



Roman and early-medieval routes in north-western Europe: modelling national and international frequent-travel zones in the Netherlands using a multi-proxy approach.

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The end of the Roman period in many parts of north-western Europe coincided with severe population decline and collapsing trade routes. To what extent the long-distance transport routes changed from Roman to early-medieval periods and what their exact nature was, is generally unknown. Only few historical sources are available for this period, and archaeological records complex. Traditionally, research on the long-distance exchange of goods therefore generally has focussed on the spatial analyses of archaeologically recognizable goods (e.g. jewellery, religious artefacts). Although these endeavours greatly increase our understanding of long-distance trade networks, they probably in itself do not represent the full spectrum of common exchange networks and transport routes.

By using a dendroarchaeological approach we were able to analyse long-distance transport routes of imported timber in the Roman and early-medieval Netherlands. By combining the provenance of exogenous timbers with data on modelled Roman and early-medieval route networks, we were able to reconstruct: (a) Roman and early-medieval trade networks in structural timbers, (b) changing transport routes in structural timbers and (c) model spatially shifting frequent-travel zones in the research area.