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**Title:** Ancestral heaths : reconstructing the barrow landscape in the Central and Southern Netherlands  
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This thesis is divided into three parts. Part one (Chapters 1, 2 and 3) concerns the background of this research, beginning (Chapter 1) with an overview of the development of the palynological research of barrows. Following the overview is an assessment of what data are available (Chapter 2) and what is still missing (Chapter 3) from the palynological research of barrows.

Part two will go further into the methodology behind the palynology of barrows. Chapter 4 gives an overview of sampling techniques used in this study. Chapter 5 discusses the theory of vegetation history reconstruction through the use of pollen diagrams derived from mineral soils. In addition the relation between time and depth in mineral soils will be discussed in this chapter. In Chapter 6 the so-called pollen sum that is used in palynological analyses of barrows will be examined and reconsidered. Chapter 7 concerns the determination of size of the open place a barrow was built in. Three methods to determine the extent of an open space are described and discussed.

In part three of this thesis (Chapters 8-14) the methodological theories described and discussed in part two are applied to reconstruct the barrow landscapes of five case study areas. Each case study area is dealt with in a separate chapter (chapters 8-12), including the presentation of palynological analyses of several individual barrows and/or barrow complexes. In Chapter 13 the results of all case studies are summarized and discussed, and the last chapter (14) submits answers to the research questions put forward in this thesis.