Lost Maritime Culture in the Netherlands: Linking Material and Immaterial Datasets for a Modern Day Perception of the Late Medieval Maritime Cultural Landscape of the Zuiderzee Region

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Abstract : This paper focuses on the never thoroughly examined yet in native relevant late medieval maritime cultural landscape of the former Zuiderzee (A.D. 1170-1932) in the center part of the Netherlands. Especially the northeastern part of the region, nowadays known as the Noordoostpolder, testifies of the dynamic battle of the Dutch against the water. This highly dynamic maritime region developed from a lake district into a sea and eventually into a polder. By linking physical and cognitive datasets from the Noordoostpol-der region in a spatial environment, new information on a late medieval maritime culture is brought to light, giving the opportunity to: (i) create a modern day perception on the late medieval maritime cultural landscape of the region and (ii) to underline the value of interdisciplinary and spatial research in maritime archaeology in general. Since the large scale reclamations of the region (A.D. 1932-1968), many remains have been discovered of a drowned and eroded late medieval maritime culture, represented by lost islands, drowned settlements, cultivated lands, shipwrecks and socio-economic networks. Recent archaeological research has proved the existence of this late medieval maritime culture by the discovery of the remains of the drowned settlement Fenehuysen (Veenhuizen) and its surroundings. The fact that this settlement and its cultivated surroundings remained hidden for so long proves that a large part of the maritime cultural landscape is 'invisible' and can only be found by extensive interdisciplinary research.
Keywords : drowned settlements, late middle ages, lost islands, maritime cultural landscape, the Netherlands
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