*. But these honorary titles are very rare and would be suited to appear on monumental inscriptions in public buildings – one would not expect this on objects, let alone in abbreviated form. Furthermore, the *bisellarii* are not specifically connected to the imperial mint³⁶. We must therefore reject the reading of the Serbian cases of MB(N) as unconvincing³⁷.

Another possible explanation rests on an inscription from Rome³⁸ that mentions one HERMES BARBARICARIS MINSTRATOR: »Hermes, manager of the barbaricaria«³⁹. The term *barbaricaria* is interpreted as a Late Roman synonym for *fabricae*, the workshops where weapons and other gear for the Roman armies were manufactured⁴⁰. That inscription does, however, follow the classical formulations and therefore seems to date to the 2nd or 3rd century. On the one hand, the objects under discussion here are clearly Late Roman, on the other hand, the suggested date falls in the first half of the 4th century (see below). It is not impossible that the Roman inscription dates to the later 3rd century and that such an office was still in place in the first half of the 4th century.

The Veere inscription can thus be understood as reading »made by Victorinus, with a weight of 6 ounces, for (or: checked by) MB«. The latter might be, but is not certainly identified as, the MINSTRATOR BARBARICARIAE, manager of the »barbarian workshop«.

DATING

The practice of furnishing gift objects of precious metal with an inscription is primarily known from the Late Roman period. Silver vessels, finger rings and at times brooches were sometimes inscribed and can refer to the occasion for the gift, such as a victory or to commemorate the anniversary of an emperor's reign. Most examples date to the Tetrarchy and the reign of Constantine I and his successors (284-361), although the practice continued into the late 4th century, and much longer in the Eastern Roman Empire. Punctured inscriptions that relate to the production of these objects, such as the current one, are much scarcer. The Serbian examples with the combination MB in the inscription are dated to the early 4th century, in relation to the *decennalia* (commemorating ten years' reign) of emperor Licinius in 316, mentioned at the front of the plate⁴¹.

The gold *Kolbenarmringe*, of which some carry an inscription MB as well, are dated from the later 3rd to early 5th century⁴². The deposition of Lengerich (Kr. Steinfurt/D) held two such arm rings and was coined to the Constantinian period. It is interpreted as being connected to the Magnentius' revolt of 350⁴³. The assemblage of Cottbus is dated earlier (phase C2, the later 3rd century)⁴⁴. In the light of the presence in

the same assemblage of a Velp B-type ring one could argue for a date in the 4th century. A gold *Kolbenarm-ring* found at Vatin (Vojvodina/SRB) has a Greek inscription and a stamp referring to the house of Constantine and is therefore also securely dated to the first half of the 4th century⁴⁵.

The analysis of the alloy has provided another argument for a date in the first half of the 4th century. The composition of the object was compared to gold coins from various periods and the trace elements of the neck ring were shown to bear a close resemblance to gold coins of the period 220-346.

Based on the coin dates from the hoards of Dortmund and Beilen, the decorated neck rings of Velp A type date to the period around 400. The undecorated rings of Velp B type could occur alongside Velp A type, as the hoard from Velp shows, but they can of course also be older. The Cottbus assemblage is an example of an earlier date.

Reviewing all the dating arguments, a production date for this ring in the first half of the 4th century seems likely. Given the deposition patterns of Late Roman gold neck rings in the wider region, it is possible that this neck ring circulated much longer and was deposited in the late 4th or early 5th century.

NECK RINGS AND ARM RINGS AS GIFTS FOR HIGH OFFICERS AND FOREIGN WAR LEADERS

Gold neck rings are usually found outside the Roman imperial border. The same is true for the *Kolbenarm-ring*, which we have already seen to be distributed in Ireland, Scotland, Denmark and eastern Germany, down to Ukraine⁴⁶. Some authors believe that they are typical »barbarian« items and that they were made by foreign war leaders, who melted the *solidi* received from the Roman government for their services⁴⁷. However, it is more frequently stressed that they occur alongside *solidi* and are expressed in Roman weight standards, and that they were, therefore, most likely produced in Roman workshops, in forms that the Romans deemed suitable for »barbarian« war leaders, as part of the diplomatic exchange in pursuit of military support⁴⁸. Various inscribed objects are related to a Roman milieu, and sometimes are directly connected to a Roman workshop and/or circles of the emperor. The Veere neck ring is a new clue that points to the Roman manufacture of these items.

In the Late Roman period, the Roman army had to contend with a severe shortage of manpower. *Foederati*, independent fighting units of foreign descent, were therefore employed and were paid in gold to fight for the Roman cause. It seems that apart from payment in *solidi*, they also received arm rings, neck rings, and in a later period also hacked silver. The neck rings and arm rings, especially the heavier ones, must also be seen as a stock of precious metal, an ingot if you will. Their value and meaning as a symbol for leaders went hand in hand⁴⁹.

The various inscriptions follow common formulae in which weight is a returning element. The closing letters MB, attested on at least five precious metal objects of Late Roman date, are not explained with certainty but might refer to a MINISTRATOR BARBARICARIAE. This could indicate that these pieces are made under the authority of, or their weight has been checked by, the officer of that name, who is in charge of manufacturing centres where dress items of »barbarian« style were made.

ANOTHER GOLD FIND FROM WALCHEREN

The neck ring discovered in Veere is not the only find from the Late Roman period in that municipality, nor the only gold one. In 2008, a gold crossbow brooch of a late type (type 5⁵⁰) was reported⁵¹. This find

matches the class of the neck ring. Apart from the gold, the crossbow brooch itself is an object with military and elite connotations in that period. Based on written sources and pictorial evidence, the development of these items can be traced quite clearly⁵². In the 3rd and early 4th century, the crossbow brooch was a clasp worn by soldiers or lower-ranking officers; by the late 4th century it had become an accessory of the highest officers, such as *magister militum* Flavius Stilicho (* c. 362; † 408). In the 5th century, this brooch was associated with senators and other civilian representatives⁵³. The fact that the Zeeland brooch is of a late type and made of gold suggests an association with the upper military elite. The same holds for the inscribed neck ring from Veere.

A LATE ROMAN RITUAL ACT OR A ROMAN MILITARY FORTIFICATION IN OR NEAR VEERE?

Domburg in the municipality of Veere has a long history of antiquity finds. Stone altars dedicated to the goddess Nehalennia point to the presence of a sanctuary dating to the 2nd century and first half of the 3rd century⁵⁴. Several early medieval cemeteries and hundreds of metal finds from this area were discovered on the beach of Domburg⁵⁵. They are connected to an important and historically attested emporium, possibly relating to the reuse of the Roman sanctuary. Except for some 4th-century coins⁵⁶, Late Roman finds are rare: only recently a location of 4th-century pottery in Zeeland came to light near Aagtekerke on Walcheren indicating some exploitation of the already decaying landscape⁵⁷. A direct link between the sanctuary or emporium near the coast and the two gold finds discussed above seems improbable: they were retrieved on agrarian land outside this old centre of Domburg-Oostkapelle. One could hypothesize that the gold objects were deposited behind the coastal barrier of dunes in an area of natural beauty, places that were traditionally associated with a divine presence. The famous gold-plated »Peel helmet« found at Helenaveen, near current Deurne (prov. Noord-Brabant/NL) is such a case. After its discovery in 1911, it was thought that the Peel helmet, found together with a crossbow brooch, spurs, coins, and shoes, was lost by a Roman cavalryman who met a dramatic death by drowning in a peat bog⁵⁸. New analysis revealed that the helmet was wrapped in a leather bag and that several shoes of different size were present, leading to the hypothesis that a Roman soldier had deposited a collection of his gear in a wet place in the landscape, probably as a gift for the gods⁵⁹.

Another possibility that should be considered is the presence of a Late Roman fortification at or near the coast of present-day Veere. A Late Roman document, the *Notitia Dignitatum*, tells us about the military defence of the Saxon Shore (*litus Saxonicum*), in the form of troops and forts on both sides of the English Channel⁶⁰. The fort excavated near the Flemish town of Oudenburg (prov. West-Vlaanderen/B) is attributed to the *litus Saxonicum*⁶¹ and it is quite possible that there were other forts in present-day Zeeland that were also part of the chain. Robert van Dierendonck believes that there may have been a military fortification at Oranjezon (mun. Veere; prov. Zeeland/NL), a few kilometres to the east of Domburg⁶².

Whether the deposition of gold jewellery was connected to a military fortification of the *litus Saxonicum* or should be explained as the ritual act of travelling military officers wishing to thank the gods for their safe passage, it is now clear that there was activity in the coastal zone of Walcheren in the Late Roman period. And thanks to the inscription on the neck ring of Veere, we know that one of the visitors brought a gold neck ring that was manufactured in a Roman workshop, most likely for presentation to a Roman military officer or high official.

SUPPLEMENTARY DATA

pXRF measurements of the neck ring and comparative dataset of coins is available for download: <https://web.rgzm.de/fileadmin/AK/2019-1/Heeren-Deckers.pdf>

Table 1 is the list of artefacts analysed; **table 2** contains the pXRF measurement values in net intensities per element, after deconvolution; **table 3** shows the Rh-normalized values for selected elements from **table 2**, as used for further analysis.

Acknowledgements

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and **7** were kindly provided by the National Museum of Antiquities, Leiden. – Prof.dr. Johan Van Heesch (Brussels) allowed access to the collections of the Coin Cabinet of the Royal Library of Belgium. – Dr. Thomas Birch (UrbNet, Aarhus University) advised on the interpretation of the compositional analysis. – The pXRF device used in this study was funded through a Hercules Foundation project granted to Prof.dr. Philippe Claeys and Prof.dr. Karin Nys (Vrije Universiteit Brussel). – Annette Visser checked the English. – Finally, we would like to thank drs. Robert van Dierendonck (Stichting Cultureel Erfgoed Zeeland, Middelburg), dr. Fraser Hunter (National Museums of Scotland), as well as the reviewers dr. D. Quast, prof. dr. C. von Carnap-Bornheim and dr. Matthias Becker for their comments on an earlier version of this paper. Any remaining mistakes are of course entirely the responsibility of the authors.

Notes

- 1) www.portable-antiquities.nl/pan/#/object/public/10398 (15.3.2019).
- 2) van Dierendonck 2012, 43. 55.
- 3) Vos/van Heeringen 1997.
- 4) Dijkstra/Zuidhoff 2011.
- 5) Jansen 1852. – Pleyte 1877. – Quast 2009
- 6) Waterbolk/Glasbergen 1955. – Quast 2009.
- 7) Pleyte 1877. – Waterbolk/Glasbergen 1955. – Quast 2009.
- 8) Berghaus 1986.
- 9) Waterbolk/Glasbergen 1955.
- 10) *Ibidem* 97.
- 11) Heidinga 1990, 14-16.
- 12) Janiszewski 2012.
- 13) Werner 1980. – Hardt 2004. – Janiszewski 2012. – Quast 2013.
- 14) Quast 2013, 176.
- 15) Quast 2009, 211-212.
- 16) Waterbolk/Glasbergen 1955, 92.
- 17) Quast 2009, 214.
- 18) *Ibidem* 215 with references.
- 19) Martin 1984; 1988. – Klose 2006.
- 20) The measurements were collected with a Bruker Tracer IV, at 40kV and 15µA. Spot measurements measuring approx. 8mm×10mm, with a duration of 90s, were taken at three distinct points on the neck ring, and two points on each of the coins. Measurements were subsequently deconvoluted and Rh-normalized. All measurements were withheld for this exploratory analysis; in other words, measurements were not averaged by item.
- 21) e.g. Orfanou/Rehren 2015; Wouters 2012.
- 22) Gondonneau/Guerra/Barrandon 1996. – Guerra/Calligaro 2004. – Guerra/Rehren 2009. – Gorghinian et al. 2013.
- 23) Craddock/Bowman 1990, 282.
- 24) e.g. Guerra/Rehren 2009, 153
- 25) Callu et al. 1985, tab. IV.
- 26) Yeroulanou 1999.
- 27) Guerra/Calligaro 2004, 1204-1207.
- 28) Callu et al. 1985, fig. 15.
- 29) Popović 2013.
- 30) Hartley/Dickinson 2008-2012, *passim*.
- 31) Martin 1984. – Popović 2013.
- 32) Janiszewski 2012.

- 33) Quast 2013, 183.
 34) CIL III 6331.
 35) Popović 2013.
 36) Hendy 1987, 386-394.
 37) Cf. Beyeler 2015, 253.
 38) CIL VI 9641.
 39) Beyeler 2015, 254.
 40) Halsall 2007, 105.
 41) Popović 2013. – Beyeler 2015, 253-254.
 42) Werner 1980.
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Zusammenfassung / Summary / Résumé

Ein spätrömischer Goldhalsring mit Inschrift aus Walcheren (prov. Zeeland/NL)

Ein spätrömischer Goldhalsring mit Inschrift wurde 2016 in Veere, Teil der ehemaligen Insel Walcheren, gefunden. Die Inschrift lässt sich als VICTORINVSFVIMB lesen und als »von Victorinus hergestellt, mit einem Gewicht von 6 Unzen, bestellt (oder kontrolliert) von MB« interpretieren, wobei MB *Ministrator Barbaricariae* bedeuten könnte: Meister der Werkstatt für Geschenke in das Barbaricum (Gold- und Silberschmuck und -gefäße) und/oder Waffen. Ausweislich stilistischer Parallelen und vergleichbarer Inschriften auf anderen Objekten sowie der Legierung, die Münzgold aus der Zeit von 220-346 ähnelt, datiert das Stück in die erste Hälfte des 4. Jahrhunderts. Die Daten zur Legierung wurden am Ring und an 25 Goldmünzen zum Vergleich mit einem portablen XRF-Scanner erhoben. Die Entdeckung des Halsringes lenkt unsere Aufmerksamkeit auf die spätrömischen Aktivitäten an der Zeeländischen Küste, die bisher nicht geklärt waren, und bezieht die bisher magere Fundlage mit ein. Übersetzung: M. Struck

A Late Roman Gold Neck Ring with Inscription from Walcheren (prov. Zeeland/NL)

In 2016, a Late Roman gold neck ring with inscription was found in Veere, part of the former island of Walcheren. The inscription reads VICTORINVSFVIMB and is interpreted as »made by Victorinus, weighing 6 ounce, ordered (or controlled) by MB«, which might mean *Ministrator Barbaricariae*, the master of the workshop where barbarian gift items (gold and silver jewellery and vessels) and/or weapons were made. The object is dated to the first half of the 4th century, based on stylistic parallels and comparable inscriptions on other artefacts, as well as on the alloy composition, which resembles monetary gold of the period 220-346. Data on the composition of the object results from pXRF measurement of the neck ring and 25 gold coins as a comparison. The discovery of the neck ring draws our attention to Late Roman activity at the Zeeland coast, which was unclear until now, but ties in with scanty evidence gathered before.

Un torque en or fin romain avec inscription de Walcheren (prov. Zeeland/NL)

En 2016, une bague en or romaine tardive inscrite a été découverte à Veere, part de la vieille île de Walcheren. L'inscription se lit VICTORINVSFVIMB et est interprétée comme étant »fabriquée par Victorinus, pesant 6 onces, commandée (ou contrôlée) par MB«, ce qui pourrait signifier *Ministrator Barbaricariae*, le maître de l'atelier où étaient fabriqués les cadeaux barbares (bijoux et objets en or et argent) et/ou les armes. L'artefact est daté de la première moitié du 4^e siècle, sur la base de parallèles stylistiques et d'inscriptions comparables sur d'autres objets, ainsi que sur la composition de l'alliage, qui ressemble à l'or monétaire de la période 220-346. Les données sur la composition de l'artefact proviennent de la mesure pXRF du torque et de 25 pièces d'or à titre de comparaison. La découverte de ce torque attire notre attention sur l'activité de la fin de l'époque romaine sur la côte zélandaise, qui n'était pas claire jusqu'à présent, mais qui complète bien les rares indices recueillis auparavant. Traduction: L. Bernard

Schlüsselwörter / Keywords / Mots clés

Niederlande / Völkerwanderungszeit / Spätantike / Gold / Statussymbol

Netherlands / Migration Period / Late Antiquity / gold / status symbol

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