

## “Ships of the Roman period in Central and Northern Europe”

For reasons beyond our control, it was not possible to obtain Mr. Marsden's paper, in time for this publication we have published the relative abstract in its stead.

Many ships of the Roman period have been found in central and northern Europe during the last twenty-five years, and they show that there were three main shipbuilding traditions in the region:

1. A native tradition of central and north-western Europe, which is, for convenience, called the “Celtic tradition”. Recent discoveries suggest that this was the most common form of shipbuilding in the region, even though the existence of this tradition was only vaguely recognised until 1962. The ships were carvel built, and the planking was mainly attached to preerected ribs in a “skeleton technique” of construction. Examples of sea-going ships have been found at London, Bruges and in Guernsey (Channel Islands); and inland waters craft have been found in England, Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland and Northern France.
2. The Classical Mediterranean tradition, with the well known mortise and tenon joints in the planks. This is the “shell technique” of shipbuilding, the ribs being inserted mainly after the planks have been joined together. Examples have been found in London, and at Zwammerdam and Vechten in the Netherlands.
3. The Scandinavian tradition of clinker (overlapping) planking, which was in use around the Baltic Sea area, just beyond the edge of the Roman Empire. This too was a “shell technique” of shipbuilding, the planking being joined together before the ribs were added. The best example is the Nydam boat of the 4th Century A.D., found in Jutland.

The Romans therefore, from the 1st century B.C., were in direct contact with other shipbuilding traditions, particularly that of the Celtic people of central and northwestern Europe. It is possible, then, that this may have influenced the later development of Mediterranean shipbuilding, and its change from the “shell” to the “skeleton” techniques of construction.

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