THE ANCESTORS NEARBY

The domestic and funerary landscape of Angelslo-Emmerhout

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Introduction
During the half decade leading up to Eric Lohof’s (1991) dissertation, he was one of the first to devote significant scientific attention to the rich burial record of the excavation at Angelslo-Emmerhout. Necessitated by urban development of the city of Emmen, a former heathland area of c. 110 ha was to be disturbed and was consequently brought to the attention of the archaeologists of the Groningen Institute for Archaeology. The potential archaeological richness of this area was already indicated by excavations of several prehistoric barrows south of the Emmerdennen by F.C. Bursch (1936; 1937). Considering the large spatial extent of the construction works, supervision of the digging of the prospective road trajectories was opted for, but in locations where ample archaeological remains were uncovered, more large-scale excavations could be undertaken (Fig. 1).

Between 1960 and 1968 a surface area of c. 12,9 ha was uncovered to study these remains, under the supervision of J.D. van der Waals of the Groningen Institute of Archaeology. Unfortunately, only preliminary results were published by Van der Waals (1962; 1963; 1967; 1968; Van der Waals & Butler 1976, cf. Ruiter & Swart-Poelman 1967). In order to complete his analysis of Bronze Age mortuary traditions in the northern Netherlands, Lohof (1991a-b) therefore needed to study the original documentation and preliminary publications to determine which barrows had Bronze Age use-phases (table 1).

As Lohof’s (1991) dissertation focussed on the Bronze Age tumuli, only 15 of a total of 106 individual funerary monuments at Angelslo-Emmerhout were studied. In this contribution, we would like to present the information on the development of the Angelslo-Emmerhout funerary landscape as a whole, and from a diachronic perspective. Not only does this allow for a better perception of the development of the funerary landscape, but moreover it allows to entwine this development with that of the equally ubiquitous settlement remains (that were however also not published in full up to quite recently; Kooi 2008b). Arguably quite unusually (Bourgeois & Arnoldussen 2006, esp. 13; Bourgeois & Fontijn 2007), the excavations of Angelslo-Emmerhout allow to determine whether Bronze Age barrows were erected quite close to contemporary farmsteads (as models for Bronze Age settlement dynamics would have it; Arnoldussen 2008, 85; 270-272, cf. Harsema 1982, 156; Kolen 2005, 145). It is particularly the possibility to study
Fig. 1 Overview of the excavation trenches (black outlines, trench labels in grey) and main funerary monuments (halftone grey with white outline) in the Angelslo (southern part) - Emmerhout (northern part) urban development area. The contours show the altitude in meters above D.O.D. for the micro-topographic landscape prior to the 1960-1970’s construction works.

Table 1 (right page). List of funerary monuments in the Angelslo-Emmerhout area with their common labels, Lohof (1991a-b) numbers and main references.
this entwined development of monumental burial traditions and later prehistoric habitation that merits a return to this well-known site. In the sections that follow, the evidence for burial traditions and settlement data between 3400 and 600 cal BC are discussed, following the traditional periodisation (Brandt et al. 1990; Van den Broeke et al. 2005).

**Middle Neolithic (Funnel Beaker Culture period; 3400-3000 cal BC)**

The initial use of the Angelslo area for the erection of monumental barrows started during the Middle Neolithic Funnel Beaker culture period, when two megalithic graves (Dutch: *hunebedden*) were constructed. Known now as D46 and D47, the two megalithic tombs were enclosed by the new housing estate Angelslo in the nineteen-sixties (Klok 1979, 116-120). The contents of D46 and D47 still await scientific attention (Van Ginkel, Jager & Van der Sanden 1999, 188), and consequently no precise dates for their construction can be established. Presumably, they too date to the main construction horizon between 3400 and 3200 cal BC (*ibid.*, 56). In addition, flat graves are to be expected for this period. Within 34-55 m to the northeast of *hunebed* D47, three Funnel Beaker period flat graves were uncovered (Fig. 2, C; Bakker & Van der Waals 1973; Van der Waals 1967; *cf.* Van der Waals 1962). These date from the late (Havelte) phases – albeit that an earlier (Drouwen) period age was forwarded for one of these (Van der Waals 1967, 38) – and contained typical Funnel Beaker ceramic types such as collared flasks and baking plates, yet in one case also contained a Single Grave period sherd (Van der Waals 1967, 38; Bakker & Van der Waals 1973, 18-25). This suggest that some (if

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Fig. 2. Location (A) of the Funnel Beaker Culture period megaliths (D46 & D47) and various flat graves (B, C). Insets D and E show plan and contents of Late Havelte Grave cremation grave nr. 14 (after Bakker & Van der Waals 1973, 25 Fig. 9).
not all) Funnel Beaker period flat graves date to the period after the construction of the megaliths proper (i.e. the flat graves date to c. 3200-2850 cal BC). Probably not coincidentally, another Funnel Beaker feature was found 20 m to the north of *hunebed* D46. It contained a pot with lugged-ears on the shoulder, datable to the Havelte period and a small crude flint axe (Fig. 2, B; Van der Waals 1967, 38). These finds suggest that this feature was yet another Funnel Beaker period flat grave, although no cremation was observed in the feature (ibid.).

It seems probable that Funnel Beaker habitation too was once situated near to the D46 and D47 megalithic tombs. Funnel Beaker period sherds are found in significant quantity and diversity (well over 3500 sherds), with the bulk and oldest ceramics (Brindley horizon 2 and 3 (c. 3350-3200 cal BC; Brindley 1986; Van Ginkel, Jager & Van der Sanden 1999, 188) being found in Emmerhout trenches 19, 21 and 22 (c. 2563 sherds; unpublished finds inventory A. Ufkes), at c. 900 m north of D46. This is in accordance with the assumed proximity of settlements and megaliths (within hundreds of meters to a few kilometres at most) as was established for the Valthe micro-region based on survey results (Van Ginkel, Jager & Van der Sanden 1999, 188). Unfortunately, lack of Dutch funnel-beaker house-plans (or their identification) complicates a more in-depth discussion of the nature and permanency of domestic activities next to *hunebedden*. In any case, the sheer numbers (over 200 pieces) of late Funnel Beaker sherds recovered from underneath Angelslo barrow XI, suggest that domestic debris can be found as close-by as 120 m west of *hunebed* D47. In various trenches pottery datable to pottery horizons 4 and 5 was recognised (Emmerhout trenches 19-20; 22; Angelslo trench II). Ceramics datable to the youngest ceramic phase (laat-Havelte, c. 2900-2850 cal BC) were identified in Emmerhout trenches 1, 4 and 24 and Angelslo trench III and wb13 (unpublished finds inventory by A. Ufkes), indicating that Funnel Beaker presence will have spanned full the 3400-3000 cal BC period of its traditional periodization.

**Late Neolithic-A (Single Grave Culture period; c. 2900-2400 cal BC)**

The Single Grave Culture period is represented by nine separate inhumation graves in the Angelslo-Emmerhout area (Fig. 3, A-E). The dating of the majority of these graves is based on typology of the grave goods or the structural features of the grave, as only one radiocarbon date for an inhumation grave is available. Four main types of graves can be outlined. Most common (graves ‘G’, ‘M’, ‘I’, ‘O’ and ‘Tum. X’), was an up to c. 80 cm deep oval (to sub-rectangular; 1,7 by 1,4 m) pit, in which a body (in crouched position) and sometimes grave goods were placed (cf. Drenth & Lanting 1991; Drenth 1992; 2005). Only with ‘Tum. X’, was a barrow presumably erected over the grave, stressing the continuity of the tradition of flat graves established for the preceding period. Two graves (‘Tum. VIII’ and ‘R’) show a lowered foundation trench with posts directly adjacent to the grave, which is known as the ‘beehive’-grave construction (Drenth & Lohof 2005, 438; 453 nt. 38). Tumulus VIII was also covered by a low mound, but its exact dimensions are unknown (Lohof 1991b, 37). With grave ‘D’, this ‘palisade-trench’ is situated more distant from the grave proper, and may have been an intermediate feature.
(possibly once covered by a low – later destroyed – mound; Drenth 2005, 357). The fourth grave form is a deep (c. 1.9 m) and narrow shaft in which a tree-trunk coffin and – a-typical (possibly Bronze Age?; Van der Waals 1976, 211) – beaker was placed (i.e. extended inhumation graves: grave ‘C’; cf. Drenth 2005, 357).

Fig. 3. Locations (A-E) and plans (below) for Single Grave Culture period (c. 3000-2500 cal BC) use-phases of barrows at Angelslo-Emmerhout (B-E and plans all to the same scales; images: © Groningen Institute for Archaeology).
In two cases do the Single Grave Culture period interments represent the starting point of what would later develop into multi-period barrows (Tum. VIII and X). Unfortunately, of these two barrows only the subsoil features remained (Van der Waals 1967, 40), as the actual mound bodies had been levelled when the area was cultivated in the 1920’s. Barrows VIII and X are placed nearly perfectly on the line connecting the two Funnel Beaker period megaliths. In the remainder of this study will we show that these two barrows initiate an alignment of funerary monuments that was adhered (and appended) to for centuries (infra).

Tumulus ‘VIII’ yielded a classic beehive grave with a protruding foot beaker as grave gift (Fig. 3, tum. VIII, A; Van der Waals 1967, 211; Bakker & Van der Waals 1973, 25). A charred branch that was found with the beaker was \(^{14}C\) dated to c. 2800-2630 cal BC (GrN-6644: 4160 ± 30 BP; Lanting & Mook 1977, 113). Tumulus X contained a body, placed on its right side with a W-E orientation, accompanied by a battle axe, a flint axe and blade and a sharpening stone (Fig. 3, tum. X, a-d; Van der Waals 1967, 211). Grave ‘D’ contained a flint arrowhead, knife, three flint flakes and a battle axe (of a type intermediate to Glob’s types B and C; Bakker & Van der Waals 1973, 25, datable to c. 2750-2650 cal BC; Drenth 2005, 349). Flat grave ‘M’ contained a protruding foot beaker (sherd?; A.Ufkes, personal observation) and two flint flakes (ibid.). Remarkably, both graves ‘G’ and ‘I’ contained a greenstone axe and a flint blade, suggesting a relatively young Single Grave Culture period date for both (Bakker & Van der Waals 1973, 25). Grave ‘O’ contained a fragment of a battle axe and a protruding foot beaker, indicating that it too dates to the Single Grave Culture period.

As with the Funnel Beaker (TRB) culture, little to no knowledge on house plans of the Single Grave Culture in the northern Dutch sand area is available (cf. Hogestijn & Drenth 2001). This is partly due to the poor preservation capabilities of sandy soils (Waterbolk 2009, 41; Drenth 2005, 357) and partly because due to later agricultural usage features will have been destroyed (Fokkens 2005, 362). Moreover, the light and irregular construction of the houses and the observation that the occupation did not leave many other traces such as ditches or pits, renders domestic sites for this period less archaeologically visible (Fokkens 2005, 362). This problematic recognisability again complicates a discussion of the relation between habitation areas and the graves.

The inventory compiled by A. Ufkes of the Angelslo-Emmerhout finds mentions about two dozen artefacts that can be dated to the Single Grave Culture period, most of which are protruding foot beaker sherds, but there seems to be no apparent clustering in these finds. Partly they originate from the grave fills themselves, some are found in the vicinity of the graves, but the remainder are isolated finds spread over the entire excavated area. Based on the small numbers of fragments recovered, it seems unwarranted to reconstruct dense occupation of the excavated areas for the Single Grave Culture period.
Late Neolithic-B (Bell Beaker Culture period; c. 2500-2000 cal BC)

In light of the ample evidence for Single Grave Culture period interments (supra), the near absence of graves datable to the Bell Beaker period is remarkable. One may speculate whether the absence of a well-defined culture layer – rendering the backfill of any flat graves nearly invisible – and the relative scarcity (e.g., Drenth & Lohof 2005, 440) of features such as intermediate ring-ditches or post-circles during this period have significantly hampered the visibility (and hence discovery) of such graves in contrast to those of preceding and ensuing periods.

The only grave securely datable to the Bell Beaker period in the present study area is a pit containing cremated human remains and fifteen burnt barb-and-tanged flint arrowheads (Fig. 4; Van der Waals 1967, 39; Lanting 2008, 180-181; Beuker 2010, 198 fig. 287). For this grave two radiocarbon dates obtained for the cremated remains are available, suggesting that it dates to c. 2560-2300 cal BC (GrA-13614: 3940 ± 50 BP; GrA-27937: 3925 ± 40 BP; Lanting 2008, 181).

This cremation grave was presumably positioned rather independently of the location of preceding Single Grave culture period interments, as the nearest Single Grave Culture period grave is situated c. 80 m to the southwest. At c. 1300 m to the west of the main Angelslo-Emmerhout area, a Bell Beaker burial was found (in the urnfield uncovered by Bursch in 1931/1932; Bursch 1936), but this burial has already been discussed elsewhere (Lanting 2008, 60; 178-179).

Fig. 4. Location (A-B) of grave datable to the Bell Beaker period at Angelslo-Emmerhout. Inset C shows 14 of the 15 burnt flint arrowheads recovered (after Beuker 2010, 198 Fig. 287).
From analysis of the recovered ceramics it is clear that the area presumably was not deserted. In four concentrations across the area (concentrating on trenches Emmerhout 4, Emmerhout 8/17, Emmerhout 16 and Emmerhout 26), sherds clearly recognisable as Bell Beaker ceramics (albeit c.20-30 sherds altogether) were discovered. Moreover, near these concentrations two flint retouched knives and a Bell Beaker type flint arrowhead were found.

None of the graves in the northern Emmerhout trenches (e.g. graves ‘N’, ‘R’, ‘P or ‘Q’) can be positively identified as Bell Beaker period graves, and based on the types and dimensions of their delimiting features, a Bell Beaker age does not seem probable (see Drenth & Hogestijn 1999, 116-124; Drenth 2005, 357; Lanting & Van der Waals 1976, 45-46 and Lanting 2008, 62-63 on Bell beaker grave forms). It is therefore suggested that Bell Beaker habitation may have been situated c. 880 m north of contemporary graves (suggesting spatial avoidance), but close to previous Single Grave Culture period interments (e.g. grave R; supra). At 70-104 m distance from the cremation grave a few Late Bell Beaker sherds were found, but it remains unclear – due to their low numbers – whether they signify habitation in those areas.

It is possible that mostly or only late Bell Beaker types are represented, as beakers characterized by the early (maritime and epi-maritime; Lanting 2008, 35-40; 55) decorative schemes are not listed in the finds inventory compiled by A. Ufkes. Late Bell Beaker style fragments were however discovered in trenches Angelslo 6 and Emmerhout 3 and were sometimes found associated with potbeaker fragments (e.g. in trenches Angelslo III and Emmerhout 16). Potbeaker vessels are the – frequently coarser and larger – Begleitkeramik to the thin-walled beaker pots of the late (Veluwe style) Bell Beaker and Early Bronze Age (‘barbed-wire’- stamp decorated) periods (e.g. Lehmann 1969; Lanting 1973, 254-257; Drenth & Hogestijn 1999, 124-134). Large potbeakers of Bentheim- (from Emmerhout trench 10; Drenth 2005, 339; Lanting 2008, 92-97) and Riesenbecher-types (from Emmerhout trench 14) document the continued human activities on-site around the Neolithic-Bronze Age transition. In contrast, continued human presence between c. 2600 BC (the demise of the all-over-corded decorative scheme) and c. 2300 BC (the advent of late (Veluwe) Bell Beaker styles) is far less clear. It seems that it is only from the Late Neolithic-B onward (c. 2500-2000 BC, or the period of Bell Beakers decorated with dentate spatulas; Butler & Fokkens 2005, 372) that the long-term (domestic and agricultural) use of the site commenced. The absence of house-plans for the Bell Beaker period can be explained by the documented poor general archaeological visibility of such plans (Drenth & Hogestijn 1999; Drenth 2005; 355-356; Arnoldussen & Fontijn 2006, 292-293; Arnoldussen 2008, 171). The absence of regularity (and thus predictability) in post-placement for houses of this period renders these difficult to isolate and outline in sites with moderate to high feature densities. It is consequently very well possible that Bell Beaker presence at Angelslo-Emmerhout took the form of permanent habitation, albeit that house plans remain to be recognized.
Early Bronze Age (c. 2000-1800 cal BC)

During the Early Bronze Age, the alignment embodied by the Funnel Beaker period monuments and Single Grave barrows VIII and X is supplemented by another barrow known as Angelslo XII (Fig. 5, C). Remarkably, near the centre of this 11-13 m diameter barrow not a human, but a cow was interred (Lohof 1991b, 41; Van der Waals 1967, 210; 1968, 194). Tooth enamel of this cow was dated to 3585 ± 45 BP (c. 2120-1770 cal BC; Lanting & Van der Plicht 2003, 178). In the same pit some sherds were found that have been identified both as ‘Barbed Wire’-stamp decorated (Dutch: wikkeldraad; Lanting 1973; Prummel et al. 2009, 144-147) pottery (Lohof 1991b, 41) and Funnel Beaker period (Brindley horizon 4/5; A. Ufkes personal observation) fragments, the latter presumably being

Fig. 5. Locations (A-C) and plans (below) for Early Bronze Age (c. 2000-1800 cal BC) use-phases of barrows at Angelslo-Emmerhout (B-C and plans all to the same respective scales; Emmerdennen after Lanting 1969a, 23 (183) Fig. 2; 24(184) Fig. 3, other images: © Groningen Institute for Archaeology).
Animal interments are known for this period as flat-graves from settlement sites (such as the oxen and pig of Molenauergraaf and Ottoland respectively; Louwe Kooijmans 1974, 264-267; 321-323; Lanting & Van der Plicht 2002, 178), but the interment of animals in monumental barrows has its roots in preceding Single Grave Culture period traditions (e.g. the cow interred at Zeijen (Van Giffen 1930a, 57-59; 1930b, Fig. 41-43a) and the possible cow interred at Garderen - Solsche Berg (Bursch 1933, 69-71; Bourgeois, Amkreutz & Panhuysen 2009, 100)).

In the northern part of the Angelslo-Emmerhout area, at 300 m west of the previous Single Grave interments (graves R and O; Fig. 3), two barrows – now known as tumuli Emmerdennen II and III – were presumably erected during the Early Bronze Age. For Emmerdennen II, the dating is insecure as under a large recent disturbance only a fibrous soil discoloration of the central grave was preserved (Fig. 5, B; Lohof 1991b, 39; Lanting 1969a, 179-189). The barrow was c. 13 m in diameter, 70 cm high and some stones recovered may hint at an originally stone-capped grave (ibid.), suggesting an Early Bronze Age period of construction (Lanting 1969, 22(182); Lohof 1991a, 76). Barrow Emmerdennen III (Fig, 5, B) was presumably erected on a stone-paved surface and the central grave may have been stone-capped (Lohof 1991a, 56; 1991b, 39). Both the (disturbed) central interment and the secondary (child?) interment were part of the first construction phase consisting of a 14 m diameter and 1 m high barrow. From the disturbed soil near the centre, fragments of two ‘Barbed Wire’-stamp decorated beakers and a (quick to be stolen) flint dagger of Scandinavian type were recovered (Lanting 1969, 27(187); Lanting 1973, 223; 261-263; Bloemers 1968, 50; 52; 98), securely dating this construction phase to the Early Bronze Age. Tentatively, tumulus Emmerdennen I (at c. 180 m to the east; Fig. 5, B; infra) could also have been erected during the Early Bronze Age, but as ‘Barbed Wire’-stamp decorated sherds were recovered from the culture layer underneath the mound, this is considered a terminus post quem for its construction (Lohof 1991b, 39; Lanting 1968, 20(164)).

No clear-cut evidence for habitation of the Angelslo-Emmerhout area during the Early Bronze Age can be put forward. Similar to what was stated above for the Bell Beaker period, houses of the Early Bronze Age lack the regularity and predictability in plan that allows for their easy recognition (Arnoldussen 2008a, 167-174 for an extensive discussion). Various pits containing ‘Barbed Wire’-stamp decorated pottery testify that the area was used nonetheless (one pit at c. 40 m south of barrow XII; Van der Waals 1967, 39(211), another pit c. 90 m to the southeast of this barrow was radiocarbon dated to c. 1890-1680 cal BC (GrN-5187: 3485 ± 35 BP; Lanting & Mook 1977, 97)). A single ‘Barbed-wire’-stamp decorated sherd was (presumably unintentionally) incorporated into grave ‘N’(Fig. 9, C; infra, tentatively dated to the Late Bronze Age-Middle Iron Age). Although ‘Barbed Wire’-stamp decorated sherds are recovered in small numbers in all parts of the Angelslo-Emmerhout area, a clear-cut concentration (c. 75 sherds) can be postulated around Emmerhout trenches 8-9 and 17 directly east of tumulus Emmerdennen I, suggesting that activities may have concentrated on this area.
## Middle Bronze Age-A (c. 1800-1500 cal BC)

In the Middle Bronze Age-A (c. 1800-1500 cal BC), barrows are constructed both in areas previously used for interment and newly selected locations. To start with the former, in the north of the Emmerthout area tumulus Emmerdennen I was probably erected within sight of the Early Bronze Age barrows Emmerdennen II and III (Fig. 6, B; supra). Like Emmerdennen tumulus III, the ample stones recovered (among which part of a quern) suggest that the initial (c. 11 m diameter) mound period was stone-capped (Lohof 1991b, 39 contra Lanting 1968, 19(163)), albeit that various stones slipped into the ring-ditch that may have delimited its (wider, and possibly later) base (Lohof 1991b, 38-39; Lanting 1968).

The mound was erected on a culture layer containing Funnel Beaker period, Single Grave Culture period and Early Bronze Age ‘Barbed Wire’-stamp decorated pottery (Lanting 1968, 20(164)), indicating that this barrow was constructed (during?) or after the Early Bronze Age. If the stones recovered from the 19 m diameter ring-ditch are indeed from the initial stone-capped construction, than the radiocarbon date of 3295 ± 30 BP (charcoal from ring-ditch; GrN-6396; Lohof 1991b, 39) suggest a construction between 1670 and 1490 cal BC. This tallies with dates obtained for other ring-ditched barrows, such as that of Havelte (GrN-8674: 3305 ± 35 BP; Kooi 1979, 110, cf. Lanting & Van der Plicht 2003, 189-196), Dalen (GrN-18787: 3325 ± 17 BP; Lanting 1992, 61) or Wünneberg-Haaren (Germany; 3550 ± 65 DP; Herring 2009, 263) albeit it that (particularly smaller) ring-ditches were constructed well into the Late Bronze Age (Kooi 1979, 112; Bourgeois & Arnoldussen 2006, esp. 20 fig 5; Lohof 1991a, 41; Theunissen 1999, 62; Lanting & Van der Plicht 2003, 157-158).

At the location of the Single Grave period beehive interment labelled tumulus VIII (Fig. 3, E), one to possibly four (based on depth of a total of 8; Lohof 1991b, 38) tangential interments were placed into a new mound period. Charcoal from one of these (inhumation-) graves was dated to 3405 ± 35 BP (GrN-5183; c.1870-1610 cal BC; Lohof 1991b, 38).

Not only were previous funerary clusters (Emmerdennen) or older graves proper added to, also new locations were selected for interment. In the northwest corner of the housing cluster ‘block 2’ to the west of the main investigated area, another ring-ditch barrow (tumulus II; Fig. 6, C) was constructed. This barrow, that may have started as a 8 m diameter mound period for which no central grave is known, was presumably enlarged to 14 m diameter and circumscribed with a 2 m wide and 85 cm deep ring-ditch during the Middle Bronze Age-A. The centrally located grave contained a quern (Van der Waals 1963, 252(76), cf. Tumulus Emmerdennen I) and charcoal that was dated to c. 1880-1600 cal BC (GrN-7489: 3405 ± 40 BP; Lohof 1991b, 36). In the northeast quadrant, a tangential interment of a cremated individual in a pit next to a set of wooden beams and lots of charcoal (possibly a pyre-location) was also radiocarbon-dated to this phase (GrN-7488: 3385 ± 40 BP; Lohof 1991b, 36).

At c. 145 m west of tumulus VIII, yet another new barrow was constructed (Tumulus V; Fig. 6, D). This 12 m diameter barrow contained a central coffin-grave (supported by stones), for which a radio carbon date of c. 1610-1420 cal BC was obtained on charcoal (GrN-7487: 3225 ± 40 BP; Lohof 1991b, 38).
Fig. 6. Locations (A-E) and plans (below) for Middle Bronze Age-A (c. 1800-1500 cal BC) use-phases of barrows at Angelslo-Emmerhout (B-E and plans all to the same respective scales; Emmerdennen after Lanting 1968, 17 (161) Fig. 4, other images: © Groningen Institute for Archaeology).
Noteworthy is that the orientation of the interments of barrows I, V and VII is nearly identical (NNW-SSE) and shared by several interments here (in absence of evidence that these too date to this phase) discussed for the Middle Bronze Age-B period (Fig. 7, tum. V, VI, VII, IX, XI and E). Moreover, it is important to stress that the location of barrow V may in this period seem isolated, but later barrow construction (infra; Fig. 6, B) will reveal it to be part of a secondary barrow alignment, located 145 m west of the previously discussed alignment.

Remarkably, a pottery type very typical for this period and easily identifiable (‘Hilversum’-style decorated; Arnoldussen 2008, 177-178) is known from other parts of the Netherlands (esp. the coastal regions; Arnoldussen 2008, 179 Fig. 5.6), but has – as far as now known – not been recovered from within the Angelslo-Emmerhout excavated areas. No fragments of pots decorated in this tradition are presently registered for the three northernmost provinces of the Netherlands in the Dutch central archaeological database Archis (situation May 2011). For the nearest finds we need to look to Flevoland (Emmeloord; Bloo 2002) or Overijssel (Verlinde 1987b, 139-142; 1989, 171-172). Evidently, ‘Hilversum’-style pottery (decorative traditions) never reached or caught-on in the northernmost provinces, which is all the more salient as its direct precursor (‘Barbed Wire’-stamp decorated pottery) is known in some numbers from Drenthe (e.g. Lanting 1969b; 2008; Van der Veen & Lanting 1991; Van der Sanden 1992; Prummel et al. 2009, 145). This scarcity of ‘Hilversum’-style pottery renders it very difficult to outline buildings or settlement sites that date to this period for the northernmost provinces.

To make matters worse, for the Middle Bronze Age-A too (like with preceding periods), an evident lack of standardization and regularity in ground plans of houses (see Arnoldussen 2008, 174-185) significantly hampers the identification of houses for this period. This leaves us in a position where the presence of habitation at Angelslo-Emmerhout for the period 1800-1500 cal BC may be postulated (primarily based on the barrow construction as evidenced for), but cannot be proven (nor disproven or tied to specific zones in the landscape). This period remains – as it does elsewhere – somewhat of a ‘dark age’ (Arnoldussen 2008, 174).

Middle Bronze Age-B (1500-1050 cal BC)

The discussed scarcity of known houses for the preceding period is well compensated for by the large numbers of houses known for the Middle Bronze Age-B at Angelslo-Emmerhout (Van der Waals & Butler 1976; Kooi 2008a-b). Although there has been some debate about the typology of the Middle Bronze Age houses at the site (Harsema 1993; Fokkens 2001, 255; Lanting & Van der Plicht 2003, 158; Kooi 2008a, 59), it is generally assumed that houses of the ‘Emmerhout’ type (Huijts 1992, 37-54; Waterbolk 2009, 43; 46-48, see Arnoldussen 2008, 192-198 on the (limited) usefulness of traditional typological labels) date to the Middle Bronze Age-B (Huijts 1992, 37; 55; Kooi 2008a, 59; Lanting & Van der Plicht 2003, 165-166; 183). Absolute dating of (such) houses is frequently affected by innate poor quality samples (unspecified charcoal instead of specified macro-botanical remains with limited own age) and poor sample association (samples from ‘a pit within’ or – only better – a posthole of a given house (Waterbolk 1971; Lanting & Van der Plicht 2002; op. cit.; Arnoldussen 2008, 212)). Samples ob-
tained from postholes of Middle Bronze Age-B houses are therefore prone to yield unreliable (older) results (Arnoldussen 2008, 185-188 for discussion). Five of a total of six slightly more reliable dates for houses of the type ‘Emmerhout’ originated from the eponymous site (Arnoldussen 2008, 212 Fig. 5.24) and suggest that the type was indeed current between c. 1500 and 1000 cal BC, as shown by charcoal from the hearth of house 61 (GrN-5776: 2965 ± 35 BP; Van der Waals & Butler 1976, 56; Arnoldussen 2008, 212; Fig. 7, C) and a pit in the aisle of house 32 (GrN-5775: 3090±60 BP; Van der Waals & Butler 1976, 56; Kooi 2008a, 66 Fig. 4.8; Fig. 7, A).

Since the settlement development of Angelslo-Emmerhout has been dealt with elsewhere extensively (Van der Waals 1967; Van der Waals & Butler 1976; Kooi 2005; 2008a-b), here only the distribution of the house plans for this period will be presented (Fig. 7, A; C). It is remarkable that despite significantly large areas of excavation, no houses reliably datable to the Middle Bronze Age-B are identified for the northern trenches (north of house 32) of Angelslo-Emmerhout. Similarly, funerary monuments were not erected in the northern area, suggesting that around the older barrows of Emmerdennen (tumuli I to III) an area of c. 500 m diameter was not used for habitation or funerary monuments.

For the inhabited southern area (Fig. 7, C), it is striking that the houses – which are frequently extended to form long composite plans and which are sometimes rebuilt (Kooi 2005; 2008a, Arnoldussen 2008, 207-210) – seem to reflect the orientation of the much older barrow alignment (even though house 51 deviates by c. 25 degrees). While it should be noted that house- and barrow-alignments may merely reflect the dominant topographic axis already present in the natural (and pre-existing cultural) landscape, the documented house orientations drive home the main point that house orientation was by no means arbitrary or coincidental (cf. Arnoldussen 2008, 301-303) and may very well have been used to materialize and intentionally reflect a perceived structuring of the pre-existing cultural landscape.

The most interesting part of the close proximity of the funerary monuments and houses at Angelslo-Emmerhout is the fact that the generally spatially separated domains of the deceased and the living within the cultural landscape (e.g. Arnoldussen 2008, 437-441) touch each other here. Based on a strict analysis of radiocarbon dates for Dutch Bronze Age barrows, Bourgeois and Arnoldussen (2006, cf. Bourgeois & Fontijn 2008) have argued that generally, the initial construction of barrows dated to the (final centuries of) the Middle Bronze Age-A, and that new barrows were rarely erected on settlement sites (which is not to say that no new mound periods or secondary interments took place thereafter). It will be clear that – in general absence of datable finds (cf. Lohof 1991a, 68; 125; 192) or absolute dates (Bourgeois & Arnoldussen 2006) – proving that a certain barrow was constructed during the Middle Bronze Age-B is difficult. Maybe it is even a moot point. The reuse of older barrows of the previously existing barrow alignment (with or without erecting new barrows) reflects a positive appreciation of having (and creating new) ancestors close to home (cf. Harsema 1982, 156; Fontijn 1996, 81; Kolen 2005, 45). The seemingly paradoxical situation that on other Dutch Bronze Age settlement sites this is generally not the case (Bourgeois...
& Arnoldussen 2006; Bourgeois & Fontijn 2008) may be a consequence of the fact that at Angelslo-Emmerhout, a Middle Bronze Age-B domestic (cultural) landscape encroached upon an older funerary (landscape) – a fully contemporary one.

It is difficult to determine the exact age and Middle Bronze Age-B use-phases for the individual barrows at Angelslo-Emmerhout. Therefore – in want of more dates – various barrow(-phases) that may in reality date from the previous phase, are displayed and discussed here under the Middle Bronze Age-B. Traditionally, the single widely-spaced post-circle that accompanies various barrows (tumuli IV, VI, VII, IX, X, XI and XII; Fig. 7) is held typical for a Middle Bronze Age-B age (Lohof 1991a, 159; Theunissen 1999, 55; Drenth & Lohof 2005: 441). Bourgeois and Arnoldussen (2006, 18, 20 Fig. 5) have shown that post-circled barrows do occur from the Early Bronze Age to (beyond the) Middle Bronze Age-B, yet are frequently dated to c. 3300 BP (ibid., cf. Bourgeois & Fontijn 2008, 48; Lanting & Van der Plicht 2003, 192-193 esp. Eext, Hijkerveld tum. 5 & Onstwedderholte II). Frustratingly, only a single radiocarbon date is available for all post-circled barrows of figure 7, and this concerns charcoal from a tangential grave in the north-east of tumulus X (that was first erected during the Single Grave Culture period; Fig. 3, D) which was dated to c. 1390-1120 cal BC (GrN-5184: 3010 ± 40 BP; Van der Waals & Butler 1976, 56). As two more tangential interment were found in barrow X, its relevance for the dating of this type of post-circle remains speculative.

In addition to re-use of already existing barrows (tumuli II, V, X and XII), at a(n un) certain point in time new barrows were added to establish the more westerly NNW-SSE barrow alignment that now comprises barrows IV, V and XXI. Likewise, barrow III may have extended the easternmost barrow-alignment to the north. Only two barrows appear to be placed irrespective of older arrangements and sit well west (tum. VI) or east (tum. VII) of the eastern NNW-SSE alignment. The sub-rectangular ditch tentatively labelled ‘Grave B’ is stratigraphically assigned to this phase (it is cut by an Elp-type house; Fig. 7, D), yet is in no way typical for graves of this period and may very well have an other (and/or older) origin.

As most of the presumed Middle Bronze Age-B barrows have been discussed by Lohof (1991a-b), we will not discuss their funerary tradition in detail here (inhumations – often with a NNW-SSE orientation – and cremation graves of adults and children placed tangentially in tree-trunk coffins – sometimes supported by stones – near the foot of barrows). A few interesting patterns should however be mentioned.

First, one of the most striking aspects is that dual interment into a single grave was quite common. In the south of tumulus III a grave containing two silhouettes of adults buried back-to-back with retracted legs could be identified (heads

Fig. 7 (left page). Locations of houses of the ‘Emmerhout’ type and barrows (A-C) and plans (below) for possible Middle Bronze Age-B (c. 1500-1000 cal BC) use-phases of barrows at Angelslo-Emmerhout (plans all to the same scales; tum. XI after Ruiter & Swart-Poelman 1967, 21(193) Fig. 3, other images: © Groningen Institute for Archaeology).
to the SSE; Lohof 1991b, 37), a situation that is echoed by grave E (for which no mound body could be identified) also containing two individuals (with retracted legs, yet with their heads to the NNW). The central inhumation of barrow IX contained faint traces of an additional skull having been placed near the head of the inhumation, suggesting that extra body parts (and not only full bodies) may have been buried as well (Lohof 1991b, 40, cf. Cuipers, Drenth & Lanting 1994, 33(125); Bourgeois, Amkreutz & Panhuysen 2009, 100). Dual interment could also be achieved by placing cremated remains on the legs of buried individuals, as was the case in the north-west quadrants of tumuli II and III (Lohof 1991b, 37, cf. Lanting & Van der Plicht 2003, 192). Being situated 640 m apart, the treatment of the dead in tumuli II and III appears to be carbon-copied, as in both graves amber beads were found (Van der Waals 1963, 252 (76); Lohof 1991b, 37). Nine amber beads were also found underneath the skull of the northeast tangential interment in barrow IV, suggesting that the amber beads may have decorated a headdress (Lohof 1991b, 37, cf. Bursch 1934, 53-71 tum. II; Van der Veen & Lanting 1991, tum. IX and X). Save for a bronze ring in the inhumation grave in tumulus XII – unfortunately too fragile to recover (Van de Waals 1967, 38(210)) – no inorganic grave goods were found.

Second, a minimum total of 43 cremation- and inhumation graves and seven houses are attributed to this period, indicating how rare barrow burial actually was. Assuming that the area (whether fully excavated or not) was inhabited continuously between 1500-1000 cal BC, these graves amount to a ‘living population’ of 2.5 person based on a 30 year life expectancy (Acsádi & Nemeskéri 1970), a 15% funerary representativeness (Theunissen 1993, 40) leaves us with c. 17 persons to populate the available houses (see Arnoldussen 2008, 85-92 for a discussion of the parameters household size and structural longevity).

Third, grave F stands out for its typical shape and combination of two delimiting structures (first a ditch, followed by multiple post settings). In its orientation it conforms to that of the ‘ancient barrow alignment’ but also to that of the ‘Emmerhout’-type houses, yet its close proximity to houses 69/70 renders it improbable that these houses and grave F existed simultaneously. Grave F belongs to a group of elongated barrows that have been argued to date firmly to the Middle Bronze Age-B (Bourgeois & Fontijn 2008, 50; Theunissen 1999, 68) and that may have been precursor to the elongated grave types known as long barrows (Dutch: langbedden) current between the Late Bronze Age and Middle Iron Age (Verlinde 1987, 173-193; Roynans & Kortlang 1999, 42-53; Tol 1999, 103; Kortlang 1999, 163).

In this sense, grave F can be regarded as a bridgehead between the patterns – perhaps most typical for the period (1600?)1500-1300 cal BC – discussed here above and those for the period 1300-1000 cal BC now to be discussed. This somewhat arbitrary division is necessary (and/or possible) due to the presence of houses of an alternative type of ground plan called ‘Elp’ houses (Huijts 1992, 55-66; Waterbolk 2009, 49-51), that most likely date to the period between 1300 and 900 cal BC (Arnoldussen 2008, 212 Fig. 5.24). Thus, the joint narrative for houses and graves becomes complicated, as the inhabitants of the Elp-type houses may form part of the tangential interments discussed above (Fig. 7), yet may al-
ternatively have been interred in the much smaller mounds with ring-ditches depicted in figure 8. As there are no absolute dates or grave gift to clarify this, here purely for clarity the Elp-type houses are depicted in the top part of figure 8.

Late Bronze Age (1100-800 cal BC)

Compared to the evidence for habitation in the preceding phase (with less than ten Emmerhout-type houses (but see Kooi 2008b, 358-359), the Angelslo-Emmerhout area appears to be much more intensively (and extensively) occupied. A total of 37 house-phases can be indentified, but as some house-phases form part of a single composite extended house plan (some up to 80 m in length; Kooi 2005; 2008b, Fig. 4; Arnoldussen 2008, 210-211) or are overlapping, it is better to speak of c. 27 house-sites (cf. Kooi 2008b, 360). It seems that in all areas where a sufficiently large surface area was opened up, ‘Elp’-type houses could be identified (save for the northernmost zone, that however did support Iron Age habitation; Fig. 10). The orientation of the houses appears to less strictly copy that of the main barrow alignment (especially in the north) and some houses are even orientated NNE-SSW (Fig. 8, B).

An analysis of the distribution pattern for the graves of this period (that are admittedly poorly datable typologically, as smaller ring-ditches (mostly 2-6 m diameter, rarely exceeding 11 m, are innate to later prehistoric (Late Bronze Age and Iron Age) cemeteries; Kooi 1979, 132; Verlinde 1987a, 198-200; Hessing & Kooi 2005, 635-636; Verlinde & Hulst 2010, 14-15) is hampered by the fact that none of the isolated ring-ditches A, H, J, K, N, P or Q have yielded evidence of their use as funerary construction. Presumably, their mound bodies (and cremation graves) were destroyed and levelled through agricultural use, leaving only the subsurface ditch feature. It is therefore mainly based on analogy with the ring-ditches uncovered in the two main urnfield locations (Fig. 8, D urnfield ‘Brands’ and Fig. 9 urnfield ‘Bursch 1933’) that the isolated ring-ditches are here tentatively interpreted as graves. Although they appear to occur near the long- or short sides of Elp-type houses (particularly graves A, H, K, N and P), it seems – due to the naturally well-drained soil – improbable that the ditches originated as part of an agricultural process such as cereal processing (such as the ditches around hay-stacks known for West-Friesland; cf. Buurman 1996, 206; Ufkes & Veldhuis 2003; Lohof & Vaars 2005), again favouring the interpretation as (levelled) graves. Within the ‘Brands’ urnfield, seven cremations and fragments of two urns datable to the Late Bronze age or Early Iron Age were recovered (A. Ufkes, personal observation).

Within the ‘Brands’ urnfield two key-hole shaped monuments can be identified (Kooi 1979, 130-131; Verlinde 1987a, 193-197). According to Verlinde and Hulst (2010, 103-105) it is an important characteristic of the ‘Northern Netherlands’ and ‘Eems’ urnfield regions (op. cit., 106 Fig. 41). Recent analyses indeed seem to indicate that the Dutch examples of these Schlüssellochgräber are merely the westernmost margin of a distribution around the middle Ems in Westfalen (e.g. Bérenger & Grünewald 2008, 42; Brink-Kloke, Heinrich & Bartelt 2006, 20; Wilbertz 2009). The dating of this type of grave is generally set in the 12th to 9th century BC (or c. 3000-2790 BP), based on various radiocarbon dates (Verlinde 1987a, 193-197; Hessing & Kooi 2005, 636; 653 nt. 15; Brink-Kloke,
Fig. 8. Locations of houses of the ‘Elp’ type (c. 1300-900 cal BC) and possible graves tentatively attributed to the Late Bronze Age (c. 1050-800 cal BC, yet that may span the period up to the Middle Iron Age (c. 500-250 cal BC)) outlined in black. Older phases of barrows and houses (Fig. 6) are depicted in halftone grey. Situational plans in lower part all to same scale (based on Kooi 2008b, urnfield Brands © Groningen Institute for Archaeology).
Heinrich & Bartelt 2006, 20 tab. 8; Herring 2009, 262). The keyhole shaped graves may therefore mark the transition from a more (personally) exclusive (and spatially linear) Middle Bronze Age funerary tradition to a more inclusive (and spatially nodal) burial ritual at Angelslo-Emmerhout. The peculiar ‘figure-of-8’ shaped ditch may also date relatively early, as in a close parallel uncovered at Wezup (Kooi 1979, 110 map 107, cf. op.cit. 104-108) a cremation was found in a Gasteren-type urn, which can be dated to c. 1400-1200 cal BC (Arnoldussen 2008, 409 nt. 147).

Circa 660 m to the northwest of the ‘Brands’ urnfield, yet another urnfield developed (Fig. 8, A; Fig. 9). This urnfield was excavated – mostly by trial trenches – by F.C. Bursch in 1933 and probably extended beyond the 80 by 40 m area that was investigated (Bursch 1937, 53-56). At the centre of the uncovered area (which need not have been the spatial or chronological point of gravity of this urnfield), a 17 m long elongated barrow (Dutch: langbed) with internal post-setting of the ‘Vledder’ or ‘Gasteren’-type (Kooi 1979, 131; Verlinde 1987a, 173-178) was uncovered. This type of barrow is dated to c. 3000-2860 BP (Lanting 1986, 107; Verlinde 1987a, 178; Hessing & Kooi 2005, 636; 653 noot 12), but a dating after the 13th century BC seems most common (cf. Herring 2009, 262). The two barrows of the ‘Vledder’ type (and/or not uncovered older Middle Bronze Age barrow?) may have formed the initial nodes around which the Bursch 1933 urnfield developed. Unfortunately, no absolute dates are available for cremations of the Bursch 1933 urnfield.

The orientation of the long barrows (and a tentative keyhole/figure-of-8 shaped grave) is markedly different (albeit almost perpendicular) to that of the eastern barrow alignments and keyhole-shaped urnfield graves of the Brands urnfield. Although the exact meaning of this shift in orientation eludes us, its former significance need not be doubted and it probably either reflects conformity to an uncovered yet once differently structured local part of the cultural landscape or an explicit deviation from the main axis of the wider domestic cultural landscape. The fact that at c. 40-50 m to the east of urnfield Bursch 1933 several more elongated barrow of the ‘Noordbarge’-type – whose orientations match those of older alignments and Elp-type houses – were uncovered (Fig. 9, B), may support the latter scenario. The ‘Noordbarge’-type long barrows are – like those of the ‘Vledder’-type – probably among the oldest of the urnfield constituents, with available radiocarbon dates between 1410 and 1020 cal BC (Lanting & Mook 1977, 132; Kooi 1979, 130; Verlinde 1987a, 181 nt. 72; Lanting & Van der Plicht 2003, 214).

Possibly, the original urnfield spanned both the ‘Noordbarge’-type ‘long bed’ barrows and the area uncovered by Bursch in 1933, suggesting that the 52 monuments now recovered form only a lower limit for an originally much larger urnfield. Combined with the 10 urnfield graves in the Brands urnfield and the 8-9 dispersed ring-ditches (Fig. 8), a minimum number of 70 urnfield interments are accounted for. Assessing the demographic size of the burial community is however hampered by the fact that no reliable estimate of the duration of use of the urnfields at Angelslo-Emmerhout can be given. Ufkes’ inventory lists fragments of one Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age vessel (and a possible piece of iron; from the northernmost ring-ditch) and one possible Early Iron Age pot from the Brands
Fig. 9. Location (A-B) and features uncovered in and near the urnfield uncovered by F.C. Bursch in 1933 (after Bursch 1937, 54 Fig. 27), plans in lower part all to same scale, figures to the right © Groningen Institute for Archaeology.
urnfield (location unclear), suggesting that it remained in use at least into the Early Iron Age (c. 800-600 cal BC). With a hypothetical life span of 600 year (c. 1200-600 cal BC), the presently known Angelslo graves do not present a categorically different ‘burial community’ size than the one hypothesized for the Middle Bronze Age-B above (now 3 persons versus 2.6). However, comparison with the 27 known house-sites drives home the point that many more urnfield period graves can be expected (even with a very optimistic life-span of 100 year for individual house(-site)s (Arnoldussen 2008, 90-92), 27 house-sites in 600 years imply 4-5 contemporaneous house-sites), provided that the generally upheld theory that in urnfield period more people within society were selected for monumental burial in the urnfield holds true (Fontijn 1996, 78; Fokkens 1997, 363; 369, cf. Kooi 1979, 174, who established 14-15 persons as a mean ‘urnfield burial community’ size based on seven urnfields from Drenthe).

Early Iron Age (800-600 cal BC)

Whereas evidence for continued urnfield usage during the Early Iron Age was suggested above, the evidence for habitation of the Angelslo-Emmerhout is more clear-cut. Particularly in the northern part, two Early Iron Age (fenced-off) house-sites can be identified (Fig. 10, B; Kooi 2008b, Fig. 3A-B, cf. Arnoldussen & Jansen 2010, 386 Fig. 9, A). The houses are surrounded by smaller outbuildings and fences that either connect to the buildings, surround them and/or define the agricultural layout of the site (Kooi 2008b, 363). The two W(SW)-E(NE) orientated houses in the extreme north are remarkably of an unknown (yet clear) type (Kooi 2008b, 335 Fig. 4 nos. 1-2, cf. Waterbolk 2009, 43), but as their orientation matches that of house 6 (70 m to the south) – which is evidently of the Early Iron Age ‘Een/Kleuvenveld’ type (Waterbolk 2009, 54 Fig. 32; Kooi 2008b, 361) – they are dated to the Early Iron Age as well. Directly west of this (rebuilt) Early Iron Age house, several ground plans were found that are here tentatively dated to the Iron Age, as they do not fit easily within current typological schemes (houses 3, 4 and 7; Kooi 2008b, 355-356). Similarly, the two houses yet again 230 m to the south can also only tentatively be dated to the Iron Age in general terms (Kooi 2008b, 340-341).

A comparably cautious approach to the 11 houses claimed to date to the Early Iron Age by Kooi (2008b, 361) applies to the southeast cluster (Fig. 10, C). The E-W orientated house 140 m to the southeast of grave L can only be characterized as a generic Iron Age type (Kooi 2008b, 348), as does the house 60 m to the east of urnfield ‘Brands’ (Kooi 2008b, 348-349). The cluster of houses to the east of this house however contains two evident ‘Een/Kleuvenveld’-type Early Iron Age houses. The third reliable location of Early Iron Age habitation is situated in the extreme west of the Angelslo-Emmerhout area (house 75; Fig. 10, A, dated to c. 720-370 cal BC (GrN-6132: 2360 ± 35 BP; Lanting & Van der Plicht 2003, 166; Kooi 2008b, 362). Remarkably, this house is also rebuilt, suggesting that trends such as increased house-site longevity (Arnoldussen & Jansen 2010, 3; 9) may be incipiently present in the Early Iron Age. In conclusion, only seven houses (all orientated nearly E-W, presenting a clear-cut break with the previous house-orientations) can with a sufficient degree of confidence be placed in the Early Iron Age.
Even if we assign a rather pessimistic life span of 50 years for a house site (*supra*; Arnoldussen 2008, 90-92), this suggest 3-4 contemporaneous house-sites that could have been in use simultaneously at a given time for the period 800-600 cal BC. This supports the conclusion in the previous paragraph about the population density in the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age.

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*Fig. 10. Location (A-C) and structure of Early Iron Age habitation at Angelslo-Emmerhout (EIA houses hatched with black outline, houses from the preceding period in halftone grey). House 75 (from: Kooi 2008b, 356 Fig. 4; Waterbolk 2009, 57), feature plans from Kooi (2008b, Fig 3 A, B, H & L), images graves © Groningen Institute for Archaeology.*
Remarkably, only one burial in the Angelslo-Emmerhout area can be conclusively dated to the Early Iron Age, grave L (Fig. 10, C). This is an elongated grave containing a possible coffin and five Iron Age sherds as well as fragments of iron inside the ‘coffin’ (A. Ufkes, personal observation). Possibly, both the ‘Brands’ and ‘Bursch 1933’ urnfield span into the Early Iron Age, as Early Iron Age types of urns were found (Bursch 1937, 53 Fig. 26; A. Ufkes, personal observation). An only marginally excavated square or rectangular grave in the ‘Bursch 1933’ urnfield (Fig. 9) may even represent a Middle Iron Age grave type (c. 2510-2485 BP / 800-400 cal BC; Kooi 1979, 133; Lanting & Van der Plicht 2006, 304-305). Finally, a very speculative case may be argued for the two parallel ditches labelled ‘unknown 30’ (Fig. 10, C). These two ditches are stratigraphically one of the youngest features at Angelslo-Emmerhout, and show some resemblance to comparable parallel ditches – that once delimited a langbed barrow – in the urnfields of Noordbarghe and Sleen (Kooi 1979, appendix map 6; 45, cf. Hessing & Kooi 2005, 638 Fig. 28.4; 639).

The ancestors nearby – the domestic and funerary landscape of Angelslo-Emmerhout

The Angelslo-Emmerhout data allow to trace the entwined development of funerary and domestic usage of the cultural landscape. It has been argued that – mainly due to the poor archaeological visibility of houses for those period – the evidence for habitation from the Funnel Beaker to the Middle Bronze Age-A period is inconclusive. Particularly for the Single Grave-, Bell Beaker- and Early Bronze Age periods (with Middle Bronze Age-A pottery altogether absent), the dispersed spatial distribution and low number of pottery sherds recovered suggest that habitation had no place near or amongst the monumental graves.

One of the most striking features of the Angelslo-Emmerhout cultural landscape is that, from the Single Grave Culture period onwards, new barrow construction was used to expand and reinforce a NNW-SSE alignment of monumental mounds whose roots lay in the two megalithic hunebed mounds. The orientation of the alignment – presumably not coincidentally – mirrors that of the dominant gradient in the micro-topographic landscape (cf. Fig. 1), which dips from 25 to 23 m above D.O.D. perpendicular to the NNW-SSE direction. Only with the Middle Bronze Age-B (albeit that dating of most barrows remains insecure), do rules of funerary placement appear to have been less strictly adhered to. However, it remains dubious whether (m)any mounds were constructed during this period, as there is no radiocarbon evidence for any MBA-B (initial) central graves. Regardless of problematic dating, even in the MBA-B, the addition of new mound(period)s was far from arbitrary. At c. 130 m west of the main alignment, yet another similarly orientated line of barrows can be reconstructed. Moreover, the few graves that (based on typology) are prone to date to the MBA-B (i.e. grave ‘F’), in their placement and orientation strengthen rather than weaken the pre-existing alignment. Save for one house-site, all houses are constructed 50 m or more to the east of the main funerary monument’s axis of alignment.
The large numbers of tangential graves and new mound periods suggest that at the time of Middle Bronze Age-B habitation (signified by the Emmerhout-type houses), a small percentage of the population was added to the group of ancestors through the reuse of older barrows. Although this may seem to confirm the traditional hypothesis of barrow burial next to houses, it should be stressed that in the above cases it is barrow (re)use rather than barrow construction that is at play. As stated earlier, here a Middle Bronze Age-B domestic (cultural) landscape encroached upon an older funerary (landscape). While it is tempting to relate the orientation of the Emmerhout-type houses to that of the barrow-alignment, other factors (including, but not limited to) such as the dominant orientation of the (micro-)topographical landscape will have been at play (cf. Arnoldussen 2008, 301-303). Once again, the observed (rigidity and) conformity in orientation of the houses is significant in itself, regardless of the exact motivation.

Around the end of the MBA-B, the strict sets of rules regulating grave- and house-placement and -orientation appear to have waned. Not only is house orientation significantly more diverse, new houses now touch upon or even overlap the locations of older funerary monuments. A series of (admittedly poorly dated ring-ditches) appears to accompany the Elp-type houses, but their association may very well be coincidental (i.e. not contemporaneous). Nonetheless, the spatially scattered occurrence of new types of graves (small ring-ditches) again show a clear diversion from the previous locations (now beyond of the main alignments) and types (keyhole-shaped, or of types ‘Noordbarge’ and ‘Vledder’) of the older MBA monuments.

Regardless of when exactly this happened, at some point in the final centuries of the MBA-B and LBA, true aggregation of smaller monuments (mostly ring-ditches) into urnfield clusters occurred (e.g. urnfield ‘Brands’ and ‘Bursch 1933’). It seems that for the LBA period the percentage of people interred in urnfield monuments was still modest, but this estimate is very dependant of the unfortunately poor chronological resolution (and therefore hypothetically long use-life of the urnfield period graves).

While the better part of the LBA may be identified by Elp-type houses (Arnoldussen 2008, 212 Fig. 5.24), theoretically a gap in habitation may be present during the (10th to) 9th century BC – as the ‘Een/Kleuvenveld’ houses found in the extreme north of Angelslo-Emmerhout most probably date from the final quarter of the 9th century onwards (Lanting & Van der Plicht 2003, 166-167, cf. Arnoldussen 2008, 229). In the more southern areas of Angelslo-Emmerhout, Iron Age habitation appears to have shifted to the (less extensively excavated) east, which – combined with the more dispersed placement of graves in this period (cf. Fontijn 1996, 82-84; Van Beek 2006; 2010, 319; Van der Velde 2011, 48-49) – may account for few numbers of Iron Age graves.

The above discussions by no means tell the full or complete tale of the co-evolution of the Angelslo-Emmerhout funerary and domestic landscapes. To start, c. 200 m north of the now discussed area, a cemetery attributed to the ‘period of early Roman emperors’ was found (Bursch 1937, 58-60, esp. 59 Fig. 31). Moreover, only 1.2 km to the west of the main Angelslo-Emmerhout area, another late prehistoric cemetery (starting with the Single Grave Culture period graves
and culminating into an urnfield) was found (Bursch 1936, 56-66; Lohof 1991b, 34). While this cemetery was partly re-excavated in Angelslo housing block 1 (Kooi 2008a, 64 Fig. 4.7), its distant location and absence of settlement traces rendered it unsuitable for incorporation into the present study – despite the evident parallels in cemetery development (cf. Kooi (1979, 77-90; 104-108, esp. 108 Fig. 105) on possibly similar trajectories at Havelte and Zuidwolde). Whereas more extensive excavations of later prehistoric cemeteries that show a comparable time-depth are known from neighbouring regions as well (e.g. Warendorf (Lanting 1986; Jockenhövel 2003, 92-94) or Hülsten (Radberg; Jockenhövel 2003, 95 Fig. 4; Herring 2009b, taf. 76-77), the Angelslo-Emmerhout excavations remain unrivalled in their scale and equally well-represented settlement and funerary remains. It is this combination that has allowed to study the dual – yet entwined – narratives of houses and graves from a long diachronic perspective.

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