

Current Issues Relating to Medical Care in Roman Germania Inferior

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Introduction

The Roman Empire - one of the greatest civilizations in history - lasted for over 1000 years providing the basis to many parts of today's Europe. The Empire also offered a relatively good health care, not only to its citizens, but also to its soldiers, as the many archaeological artifacts testify. Artifacts are often found at the Empire's former border, also known as the Limes. The northern Limes of Germania Inferior was the river Rhine, especially its south-bank which was used as a commercial road too. However, until now, not all the remains of this Limes have been found back.

Objectives

Locating traces of the Roman Limes, on the Rhine's bank just downstream of the settlement of Albiniana (now Alphen aan den Rijn, The Netherlands), towards the village of Koudekerk aan den Rijn, to facilitate future searching for artifacts.

Research questions, material, and methods

As suggested by teacher, poet, alderman, and chair of Alphen aan den Rijn's Historical Society Rev. A. J. Dekker in 1961, we examined to what extent Zonneveld's claim (1968) : "former Alphen's Rhine must still have flowed in Roman times ... almost straightforwardly ... from Albiniana ... to Koudekerk" (7) is confirmed by historical cartography (1737-1944), ranging from maps for surveying, landscaping, and topographic-military purposes, to RAF aerial cartography. We took into account Van der Linden's 1982 analyses (8) of reclamations after Roman times, before 1000, but also the 2021 discovery of Roman artifacts along the Rhine's levee downstream of Koudekerk aan den Rijn.

Results

Starting from Zonneveld's 1968 statement and his 1942 drawing "Fig. 3b" (9), a HR 1944 RAF aerial photograph (11) overlay was inserted. The presumed southern arm of the River Rhine still existing in Roman times appears to have flowed into the Rhine-bed located at the area of the estate "Klein Raadwijk" and farm, known for its medieval basements. In 1850 still (10), its haughlands downstream are uninhabited. Lands beyond the adjacent farm downstream 'Langerooden' show broad conical patterns, suggesting that they were reclaimed in late periods.

Details of the 1944 aerial photograph show haughland-occupancy only slowly advancing during 100 years, starting from 1850 (10). Details of "Lagewaard" meadows (11) reveal irregular, broad and square patterns, typical for reclamations in the early 10th century (14). 1737 cartography (12) shows future "Klein Raadwijk" as "buiten Plaats van Erkelens" with Rhine levee "Hogen Rijn dijk" bending inland. Garden-design in 1802 (13) shows same area, with follies and fancy paths of its pleasure gardens, which are still partly recognizable in 1944. The 1737 unrevetted Rhine bank "roijenge onbeschoeijd" is almost on par with "Scheeps timmer Werff" shipyard slipways (cf. (15)) as in \pm 1900.

Conclusion

Cartography suggests the location of a silted Rhine arm and its Limes road, downstream of "Klein Raadwijk" and "Langerooden", Alphen aan den Rijn, The Netherlands.

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