

Distribution maps are an important ~~analytical~~-tool for analytical studies of early medieval cemeteries and burial archaeology; ~~and this book contains a considerable number of them.~~ The simplest type of distribution map ~~shows marks~~ the distribution of a certain type of object over a specific area. Analysing these maps is not ~~a straightforward affair; since the~~ interpretation of distribution patterns largely depends on the interpreter's ~~suppositions of the interpreter.~~

Geibig, for instance, created distribution maps of very narrowly defined sword types.<sup>1</sup> His supposition was that identical swords were ~~made-produced~~ in a single workshop and that consequently, the distribution map showed the 'market area' of that workshop. He assumed that ~~the workshops~~ producing a particular type of sword were ~~located in the area where~~ which had the densest distribution of that type was most densely distributed.

Others use distribution maps to reconstruct movements of ethnic groups and persons, ~~that can be~~ identified on the basis of identical objects.<sup>2</sup> They assume that specific types of objects represent specific ethnic identities and that ~~the object~~ distribution ~~of the objects~~ is due to migration. The ~~distribution-presence~~ of certain artefacts in graves should thus ~~show pinpoint~~ where people with a corresponding ~~particular~~ ethnic identities ~~were buried.~~ A variation on this method ~~utilises~~ the distribution of specific weapon combinations ~~of weapons~~ in graves to illustrate the Frankish 'conquest' or ~~Frankish~~ establishment of power in sixth century northern Gaul.<sup>3</sup>

Yet others use the maps to illustrate exchange routes and even the presence of trade as a dominant form of exchange. All these and other suppositions and interpretations ~~have contain~~ their advantages and flaws.<sup>4</sup> One of the major flaws is that distribution maps almost never include an indication of the context in which the object was found. ~~Is it~~ The context could ~~have been~~ a grave, ~~an~~ element of a settlement, ~~a~~ deposition in the landscape, ~~a~~ stray find, ~~or a~~ river find.<sup>5</sup> ~~Another flaw is that~~ Also, such maps direct attention towards the areas where the objects are found. ~~Interpreting the e~~ Empty areas ~~is are~~ neglected, ~~even though an~~ ~~interpretation explaining of the an~~ object's ~~presence-absence should also~~ is as important as ~~explain interpreting its~~ ~~absence~~ presence. Focussing on ~~the~~ empty areas might ~~provoke spur~~ ~~other alternative~~ interpretations of the distribution pattern.<sup>5</sup> Périn interprets the absence of 'Frankish' swords in the oldest Frankish kingdoms ~~as to be~~ a result of the emigration of

<sup>1</sup> Geibig 1991.

<sup>2</sup> On this debate, see Brather 2004; Theuvs 2009.

<sup>3</sup> See for instance, Périn (1997, 77), who departs from the (unproven) identification of swords of type 'Krefeld-Gellep' and those decorated with garnets, such as 'Frankish' swords. Alternative explanations are possible; see for instance Theuvs/Alkemade 2000.

<sup>4</sup> Dierkens/Périn 2005.

<sup>5</sup> See note 5, and ~~for instance~~ Theuvs/Alkemade 2000 and Theuvs 2009, for instance.

aristocrats to foreign territories.<sup>6</sup> Many distribution maps depend on the presence of cemeteries with grave goods and thus on a specific burial ritual. ~~If there are hardly any cemeteries in a region, the distribution maps of the Merovingian period will show empty areas.~~ A good distribution map should ~~thus~~ show the probability ~~that of~~ objects of that type ~~can be~~ found in a particular region. ~~In simple terms: if there are hardly any cemeteries in a region the distribution maps of the Merovingian period will show empty areas.~~ Referencing Geibig ~~once more, to come back to this example, we note that he~~ took little account of the different types of depositions in his analyses. In ~~the north of~~ Germany, ~~the~~ early swords are found in rivers, while in the south they occur almost exclusively in graves.<sup>7</sup> An analysis of their distribution patterns should certainly ~~take into account the~~ ~~consider deposition~~ type ~~of deposition.~~<sup>8</sup> This criticism does not mean that distribution maps should be discarded as an instrument of archaeological analyses, but ~~we should evaluate and change~~ ~~that~~ our techniques and interpretations ~~should be evaluated and altered where necessary.~~

We will first discuss the necessary changes in techniques. ~~Currently it~~ is ~~currently~~ customary to present the distribution of certain types of objects against a simple blind map showing only rivers and middle and high mountain ranges. In the future, the background of distribution maps should at least include all locations of relevant sites, such as cemeteries, that date to the period of the mapped object. Finds from different ~~context~~ types ~~of contexts~~ should be indicated with distinct symbols. In addition, the background of the map should indicate variation in the intensity of archaeological research, to allow an estimation of whether absence of evidence should be considered evidence of ~~absence~~. However, the data necessary for creating such backgrounds is usually not available. It is surprising to see how few usable ~~excavation~~ inventories ~~of excavations have been made~~ ~~were created~~ for different parts of north-western Europe.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, these are not ~~brought together~~ ~~compiled~~ in a single ~~database~~. This means that ~~quite an~~-intensive research effort is needed just to improve the analytical value and reliability of distribution maps. The Anastasis project aims to create this overview for the Netherlands, and we hope ~~over the years~~ to ~~eventually~~ include Belgium

Comment [MRF1]: River finds will be ignored because they are considered random, as in footnote eight?

Comment [MRF2]: On the basis of information besides for grave finds, you mean? And there are no finds besides for cemetery and river finds. Doesn't this contradict what you said earlier about the various origin of finds not being indicated?

Comment [MRF3]: Cheek in tongue (joking) answer to question: Doh, people didn't carry their swords near rivers in the South. Responsibility, my friend!

Comment [MRF4]: I don't know if I understood exactly what you were trying to say in this footnote.

Comment [MRF5]: These are all very good ideas.

Comment [MRF6]: I'm surprised at that. You would think in our day and age all this information would already be shared.

<sup>6</sup> ~~This would mean~~ ~~Signifying~~ that no aristocrats were left in these kingdoms.

<sup>7</sup> Only on one map ~~is the difference between~~ graves and rivers ~~deposition is indicated~~ ~~differentiated~~ (Geibig 1991, Abb. 42).

<sup>8</sup> He ignores the practices behind river depositions ~~which determine the pattern~~ by excluding the supposed heathen practise of votive deposition in a Carolingian Christian world. Swords found in rivers are interpreted as accidental losses and thus represent a random distribution pattern of losses. Why then are there hardly any river finds in the south?

<sup>9</sup> Such recent inventories, ~~which include~~ sufficient data per cemetery to ~~make a soundly~~ ~~assessment~~ ~~of them~~, exist in some parts of Germany. ~~For instance:~~ Siegmund 1998; Plum 2003; Nieveler 2003; Nieveler 2006. An older one is, of course, Böhner 1958. Closer to our research area is the inventory of the ~~Belgianum~~ province of Limburg: Heymans 1978. They seem to be lacking in France and are absent in the Netherlands. One study ~~that comes~~ ~~closest~~ to this ideal is Knol 1993 for the northern dwelling mound area.

~~to~~as well. This database ~~has to~~must be connected to a GIS environment, with international coordinate systems.

~~Secondly~~ Aside for technique change, we ~~have to~~must ask question what interpretations can be made on the basis of distribution patterns without relying too heavily on unwarranted or ill-defined assumptions. ~~The answer~~Our response is to go back to basics. The distribution maps of objects dating to the Merovingian period usually show objects found in graves. Each dot ~~on the map~~ indicates that at some point in time ~~and~~ for some reason, ~~a person~~someone was buried with that type of object. ~~However~~ it is often neglected, ~~however~~, that ~~before prior to~~ deposition, ~~these~~ objects had a 'life' of their own in terms of production, distribution and use.<sup>10</sup> Some ~~of the~~ objects were produced locally, some in the wider region, and others ~~originate from far away in distant lands~~. Objects do not ~~move self-transport by themselves~~. They must have changed ~~several~~ hands ~~several times~~ between their ~~creation moment they were created~~ and ~~the time they were~~ deposited in the grave. Thus, the 'life trajectory' of an object ~~has contains~~ both a temporal and a spatial component. These dimensions were interconnected. They probably influenced the perceived value and meaning of an object and consequently the choice to deposit it in a grave. The creation and circulation of an object ~~is can~~ thus ~~not only~~ related ~~not only~~ to a disenchanting economic sphere where value is created on the basis of ~~input~~ during the production process and because of the differences between supply and demand, but also because the object is related to the persons ~~and their statuses~~ who ~~held~~ possessing the object in its life time ~~and their statuses~~.<sup>11</sup> Consequently, the movement of an object through space and time is also a movement in social-political-ideological space.<sup>12</sup>

A sound interpretation of distribution maps requires knowledge of several aspects of the object's life trajectories. We ~~have to~~must know where and when ~~it an object~~ was produced, how it was moved in space and what elements ~~determined~~ factored into the choice to deposit it in a grave. At this point we run into trouble interpreting Merovingian distribution maps. For a few types of objects, their exact place of production has been identified. In those cases, ~~we can form~~ some idea of the spatial component of its life trajectory ~~can be formed~~, although ~~it the object~~ need not have travelled in a straight line between the point of production and the point of deposition. For other types of objects (such as dated coins), ~~we know also~~ somewhat more of their temporal trajectories ~~is known~~. ~~Of~~ We do not know where and when most objects ~~we do not know where and when it was were~~ produced. A plethora of ~~practices~~ explanations ~~have been suggested~~ as to how they moved in space ~~have been suggested~~: trade,

Comment [MRF7]: I completely agree with this one. I'm a big un-fan of conjecture which then gets quoted and requoted until it makes its way into history books as fact.

Comment [MRF8]: This change was made to keep the phrasing in the sentence constant.

Comment [MRF9]: What do you mean by input? You mean, the fineness of the object?

Comment [MRF10]: This idea seems to be equally reasonable as the previous ideas you derided.

<sup>10</sup> This aspect was to some extent neglected by recent archaeology ~~that was~~ primarily geared to analysing ~~the~~ deposition ritual. However, recently Kars (2011) ~~asked for~~solicited a renewed interest in this aspect of the material culture found in cemeteries.

<sup>11</sup> There is ~~an~~ extensive literature on this subject. A source of inspiration was: Godelier 1999.

<sup>12</sup> Helms 1988; Kopytoff 1988; Bloch/Parry 1988; Godelier 1999 [1996]. Especially for the Early Middle Ages: Bazelmans 1999.

gifts, plunder, marriage gifts, etc.). ~~Moreover~~ Very little is known about the factors ~~that~~ determining the deposition pattern (such as gender and age). The strength of our interpretations is influenced significantly by the fact that objects need not have been deposited with equal density in the entire area where they circulated. For instance, deposition may be limited to certain regions, such as the periphery of power networks.

~~Do we have to wait for better times before we can use~~ Should archaeologists cease using distribution maps ~~again until they are more complete~~? Probably not, but we ~~do have to start~~ must begin asking new and better questions. The distribution of deposited objects ~~shown on a map~~ is not ~~just merely~~ a reflection of their combined spatial and temporal life trajectories. ~~It also~~ They are also the result of ~~shows~~ a mental ~~aspect~~ process, namely the ~~that~~ minimal extent of the area where this type of object was considered socially acceptable material culture. The time ~~that passes~~ between the introduction of a new type of material culture's introduction and its wide acceptance can be astonishingly short. A prime example can be found in the iron belt sets ~~that were~~ distributed over quite-large areas of western Europe at the end of the sixth century, especially ~~the~~ belts with fittings of the so-called Bülach type.<sup>13</sup> The latter seem to have spread over north-western Europe within a period of 10 years. This process has two aspects: the physical movement of the belt fittings through time and space, and their mental acceptance as a 'proper' way of dressing. We ~~have to~~ must ask how such rapid acceptance of a new type of object was possible in a pre-modern society where there was no ~~marketing~~. This is a good example of novel questions and avenues for research ~~that are~~ prompted by distribution maps.

Another worthwhile avenue of research ~~is to~~ would identify the various individuals involved in the 'life trajectories' of objects and ~~establish what~~ their role in the trajectory ~~was~~. Several authors have proposed models for various modes of ~~object~~ exchange, ~~of objects~~ Steuer, for instance, assumes that the movement of objects in early medieval society was a ~~top-trickle~~ down process.<sup>14</sup> Objects moved down the social scale.<sup>15</sup> Peasants and dependent people received their objects from lords who in turn obtained them from (supra-regional) traders. This model tallies to some extent with what was recently proposed by Wickham, ~~who~~ considers elite demand ~~as~~ the motor of the early medieval economy.<sup>16</sup> In view of the substantial number of non-local objects ~~found in rural graves~~, ~~found in rural cemeteries~~ this point of view is difficult to maintain for the Merovingian period. The cemetery evidence suggests ~~otherwise that~~: on the contrary, rural populations seem to have created an enormous demand for goods. Peasants were not the passive receivers of objects but ~~were most~~ likely actively involved in their ~~procurement~~. ~~The Cemetery~~ distribution maps ~~of the cemetery~~

Comment [MRF11]: What is a power network and why would you assume this?

Comment [MRF12]: Maybe the belts were just very practical, or weren't that different from what preceded it?

Comment [MRF13]: Is an evil guy who seduces 16 year old girls (Austen).

Comment [MRF14]: I love this word

<sup>13</sup> Werner 1953.

<sup>14</sup> Steuer 1997.

<sup>15</sup> This model seems to be inspired by the 'prestige goods economy' model. See for instance Friedman/Rowlands 1977.

<sup>16</sup> Wickham 2005.

~~evidence~~ invite us to reconsider a topic of great importance for early medieval Europe: ~~peasant~~ agency, ~~and~~ economic agency in particular. Distribution maps ~~thus show~~ reveal an important element of peasant life: rural populations had access to supra-regional and even international exchange networks. ~~The~~ ~~We can now~~ question ~~is in what form~~ how this access was accomplished and who were involved. This probably varied ~~from place location~~ to ~~place location~~ and ~~from moment period~~ to ~~moment period~~. We should also ~~ask~~ inquire to what extent systems of exchange were fixed or closed, even institutionalised, or whether they were more open and fluid. Perhaps the Merovingian economy shared some characteristics with what is called the eclectic economy in the Amazon basin.<sup>17</sup> These questions cannot be answered on the basis of the Bergeijk cemetery alone, but ~~it is an excellent case to~~ introduce ~~the~~ world of connections around such a cemetery ~~is very relevant~~.

Comment [MRF15]: Aka regular people like us. ☺ (Post Communist revolution preoccupation with the plebeian)

Comment [MRF16]: Moment means very small amount of time- ie, one moment the vase is tottering on the edge of the table; the next moment it crashes. (The next moment, an archaeologist is trying to figure out how it got there and whether it signifies house decoration and hosting parties. And whether perhaps it was brought to the funeral by those who had admired the deceased's decorating taste. Or whether perhaps the vase never contained flowers at all. Perhaps the vase was used for purposes of collecting rocks the children had gathered and thus was a symbol of the importance of family, or perhaps continuity and regeneration. Or maybe it symbolized a strained and volatile marriage, since it was in pieces and on the floor, after all.)

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### **The burial community of the Bergeijk cemetery and its networks**

In chapter six, several simple distribution maps of specific types of objects were given. It is worthwhile to reproduce them here ~~and with~~ commentary ~~on them~~. In view of what has been said above, I consider the distribution patterns presented first and foremost as an indication of where these types of objects were deposited. However, for most of these object types, ~~it can be supposed that~~ the area of circulation ~~can be supposed to have been~~ is more or less identical to the area of deposition.<sup>18</sup> It is difficult to determine whether these objects circulated through trade, gift-exchange, or along with people, ~~who migrating~~ in the context of ~~or~~ marriage-alliances, ~~or~~ relations of dependency, ~~and or~~ the creation of new estates. Theft and plunder cannot be excluded, but probably did not play an important ~~part role~~, given the common nature and wide availability of the objects in question. The distribution patterns presented are those of the 'Ophoven type' ~~of~~ belt, large ear rings, disk fibulae, glass beakers, and small pottery beakers. We ~~think assume~~ that these types of objects were ~~probably not made produced~~ locally ~~and that their location of production is even outside their even~~ regionally, although some ~~of them~~ could have been made in the Meuse valley.

Although ~~only a few~~ maps are available, a number of interesting observations can be made. In my view, ~~three~~ ~~four~~ different exchange networks ~~of people, objects, and ideas~~ can be detected in these maps, ~~for people, objects and ideas~~. First, there is a network of exchange connecting regions along the Middle and Lower Meuse, ~~which is~~ illustrated by the distribution of 'Ophoven type' ~~of~~ belts (fig. 14.1). This type of belt was most likely made somewhere along the Meuse. ~~The belts were and was~~ buried in the graves of women, perhaps young women. None of the other illustrated distribution patterns show this network, but we can be fairly

Comment [MRF17]: You list four networks.

Comment [MRF18]: I first thought you were going to point out a separate exchange network for people, objects, and ideas.

<sup>17</sup> Theuws in prep e.

<sup>18</sup> This supposition is based on the nature of the objects. They are quite common objects (with the exception of ~~the grave 30's~~ glass beaker ~~in grave 30~~). As ~~said stated~~ above, it is possible that exceptional and quite unique objects, such as the early swords, were deposited in areas smaller than their circulation areas.

certain that most of the pottery and wooden vessels in the Bergeijk cemetery circulated in a network of this size or even smaller.

Second, there is the network of the Rhine and lower Moselle valleys, ~~that is~~ illustrated by the distribution of large ear rings (fig. 14.2). The Bergeijk specimen, together with ~~those of~~ Dommelen's, are the westernmost examples (nrs 2 and 43). This could indicate that the Rhine-Moselle network reached just as far as the Kempen region, or the *pagus* Texandrië, as the region was called in early medieval times. Along the Rhine, it may have reached a bit further north. It is too early to comment further on this network, ~~further~~ but it is probably no coincidence that just one or two decades later, aristocrats ~~who own~~ ~~ing~~ landed property in the *pagus* Texandrie donated it to the abbey of Echternach.<sup>19</sup> This abbey was part of the sphere of influence of Plectrud, Pippin II's wife, and ~~of~~ Adela of Pfalzel, whose geographical spheres of influence ~~is~~ ~~are~~ very similar to the area in which the earrings are found.<sup>20</sup> The distribution pattern of ear-rings, and, as we will see when studying the graves finds of Dommelen and Geldrop, ~~those of~~ other objects ~~too~~ ~~as well~~, may thus reflect a Rhine/Moselle based network in which objects and people circulated.<sup>21</sup> ~~These~~ ~~o~~ ~~Objects~~ ~~that are~~ characteristic for the network are all found in women's graves. This distribution pattern could have resulted from trade, but could also have come about through the movement of women ~~exchanged in marriage relation~~ ~~travelling for marriage~~ or through the (~~perhaps~~ forced?) migration of dependent people by the aristocrats in the network.<sup>22</sup> Most likely, a combination of all these factors is involved.

The third are the networks of the Middle and Upper Meuse and Upper Moselle valley and north-western France. These networks are well illustrated by the distribution of disk fibulae ~~with bearing~~ a bird motif ~~ve~~ (fig. 14.3). These fibulae are almost all found west of the distribution area of large earrings.<sup>23</sup> They also seem to indicate that a north-south route along the Meuse and upper Moselle valleys is part of this network. ~~Perhaps~~ ~~t~~ ~~his~~ ~~may be~~ ~~is~~ evidence for the supposed long distance trade network from Marseille to the north along the Rhone, Saône, Moselle and Meuse valleys. These fibulae, ~~too~~, are normally found in women's graves. The same network is also reflected by the distribution of small pottery beakers (fig. 14.4). This distribution pattern extends from Bergeijk, ~~which is~~ the northernmost example, to Dijon,

Comment [MRF19]: Why? Because belts were distributed, then so were pottery and wooden vessels? Also, similar pottery or wooden vessels were found along this same Middle and Lower Meuse?

Comment [MRF20]: Footnote: Mayen/Mayan?

Comment [MRF21]: Showing that women are far more easily influenced than men to adopt new fashions. :/

<sup>19</sup> Theuws 1991.

<sup>20</sup> See the map in Werner 1980, 161. Adela is often supposed to be a sister of Plectrud, but Werner concludes that the evidence is not strong enough to consider this an established fact.

<sup>21</sup> See also the distribution map of Mayen pottery (Brather/Wotzka 2006, 209 based on the work by Redknap 1999) and certain types of glass beakers (Brather/Wotzka 2006, 209 based on the work by Maul 2002).

<sup>22</sup> The ~~latterst mentioned~~ solution does not ~~mean~~ ~~connote~~ that ~~the~~ women ~~who had~~ ~~buried with~~ these earrings necessarily obtained them from these aristocrats.

<sup>23</sup> Brather (2008, 245, Abb. 1) also used this type of fibula to oppose eastern and western distribution areas of fibulae.

~~in~~ France, in the south. Other examples of such beakers are found in north-western France. ~~Only v~~Very few are found along the Rhine.

The fourth network is illustrated by the distribution of glass bag beakers. It combines the region discussed ~~above~~ with a network that extended to the east to England, more specifically, Kent.<sup>24</sup> Vessels of this type are found in England, ~~in~~ the Baltic, and on the continent (fig. 14.5). This distribution could have been determined by trade networks ~~that us~~ing such ports as Domburg.<sup>25</sup> However, ~~the~~ globular beakers with ~~an~~ identical decoration patterns have a different distribution pattern ~~that~~ resembles that of ~~the~~ disk fibulae and small pottery beakers. The fact that a globular beaker was also found in the Putten cemetery ~~is an~~ indication that this network stretched further ~~to the north~~ than ~~is revealed~~ exhibited by the distribution of disk fibulae and pottery beakers. Perhaps the middle Meuse valley connects these north-south and east-west networks. The glass vessels are not associated with a specific gender.

Comment [MRF22]: Do you mean the Middle and Upper Meuse and Upper Moselle valley and north-western France?

### Interpreting the networks

After having described a number of distribution patterns ~~that~~ indicating the presence of various networks, it is time to interpret them. When looking at a large scale map, the lack of disk fibulae with a bird motif ~~ve~~ in the Rhine valley (figure 14.3) is probably true evidence of absence, since there are ~~plenty of numerous~~ excavated cemeteries in the ~~region~~. ~~At On~~ a smaller scale of for instance map figure 14.1, the absence/presence of cemeteries determines the distribution pattern of belt sets significantly, since large areas of the map are entirely empty of cemeteries. This should have been indicated on the map, but the data does not ~~yet~~ allow ~~us to do this yet for this~~. The patterns observed ~~at on~~ the large scale indicate that two major networks existed, that of the Meuse/Upper Moselle valley and that of the Rhine/Lower Moselle valley. New maps with distribution patterns of other types of objects will probably show ~~that~~ many objects ~~only~~ circulating ~~only~~ within one of these networks. It does not seem constructive to interpret such networks as 'Kulturmodelle West und Ost' with an ethnic background.<sup>26</sup> Within these areas the variability in material culture, burial rites and settlement patterns is so great that ~~it is not valid to suggest~~ homogeneity ~~is not a valid suggestion~~. ~~Instead of assuming static homogeneity it is more apt to s~~Stressing the dynamics of connections, movement and mobility ~~which~~ resulting in these distribution patterns ~~would be more apt~~.

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Comment [MRF23]: Didn't you say that cemeteries are not the only source?

Comment [MRF24]: What is not indicated on the map? Absence of cemeteries? And if you know that, then how does the data prevent you from filling it in?

By now we can identify several networks with differing spatial scopes. Some have a rather restricted circulation area, while others, ~~such as that of the Rhine and Lower Moselle valleys~~, are larger ~~(such as that of the Rhine and Lower Moselle valleys)~~. However, certain types of

<sup>24</sup> See also Hugget 1988.

<sup>25</sup> Domburg: Jankuhn 1958; Verhulst 1999, 41-42, 46-47, 51. See also various contributions in Van Heeringen/Henderikx/Mars 1995.

<sup>26</sup> Siegmund 2000, whose model received serious critique by Brather/Wotzka 2006.

objects circulate in all of these networks. These objects ~~with a widely~~ distribution are exotics, such as amethyst beads, amber beads, cowry shells, crystal balls, garnets, etc. ~~Most likely~~ ~~the~~ distribution of these objects ~~most likely~~ resulted ~~eds~~ from a combination of long distance trade and circulation in the exchange networks discussed here. The Bülach type belt sets also circulated between multiple networks. ~~To understand~~ ~~ing how they were~~ exchanged between networks ~~requires it is necessary to~~ knowing whether ~~the objects they~~ were all produced in one location or in several places. For each of these options we ~~have to~~ ~~must~~ create a model of exchange ~~that~~ explaining ~~s~~ the distribution pattern. We also ~~have to~~ ~~must~~ explain how the concept of the 'Bülach type belt' was distributed and how it became widely ~~accepted~~. As indicated before, ~~it is likely that~~ besides objects and people, ~~it is likely that~~ ideas also circulated ~~in~~ these networks. Unfortunately, the mechanisms behind these exchanges remain largely unknown.

What is surprising is that *all* the categories of objects discussed above are encountered in rural cemeteries, even in relatively small ones such as Bergeijk. This means that the objects ~~that were~~ exchanged between networks were not restricted to an upper class of aristocrats, but were available to a large part of the population. Moreover, the maps provide the minimal variant of the distribution and circulation.

~~One could draw up a~~ model of exchange in which long distance trade connected the various networks described above ~~could be produced~~. In this model, however, various agents are responsible for the exchange and distribution of objects. ~~This includes~~ not ~~just only~~ traders and aristocrats, but also peasants.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, locally and regionally produced objects were introduced in these networks and were 'exported' through long distance trade.<sup>28</sup> In addition to trade, a host of other exchange mechanisms were probably involved in the distribution of the objects. In contrast to past models, I suggest that the contacts between ~~the~~ various networks were not restricted to controlled entry points such as elite dominated ports of trade or gateway communities, but that ~~there was~~ a more eclectic system of exchange ~~existed~~. In this eclectic system it was possible for members of *all* social ~~layers-strata~~ to participate as active agents and not ~~just merely~~ as passive receivers of goods. In this line of thought, emporia like Dorestat may in later times have originated as ideologically 'neutral' places where intercultural exchange could take place.<sup>29</sup> If that is so, the elite may not have ~~started begun~~ to tax ~~the~~ international trade in these places until a later period. In my model, the emporia were not elite or royal initiatives ~~with the purpose intending~~ to control the trade.<sup>30</sup>

Comment [MRF25]: Why must an object also come with a concept? What is so different or fascinating about a belt type that it needs to come with a concept? Why can't it just be a belt that people found useful/aesthetic/aristocratic/whatever?

<sup>27</sup> Theuws in prep. e.

<sup>28</sup> This poses the problem of the relation between 'petty commodity production' and exchange or non-agricultural household production and the wider economy (Nugent 1993, 176-198), usually ~~and to my opinion unjustly~~, formulated ~~(unjustly, in my opinion)~~ as town-countryside relations, ~~in archaeology~~.

<sup>29</sup> Theuws 2003, 2004.

<sup>30</sup> I will explore this line of thought further in a forthcoming article (Theuws in press e.).