

FRISII AND FRISIAVONES

M.C. GALESTIN

University of Groningen, Groningen Institute of Archaeology, Groningen, the Netherlands

ABSTRACT: A study was made of the literary and epigraphical evidence referring to *Frisii* or *Frisiavones*, with the aim of assessing their relations with the Romans. The similarity of their names makes it difficult to distinguish between the two tribes. It emerges that the *Frisii* and *Frisiavones* probably were not related and lived in different territories. Both groups had contacts with the Romans, who made their names part of recorded history. Both *Frisii* and *Frisiavones* served in the Roman army and received Roman citizenship afterwards. The *Frisiavones* made their appearance around the middle of the first century and towards the end of the first century they formed an ethnic unit which served in Britain during the 2nd and 3rd centuries. *Frisii* were active in the Roman army from their first encounter in 12 BC, but their name did not become linked to an ethnic unit until the 3rd century, when several Frisian units were deployed in forts along Hadrian's Wall. The *Frisiavones* had become incorporated into the Roman Empire, while the *Frisii* remained outside. The *Frisii* adopted some Roman habits but largely retained their own cultural identity. Members of both groups were present in Rome, as *equites singulares*, where their ethnic names are found combined with Roman names in their epitaphs. Their relations with the Roman Empire also provided new identities for *Frisii* and *Frisiavones*.

KEYWORDS: *Frisii*, *Frisiavones*, Roman army, Roman Empire, ethnic identity.

1. INTRODUCTION

The arrival of the Roman army in Northwestern Europe put many peoples who lived in areas bordering the North Sea and who had not been known from written sources, on the stage of history. Various tribes living in what is now the Netherlands, received a Roman name. These names were mentioned by classical authors and have been handed down to us. Among these tribes are the *Frisii*, the *Frisiavones*, and also the *Batavi* and the *Cananefates*.

The better-known tribes, such as the Frisians and Batavians, have received ample attention from classicists, historians and archaeologists. Other groups, about whom the evidence is scarce, did not get this amount of attention, and the *Frisiavones* are one of them. The resemblance between the names of the *Frisii* and the *Frisiavones* has often led to confusion. On some occasions no distinction was made and *Frisiavones* were simply called Frisians. This confusion may lead to wrong conclusions in studies of the relations between *Frisii* or *Frisiavones* and Romans. The present article strives to end this confusion and to limit the problems with which we are confronted in dealing with *Frisii* and *Frisiavones*. The aim is to find out whether it is possible to identify the two groups, to establish their territories and to enquire whether the two tribes may have been in some way related. A further aim is to find out when and where their names

were used by the Romans and in what contexts *Frisii* and *Frisiavones* used their own ethnic names.

2. *FRISII* AND *FRISIAVONES*: THE LITERARY EVIDENCE

The most important source of our knowledge about *Frisii* and *Frisiavones* is offered by classical authors. Pliny the Elder, Tacitus, Cassius Dio, Ptolemy and Pomponius Mela provide limited but important evidence. Some of them refer only briefly to the Frisians while others provide more detailed information. This information, however, is often difficult to interpret and sometimes even contradictory. Tacitus distinguishes between Greater and Lesser Frisians, while Pliny is the only author to mention the *Frisiavones*. The descriptions of the territories inhabited by the *Frisii* and *Frisiavones* vary among the authors and this has led to different interpretations. The following quotes from the descriptions by classical authors may illustrate these differences.

PLINY (NH 4, 101) who visited the area in AD 47, is very precise in his description:

In Rheno autem ipso, prope C in longitudinem, nobilissima Batavorum insula et Cannenefatium et aliae Frisiorum, Chaucorum, Frisiavonum, Sturiorum, Marsaciorum, quae sternuntur inter Helinium ac

Flevum. Ita appellantur ostia in quae effusus Rhenus a septentrione in lacus, ab occidente in amnem Mosam se spargit, medio inter haec ore modicum nomini suo custodiens alveum.

“In the Rhine itself, the most notable island is that of the Batavi and Cananefates, which is almost a hundred miles in length, and others are those of the Frisii, Chauci, Frisiavones, Sturii and Marsacii, which lie between Helinium and Flevum. The latter give their names to the mouths into which the Rhine divides, discharging itself on the north into the lakes there and on the west into the river Meuse, while at the middle mouth between these two it keeps a small channel for its own name” (text and translation: Rackham, 1942).

PLINY (NH 4, 106)

A Scaldi incolunt extera Texuandri pluribus nominibus, dein Menapi, Morini, Oromarsaci iuncti pago qui Chersiacus vocatur, Britanni, Ambiani, Bellovaci, Bassi; introrsus Catoslugi, Atrebates, Nervi liberi, Veromandui, Suaeuconi, Suessiones liberi, Ulmanectes liberi, Tungri, Sunuci, Frisiavones, Baetasi, Leuci liberi, Treveri liberi antea, et Lingones foederati, Remi foederati, Mediomatrici, Sequani, Raurici, Helveti; coloniae Equestris et Raurica. Rhenum autem accolentes Germaniae gentium in eadem provincia Nemetes, Triboci, Vangiones, in Ubiis colonia Agrippinensis, Guberni, Batavi et quos in insulis diximus Rheni.

“The part beginning at the Scheldt is inhabited by the Texuandri, who have several names, and then the Menapi, the Morini, the Oromarsaci adjacent to the canton called Chersiacus, the Bretons, the Ambiani, the Bellovaci and the Bassi; and more in the interior the Catoslugi, Artrebates, Nervi (a free people), Veromandui, Suaeuconi, Suessiones (free), Ulmanectes (free), Tungri, Sunuci, Frisiavones, Baetasi, Leuci (free), Treveri (formerly free), Lingones (federated), Remi (federated), Mediomatrici, Sequani, Raurici, Helveti; and the Equestrian and Rauric colonies. The races of Germany living on the banks of the Rhine in the same province are the Nemetes, Triboci and Vangiones, and among the Ubii the Colony of Agrippa, the Guberni, the Batavi and the people on the islands of the Rhine” (text and translation: Rackham, 1942).

TACITUS (Germania 34) writing in the second half of the 1st century AD, refers to two groups of Frisians, Greater and Lesser, and explains that the difference is based on their number:

Angrivarios et Chamavos a tergo Dulgubnii et Chasuarrii cludunt aliaeque gentes haud perinde memoratae, a fronte Frisii excipiunt. maioribus minoribusque Frisiis

vocabulum est ex modo virium. Utraeque nationes usque ad Oceanum Rheno praetextuntur ambiuntque immensos insuper lacus et Romanis classibus navigatos. Ipsum quin etiam Oceanum illa temptavimus; et superesse adhuc Herculis columnas fama vulgavit, sive adiit Hercules, seu quidquid ubique magnificentum est, in claritatem eius referre consensimus. Nec defuit audentia Druso Germanico, sed obstitit Oceanus in se simul atque in Herculem inquiri. Mox nemo temptavit, sanctiusque ac reverentius visum de actis deorum credere quam scire.

“The Angrivarii and Chamavi are shut in from behind by the Dulgubnii, Chasuarrii and other peoples of no special note, whilst in the West they are succeeded by the Frisii. The Frisii are called the ‘greater’ and the ‘lesser’, in accordance with the actual strength of the two peoples. Both tribes have the Rhine as their border right down to Ocean, and their settlements also extend round vast lakes, which have been sailed by Roman fleets. We have even felt our way into Ocean by this route, and rumour has it that there are pillars of Hercules beyond. Did Hercules really go there, or is it only our habit of assigning any conspicuous achievement anywhere to that famous name? Drusus Germanicus was not deficient in the courage of the explorer, but Ocean forbade further research into its own secrets or those of Hercules. Since then no one has tried to explore. It has been judged more pious and reverent to believe in what the gods have done than to investigate it” (translation Mattingly, 1948).

CASSIUS DIO (Roman History LIV 32) lived in the 3rd century AD and wrote in Greek. He refers to the Frisians while describing the first campaign of Drusus, in 12 BC:

ἔς τε τὸν ὠκεανὸν διὰ τοῦ Ῥήνου καταπλεύσας τοὺς τε Φρισίους ὤκειώσατο, καὶ ἐς τὴν Χαυκίδα διὰ τῆς λίμνης ἐμβαλὼν ἐκινδύνευσε, τῶν πλοίων ὑπὸ τῆς τοῦ ὠκεανοῦ παλιρροίας ἐπὶ τοῦ ξηροῦ γενομένων. καὶ τότε μὲν ὑπὸ τῶν Φρισίων περὶ συνεστρατευκότων αὐτῷ σωθεὶς ἀνεχώρησε (χειμῶν γὰρ ἦν).

“He sailed down the Rhine to the ocean, won over the Frisians, and crossing the lake, invaded the country of the Chauci, where he ran into danger, as his ships were left high and dry by the ebb of the ocean. He was saved on this occasion by the Frisians, who had joined his expedition with their infantry and withdrew, since it was now winter” (translation: Cary, 1917).

PTOLEMY (Geographia 2,11,7) wrote in Greek and lived in Alexandria at the time of the emperor Marcus Aurelius (AD 139–180):

Τὴν δὲ παρωκεανῆτιν κατέχουσιν ὑπὲρ μὲν τοὺς

Βρουκτέρους οί Φρίσιοι μέχρι τοῦ Ἀμισίου ποταμοῦ, μετὰ δὲ τούτους Καῦχοι οί μικροί μέχρι τοῦ Οὐν-σοῦργιος ποταμοῦ· εἶτα Καῦχοι οί μείζους μέχρι τοῦ Ἄλβιος ποταμοῦ·

“Beyond the Bructeri, the land near the ocean was inhabited by the Frisians up to the river Ems, beyond them lived the Lesser Chaukans up to the river Weser, then the Greater Chaukans up to the river Elbe” (translation by the author).

POMPONIUS MELA (Chorographia 3.24) wrote a book which appeared probably in AD 44 (Romer, 1998: 3); in it, he says:

Rhenus, ab Alpibus decidens, prope a capite duos lacus efficit, Venetum et Acronium: mox, diu solidus, et certo alveo lapsus, haud procul a mari huc et illuc dispergitur; sed, ad sinistram, amnis etiam tum, et donec effluat, Rhenus; ad dextram, primo angustus et sui similis, post, ripis longe ac late recedentibus, jam non amnis, sed ingens lacus, ubi campos implevit, Flevo dicitur; ejusdem nominis insulam amplexus, fit iterum arctior, iterumque fluvius emittitur.

“The Rhenus, cascading down from the Alps, makes – more or less at its source – two lakes, Lake Venetus and Lake Acronus. Then solid for a long time and descending in a defined bank, not far from the sea it spreads in two directions. To the left the Rhenus actually remains a river until it reaches its outlet. On the right, however, the river is at first narrow and unchanged, but later its banks recede over a vast expanse. At this point it is no longer called a river but a huge lake – Lake Flevo – where it has flooded the fields. It surrounds islands of the same name, becomes narrower again, and again makes its outlet as a river” (text and translation: Romer, 1998: 109).

The classical authors cited above mention the *Frisii* or, in the example of Pomponius Mela, describe in detail the different mouths of the river Rhine. Only two authors offer more detailed information. Tacitus mentions two different groups of Frisians, and Pliny is the only author who distinguishes between *Frisii* and *Frisiavones*. Tacitus refers to Greater (*maiores*) and Lesser (*minores*) *Frisii*, while Pliny mentions (islands of) the Frisians (*Frisiorum*) and also of the *Frisiavones* (*Frisiavonum*). Both describe the Frisians and the *Frisiavones* as living between the mouths of the Rhine. It is remarkable that both Pliny and Tacitus only use these names, the Greater and Lesser *Frisii* and the *Frisiavones*, in describing the geography. In their descriptions of historical events, they only refer to *Frisii* (Tacitus Germania 34.1) or *Frisi* (Pliny NH XXV vi 21).

These differences and inconsistencies may be caused by the fact that in their description of faraway lands and peoples the ancient writers often used a fixed set of *topoi*. We cannot therefore take geographical and ethnographic descriptions at their face value. Nor can we interpret their descriptions as truthful reports of what the authors saw at first hand or were able to find out about these subjects. Even if an author was knowledgeable on the subject because he had visited the area he described, like Pliny who travelled in Northern Europe, it still is difficult to separate ethnographic tradition from personal observation. As a result, the descriptions by classical authors of the geography of a region and the localisation of different tribes have often been subjects of debate. This has also been the case with the description of *Frisii* and *Frisiavones*, and from this discussion several conclusions have emerged.

According to Mommsen (1904: V, 116), the distinction made by Pliny between *Frisii* and *Frisiavones* and that between Greater and Lesser Frisians by Tacitus may relate to the difference between independent and subjected Frisians. According to Mommsen the *Frisii* in AD 58 acted as a fairly independent tribe; also the fact that Pliny, who was in the area under Domitius Corbulo (AD 47), referred to the Frisians at the time of Germanicus (AD 14/15) as “a then loyal tribe” (*gens tum fida*) seems to point to the existence of subjected and independent Frisians. According to Mommsen all Frisians lived near the sea, in the areas that still bear their name (“Anderswo als an der noch heute ihren Namen tragenden Küste darf man sie nicht ansetzen”). He also claimed that Pliny’s second reference to the *Frisiavones* was without any doubt a mistake.

Stein (1932: 5) stated that the *Frisiavones* and Chaukans lived along the coast of the Zuiderzee and the islands lying in front (“Splittern der Frisiavones und der Chauki um den Zuidersee und auf den vorgelegerten Inseln”). The second reference by Pliny to the *Frisiavones* leads Stein (1932: 5) to remark that part of the *Frisiavones* may also have settled in the neighbourhood of Cleves (“Reine Germanen waren auch ein vielleicht um Kleve angesiedelter Teil der Frisiavones, ...”).

Schmidt (1938: 71–72) was of the opinion that the *Frisii Maiores* were living east of the Vlie (between Vlieland and Terschelling). According to him, the Lesser Frisians are usually but quite erroneously identified with the *Frisiavones*. The *Frisiavones* lived in Belgium where they are mentioned by Pliny as living near the *Tungri*, *Sunuci* and *Baetasi*. Therefore the description of the *Frisiavones* living on the islands

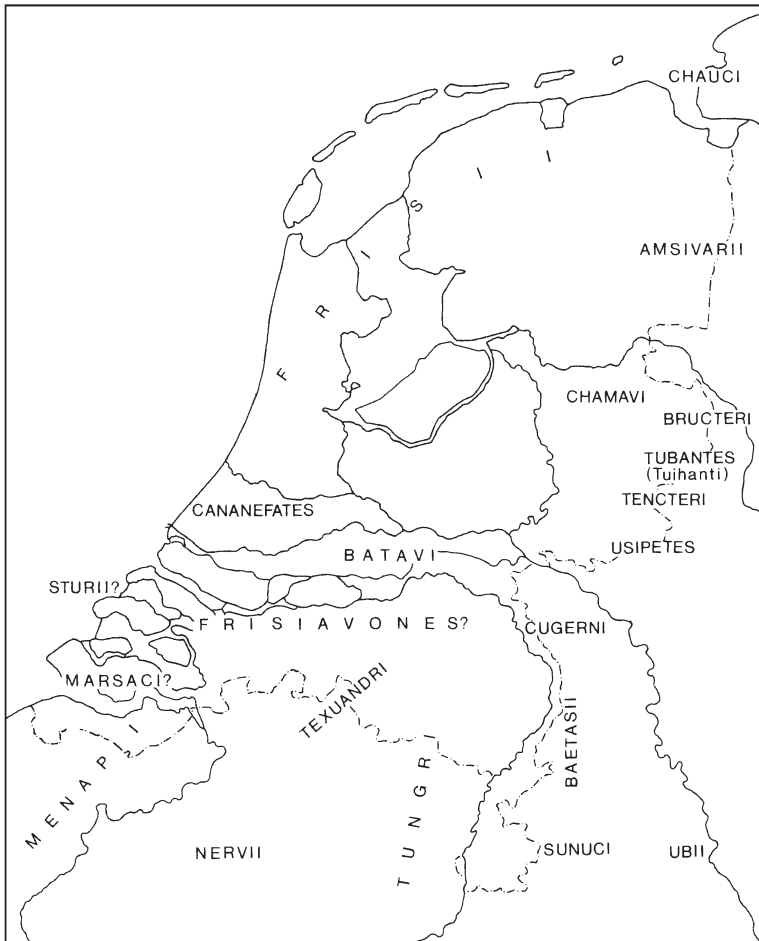


Fig. 2. The territory of the *Frisiavones* (After: Bogaers, 1967 and Van Es, 1981: fig. 12).

branch of the Frisian tribe and considers that the *Frisii Minores* are to be equated with the *Frisiavones*.

Rives (1999: 262), however, tells us that the identification of the Lesser *Frisii* with the *Frisiavones* has now been generally rejected.

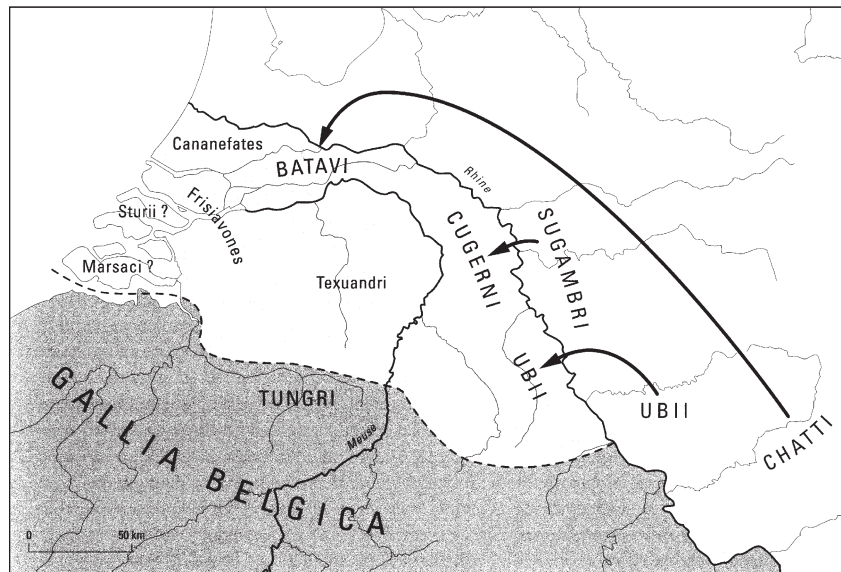
Roymans (2004: 25 and fig. 3.2) observes a link between the disappearance of the Eburones and the arrival of new tribal groups such as the *Cananefates* and the *Frisiavones* in the second half of the 1st century BC. According to Roymans (2004: 205–209), the *Frisiavones*, together with the *Cananefates* and *Marsaci*, were client tribes of the Batavians. They supplied auxiliary troops and their contingents may have been incorporated into the Batavian units in the Roman Army. In his reconstruction of the pre-Flavian *civitas Batavorum* he situated the *Frisiavones* in the southern part of the modern province of Zuid-Holland and the northwestern part of Noord-Brabant (Roymans, 2004: fig. 8.4). This situation may have continued until the Batavian revolt and according to Roymans (2004: 209), “after the Batavian revolt the Frisiavones and the Cananefates were given an opportunity to express

their own identity”. He also mentions the possibility that the *Cananefates* and *Frisiavones* were separated from the Batavians at an earlier moment, maybe under Claudius (Roymans, 2004: 208, No. 464).

The arguments put forward in the above-mentioned discussions may prompt the conclusion that the evidence from classical writers cannot be taken as plain fact. It is clear that different outcomes arise when ancient texts on *Frisii* and *Frisiavones* are interpreted by different people. Many authors, however, agree that the *Frisii* were in fact divided into Greater and Lesser and that they lived along the coast in the northern part of the Netherlands. However, there is less agreement on the *Frisiavones* and the identification of their territory has been much discussed.

The problem with the *Frisiavones* is the description by Pliny, who seems to localize two tribes with identical names in different places. Although it is difficult to decide whether one of the descriptions is an interpolation or both descriptions belong to the original text, many archaeologists accept that both references

Fig. 3. The territory of the *Frisiavones* (After: Roymans, 2004: fig. 3.2).



are part of the original text. Some try to reconcile the two passages in their efforts to localize a single tribe, while others accept the existence of two tribes bearing the same name and living in different areas.

On the *Frisii* most authors agree, and accept the description by Tacitus, since Tacitus also mentions the Greater and Lesser Chaukans, and it is indeed possible that a similar situation existed among the Frisians. Many authors place the Lesser Frisians in the western part of the Netherlands (Noord-Holland) and the Greater Frisians in the northeast (Friesland and Groningen) notwithstanding the fact that in their descriptions both Tacitus and Pliny localize the *Frisii* on islands in the Rhine. However, other classical authors locate the Frisians near the Ocean and bordering the Chaukans to the east, which seems to be in accordance with the situation at that time. However, an argument in favour of Pliny and Tacitus may be that both authors were offering a description of the Rhine and therefore only mentioned the Frisians living near the Rhine. Still, this fails to explain why Pliny locates the Chaukans on islands in the Rhine, while nowadays they are generally located to the east of the river Ems. It cannot be excluded, however, that small groups of Chaukans did live near the Rhine, namely, on the coast of the former Zuiderzee (now the IJsselmeer). Pliny may have accurately described the situation as he observed it when he visited the area. In that case, his description illustrates the fact that in the 1st century AD many groups or even entire tribes did not live permanently in one area but were often on the move, looking for new territory. One example of this is given by Tacitus (Annals XIII, 48) in his descrip-

tion of the events in the year AD 58 when two Frisian kings, Verritus and Malorix, arrived on the banks of the Rhine with a large group of entire families, young and old, in order to settle in that area.

A far more difficult point is that although we have the descriptions of the classical authors, we still do not know by what names the Frisians, Chaukans and *Frisiavones* identified themselves and how they perceived themselves. Did the Frisians consider themselves Frisians, as an ethnic unit or as belonging to smaller units and, more importantly, was this an issue for them? Tacitus (Annals XI, 18) mentions Gannascus, the leader of Chaukan raids, who was of Canninefate extraction (*natione Canninefas*).

We do not know the answer, and maybe the Romans, together with many modern authors, laid too much emphasis on the existence of different tribes, maybe even 'creating' them, unbeknown to the people concerned. Maybe we should accept that it is not possible and even pointless to impose our modern ideas about well-defined social groups with similarly well-defined territories on people in a distant past.

3. *FRISII* AND *FRISIAVONES*: THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

The emphasis in archaeology on identifying tribes and on finding differences between groups probably is inherent to the effort to create order where such order may have been absent or not even considered desirable. This effort to create order is also known from other disciplines that study the past. In archaeology this

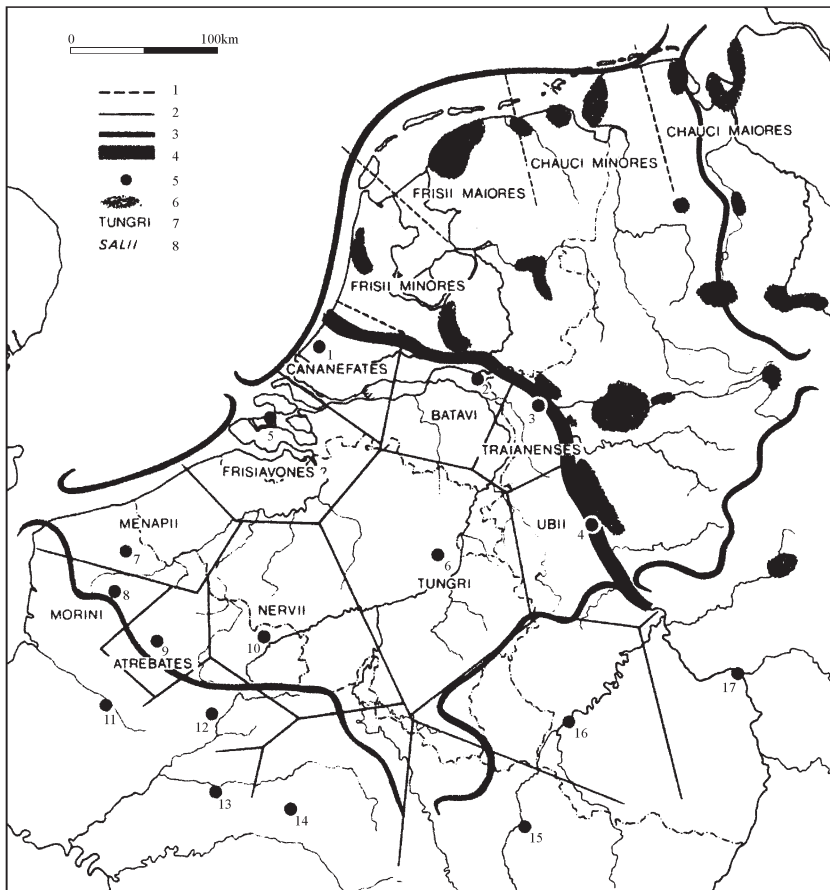


Fig. 4. The *civitas* of the *Frisiavones* (After: Bloemers, 1988: fig. 3.4).

effort has led to the identification of cultures, while it is not certain that in antiquity these cultures represented groups that had any notion of belonging together or of being related. This strong desire to classify and to identify material culture and to match names and peoples to material culture has led to the identification of a so-called 'Frisian' pottery style. This does not mean that in antiquity the makers of this Frisian pottery identified themselves as Frisians, nor that people whom the Romans called Frisians were making this type of pottery. The designation 'Frisian ware' often appears when we study the hand-made pottery of the Northern Netherlands. The pottery was studied by Taayke (Taayke, 1990; 1996). He showed that towards the end of the 1st century BC the pottery styles in Friesland, Groningen and Noord Holland were related, and that in the early 1st century AD a "Frisian" pottery style might be identified in areas along the North Sea coast as far south as Zuid Holland (Taayke, 1996: 174, fig. 5 and 176, fig. 7). From the early 1st century AD, the hand-made pottery from Groningen was no longer similar to the Frisian pottery but showed affinity to the pottery in the coastal areas of northern

Germany (Taayke, 1996: 175). Recently a special type of pottery, so-called 'Chaukan' pottery, which is characteristic of Groningen and the adjacent area in northern Germany, was discovered in the new building area "Leidsche Rijn", near Utrecht in the central Netherlands. According to Taayke (2007: 334–336) the presence of this pottery, in an Early Roman context, may indicate that people from the north had moved southward to this area, just across the Rhine. Although the attribution of ethnic names to pottery styles may be disputable, the fact is that this style of pottery has been found in Utrecht and therefore we cannot exclude the possibility that people making this pottery moved southward during the 1st century AD, whether we call them Chaukans or otherwise. This could be an illustration of Pliny's remark that Chaukans lived on islands in the Rhine. It may also show that the arrival of the Roman army caused an overwhelming effect on people living in the occupied regions, including the fringes of the occupied areas. Groups of people living in these parts who might have been used to moving between territories were no longer able to do so. Maybe they were forced to move to areas where they could

not support themselves because there was insufficient land, or they lost access to the pastures for feeding their stock. People were not static entities, they were constantly dealing with the natural circumstances as well as with their neighbours.

This change of environment not only applies to groups like tribes, but it may have particularly affected certain families or individuals. In this way we may interpret the Frisian pottery and the two farmhouses of Frisian type in a small settlement near Venlo, in the Dutch province of Limburg. Dendrochronological analysis has dated the excavated remains towards the end of the 1st century AD. The Frisian finds seem to indicate that people who came to live here were used to the Frisian way of making pottery and building farmhouses. They may have been veterans from the *auxilia* who did not want to return home and who settled there after their term of service (Enckevort, 2001: 381–382).

These studies of Frisian pottery show how material culture has been used to identify Frisians and the areas where they lived but also demonstrate the use of material culture to show that individuals or groups of people often were on the move. Frisian material culture may be used to identify Frisians because their material culture differs from that in neighbouring areas. Frisian material culture which is found outside the territory of the Frisians, the coastal zone of the northern part of the Netherlands, has often been interpreted as an indication of the presence of Frisians or at any rate of people from the northern Netherlands.

No specific archaeological culture is associated with the *Frisiavones* and therefore we have no archaeological indication about the territory where this tribe lived. If we assume that both names indicate Frisians, their material culture could be related. In that case, we should look for the *Frisiavones* in areas near the Rhine where Frisian pottery has been found. The pottery style and the way of building farmhouses which is typical of the Frisians living in the north has occasionally been encountered in areas south of the Rhine. It has not been found in the areas usually attributed to the *Frisiavones*, namely the western part of the modern province of Noord-Brabant, the southern part of Zuid-Holland, or Zeeland. If we accept the generally held opinion that the *Frisiavones* lived somewhere in these areas, their relation to the *Frisii* cannot be demonstrated through their material culture.

The motivation for this study were questions about whether it might be possible to distinguish between *Frisii* and *Frisiavones*, or to identify their territory, or to find out whether they were related. From the classical texts and their modern interpretations it has

become clear that the Romans made a distinction between *Frisii* and *Frisiavones*. The *Frisii* lived in the coastal area of the northern part of the Netherlands, the modern provinces of Noord-Holland, Friesland and Groningen. They became independent after a short period of dependency. The *Frisiavones* lived south of the Rhine, probably in (the western part of) Noord-Brabant and parts of Zuid-Holland and Zeeland and they were part of the Roman Empire. It has not become clear whether *Frisiavones* also lived in other parts of the Empire, for instance further inland, and the *Frisii* and *Frisiavones* do not seem to have been culturally related.

In the next part of this investigation, the epigraphical evidence relating to the *Frisii* and the *Frisiavones* will be scrutinized. Inscriptions provide data which not only are contemporary but also have a particularly strong relationship to the people they concern because the inscriptions were used and commissioned by the people they concern. The inscriptions show when and where *Frisii* and *Frisiavones* were active in Roman contexts and how they used their name and their official identity. The epigraphical sources, however, also provide difficulties when it comes to distinguishing between *Frisii* and *Frisiavones*.

4. *FRISII* AND *FRISIAVONES*: THE EPIGRAPHICAL EVIDENCE

4.1. Inscriptions

Latin inscriptions have been published in different corpora. Some of these corpora were compiled in the 19th century. Other corpora followed in the 20th century; hence various references may relate to the same inscription and this may cause confusion. Some of the inscriptions published in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (*CIL*) part VII (the inscriptions in Great Britain) also appear in part XVI (the military diplomas) and in *The Roman Inscriptions of Britain* (*RIB*) and in *The Roman Military Diplomas* (*RMD*). On the other hand, not all inscriptions published in the earlier corpora, as for instance *CIL* VII, published in 1873, are nowadays still used as evidence. Byvanck in his *Excerpta Romana*, published in 1935, collected inscriptions referring to Frisians or *Frisiavones* from these early corpora, but in more recent publications several of these inscriptions are no longer considered reliable sources. Therefore inscriptions which only appear in *CIL* VII and were excluded from the more recent publications will not be taken into account in

the present study.

Inscriptions in which *Frisii* or *Frisiavones* are mentioned are of various kinds. They include official inscriptions such as military diplomas, but also more personal ones, such as funeral inscriptions. Official inscriptions may illustrate the Roman way of referring to *Frisii* and *Frisiavones*, while the personal documents offer an insight into how the *Frisii* and *Frisiavones* perceived their own identity and how they wished to be remembered.

The similarity of the names and the problem of distinguishing between *Frisii* and *Frisiavones* becomes particularly prominent in the inscriptions. Some authors however, apparently fail to make any distinction between the two groups. It is important to clarify these problems, since we are dealing with two different groups, with similar names, which had different relations to the Roman Empire.

Diacritical marks

The following diacritical marks have been used:

- | end of phrase on the stone
- () elaboration of an abbreviation
- [] completion (or conjectures) of lost characters
- ... lacuna of specified number of characters
- lacuna of unknown number of characters
- > stands for the inverted C, used in Latin inscriptions to indicate the word *Centurio*

For the translations of the inscriptions into English, italic script is used.

For names that are unclear or unfamiliar, CAPITALS are used in the transcription.

4.2. First century

The earliest inscriptions date to the early 1st century AD. Two funerary inscriptions discovered in Rome mention a Frisian. These inscriptions also are a good illustration of the problem we have in distinguishing between *Frisii* and *Frisiavones*. Both inscriptions, now lost, were discovered in the so-called *Monumentum Liberatorum Neronis Drusi*. This is the name of a subterranean mausoleum with urns placed in niches covered with marble slabs on which the funerary inscriptions were written.

The first inscription (*CIL* VI 4342; *ILS* 1720) reads:
Bassus Neronis | Caesaris corpore | custos natione Frisius | vix(it) a(nnos) XL

“Bassus bodyguard of Nero Caesar of Frisian origin lived forty years”.

The second inscription (*CIL* VI 4343; *ILS* 1721) reads:

Hilarus Neronis | Caesaris corpore | custos natione Frisiaeo | vix(it) a(nnos) XXXIII

“Hilarus bodyguard of Nero Caesar of Frisian origin lived thirty-three years”.

The bodyguard in the first inscription was of Frisian origin. The words *natione Frisiaeo* are the usual words for indicating a person’s origin. This formula is also used in other funerary inscriptions, for instance *natione Batavus* (Bellen, 1981: A 8, 9, 10, 12, 14) and it also occurs with classical authors, for instance Tacitus (*Annals* XI 18), who refers to Gannascus as *natione Canninefas*.

The second inscription presents a problem. In this inscription the origin of the deceased may be read as *Frisiaeo*, but according to Bellen (1981: 116, B 6) the inscription has also been read as *Frisiao*, *Frisaeo* and even *Farisaeo*. Bellen assumed that the stone was inscribed *Frisiavo* and he referred to Bang (1906: 68, No. 574) who reads the inscription *Frisiaeo* as meaning “ein Frisiavone”. Since the inscription is now lost, it is difficult to decide which reading is the true one and we have to make do with the evidence we have at our disposal. In all the readings the name ends with the letter “o”. Although most of these funerary inscriptions have an origin name which ends with “us” in this inscription the letter “o” appears. The question is what might have been meant by this. Does *Frisiao* or *Frisiaeo* refer to *Frisius* or to *Frisiavonus*? This question is important because we often encounter this type of problem in attempting to distinguish between *Frisii* and *Frisiavones* in Latin inscriptions. In all above-mentioned readings, *Frisiaeo*, *Frisaeo* and *Frisiao*, the name seems too short to justify reconstructing the name as Frisiavone; too many letters are lacking and therefore, in my opinion, the epitaph does not refer to a Frisavone. Thus we may come to the conclusion that this second inscription too refers to a member of the *Frisii*.

Both inscriptions are said to originate from the subterranean mausoleum of the freedmen of Nero Drusus. He was the son of Germanicus, who campaigned in the region of the North Sea coast in AD 14-16. During his campaigns Germanicus enlisted Germans for his bodyguard (Bellen, 1981: 28–29). This was not unusual and it is known that also Tiberius had German bodyguards. After Germanicus’ death in AD 19, part of his bodyguard joined the bodyguard of his son Nero.

Therefore the date of both funerary inscriptions is likely to have been before the year AD 29, when both Nero Drusus and his mother Agrippina, Germanicus' wife, fell into disgrace and were sent into exile. If both soldiers were indeed enlisted by Germanicus in the year AD 15, it follows that Bassus (who died at forty) at the time of his enlistment was between 26 and 36 years of age, and that Hilarus (who lived to be thirty-three) was between 19 and 29 years old. This age-bracket is not unusual. According to Holder (1982: 51), the youngest military recruit in Britain was 15 and the oldest 30; and Sauer (2005: 209), who made a calculation for legionary soldiers, reckoned that they enlisted at an age between 13 and 36 years.

The third inscription mentioning a Frisian soldier is also an epitaph (*CIL* VII 68; *RIB* 109; Webster, 1993: 45–46). It was discovered at Watermoor, Cirencester (Gloucestershire, England) and was on the tombstone of Sextus Valerius Genialis:

*Sextus Valerius Genialis Eq(u)es | Alae Thraec(um)
Civis Frisiavs | Tyr(ma) Genialis An(norum) XXXX |
St(ipendiorum) XX H(ic) S(itus) E(st) (H)e(res/redes)
F(aciendum) C(uravit/uraverunt)*

“Sextus Valerius Genialis, horseman of the Thracian auxiliary troops, Frisian citizen, of the unit of Genialis, forty years old, who served twenty years, lies buried here, his heir(s) took care of his funeral”.

The tombstone shows Sextus Valerius Genialis, carved in high relief on the upper half of the stone. He is represented as a horseman and he wears body armour with shoulder straps and a Medusa head on the chest. He wears a cavalry sports helmet with an upturned pointed peak. Below the peak his face is covered with a visor, but it is impossible to tell whether the mask covers the entire face (Robinson, 1975: 89, 111, 169 and plate 300). He thrusts his spear into an enemy who is being trampled by his horse. In the inscription on the lower part of the tombstone he is called *civis Frisiavs* and his three names also point to his Roman citizenship. Since he only served twenty years and Roman citizenship was awarded after twenty five years of service, he may have acquired citizenship during his service. In some cases block allocations of citizenship were awarded to particular units (Holder, 1982: 22–23; Mattingly, 2006: 190). However, it is more likely that he was a citizen son of a Frisian auxiliary veteran. Genialis' Frisian father may have been an auxiliary soldier in the first half of the 1st century AD; after twenty-five years father and son would have become Roman citizens, and so Genialis may have been a Roman citizen even before he entered the army. Although this became increas-

ingly common in the 2nd century (Mattingly, 2006: 190), this may have been the case already in the 1st century.

The date of the inscription is uncertain. Junckelmann (1991: 137–139 and fig. 78) dates it to the second half of the 2nd century, but most archaeologists date it to the second half of the 1st century and more precisely to the years AD 45–75 (Stein, 1932: 154, No. 250; Webster, 1993: 45–46). The Thracian auxiliary unit in which Genialis served probably was the *Ala I Thracum*. Genialis may have been recruited locally in the province where this unit was stationed before it came to Britain (Dobson & Mann, 1973: 198). The unit may have been stationed at Vechten (*Fectio*) in the Netherlands (Bechert *et al.*, 1995: 83) before going to Colchester in AD 43; from there it moved on to Gloucester, which is not far from Cirencester where Genialis was buried.

The inscription mentioning three names, characterizes Genialis as a Roman citizen and as a *civis Frisiavs*. The latter has often been interpreted as ‘a Frisian citizen’, a member of the tribe of the *Frisii*. According to Mann (1971: 224), *Frisiavs* may be interpreted as *Frisiavo*. He believes that the declension changed from the third to the second and hence that *Frisiavs* evolved as a Vulgar Latin form of *Frisiavo* (Dobson & Mann, 1973: 198). I see no need to postulate a change of declension, because *Frisiavs* is written like many origin names, such as for instance *Noricus*, *Dacus* or *Arabus* (Speidel, 1994: 14–15). But even if we would accept Mann's interpretation, it remains unresolved what is meant by *Frisiavo* or *Frisiavus* and from what name it is derived.

These three inscriptions illustrate the problems that occur when we want to translate origin names in Latin inscriptions. Spoken language not only may have caused a change in the declension of a name but also seems to have influenced the way in which names were written. It may have caused names to become corrupted and characters to be replaced, or contracted. These changes are often seen in the inscriptions from Rome. This need not surprise us because the mixing of people using different dialects and coming from different parts of the Empire, but all speaking Latin, will have caused changes in pronunciation and as a consequence in the written language as well. I believe that in all three inscriptions the subjects were *Frisii*. This means that no *Frisiavones* are known in inscriptions dating to the 1st century. This seems in accordance with the view of Roymans (2004: 209) who argues that *Frisiavones* were given a separate identity only after the Batavian revolt in AD 69.

4.3. Second century

In the 2nd century we not only have epitaphs but also military and votive inscriptions mentioning *Frisii* and *Frisiavones*. The funerary inscriptions belong to *equites singulares*, the Emperor's bodyguard, and these inscriptions present some difficulties in distinguishing between *Frisii* and *Frisiavones*. The military inscriptions on the other hand are very clear, they refer to the unit of the *Frisiavones* and to individual *Frisii*. The two votive inscriptions are enigmatic. One refers to the region of the *Frisiavones* in Gallia Belgica, while the other mentions Frisian goddesses whose ethnic name is not unambiguous.

4.3.1. Votive inscriptions

A votive inscription discovered in Tunisia in 1958 refers to the *Frisiavones* as a group of people with their own *regio*. At the time the inscription was made, this *regio* appears to have been connected with Gallia Belgica. The inscription was on the base of an equestrian statue dedicated to Q. Domitius Marsianus by the city council of Bulla Regia in proconsular Africa (*AE*, 1962: No. 183). The inscription dates to the period of the emperor Marcus Aurelius.

In this inscription Marsianus is referred to as ... *proc(urator) Aug(usti) ad census accipiendos provinciarum Belgicae per regiones Tungrorum et Fris(i)avonum et Germaniae inferioris et Batavorum*. The inscription has prompted much debate as to whether the "regio Frisiavonum" was part of Gallia Belgica, and also about the question of where the border ran between Gallia Belgica and Germania Inferior (Bogaers, 1967: 106). The inscription seems to make clear that in the 2nd century AD the *Frisiavones* lived in a region that seems to have formed part of Gallia Belgica, and where taxes had to be paid.

A second votive inscription, discovered in the environs of Xanten, mentions the hitherto unknown name *Frisavae*. The inscription reads: *Matribus Frisavis paternis* (*CIL* XIII 8633; Byvanck, 1935: 569, No. 1586). The date of the inscription cannot be established.

The name of the goddesses: *Matres Frisavae Paternae* (Zelle, 2000: 125) has been interpreted as relating to the *Frisiavones*. The name "Frisava" does not unambiguously refer to the *Frisiavones* and in my opinion a relation with the name of the *Frisii* may also be possible.

The *Matres Paternae*, "fatherly mothers" are known from other inscriptions in Lower Germany, where the

cult of the *Matres* was very popular and they were often invoked in the plural. *Matres* were often worshipped as protectors of people or places, for instance *Matres Treverae*, the *Matres* of the Treveri. The cult of *Matres* with names referring to other lands or distant tribes could mean that "worshippers may have attempted to transfer their own gods to a new seat of power" (Irby-Massie, 1999: 147).

Both the *Frisiavones* and the *Frisii* probably had their own mother goddesses. The *Frisiavones*, who presumably lived in the southwestern part of the Netherlands, may have been familiar with Nehalennia. This goddess is known from several votive stones discovered in Zeeland. For the *Frisii*, Hludana may have been a familiar goddess, since a votive inscription dedicated to Hludana was discovered at Beetgum in Friesland.

The *Matres Frisavae Paternae* are not the only *Matres* with ethnic names that are known from Xanten. Votive inscriptions dedicated to the *Matres Brittae* and the *Matres Marsacae* were also discovered. The *Matres Marsacae* apparently refer to the Marsaci, a group of people listed by Pliny (NH IV, 101) among the different tribes living on islands between Helinium and Flevum, just like the *Frisiavones* and the *Frisii*. This may illustrate the popularity of the *Matres* in the area of the Lower Rhine but the text does not offer any help in the attribution of the *Matres Frisavae* to the *Frisii* or to the *Frisiavones*. Since the *Frisiavones* were part of the Roman Empire and the veneration of the *Matres* took place within the Empire, the *Frisiavones* may be the more obvious choice. On the other hand, these votive stones were dedicated to their own *Matres* by people who did not originate from the region of Xanten. They could have been foreign settlers, or indeed traders, and in this context the *Frisii* should definitely be taken into account. They may have had access to Roman markets to exchange goods (for example hides or wool) for Roman products or for money.

4.3.2. Military inscriptions

Cohors I Frisiavonum

The *Cohors I Frisiavonum*, the first cohort of the *Frisiavones*, is mentioned in seven military diplomas and in four or maybe five building inscriptions. This *Cohors* was formed in the 1st century AD. Maybe after the Batavian revolt in AD 69, but at the latest around the year 80, which is 25 years before the date of the first diploma mentioning this unit. All diplomas were issued in Britain in the 2nd century AD.

The first diploma was issued by Trajan in Britain in AD 105. It consists of two fragments which were both discovered at Sydenham (England). The text mentions eleven cohorts, including the cohort of the *Frisiavones*. The name appears among those of other cohorts: *I fida Vardullorum, I Frisiavonum, I Nerviorum*. (CIL XVI, 51; RIB II.1 2401.2; Byvanck, 1935: 439, No. 1089).

The second diploma mentioning the First Cohort of the *Frisiavones* was discovered in the Netherlands. It turned up at a site called Delwijnen in the province of Gelderland, northwest of Den Bosch (Hulst, 1994: 167). Delwijnen is situated in the Bommelerwaard, an area between the river Waal and the river Meuse. This area may once have been part of the *civitas* of the *Frisiavones*, and Delwijnen may be at or near the border between the territories of the *Frisiavones* and the *Batavi* (Hulst, 1994: 167). The very small fragment of the diploma was discovered in 1993 and was published by Roxan (Roxan, 1994: diploma 151). She concluded that this diploma does appear to belong to the well-known series of diplomas issued by Trajan in Britain in the years 98, 103 and 105 and therefore attributed the fragment to the years before AD 114, most probably between AD 106 and 114. Only five lines remained on the outer face of the diploma and only three on the inner face. The text on the outer face shows at least the following capitals in five lines (1) STA ET I (2) ET I FR (3) ENAPIO (4) ET III L (5) NVM. In the second line, the name of the Cohors I Frisiavonum may be read and on the basis of this fragmentary text Roxan proposed the following reconstruction of the Latin text (1994: 269):

Aug]usta et I [---]m et I Fr[isiavonum et --- et M] enapio[rum ---]m et III Li[n]gonum et--- et IIII Lingo] num [et --- et sunt in Britannia sub ---

The third diploma mentioning the First Cohort of the *Frisiavones* was issued by Hadrian in Britain in AD 122. It was discovered in Hungary, in A-Szöny (the Roman *Brigetio* in Pannonia Superior). The text mentions the First Cohort of the *Frisiavones* on the outer as well as the inner face. On the outer, the inscription mentions *I Frisiavon(um)* and on the inner, *I Frisiavonum* (CIL XVI, 69; Pryce, 1930). The diploma records 37 cohorts in Britain. The diploma was issued on 17 July 122 and it is unusual because it was issued during the campaigning season. According to Jarret (1994: 74) this “may well be linked to Hadrian’s visit to Britain”.

The fourth diploma mentioning this Cohort was issued by Hadrian in Britain in AD 124. Two fragments

were discovered at Stannington, Sheffield (England). On one of the fragments the name of the cohort of the *Frisiavones* is mentioned twice. On the outer face as *I Frisiav et* and on the inner face as *[Frisi]avon et* (RIB II, 1 2401.6).

A fragment of a fifth diploma, issued by Hadrian in Britain in AD 127, was probably discovered in the Balkans (*AE*, 1997: 1779). A small part of the same diploma appeared on the London art market. The name of the cohort of *Frisiavones* does not appear on either of the fragments, but a conjecture by M.M. Roxan (1997) puts the name of the First Cohort of the *Frisiavones* in the eighth line on the inner face of the diploma.

The sixth diploma was issued by Antoninus Pius in Britain in AD 158. The three fragments were discovered in 1995 near the Roman fort at Ravenglas, *Itunocelum*, in England. Among seventeen cohorts, it mentions the *I Fr[is]iavon(um)* (Tomlin, 1997: 463; *AE*, 1997: 1001).

The seventh diploma was issued by Marcus Aurelius and Commodus in Britain in AD 178. The diploma was found in Bulgaria. On the outer face the names of sixteen cohorts are mentioned, including the *I Frisiavon(um)* (Roxan, 1994: 308–310).

These seven diplomas show that the Cohort I Frisiavonum was active in Britain during the 2nd century. The first diploma mentioning a Cohort I Frisiavonum was issued by Trajan in the year 105. The soldiers who were granted citizenship in this diploma had been in the army for 25 years and therefore they would have entered the army in AD 80, during the reign of the emperor Titus. The latest diploma dates to the reign of Marcus Aurelius and if by then there were still any *Frisiavones* in the cohort bearing their name, they would have enlisted just after the middle of the 2nd century, around AD 153.

Although the presence of the Cohors I Frisiavonum is attested in Britain, the diplomas do not inform us about the military forts where these cohorts had been active. On this subject we are better informed by building inscriptions discovered in or near military forts and which relate to building activities in these forts. The First Cohort of the *Frisiavones* is mentioned on three, or even four, inscriptions on building material. They were discovered at *Mamucium*, the Roman fort at Manchester (England). These so-called “centurial” or “cohort” stones mention the amount of building work that was completed by the auxiliary units. The

names of the cohort and of the leaders of the century are often mentioned, as well as the number of feet, indicated with *P(edes)*, of building work done by the unit. In the following, the symbol “>” represents the inverted C, used in Roman inscriptions to indicate the century. All the building inscriptions are now lost and there is no precise date for the inscriptions. They could, according to Jarrett (1994: 59–60), relate to the Severan rebuilding of the fort.

Coh(ortis) I Frisiavo(num) > Masavonis p(edes) XXIII (CIL VII 213; RIB 577)

“The century of Masavo of the First Cohort of the Frisiavones [built] 23 feet”

Coh(ortis) I Frisiavo(num) > Qvintiani fec(it) p(edes) XXIII (RIB 578)

“The century of Quintianus of the First Cohort of the Frisiavones built 24 feet”

> *Cvdreni C(oh)hor(tis) I Frisiav(onum) p(edes)* (RIB 579)

“The century of Cudrenus, of the First Cohort of the Frisiavones [built] (...) feet.”

> *Candidi pedes XX IIII* (CIL VII 215; RIB 580)

“Century of Candidus [built] 24 (feet)”

The last inscription (RIB 580) cannot be definitely attributed to the First Cohort of the *Frisiavones* because it fails to mention the unit. However, its similarity to the three other inscriptions suggests that it refers to the *Frisiavones*.

At Melandra Castle in Derbyshire (England), not far from *Mamucium*, a fifth building inscription was discovered. The Latin name of Melandra Castle is *Ardotalia*.

C(oh)ho(ortis) I Frisiavo(num) C(enturia) Val(eri)[i] Vitalis (CIL VII 178; RIB 279)

“The century of Valerius Vitalis of the First Cohort of the Frisiavones [made this].”

According to Jarrett (1994: 59) this inscription may belong to the rebuilding of the fort which is dated to the reign of Trajan or Hadrian.

Three other inscriptions referring to the First Cohort of the *Frisiavones* I have excluded. Two inscriptions, probably cohort stones, were mentioned by Byvanck (1935, Nos 1273 = CIL VII 1243 and 1282 = CIL VII 427), but they could not be traced in the modern literature and have therefore been omitted. A third inscrip-

tion, reported to have come from Vindobala (Byvanck, 1935: No. 1280; CIL VII 541), was not mentioned either in the modern literature or by Irby-Massie (1999). It was therefore not included.

Diploma for a Frisian veteran

The only military inscription mentioning a soldier belonging to the *Frisii* is a diploma issued between AD 129 and 134. The diploma (CIL III 37; Byvanck, 1935: 443, No. 1095; Stein, 1932: 283–284; Roxan, 1978: 25; Roxan, 1986: 287; Roxan, 1994: 245) was discovered in Göhren near Pappenheim, in Germany.

[--- *Alae*] *Aurian(ae) cui pra(e)st* [---] *Bassus Roma[nus ex gre]gale* [---] *li f(ilio), Frisio, [et ---]ini fil(iae) uxor(i) eius, Bat[avae et ---]ellinae fil(iae) eius* [---] *Felicis* [---] *Alcidis* [---] *Proculi* [---] *Daphni* [---] *Ampliati* [---] (After: Byvanck, 1935: 443, No. 1095).

Although only a fragment of this diploma has been preserved, it is the most important part of the document because it contains the text in which the recipient of the diploma is mentioned. The diploma was issued to a common soldier from the Ala I Hispanorum Auriana, who stood under the command of Bassus from Rome. The recipient of the diploma was a Frisian who had a Batavian wife and a daughter whose name ends with *-ellina*. The names of four witnesses are also preserved. The soldier was a veteran of Frisian origin and he had served in the Ala Auriana. The Frisian veteran appears to have settled in the area where he left the army because his diploma was discovered at a site not far from the military camp. The dating of the diploma has been refined several times and has now been fixed between AD 129 and 134 (Roxan, 1994: 245).

A second Frisian soldier is mentioned on one of the *Tabulae Vindolandenses*. The inscription gives a list of several names, probably of soldiers, including a *Frissia[us]* (Birley & Birley, 1994: 437–440). The inscription dates to period II (c. 92–97) when the garrison at Vindolanda (Chesterholm) was the Cohort VIII Batavorum. The tablet records small payments with names of the men who had to pay a stated amount. The name *Frissiaus* looks like an ethnic name, and although *Frissiaus* is not attested as a personal name, it may have been the name of a soldier in the Batavian cohort.

4.3.3. *Funerary inscriptions: Equites Singulares*

Apart from the more official inscriptions mentioning military units we also have epitaphs for individual soldiers on tombstones which often were erected by

the heirs. A special group of tombstones belongs to the *equites singulares*, the horseguards probably established by Trajan in AD 97 (Speidel, 1994: 24). The *equites singulares* were buried in Rome in their own graveyard where a large number of tombstones were discovered. Among the funerary inscriptions of *equites singulares*, eight may be attributed to *Frisii* or *Frisiavones*. One of the inscriptions did not refer to an *eques* but was dedicated to someone whose brother belonged to the *equites singulares*. We do not know why the deceased brother was in Rome, but a possible explanation is that the two brothers lived in Rome because their father was a horseguard (Speidel, 1994: No. 708). Six of the inscriptions mentioning *Frisii* or *Frisiavones* date to the 2nd century AD (Speidel, 1994: Nos 101, 103, 159, 180, 202, and 708) and two date to the 2nd or 3rd centuries (Speidel, 1994: Nos 359 and 444). The epitaphs are fragmentary and many words and characters are reconstructions or conjectures. Therefore no translations are given.

Speidel 101 (CIL VI 32850)

[D(is) M(anibus)] | [---] | Eq(uiti) sin[g(ulari) Aug(usti)] | Tur(ma) V[---, natio-] | ne Fr[is ---] | T. Fl(avius) C[---] | Eq(ues) sing(ularis) [Aug(usti), fratri] | Piissim[o ---].

Speidel 103

D(is) [M(anibus)] | T.Fl(avio) Geniali eq(uiti) sing(ulari) Aug(usti)] | Tur(ma) Larci Proclini nat(ione)] | Frisaoni stipend[iorum] | [X]VIII vix(it) an(nos) XX[X...] | [....] Rom[anus] | [-----]

Speidel Nr 159

D(is) [M(anibus)] | Aur(elio) R[- - -] | Nat(ione) F[risiavo - - -] | [- - -

Speidel nr 180 (CIL VI 32866)

- - tur(ma) U]rbani | [nat(ione) Fr]isiavo | [vix(it) ann(os) - - - X]XVII | [mil(itavit) ann(os) - - -]X | [- - -

Speidel 202 (CIL VI 3230)

D(is) M(anibus) | Aur(elio) Vero. Eq(uiti) sing(ulari) Aug(usti) | nat(ione) Friseo, t(urma) Ael(i) Gemini | vix(it) ann(os) XXX | mil(itavit) ann(os) XIII | Aur(elius) Moesicus, her(es) | a(mico) o(ptimo) f(aciendum) c(uravit)

Speidel 359

- - - nat(ione) Fri]saoni | [tur(ma) - - -] ani | [- - -] mil(itavit) a(nnos) | [- - -] Jinus | [- - -] I | [- - -

Speidel 444 (CIL VI 3321a)

[D(is) M(anibus).] | [- - -] I | [- - -] eq(u - - -) | [s - - -] Frisi- | [avo - - -] F. AGRA[- - -] | [- - -] F. CHIU[- - -] | [- - -] Cand[- - -] | [- - -] JH[- - -

Speidel 708 (CIL VI 3260)

D(is) M(anibus) | T. Fl(avio) Verino | Nat(ione) Frisaevone | vix(it) an(nos) XX. T. Fl(avius) Victor | eq(ues) sing(ularis) Aug(usti), fratri | dulcissimo | f(aciendum) [c(uravit)]

The funeral inscriptions offer some problems. They often are not only incomplete but also difficult to interpret, because the names of the “nationalities” of the deceased *equites* are written in different ways. Only one inscription refers to a horseguard *natione Friseo* (Speidel, No. 202). In the other inscriptions, the nationality was written as *Fr-* (Speidel, No. 101), *F-* (Speidel, No. 159), *Frisaoni* (Speidel, No. 103), *-saoni* (Speidel, No. 359), *-siavo* (Speidel, No. 180), *Frisaevone* (Speidel, No. 708) and *Frisi-* (Speidel, No. 444). Speidel believes that all these names, although most of them lack the letter ‘i’ after the letter ‘s’, probably refer to *Frisiavones*. Therefore the only inscription referring to a *Friseo* should, according to Speidel, also be understood as referring to a *Frisiavone*.

Still, I would hesitate to support this conclusion and I would dare to disagree with Speidel, who himself was also very cautious in his conclusion. We do not need to interpret *Friseo* as *Frisiavone* only because most *equites* were *Frisiavones*. It may not have been usual, but need not have been impossible for the *Frisii* to join the *equites singulares*. After all, they did join the bodyguard of the Imperial family in the 1st century. Therefore, in my opinion, at least one of the *equites* belonged to the *Frisii*. Four of the other *equites* (*Frisaoni*, *-saoni*, *-siavo* and *Frisaevone*) may have been *Frisiavones*, while in the rest of the inscriptions the evidence is too meagre to decide one way or the other.

Three of the *equites* bear the name T. Flavius. One of them is called *Frisaoni* and a second *Frisaevone*. This could mean that *Frisiavones* had been granted Roman citizenship in the Flavian period. According to Mc Elderry (1920: 72) there probably was a Flavian policy for the region, and Roymans (2004: 209) is of the opinion that “The Batavorum lost its former client tribes from the coast” after the suppression of the Batavian Revolt in AD 69/70 which put an end to Batavian supremacy over the *Frisiavones*. It therefore seems possible that Roman citizenship was granted to some of the *Frisiavones* after the Batavian Revolt. This also happened to some members of the Batavian

elite, as is illustrated by Batavian officers by the name of Flavius who are recorded on Vindolanda tablets dating to Trajan's reign (Birley, 2001: 252).

The military, funerary and votive inscriptions mentioned above show that in the 2nd century both *Frisii* and *Frisiavones* were active in a Roman, often military, context. Members of both tribes could be identified from their ethnic name, the *Frisiavones* formed the majority. Their participation in Roman society is not only visible in an inscription mentioning civil matters like tax payment or their territory, or in a votive inscription mentioning goddesses with the name of their tribe, but also in many military inscriptions mentioning *Frisiavones*. In the military inscriptions, however, not only *Frisiavones* but also *Frisii* are mentioned. They too enlisted in the Roman army. The *Frisiavones* had their own ethnic unit and the *Frisii* appear to have been active as individual soldiers or to have entered the army in small groups. Inscriptions on tombstones of *equites singulares* in Rome also refer to *Frisii* and to *Frisiavones*. These inscriptions, however, proved difficult to interpret, making it hard to decide whether the inscriptions belong to *Frisii* or to *Frisiavones*. To my mind there can be no doubt that not only *Frisiavones* served among the *equites singulares*, but also *Frisii*.

After their term of service some of the soldiers remained in the area where they were discharged. For instance, members of the *equites singulares* and the Frisian veteran whose diploma was found in Pappenheim. Others may have returned home. For example, the owner of the diploma discovered in the Dutch hamlet of Delwijnen, which is situated in or near the area where the *Frisiavones* are thought to have lived. But also some of the *Frisii*, whose homeland lay outside the Empire, may have returned home after their term. The quite numerous small bronze statuettes representing the Roman god Mars that have been discovered in present-day Friesland may be attributed to veterans who brought a religious memento back home (Galestin, 1994; Galestin, 2007).

4.4. Third century

In the 3rd century we can observe a change. The number of inscriptions referring to *Frisiavones* declines, while the number referring to the *Frisii* is growing. The latter no longer refer to individual soldiers but for the first time they mention ethnic units of *Frisii*. These units appear under two slightly different names: *Cuneus Frisiorum* and *Cuneus Frisionum*. Four inscriptions referring to these units were discov-

ered near Hadrian's Wall and a fifth was discovered in a fort some forty kilometres south of the Wall.

4.4.1. *Cuneus Frisiorum*

A *cuneus* is a military unit which owes its name to the wedge-shaped formation of cavalry. The name of the unit not only refers to the Frisians but also bears the name of the fort where the unit was stationed. The *Cuneus Frisiorum Aballavensium* is the unit stationed at Aballava (Burgh-by-Sands), the *Cuneus Frisiorum Vinoviensium* is the unit stationed at Vinovia (Binchester) and the *Cuneus Frisionum Ver(coviciensium)* is the unit from Vercovicium (Housesteads). Five inscriptions mentioning these units are known and all inscriptions mentioning the units are votive inscriptions.

1. A pillar-shaped altar from Housesteads (*Vercovicium*)

Deo | Marti | Thincso | et duabus | Alaisiagis | Bede et Fi | mmilene | et N(umini) Aug(usti) Ger | m(ani) cives Tu | ihanti | v.s.l.m.(RIB 1593)

"To the god Mars Thincsus and the two Alaisiagae, Beda and Fimmilena, and the divine power of the Emperor, Germans tribesmen from Tuihantis willingly and deservedly fulfilled their vow" (translation: Ireland, 1996: No. 355).

2. Altar from Housesteads (*Vercovicium*)

Deo | Marti et duabus | Alaisiagis et N(umini) Aug(usti) | Ger(mani) cives Tuihanti | cunei Frisiorum | Ver(covicanorum) Se(ve)r(iani) Alexand | drianus vo- tum | solverunt | libent(es) | m(erito). (RIB 1594).

"To the god Mars and the two Alaisiagae, and to the divine power of the Emperor, the German tribesmen of Tuihantis of the formation of Frisians of Vercovicium, Severus Alexander's own, willingly and deservedly fulfilled their vow" (translation: Ireland, 1996: No. 202).

The *Cuneus Frisiorum* mentioned in the inscriptions from Housesteads may have come to Housesteads to supplement the Cohors I *Tungrorum Milliaria* that was stationed at Housesteads (Breeze, 1982: 138; Breeze & Dobson, 2000: 145). This may have been in the early 180s (Breeze, 1982: 138). According to Reuter (1999: 481) there is no concrete evidence to support this supposition and the first sign of this cohort is not before the time of Severus Alexander.

The *Tuihanti* serving in the unit of the *Frisii* may be interpreted as a supplement made to this unit in the 3rd century and this could mean that by then the

Frisian unit had been in existence for some time and was in need of soldiers. The *Tuihanti* may have come from an area which is now in the eastern part of the modern Dutch province of Overijssel. This area, around the city of Enschede, bears the name “Twenthe”, a name that has often been linked to the Roman name *Tuihanti*. The *Tuihanti*, the Frisians and also other tribes in the eastern part of what is now the Netherlands, all appear at some point in the 1st century AD to have claimed the same area north of the Rhine. From that time onward, they may have been in contact with each other or they may have felt related. Tacitus informs us about the *Tubantes* as one of the tribes that were attacked by Germanicus after he built a bridge across the Rhine (Annals I: 51). He mentions them again in describing the events after the two Frisian kings, Verritus and Malorix, were dispelled from the banks north of the Rhine. The leader of the *Ampsivarii*, who claimed to have served the Roman army under Tiberius and Germanicus, occupied the same area and explained that the land had previously been that of the *Chamavi*, the *Tubantes* and the *Usipi* (Tacitus, Annals XIII: 55–56). In the Late Roman *Notitia Dignitatum* the name *Tubantes* also appears and this time their name is mentioned with the name of the *Salii* (*Notitia Dignitatum* Occidentis V; Byvanck, 1931: 566–567).

3. (altar) Binchester, Durham (*Vinovia*)

---mandus ex c(uneum) Fris(ionum) Vinovie(nsium) v.s.l.m. (RIB 1036)

“...mandus of the formation of Frisians of Vinovia willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow”

The inscription, now lost, may date to the 3rd century but there is no proof for this. According to Speidel (1999: 482) the name of the dedicant may have been Amandus. He is the only soldier from all units of the Frisians who is known by name.

4. Altar fragment from Cockermouth Castle, near *Derventio* (Papcastle, Cumberland)

---in cuneum Frisionum Aballave]nsium [--- | ex v(oto) p(osuit) (ante diem) XIII [Kal(endas)] | et XIII Kal(endas) Nov(embres) | v.s.l.m. | [G]ordiano II e(t) Pompeiano co(n)[s(ulibus)]. (CIL VII 416; RIB 882)

[“to the formation of Frisians] of Aballava [---] gave this gift on the fourteenth and the thirteenth day before the first day of November (= 19 and 20 October), willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow in the consulship of Gordianus II and Pompeianus.”

The date of this inscription is attested by the two consuls and mentions two successive days, October 19–20,

of the year 241. The name of the unit refers to Burghby-Sands (*Aballava*) but the inscription was at a different place. According to Breeze and Dobson (2000: 261 and 275) the unit was not stationed at Papcastle and the inscription seems to refer to someone who was transferred from Papcastle to the unit in Burghby-Sands. But according to Speidel (1999: 479–480), the unit was transferred to Papcastle (*Derventio*) in the autumn of AD 241 at the latest. The inscription is incomplete and does not have a subject.

5. Altar fragment from Cockermouth Castle, near *Derventio* (Papcastle, Cumberland).

--- | [Jeg(at.) Aug(usti) in c[ui] | neum Frision | um Aballav | ensium [Philip | p(ianorum)] (ante diem) XIII Kal(endas) et (ante diem) XIII Kal(endas) | Nov(embres) Gor(diano) II et Pompei(ano) | co(n) s(ulibus) et Attico et Pre[te] | xtato co(n)s(ulibus) v.s.l.m. (CIL VII 415; RIB 883).

“--- Legatus Augusti to the formation of Frisians of Aballava [of Philippus] on the fourteenth and the thirteenth day before the first day of November (= 19 and 20 October), in the consulship of Gordianus II and Pompeianus and in the consulship of Atticus and Pretectatus, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow.”

This inscription not only attests two successive days, October 19–20, but also two successive years, AD 241 and 242 (Irby-Massie 1999, 229 # 3). The inscription also contains a third date, because of the word “Philippianorum”: during the reign of Philippus Arabs (244–249). According to Reuter (1999: 480), this word may have been added at a later time, but Byvanck believes it was deliberately removed (Byvanck, 1935: 494, No. 1284). The conclusion is that this altar seems to have been rededicated once or twice, just before the middle of the 3rd century. In some publications the first two words of the inscription have been read as “Nonio Philippo” (RIB 883). These words were published in CIL VII 415 but were not mentioned by Reuter (1999) nor by Irby-Massie (1999). The inscription is incomplete and does not mention a dedicant. In my translation, one dedicant is considered the grammatical subject, as in the other inscription from Papcastle, but a group of dedicants may also be possible.

These five altars were dedicated by members of different Frisian units and on different occasions. The two inscriptions from the Frisian unit of Housesteads were dedicated to the god Mars who was assimilated with the native god Thinscus and associated with the two Alaisiagae. The Alaisiagae were a pair of god-

desses who are also known by the names of Bede and Fimmilene and as Baudihillie and Friagabi (Irby-Masie, 1999: 214 and 319–320). The inscriptions from Housesteads were dedicated by the German citizens *Tuihanti*. They were part of the Frisian unit, as is clear from one of the inscriptions where the Frisian unit is mentioned; this inscription dates to the period of Alexander Severus (AD 222–235). Both inscriptions from the unit at Burgh-by-Sands were discovered at Papcastle. They refer to two days in October. The first inscription was dedicated in AD 241, the second dedication refers to two successive years, AD 241 and 242, and it may have been re-used at a later period. Both inscriptions may have been dedicated on the occasion of a military festival like the *Armilustrum*, which took place on October 19th, and which included sacrifices to mark the end of the campaign season and the purification of the weapons (Irby-Massie, 1999: 38). The inscription from the Frisian unit of Binchester (*Vinovia*), a Roman fort which lies south of Hadrian's Wall, is incomplete. This unit is only known from this undated inscription (Jarrett, 1994: 69). In the inscription, the dedicant is mentioned but the part recording the beneficiary has not survived.

The Frisian units stationed at forts on Hadrian's Wall were composed of *Frisii*, people from the coastal areas of in the Dutch provinces of Friesland and Noord-Holland, north of the Rhine. Their presence could be established because of a special type of pottery which was discovered in several military sites, for instance at Housesteads, Chesterholm and Birdoswald, but also in the civilian settlements near these forts. This pottery was at first called Housesteads ware, and was then identified as Frisian pottery (Jobey, 1979). It appeared that this Frisian pottery had not been imported but was made in Britain, as was demonstrated through the analysis of the composition of the clay (Van Driel, 2006). Although the date of the Housesteads pottery could not be ascertained, it has now been firmly dated to the 3rd century by Tony Wilmott (personal communication). The Frisian pottery in Britain may have been made by Frisian soldiers or by their relatives, maybe wives and children. These hand-made pots, not wheel-thrown, may have been made by the Frisians for a special purpose. Maybe the pots were considered indispensable for the preparation of their national dish or a home-brewed beverage such as Frisian beer (Galestin, 2006).

4.4.2. *Numerus Frisiorum?*

An hitherto unknown *Numerus Frisiorum* may be

mentioned. The name may be written on an altar made of sandstone which was discovered at Vindolanda (Chesterholm). The altar has an inscribed panel with a badly weathered inscription which is very difficult to read. In line 10 it reads *ORVM*, and Tomlin and Hassall (2003: 366–368) argues that this “must be the genitive plural termination of the unit title, but the expected *COH IIII GALL* cannot be read or restored in line 9”. Tomlin continues: “The traces would allow *[n]um(eri) Fri[si]orum* but this is hypothetical: the unit is unknown and difficult to parallel.” According to Tomlin (2003: 366, No. 19), similarity to the style of the inscription RIB 1686 may date this inscription to Alexander Severus.

Notwithstanding the extreme difficulty of deciphering the inscription and consequently the large degree of uncertainty about the name of the unit in the Latin text, it seems justified to mention it here. Possibly a hitherto unknown Frisian unit is mentioned in this inscription from Vindolanda. We already mentioned the existence of a Frisian soldier at Vindolanda in a much earlier period, towards the end of the 1st century AD.

4.4.3. *Cohors Prima Frixiavonum*

The *Frisiavones* did not disappear from the military scene. Their presence in third-century Britain is attested by one inscription. The inscription was discovered at Carrawburgh on Hadrian's wall. It was one of the fourteen dedications which were found in a well near the temple of Coventina (Irby-Massie, 1999: 155–156 and 286, No. 441). This shrine was frequented by members of different cohorts in the second and third centuries. The unit which was stationed at the fort in the early 3rd century was the *cohors I Batavorum equitata* (Breeze & Dobson, 2000: 258). According to Breeze and Dobson (2000: 258) the dedication does not mean that the cohorts were actually garrisoned at Carrawburgh but they “were possibly merely honouring the local goddess Coventina”. The dedication made by the *optio*, the second-in-command of this cohort, who is mentioned in the inscription, “might just be an expression of devotion by a soldier not stationed at the fort” (Breeze & Dobson, 2000: 271).

De(ae) Conveti(nae) | v(otum) ret(tu) | lit Maus(aeus) | optio c(o)ho(rtis) | p(rimae) Frixiau(onum) (RIB 1523; CSIR 1.6.142)

“To the goddess Coventina, Mausaeus, deputy-centurion (*optio*) of the First Cohort of the Frisiavones renewed his vow.”

The name of the centurion, Mausaeus, may have been

inspired by the name of Marcus Aurelius Mausaeus Carausius, a Menapian, who was in command of the fleet, and of the coastal forts on both sides of the English Channel towards the end of the 3rd century AD (Southern, 2001: 138). The name of the cohort is slightly different from the names we have already mentioned and the indication of the number of the cohort is also different. It is indicated with the letter P (Prima) instead of I (One) and it reads Frixiav(onum) instead of Frisiavonum. The use of a letter rather than a Roman numeral is also seen in a Late-Roman text where this unit is mentioned for the last time, the *Notitia Dignitatum*.

5. *FRISII* AND *FRISIAVONES*: LATE ROMAN LITERARY EVIDENCE

So far, I have studied the references to *Frisii* or *Frisiavones* in classical literature and in Roman epigraphy during the first three centuries of our era. The literary evidence was restricted to the 1st century, while in epigraphic sources *Frisii* and *Frisiavones* could be followed over a much longer period. However, in the Late-Roman period, around the end of the 3rd century AD, inscriptions mentioning the names of the two tribes also seem to come to an end. About the same time, references in written texts reappear. Two of the texts mention the *Frisii* among those tribes that had become a nuisance for the Romans and a threat to the safety of the Empire on its northern frontier. In a third and much later text, the *Frisii* are described as people living near the Rhine. The *Frisiavones* are, in a slightly changed spelling, mentioned in a list which records the military units that were active in Late-Roman Britain.

5.1. *Frisius*

The Frisians had been mentioned in 3rd-century military contexts in Britain. Their name appears again in a Late-Roman text, dating to the end of the 3rd century. The eulogy to Constantius Chlorus (*Panegyric on Constantius Caesar* 9.3) written in AD 297, gives an idea of how the Frisians were regarded at the imperial court. The description of the Frisians as just another barbarian tribe, is full of the same stereotypes that were used in the descriptions of other northern barbarians. The use of negative descriptions is understandable if we consider the situation at the end of the 3rd century AD. “The Roman empire at this time endured decades of chaos that included invasions into Italy itself by the Germanic Alamanni, raids on Gaul

by other German tribes and the setting up of a separate western empire by usurpers in the latter decades of the third century” (Freeman, 2001: 88).

... *totis porticibus civitatum sedere captiva agmina barbarorum ... Arat ergo nun mihi Chamavus et Frisius ... Quin etiam si ad dilectum vocetur, accurrit et obsequiis teritur et tergo cohercetur et servire se militiae nomine gratulatur* (text: Byvanck, 1931: 377).

“Under the porticoes of every city sit rows of barbarian prisoners ... Now it is for me that the Chamavian and the Frisian work. ...What is more, if they are called up into the army, they hurry to join, they are brought to heel by army discipline ... and they congratulate themselves for having served us as a Roman soldier” (translation: James, 1988: 39).

The eulogy illustrates how a barbarian at that time could become a Roman soldier. He might have been taken prisoner first but he might also have been transferred with his entire family to cultivate Roman land. He was then encouraged to enlist in the Roman army and according to the Romans this was clearly not against his own wishes because barbarians were eager to become Roman soldiers. This description also seems to illustrate that in the Late Roman period many people were on the move or in search of land. A forced transfer to cultivate Roman land may for many people have been the only way of surviving. The Roman army, too, may have been a secure place to be fed on a permanent basis. Military units often have been a place of refuge where individuals, or entire families, were assured of food and drink.

In this text, the Frisians are mentioned in conjunction with the Chamavi. This connection may perhaps date back to the 1st century AD when both tribes claimed the same territory on the northern bank of the Rhine. The Chamavi arrived not long after the two Frisian kings who had claimed this land. It is possible that in the 3rd century both tribes again chose to occupy land near the river Rhine. This time they were not sent packing but were taken prisoner. Although we do not have any epigraphical evidence to confirm the presence of Frisians, or of neighbouring peoples, who lived north of the Rhine and were transferred to areas within the Roman empire or in its army, we do have archaeological evidence. This archaeological evidence dates to the early 4th century and may reveal the presence of Germanic families in the Roman Empire. The evidence consists of recent discoveries of leather remains near the Roman bridge over the river Meuse at Cuijk. Divers have brought to light a large amount of Roman footwear, including a special type of Late

Roman leather shoe. These shoes were made according to the Germanic tradition of shoe-making but were made by Roman shoemakers. According to Van Driel (2007: 138–139), these shoes were specially made for people from the north who were transferred into the empire from their homeland, maybe as labourers but more probably as auxiliary soldiers. These men seem to have been accompanied by their families, as could be inferred from the presence of various sizes of the Germanic shoes that were salvaged from the Meuse near Cuijk (Van Driel, 2007: 138–139).

5.2. *Frisiavi*

The *Nomina provinciarum omnium* is a short list of the divisions and provinces of the Roman Empire. The text is dated to the early 4th century and is also known as *Laterculus Veronensis* after the sole manuscript, kept at Verona. In this list of provinces is a section naming tribes that were a growing threat to the Empire. The Frisiavi are one of these tribes.

Gentes barbarae, quae pullulaverunt sub imperatoribus: Scoti, Picti, Caledonii, Rugi, Heruli, Saxones, Chamavi, Frisiavi, Amsivari, Angli, Angrivavi, Flevi, Bructeri, Chatti, Burgundiones, Alamanni, Suebi, Franci, Chattuari, ---

Nomina civitatum trans Rhenum fluvium quae sunt: Usiporum, Tubantum, ---

(After: Byvanck, 1931: 549).

It is noteworthy that in this list the Frisiavi are mentioned in conjunction with the Chamavi and the Amsivari. The Tubanti on the other hand are not mentioned with the Frisiavi but as a *civitas* across the Rhine. In this text we may again observe the juxtaposition of the names of the Chamavi and the Frisiavi, a combination which was also made in the the *Panegyric on Constantius Caesar*. However, the reading of the name of the Frisiavi in this manuscript is not certain, there is some doubt about the letter F and the exact reading of this part of the text is disputed (Byvanck, 1931: 549–550).

5.3. *Cohors Prima Frixagorum*

The *Notitia Dignitatum* contains the official record of army units and dates to the end of the 4th and the early 5th century AD. According to Mattingly most of the regiments recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum* as deployed along Hadrian's Wall were also present at the same forts in the 3rd century, but the units were probably much reduced in size (Mattingly, 2006: 238 and 245). Among the names of the units stationed

along Hadrian's Wall is the name of the *Cohors Prima Frixagorum*, which presumably was "Frisiavonum" (Breeze & Dobson, 2000: 257). This unit was stationed at *Vindobala*, modern Rudchester. It is interesting to note that in the name of the cohort mentioned in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, the letter "P" is used instead of the digit "I" to indicate the number of the cohort. We observed the same detail in the inscription from Carrawburgh, dating to an earlier period.

5.4. *Frigonum*

In a 7th-century text known as *Ravenna Cosmography* (*Cosmographia*, written by Ravennas Geographus), which was written long after the classical period with which we are dealing, the name of the *Frisii* appears again. Although the text dates to the 7th century, it probably made use of a Roman map which represented the situation in the 5th or 6th century AD.

In this text the name appears as *Frisones* but also as *Frixos* and their land is referred to as the country of the *Frigonum*:

(IV 23) *Iuxta Oceanum ponitur patria quae dicitur Frigonum, quae litus Oceani coniungitur cum supra scripta quam nominavimus Saxoniam.*

(IV 28) *Ingreditur vero ipse Rhenus in mare Oceanum sub Dorostate Frigonum patria.*

(V 28) *...Saxones etiam Frisones ...*

(IV 46) *...Saxos, etiam Frixos.*

(After: Byvanck, 1931: 579–580).

The Frisians in this text are linked with the Saxons. The name of the Frisians is written in three different ways. This variability may be due to the fact that different versions of the text exist. The differences in the above-mentioned texts also illustrate the variable reproduction of the same name that we observed in ancient texts. The texts also present the difficulties inherent in the study of ancient sources on tribes with very similar names such as *Frisii* and *Frisiavones*.

6. CONCLUSION

From my efforts to identify and even to resolve the problems that arise when studying *Frisii* and *Frisiavones* it emerged that both names occur in classical texts and in epigraphical sources. The classical texts mention the *Frisii* on several occasions, but the *Frisiavones* occur only in two passages. In Roman epigraphy, on the other hand, both names appear several times. In official inscriptions when military units are mentioned, there is usually no problem in telling apart the two 'nationalities', but in funerary inscrip-

tions it has proved difficult to distinguish between *Frisii* and *Frisiavones*. Notwithstanding these difficulties it has been possible to note a distinction between *Frisii* and *Frisiavones* in classical texts and in Roman epigraphy.

The *Frisiavones* were incorporated in the Roman Empire and although the capital of their *civitas* is not known, the *Frisiavones* seem to have lived in a Romanised society, they were treated as a separate region and had to pay taxes. They also had their own ethnic unit in the Roman army, the *Cohors I Frisiavonum*, which was sent to Britain. After 25 years of service some soldiers may have returned to their homeland while others remained in Britain. A military diploma from Delwijnen may document a soldier's homecoming. The *Frisiavones* also served in the special forces of the *equites singulares* who were based in Rome. They were buried in the special graveyard of the imperial bodyguard.

For the *Frisii*, who did not belong to the Roman Empire, their presence in the Roman army had a different character. They joined the Roman army after their first encounter with it in 12 BC. Later they were active as individual soldiers. Towards the end of the 2nd century or in the early 3rd century, they formed ethnic units. These so-called *cunei Frisionum* or *Frisiorum* were stationed in forts along Hadrian's Wall. Probably the Frisian soldiers were accompanied by their relatives. They appear to have held on to their own customs when it came to eating and drinking, and for this purpose made their own pottery. They certainly adopted Roman social and religious customs. Frisian soldiers dedicated altar stones with inscriptions in Latin to Roman gods, and they performed Roman rituals. On the other hand, they also remained faithful to their own gods. The Roman warrior god Mars was associated with the Germanic god Thinscus; also the two mother goddesses, the Alaisiagai, were venerated by members of the unit of the Frisians. This took place in a small sanctuary near the military fort at Housesteads. After their term of service, the Frisians received a legal identity, they became Roman citizens. Some of the veterans returned home, while others settled throughout the Empire. In some cases a memorial to their existence remained in the form of an epitaph.

It has become clear that to the Romans the *Frisii* and the *Frisiavones* were two separate groups. Both groups were present in the Roman army, but not in the same unit. Only as *equites singulares* might they have served in the same unit, but not necessarily at the same time. No cultural relationship between them

was attested. Their only link was the similarity of their names. In areas far from home these names did not always survive unaltered. Therefore it need not surprise us that at the present day, almost two thousand years later, the identification of peoples bearing names with such a close resemblance cannot be fully achieved.

In the course of the 3rd century, epigraphy ceases to provide any evidence of *Frisii* or *Frisiavones*. The textual evidence from the Late Roman period shows that the *Frisiavones* still gave their name to a military unit and also illustrates the manner of recruitment of irregular and often ethnic units for the Roman army. These methods seem to exemplify the Roman attitude towards barbarian tribes who inhabited faraway regions beyond the border of the Roman Empire. These people were subdued or forced to live somewhere in the Empire, and if needed they were encouraged to serve in the Roman army.

This study has made clear that the *Frisii* and the *Frisiavones* received a written tribal name which made them visible, not only to the Romans but also to posterity. This name provided a new identity which seems to have been accepted by both the *Frisii* and the *Frisiavones*. For the Romans this was a political act which served an administrative goal. For the *Frisii* and *Frisiavones*, this new identity created a completely new situation, which offered various opportunities. This official identity not only provided legal, social and economic privileges, but it also made it possible for people to enter the military community. For the *Frisii* and *Frisiavones* having their ethnic name made it possible to become soldiers in the Roman army. The *Frisiavones* may upon their incorporation into the Roman Empire have become Roman citizens. Citizenship was granted after 25 years of military service to those who had not become Roman citizens. A person's new Roman name often was a combination of his ethnic name and the name of the Emperor who granted him citizenship. With their new names, which occasionally might become somewhat corrupted, maybe by their pronunciation in Latin, some members of the former tribal groups without recorded history were in their epitaphs immortalized as ethnic Roman citizens.

7. REFERENCES

- AE* *L'Année épigraphique* (1888-)
CIL *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*. Berlin, Reimer/De Gruyter, 1863-

- CIL VII* see Hübner (ed.), 1873.
CIL XVI see Nesselhaut (ed.), 1936.
CSIR *Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani*
ILS see Dessau, 1892–1916.
RIB I see Collingwood & Wright, 1965/1995.
RIB II see Collingwood, Wright & Frere, 1990–1995.
- BECHERT, T. & J.H. WILLEMS, 1995. *Die Römische Reichsgrenze zwischen Mosel und Nordseeküste*. Stuttgart, Konrad Theiss Verlag.
- BELLEN, H., 1981. *Die germanische Leibwache der römischen Kaiser des julisch-claudischen Hauses*. Wiesbaden, Frans Steiner Verlag.
- BIRLEY, R. & A. BIRLEY, 1994. Four New Writing-Tablets from Vindolanda, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 100, 432–446.
- BIRLEY, A.R., 2001. Batavians and Tungrians in the *Tabulae Vindolandenses*. In: T. Grünewald (ed.), *Germania inferior. Besiedlung, Gesellschaft und Wirtschaft an der Grenze der römisch-germanischen Welt*. Berlin/New York, Walter de Gruyter, 242–260.
- BLOEMERS, J.H.F., 1988. Periphery in Pre- and Protohistory: structure and process in the Rhine-Meuse basin between c. 600 BC and 500 AD. In: R.F.J. Jones, J.H.F. Bloemers & S.L. Dyson (eds), *First Millennium Papers. Western Europe in the First Millennium AD* (BAR International Series 401). Oxford, BAR, 11–35.
- BOGAERS, J.E., 1967. Enige opmerkingen over het Nederlandse gedeelte van de limes van Germania Inferior. *Berichten van de Rijksdienst voor het Oudheidkundig Bodemonderzoek* 17, 99–114.
- BREEZE, D.J., 1982. *The Northern Frontiers of Roman Britain*. London, Batsford.
- BREEZE, D.J. & B. DOBSON, 2000. *Hadrian's Wall*. Fourth edition. London, Penguin Books.
- BYVANCK, A.W., 1931–1947. *Excerpta Romana. De bronnen der Romeinse geschiedenis van Nederland. Deel 1-3*. 's Gravenhage, Martinus Nijhoff.
- BYVANCK, A.W., 1943. *Nederland in den Romeinischen tijd*. Leiden, E. J. Brill.
- CARY, E., 1917. *Dio's Roman History*. Vol. VI. With an English translation by Earnest Cary on the basis of the version of Herbert Baldwin Foster (Loeb Classical Library). Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press/London, William Heinemann Ltd.
- COLLINGWOOD, R.G. & R.P. WRIGHT (eds), 1965/1995. *The Roman Inscriptions of Britain I*. Oxford, Clarendon. New edition with addenda and corrigenda, edited by R.S.O. Tomlin, 1995. Stroud, Sutton.
- COLLINGWOOD, R.G., R.P. WRIGHT & S.S. Frere (eds), 1990–1995. *The Roman Inscriptions of Britain II* (9 volumes). Gloucester, Sutton.
- DESSAU, H. (ed.), 1892–1916. *Inscriptiones Latinae selectae* (Vol. I: 1892, Vol. II: 1902–1906, Vol. III: 1914–16). Berlin, Weidmann.
- DOBSON, B. & J.C. MANN, 1973. The Roman Army in Britain and Britons in the Roman Army. *Britannia* 4, 191–205.
- DRIEL-MURRAY, C. VAN, 2007. Mode in de nadagen van het Keizerrijk: de schoenen van Cuijk. *Westerheem* 56, 133–141.
- DRIEL-MURRAY, C. VAN, in press. *Ethnic recruitment and military mobility*. Paper delivered at the XXth International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies, held at Leon, Spain, in 2006.
- ENCKEVORT, H. VAN, 2001. Bemerkungen zum Besiedlungssystem in den südöstlichen Niederlanden während der späten vorrömischen Eisenzeit und der römischen Kaiserzeit. In: Thomas Grünewald (ed.), *Germania inferior. Besiedlung, Gesellschaft und Wirtschaft an der Grenze der römisch-germanischen Welt*. Berlin/New York, Walter de Gruyter, 336–396.
- ES, W.A. VAN, 1981. *De Romeinen in Nederland*. Haarlem, Fibula-Van Dishoeck.
- FREEMAN, P., 2001. *Ireland and the Classical World*. Austin, University of Texas Press.
- FRERE, S.S. & R.S.O. TOMLIN (eds), 1991–1995. *The Roman Inscriptions of Britain (= RIB II)*. Stroud, Sutton.
- GALESTIN, M.C., 1994. A New Mars from The Netherlands. *Akten der 10. Tagung über antike Bronzen. Freiburg, 18. – 22. Juli 1988*. Stuttgart, Konrad Theiss Verlag.
- GALESTIN, M.C., 2007. Romeinse goden in Friesland. *Paleo-aktueel* 18, 74–79.
- GALESTIN, M.C., in press. *Frisian soldiers in the Roman army*. Paper delivered at the XXth International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies, held at Leon, Spain, in 2006.
- HOLDER, P.A., 1982. *The Roman Army in Britain*. London, Batsford Ltd.
- HÜBNER, E. (ed.), 1873. *Inscriptiones Britanniae Latinae (= Corpus Inscriptionum Latinorum 7)*. Berlin, Reimer.
- HULST, R.S., 1994. Archeologische Kroniek van Gelderland. *Bijdragen en Mededelingen Vereniging Gelre* 85, 162–171.
- IRBY-MASSIE, G.L., 1999. *Military Religion in Roman Britain*. Leiden/Boston/Köln, Brill.
- IRELAND, S., 1996. *Roman Britain. A sourcebook*. London/New York, Routledge.
- JAMES, E., 1988. *The Franks*. Oxford, Basil Blackwell.
- JARRETT, M.G., 1994. Non-Legionary Troops in Roman Britain: Part One, the Units, *Britannia* 25, 37–77.
- JOBEY, I., 1979. Housesteads ware – a Frisian tradition on Hadrian's Wall, *Archaeologia Aeliana (5th series)* 7, 127–143.
- JUNCKELMANN, M., 1991. *Die Reiter Roms. Teil II: Der militärische Einsatz*. Mainz, Philipp von Zabern.
- MANN, J.C., 1971. Spoken Latin in Britain as Evidenced in the Inscriptions, *Britannia* 2. 218–224.
- MATTINGLY, H., 1948. *Tacitus on Britain and Germany*. A new translation of the 'Agricola' and the 'Germania'. West Drayton, Middlesex, Penguin Books.

- MATTINGLY, D., 2006. *An Imperial Possession. Britain in the Roman Empire*. London, Penguin Books.
- MC ELDERRY, R.K., 1920. The Date of Agricola's governorship of Britain. *The Journal of Roman Studies* 10, 68–78.
- MOMMSEN, T., 1904. *Römische Geschichte. Bd V Die Provinzen von Caesar bis Diocletian*. Reprint of the fifth edition 1904 by Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, München (6th edition November 2001).
- NESSSELHAUF, H. (ed.), 1936. *Diplomata militaria* (= *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinorum* 16). Berlin, De Gruyter.
- NEUMANN, G., 1996. Frisiavones (Name). In: *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde* Bd 10. Berlin/New York, Walter de Gruyter, 82.
- PRYCE, F.N., 1930. A New Diploma for Roman Britain. *The Journal of Roman Studies* 20, 16–23.
- RACKHAM, H., 1942. *Pliny's Natural History* Vol II. With an English translation by H. Rackham (Loeb Classical Library). Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press/London, William Heinemann Ltd.
- REUTER, M., 1999. Studien zu den numeri des Römischen Heeres in der Mittleren Kaiserzeit. *Bericht der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission* 80, 357–570.
- RIVES, J.B., 1999. *Tacitus Germania*. Translated with Introduction and Commentary by J.B. Rives. Oxford, Clarendon Press.
- ROBINSON, H.R., 1975. *The armour of Imperial Rome*. London. Arms and Armour Press.
- ROMER, F.E., 1998. *Pomponius Mela's Description of the World*. Ann Arbor, the University of Michigan Press.
- ROXAN, M.M., 1978. *Roman Military Diplomas 1954-1977* (Occasional Publications 2) (= *RMD I*). London, Institute of Archaeology.
- ROXAN, M.M., 1985. *Roman Military Diplomas 1978-1984* (Occasional Publications 9) (= *RMD II*). London, Institute of Archaeology.
- ROXAN, M.M., 1986. Observations on the Reasons for Changes in Formula in Diplomas circa AD 140. In: W. Eck & H. Wolff, *Heer und Integrationspolitik: Die Römischen Militärdiplome als historische Quelle*. Köln, Böhlau, 265–292.
- ROXAN, M.M., 1994. *Roman Military Diplomas 1985-1993* (Occasional Publications 14) (= *RMD III*). University College London, Institute of Archaeology.
- ROXAN, M.M., 1997. Addendum to the article by J. Nollé. *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 117, 274–276.
- ROYMANS, N., 2004. *Ethnic Identity and Imperial Power. The Batavians in the early Roman Empire*. Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press.
- SAUER, E., 2005. Forum Germanorum in north-west Italy: The home community and life of arguably the earliest known legionary veteran in Britain. *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 24, 199–214.
- SOUTHERN, P., 2001. *The Roman Empire from Severus to Constantine*. London/New York, Routledge.
- SPEIDEL, M.P., 1994. *Die Denkmäler der Kaiserreiter. Equites Singulares Augusti*. Köln, Rheinland-Verlag.
- STEIN, E., 1932. *Die Kaiserlichen Beamten und Truppenkörper im Römischen Deutschland unter dem Prinzipat*. Wien, Seidel & Sohn.
- TAAYKE, E., 1990. Die einheimische Keramik der nördlichen Niederlande, 600 v.Chr. bis 300 n. Chr., Teil I: Westergo (Friesland), *Berichten van de Rijksdienst voor het Oudheidkundig Bodemonderzoek* 40, 101–222.
- TAAYKE, E., 1996. Die einheimische Keramik der nördlichen Niederlande, 600 v.Chr. bis 300 n.Chr., Teil V: Übersicht und Schlussfolgerungen, *Berichten van de Rijksdienst voor het Oudheidkundig Bodemonderzoek* 42, 163–208.
- TAAYKE, E., 2007. Recensie van Peter Schmidt, Die Keramikfunde der Grabung Feddersen Wierde, *Westerheem* 56, 334–336.
- TIMPE, D., 1996. Frisiavones (Geschichte). In: *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde* Bd 10. Berlin/New York, Walter de Gruyter, 82–84.
- TOMLIN, R.S.O., 1997. Roman Britain in 1996. *Britannia* 28, 463–464.
- TOMLIN, R.S.O. & M.W.C. HASSALL, 2003. Roman Britain in 2002 II The Inscriptions, *Britannia* 34, 361–382.
- WEBSTER, G., 1993. Military Equestrian Tombstones. In: M. Henig, *Roman Sculpture of the Cotswold Region* (= *Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani*, Great Britain, Vol. I, Fascicule 7). Oxford, Oxford University Press, 45–48.
- ZELLE, M., 2000. *Colonia Ulpia Traiana. Götter & Kulte* (Führer und Schrifte des Archäologischen Parks Xanten 21). Köln, Rheinland Verlag.