

Thijs Maarleveld
 MARINE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH OFF THE ISLE OF TEXEL,
 THE NETHERLANDS, the 1987 and 1988 seasons

Since archaeology and the protection of the cultural heritage under water became a serious issue in the Netherlands, emphasis has been given to survey and on-site protection of the many historic shipwreck sites that have been discovered and reported in Dutch waters over the last few years. Two of the many discoveries in the Texel area have resulted in planned extended research by the research group of the Ministry of Culture. Work on the AANLOOP MOLENGAT site began in 1985, systematic surveying of the SCHEURRAK SO 1 has just begun. This last season the project was for the first time run as an international project for archaeology students. Started hesitantly this proved to be most stimulating and rewarding. For the 1988 season, those interested are invited to apply. Before going into the necessary detail a rough sketch is given of what the research is about and what the prevailing working conditions are.

AANLOOP MOLENGAT

Aanloop Molengat is the wrecksite of a cargo-carrier wrecked in the first half of the 17th Century. It is located to the West of the isle of Texel. The site is utterly exposed. Waterdepth is only 16 m and decreases rapidly inshore. In combination with the tidal situation this results in the rapid buildup of a seastate. Fieldwork is only possible in the best of weather-conditions. The main feature of the site consists of a 28m long, 8m wide wreck-mound of neatly stacked heavy cargo, mainly consisting of ingots and half-finished products, which consolidates the ship's bottom underneath, preserved to just above the bilges. The stratigraphy shows some spill of wreckage to the East. After a first survey in 1985 it was decided to fully document and to excavate. The 1986 season was basically used for preparations. A procedure was outlined in which high accuracy on-site documentation can be combined with highly limited bottom-time and little surface support. To that end a huge frame of steel piping was submerged around the wreck-mound. Besides delimiting the working area it serves as anchorage, as point of attachment for buoys, for the surface-demand breathing system and as guidance for a half-floating cross bar with rails for a camera-dolly. In 1986 we gained some experience in handling it and the first trial runs of vertical stereo-photographs were made.

In many ways the 1987 season was thus to be the first fully productive campaign and indeed it has been successfully so. Full photographic coverage of the site could be effectuated during a short period of good visibility. It comprises some 200 vertical stereopairs, arranged in a total of 19 rows set at right angles with the longitudinal axis of the site. These photographs were taken on 70mm film. In combination with elevation measurements from the Underwater Heightmeter they form the basis for digitizing the distribution and spatial relations of ship and cargo. A complete set of prints serves as preliminary masterplan of the site during fieldwork. It is on the basis of these prints that features are defined and receive their objectcode. It is also on the basis of these prints that the sequence of excavation and feature-registration is outlined. Excavation has started in

the southern part of the site. A first layer of cargo has been removed, leaving enough features to link the next photographic coverage with the first.

Besides assessment and processing of the field data contained in the photographs a start has been made with the processing of finds. Three categories of cargo-material receive particular attention during this winter: lead, tin and leather.

Lead is a significant part of the cargo. It comes in ingots that are roughly shaped like a quarter of a tub. Although most ingots share the same basic shape characteristics there is quite some variety in dimensions, in notches and in markings. Weights vary between 80 and 140 kilos. The source of lead remains to be identified.

Tin ingots have the shape of rough sheets that have been rolled and that are sealed with three stamps each. They are packed in barrels. The consignment is not very homogeneous in composition. In the material that has been excavated so far 18 different stamps have been identified, relating to different workshops or different assayers. Ingots of differing lengths and with different combinations of stamps occur in one and the same barrel. All relate to the mining district on the East German-Czechoslovakian border. Some of them are dated, thus giving the first firm clue for dating the wreck (dendrochronological analysis of a sample from the huge keel is on its way). Dates however fall as far apart as 1588 and 1630, most probably dating the manufacture of the stamp and not of the stamping.

Leather was stacked in the top layer of what was preserved. Two packages, each containing hundreds of hides have been lifted and are being treated at the Ketelhaven institute. The hides have been meticulously folded in bundles. The bundles have markings (tallies?) on them and have been packed so as to produce a square outer shape, 1.8 m long, 1.1 m wide and 0.8 m high. The packages were wrapped in matting. The leather itself was tanned prior to shipping but apparently the tanning process had not been very thorough and had to be resumed once the supply had reached its destination. Technical and biological analyses are on their way.

During the 1988 season documentation, excavation and finds and data processing will continue very much on the same lines. We hope the site will emerge as undamaged from its winter cover of sand as it did last year. It is planned to finish the fieldwork by 1990.

Scheurrak SO 1

Scheurrak SO 1 is the site of an armed vessel from the 16th century. It was discovered in a recent erosion zone. Apart from natural erosion recent interference seems to have been very limited. Some material, however was raised, firmly dating the shipwreck in the 1580's. The lay-out of onsite research is very different from that on Aanloop Molengat, due to great differences in prevailing conditions. The site is situated in the Texel roads, to the East of the island. At a depth of about 6 m it is a shallow site as well as being sheltered from (frequent) westerly

and northwesterly winds. Strong tidal currents however, and extremely limited visibility pose their own problems.

As 1987 was the first campaign, on-site work was chiefly aimed at mapping the visible remains, at probing and at coring a geological section. Visibility does not allow for photographic documentation. Mapping was done by tape-recorded trilateration in confined areas. Erosion had at the start of the season uncovered wreck material over an area of approximately 36 x 20 m. Highly fragile materials such as coils of rope were just swaying in the current. Natural deposition of sand was therefore encouraged with synthetic gauze netting in order to temporarily protect the site. The bottom-part of the ship rests upright, with some list to starboard. The port side is preserved to just above the bilge only, whereas the starboard side has collapsed. It is more or less flattened out and a considerable part of the upperworks seems to remain. At a keel length of over 26 m it certainly represents quite a substantial ship. As the stern-part of the vessel protruded over an erosion gully and could not effectively be protected it was sawn off and lifted during a special operation last October. It is currently being taken apart in the institute.

In 1988 we will continue interference with the site. On the one hand stabilizing areas that await future excavation, on the other hand excavating along the fringes of the site. The bow area will get special attention and structural fragments of the collapsed starboard side will be raised.

1988

All in all the 1988 season will see a whole range of different activities. As work on the two sites is possible in quite different weather conditions, the most can be made of the necessary equipment, manpower and logistics. The apparent differences of research on the two sites are still enhanced by the fact that at this stage of work the emphasis at Aanloop Molengat is more or less on the cargo whereas the Scheurrak SO 1 research concentrates on the remains of hull and upperworks. The team of volunteers will be recruited among diving archaeology students and will reside in a camp at the shore-base near the harbour of Oudeschild on the isle of Texel. It will be supplemented by local divers. Archaeology students that are interested are invited to write to the address below. Some diving experience beyond 3rd class level is required. Volunteers will be accepted for periods of four weeks or more. The season will run from 30th May to 2d September. Room and board will be provided (i.e. preferably one takes ones own tent; food is supplied, but meals will be cooked by turns). Thijs Maarleveld, Ministry of W.V.C., P.O.Box 5406, 2280HK Rijswijk, The Netherlands.

OBS OBS OBS Arkeologstuderter med dykcertifikat. Läs och skriv sedan gärna till Thijs Maarleveld. Detta är en mycket fin invitation och kanske början på ett holländskt/svenskt samarbete.