

A TUMULUS AND AN URNFIELD AT MEERLO, PROV. LIMBURG

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In 1964 a tumulus, containing a Beaker of Veluvian type that accompanied a cremated interment was excavated at Meerlo. To the south of this tumulus, a circle of postholes was discovered in 1965. It represents the last relic of a levelled barrow. To the north of the tumulus with cremation, part of an urnfield with interrupted circular ditches had been constructed. The few urns may be dated to the HaC/D period. In the flint material, collected in and below the first tumulus, epi-Palaeolithic and Mesolithic traditions are present.

After completion of the publication of Tumulus I along the Postbaan at Meerlo¹, small investigations were carried out both to the north and south of the tumulus in 1965. From the information provided by Mr. Kessels of Meerlo, that formerly a little hill was situated on his field, an excavation of a small area east of the Postbaan was begun (fig. 1)². During the previous investigations of three quadrants, both in and below Tumulus I, flint material was found. Due

to the method of excavation, whose primary aim was a study of the barrow, it was impossible to give the collecting of the flint material the attention it deserved. This imperfection plus the fact that the total collection comprises 705 pieces,

1. Verwers, G. J. (1964): 'A Veluvian Bell Beaker with Remains of a Cremation in a Tumulus near Meerlo', *Analecta Praehistorica Leidensia*, I, pp. 17-24.
2. The excavations of 1965 stood under the daily supervision of Mr. C. Hoogendoorn and Mr. J. E. A. van Ruitenbeek, assistants to the Institute for Prehistory.

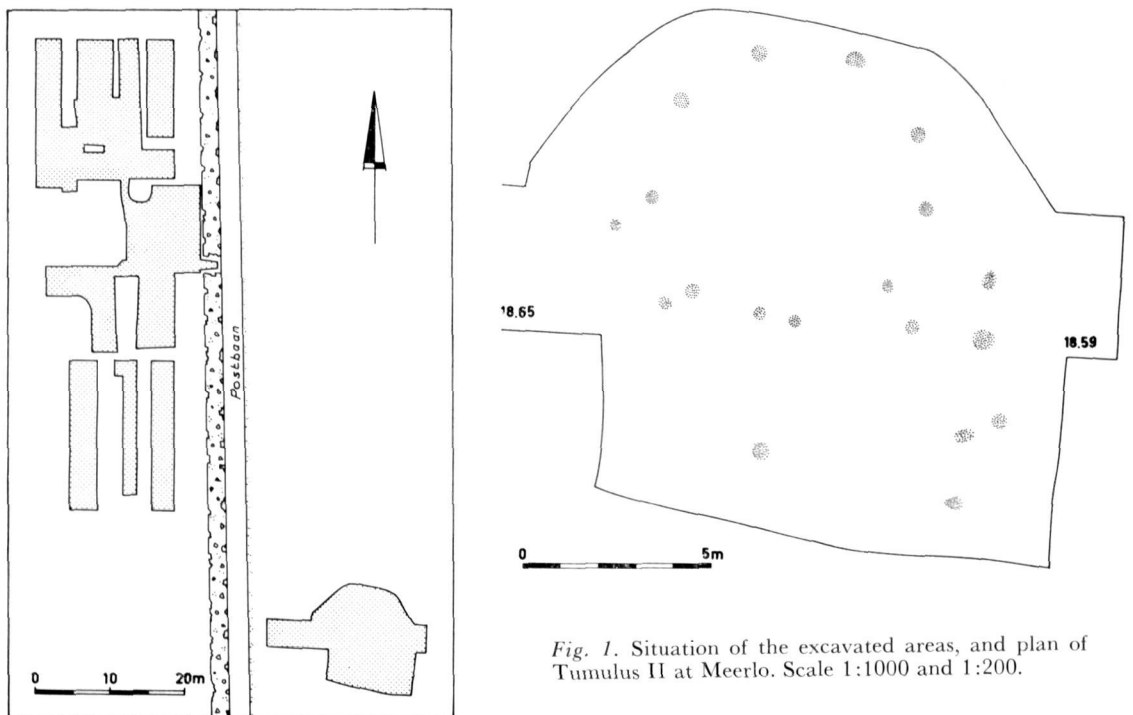


Fig. 1. Situation of the excavated areas, and plan of Tumulus II at Meerlo. Scale 1:1000 and 1:200.

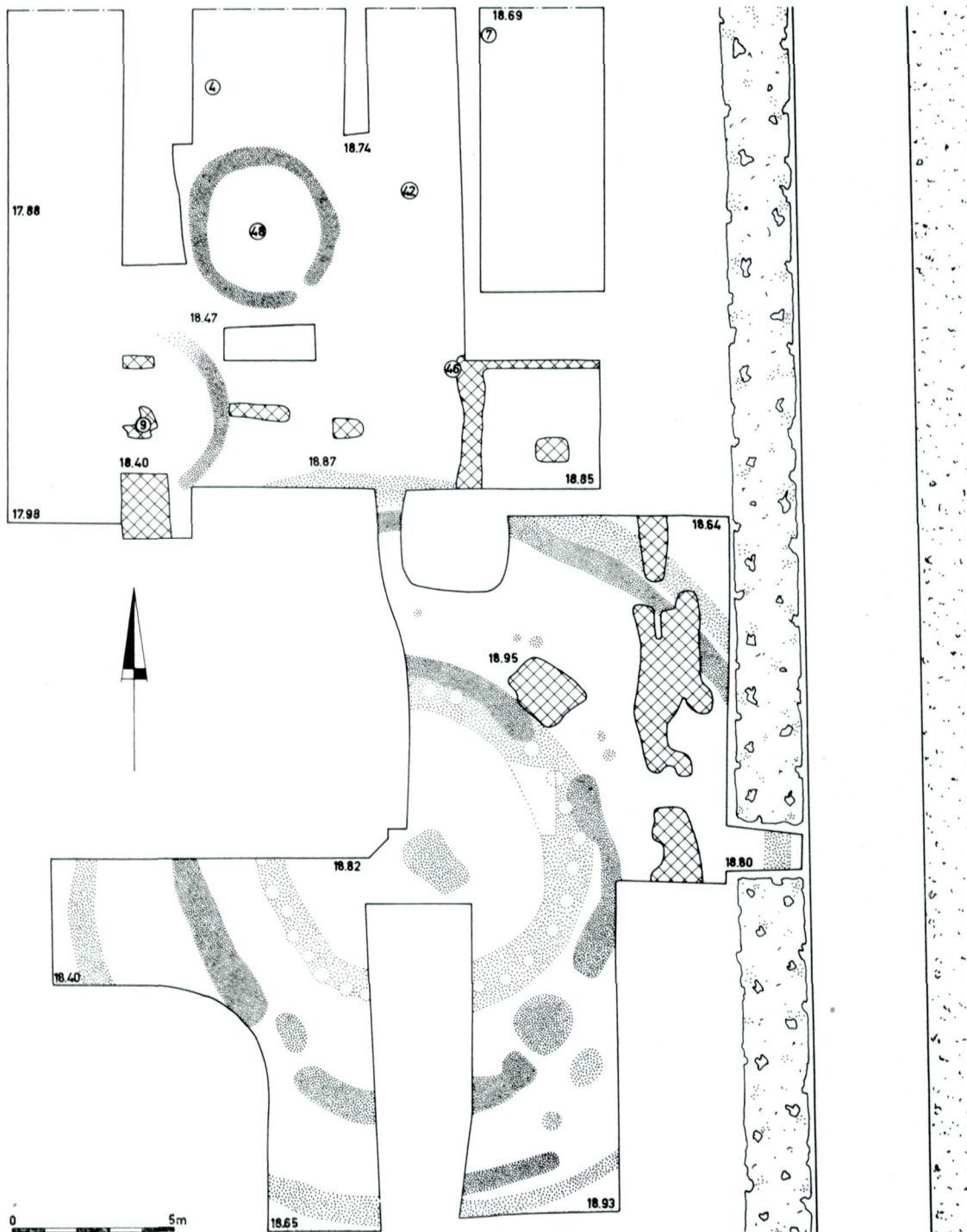


Fig. 2. Plan of Tumulus I and the Urnfield at Meerlo. Scale 1:200.

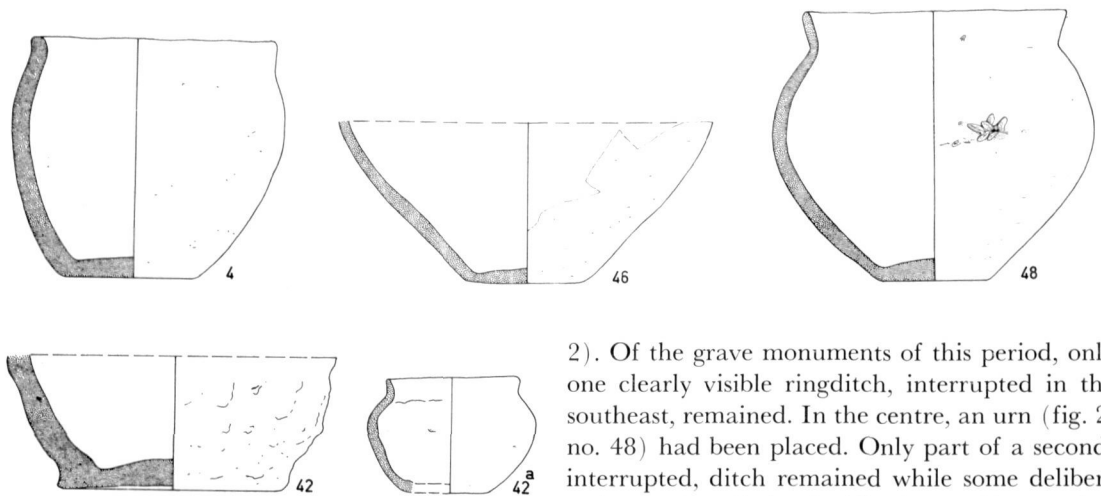


Fig. 3. Pottery from the Urnfield at Meerlo. Scale 1:4. of which only 73 are completed artifacts, makes definite statements rather perilous. Moreover this small number of artifacts very probably belongs to different periods. Being aware of these facts, Mr. J. P. Doets undertook the study of the material³. Besides clearly Mesolithic finds, he distinguishes an epi-Palaeolithic tradition in a number of objects. This last supposition might be supported by the presence of comparable material in the immediate neighbourhood.

About 50 meters to the southeast of Tumulus I, the remains of a levelled tumulus, Tumulus II, were investigated at a place indicated by Mr. Kessels. In the yellow sand below the dark topsoil, a few vague discolourations were interpreted as postholes. Ten of them stood in a regular circle with a diameter of 7.5 m. They are the last evidence for the existence of this barrow. In the southern part of the circle, two postholes close to one another might indicate a closed entrance. No trace of the interment was left.

Finally, small plots to the north and south of Tumulus I were investigated. Trial trenches in the southern area did not yield any information.

North of Tumulus I, the remains of an urnfield with circular ditches were discovered (fig.

3. We thank Mr. J. P. Doets at the Hague for his consent to publish a summary of his results.

4. For determination I am grateful to Dr. S. J. van Oostroom and Mr. J. H. Kern, State Herbarium at Leiden.

2). Of the grave monuments of this period, only one clearly visible ringditch, interrupted in the southeast, remained. In the centre, an urn (fig. 2, no. 48) had been placed. Only part of a second, interrupted, ditch remained while some deliberately roughened sherds (fig. 2, no. 9), together with fragments of cremated bone came from the disturbed center. From the same plot, parts of three more urns were collected, but these were not related to a monument (fig. 2, nos. 4, 42, 46). They can be dated to the Ha C/D-period.

During these investigations Mr. J. P. Boogerd prepared the drawings in the field; Mr. B. C. Dekker draughted the illustrations in this publication. The spontaneous and substantial support by the Municipality of Meerlo and its 'Burgemeester' Mr. M. J. A. R. Dittrich is gratefully acknowledged.

The finds from both excavations will be kept in the National Museum of Antiquities at Leiden.

Finds

Flint: Because of the limited size of the epi-Palaeolithic/Mesolithic flint-collection and the absence of a reasonable number of typical artifacts, no description will be given. Mention is made of a blade of Wommersom-quartzite ($138 \times 34 \times 8$ mm), discovered north of Tumulus I.

Pottery: The pottery of Tumulus I has previously been published. North of this tumulus some urns came to light;

(fig. 3, no. 4); handmade, clay tempered with pottery-grit, smooth surface, colour reddish brown, containing cremated bones.

(no. 42); handmade, pottery-grit, surface roughened, colour reddish brown, containing cremated bones.

(no. 42a); inside 42, handmade, smooth surface, colour reddish yellow/grayish brown.

(no. 46); handmade, pottery-grit, surface polished, colour dark brown, containing cremation.

(no. 48); handmade, little pottery-grit, surface very well polished, and then covered with a slip, colour black; when part of the surface came off, an extremely distinctive print of a fern-leaf was shown, which turned out to belong to *Pteridium aquilinum* (L) Kuhn⁴.