Burial practices in southwest Britain and northwest France (c.600-1050AD): a comparative analysis

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Abstract

British and French archaeology have both dedicated a central place to the study of the nature and impact of connections linking the Continent to the British Isles in the early medieval period. Research is, however, still limited in the western Channel, great migration and conversion period theories remaining the traditional explanation for cultural parallels between facing regions. This thesis constitutes the first detailed multiscale comparative analysis of burial practices in southwest Britain (Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset and Hampshire) and northwest France (Brittany, Loire Atlantique and Normandy) for the period c.600-1050AD, exploring the changes and permanencies in funerary rites in a period of great social, economic and religious transformation, and offering a new understanding of the connections existing in the western Channel throughout the early Middle Ages.

The scale and nature of this project required the creation of a new comparative methodology relying on a precise bi-lingual vocabulary, allowing for the collection and analysis of data gathered in countries of distinctive archaeological traditions. Various aspects of the burial practice are considered through a thematic analysis, facilitating the presentation and study of data at different levels of precision, highlighting individual peculiarities and communal traditions alongside wider regional and Cross-Channel trend.

This new approach reveals the diversity of funerary practices coexisting at different scales, offering a new perspective on the expression of multiple layers of identity, each funerary choice resulting from a composite sum of influences and personal experiences. Additionally, this study challenges previous hypothesis born from migration period theories and provides a re-assessment of the impact of the conversion period on the relationship between the dead and the living. Finally, this project emphasises the need for more comparative analyses, borrowing from different archaeological traditions to offer a new perspective on the study of burial

practices in facing regions of the Channel and unlocking the potential of further European collaborations.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Since the nineteenth-century, archaeology and history have placed a strong focus on the study of the various connections linking the Continent and the British Isles in post-Roman Europe. In Britain and France, these works traditionally focused on the migration movements occurring on large scales in the western Channel between the fifth and the seventh century, the political instability of Britain pushing populations to seek refuge across the sea. Lives of saints and linguistic similarities came to reinforce these migration theories, important movements of populations and extensive contacts rapidly becoming one of the sole explanations for the parallels in traditions observed between these facing regions. The amount of data now at our disposal in both countries has however only rarely been compared, often focusing on wide trends and large scale studies or placing the focus on exceptional sites such as emporia, thus scarcely providing detailed analyses of the traditions and practices at more local levels. This thesis investigates the similarities and differences in burial practices in southwest Britain and northwest France for the period c.600 to 1050AD, constituting the first direct comparative analysis of the treatment of the dead at a variety of sites from these facing regions of the Channel. Through a thematic and multi-scale approach, this research explores the changes and permanencies in funerary rites in a period of great social, economic and religious transformation, aiming to provide a new understanding of the connections existing in the western Channel throughout the early Middle Ages. Additionally, this thesis hopes to offer the foundations for further comparative multilingual works in northwest Europe, going beyond modern frontiers and combining data gathered through different recording and interpretative practices stemmed from distinctive visions of archaeology.

I) Themes, aims and objectives

The wide geographical and chronological scales of the following analysis, and the level of precision it aims to achieve, called for the determination of precise themes enabling a thorough investigation of the treatment of the dead from death to burial, later management of the remains and commemorative practices, whilst bringing together multiple aspects of funerary rites often studied separately (see below). Such organisation also has multiple advantages in terms of presentation and management of the information. The very large corpus of data obtained from the study of key-sites (*cf.* chapter 2) can thus be sorted depending on precise categories linked to specific aspects of burial rites. Moreover, this method enables the simultaneous exposition and comparison of data from the different sites, highlighting the similarities and differences in practices depending on the community, region and country. This thematic plan also allows for the clear presentation of the results, detailing local variations and putting them back in the wider context of the western Channel.

The first of the four themes selected for this thesis considers the burial ground in its natural and man-made environment. Through the assessment of the spatial relationship between the dead and the living, this analysis aims to identify the factors influencing the choice of location of the funerary area. These spatial considerations are then completed by the study of the layout of the burial ground, aiming to gain an understanding of the management of the funerary area through time, and, by extension, of the changes and permanencies in the treatment of the remains after burial. This aspect further investigates the link(s) between the cemeteries and their potential foci, revealing in the meantime the social and religious implications of the location of the grave. The presence/absence of markers and their practical and/or symbolic role is also taken into account in this theme. The third topic delves into the internal organisation of the grave, looking at the absence/presence of a burial container, soft wrappings and other artefacts

deposited with the body. This theme aims to highlight specific patterns in time and space, and explores the social, economic and religious implication of these funerary arrangements. Finally, attention is drawn to the body and the information osteoarchaeology can give us on the life of the individual (*i.e* demography, health, lifestyle…). This last topic hopes to offer profiles of the buried population, and uncover potential differences in treatment or location of the individual in the cemetery depending on biological data.

Overall, this thesis aims to offer:

- a reassessment of the nature of the relationship between southwest Britain and northwest France in the early Middle Ages,
- an understanding of the changes in religion and beliefs and their influence on the treatment of the deceased,
- an assessment of the social transformations and their reflection in the world of the dead, showing to which extent death was the end of the social existence of the individuals and of their identities,
- chronological considerations, trying to determine if changes in practices occurred simultaneously or at different periods in the investigated areas,
- a local, regional and cross-Channel characterisation of burial practices, highlighting similarities and differences in the treatment of the dead in these maritime connected regions for the period c.600 to 1050AD.

II) General research context: northwest Europe in the early Middle Ages

The perception of the early Middle Ages had long been influenced by historical sources, lives of saints and other accounts describing a troubled period of political turmoil and important movements of populations (Fleming, 2011:61-63). *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People* of the Venerable Bede (Colgrave

& Mynors, 1969 translation) comes first to mind, the dramatic depiction of hordes of invaders crossing the sea and settling in Britain standing at the heart of the study of this period. If research has now nuanced this discourse, this text remains nearly systematically reference in British publications, thus keeping a strong presence in the interpretation of both historical and archaeological data. In the western Channel, it is the work of Gildas that highlighted the connections tying Britain to the Continent, mentioning for the first time in the sixth century the "double kingdom" of Dumnonia (Merdrignac, 2010:83-84). A few centuries later, the presence and movements of British and/ or Breton people on both sides of the Channel (Guigon, 1994:29; Cassard, 1998:19,31) offered the bases of legends and myths still visible in modern popular folklore in the perceived "*Celtic*" kinship linking Brittany to the British Isles, whilst leading to assumptions of similarities between these facing maritime regions in archaeological studies (Cunliffe, 2001).

Far from the post-Roman collapse described by Pirenne in 1922, the period considered here is now known as a time of great transformation in northwest Europe (Pirenne, 1922, 1992). The past few decades have revealed the very high mobility of populations and goods across the Channel and through the Atlantic routes (Lebecq, 1997; Cunliffe, 2001; Charles-Edwards, 2013:73-74, Duggan 2018), accompanied by the emergence of important trading centres and smaller beach landing sites (Verhulst, 2002:16-17,21; Fleming 2011:185; Scull 2011; Loveluck, 2013). Excavations of emporia and their associated cemeteries further testify to a thriving socio-economic context leading to the appearance of new elites emulating the lifestyle of the nobility, a shift in social order that was also witnessed in more rural areas (Reynolds, 1999:111-113; Loveluck 2005, 2013). In parallel to these changes, the early Middle Ages saw the spread of Christianity, first manifesting alongside previous beliefs with high levels of syncretism, to then fully replace them (James, 1982:93-95; Treffort, 1996a:165; Young, 1999; Fleming, 2011:146). If conversion initially occurred in the highest sphere of society (Effros, 2002:209; Verhulst, 2002:16-17; Urbańczyk, 2003; Yorke, 2003), the development of the

Church as an institution and its growth as a land-owner rapidly affected all social strata, strongly marking the landscape and influencing its organisation through the formation of parishes (James, 1982:98, 107; Treffort, 1996a:165; Galinié, 1996; Boissavit-Camus & Zadora-Rio, 1996; Zadora-Rio, 2003 ; Blair, 2005:427). At the scale of the settlement, this increasing importance generally appeared through a change of layout, placing the church and its associated cemetery at the centre of the living spaces, effectively merging inhabited zones with the funerary areas formerly placed *extra-muros* as per Roman traditions (James, 1982:46; Treffort, 1996b**:**56, 2010:217). The physicality of the graves was also not left out, with modifications of its internal organisations and external manifestation, reflecting changes in the treatment of the remains and in mnemonic practices induced by this new belief system (Treffort, 1996a**:**86, 89-90; Effros, 2002:11, 206).

The repercussions of these various transformations were thus manifold, affecting different aspects of everyday life and directly impacting the treatment of the dead. Before Edward Thurlow Leeds' *Early Anglo-Saxon Art and Archaeology* (Leeds: 1936) and the second volume of *La Civilisation mérovingenne* published by Edouard Salin in 1952, most studies of funerary rites focused on the objects that were deposited with the deceased, disregarding the variety of information offered by the rest of the grave. Indeed, in the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, antiquarian interest laid more in the precious grave-goods that could be displayed in museums or kept to expand private collections, than in the burial practices themselves (Young & Périn, 1991:98). Despite the still heavy emphasis placed on these artefacts, the novelty of Leeds' and Salin's works was to take into account other aspects of the treatment of the dead and their societal impact, establishing the bases for a more substantial archaeological study of death, gradually moving away from simple inventories of past riches. The discovery of new sites and the emergence of new technologies have made some of the information and theories exposed in these publications obsolete, but the influence they have on British and French research is still noticeable. A prime example of this central

place given to Leeds' 'Final Phase' theory (Leeds: 1936), still laying at the heart of a large number of publications dedicated to Anglo-Saxon burial practices, echoing the regular references to the study of the Merovingian civilisation by Salin in France.

These publications thus opened the way to modern funerary archaeology, developing differently depending on the country (see below and chapter 2) but all considering various aspects of the burial process and their larger implications. In parallel to this archaeological perspective, sociology and ethnology offer some strong bases for a more theoretical approach to death and to the treatment of the body. It is often said that the dead do not bury themselves and that the choices in funerary practices are but reflection of social realities. In this premise, the major work of Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1990) comes to offer the starting point to the analysis the expression of cultural identities and social interactions, allowing when applied to funerary context to decipher the deeper societal and personal meaning of specific practices. Building up on this research, Jenkins explored the meaning and expression of ethnicity in a publication particularly relevant for the study of the construction of identity, defining the individual by a complicated blend of experiences and cultural allegiances manifested simultaneously (Jenkins, 1997:87). Miller (2010) and Hodder (2012, 2014) offered yet another frame of reference with the study of the interdependent relationship between individuals and "*stuff*", simultaneously defining and being defined by the other, a paradoxical truth questioning the role of objects in everyday life, or, in our context, within the grave. Finally, the recent publication of Robb and Harris (2013) put questions of perception of the body in a diachronic context, calling for a more in-depth reflection on the relationship between the living and the dead.

III) Specific research context: study of burial practices in Britain

In Britain, as on the Continent (see below IV), publications generally focus on one type of question or on one specific aspect of the treatment of the dead. For the beginning of the period of study, the works of Helen Geake and Heinrich Härke are particularly important for the characterisation and interpretation of artefacts deposited with the body. Their analysis of grave-goods highlighted the identity-defining role of the objects chosen to remain with the deceased, offering information on the status, sex and age of the individual, and potentially pointing towards distinctive belief systems (Geake, 1995, 2006 ; Härke, 1989, 2006). Caution needs, however, to be taken, as the practice of depositing artefacts with the dead is often considered as paramount evidence for pagan beliefs, rarely taking into account the syncretism of a period when Christian practices were still being defined (Young, 1999; Effros, 2002:44). Geake and Härke are of course not the only authors addressing these questions (Effros, 2002; Richard, 2006 ; Scull, 2009 ; Fleming, 2011), but their detailed study of grave-goods and their meanings makes their work reference points when analysing burial practices in early medieval Britain. Howard Williams worked from a different perspective by considering the artefacts deposited with the body and the grave itself as a means to pass on the memory of the deceased (Williams, 2006), echoing the research undertaken by Roberta Gilchrist on kinship and heirlooms for later periods (Gilchrist, 2012, 2013). With this publication, Williams showed that one aspect of the funerary rites, here the transmission of memory, could be related to different elements of the ensemble that form burial practices, highlighting the importance of more intensive studies taking into account the grave and any artefacts or structures directly associated with it.

The location of the grave and of the cemetery is another theme subject to extensive study. The connection of people to their environment, and more specifically, the relationship between prehistoric features and funerary areas are

issues extensively explored by Sarah Semple (2013), complementing a wider research corpus focused on the landscape of Anglo-Saxon England (Semple, 2008, 2011, 2013; Semple & Williams, 2015). With a more funerary-oriented focus, Martin Carver addressed the question of the status of burial areas and of the deceased, based on the information gathered from the graves, their construction and surface markers, whilst also considering their relationship with nearby settlements (Carver, 1998, 2003, 2005, 2006). The nature of the links existing between the spaces dedicated to the dead and those reserved for the living has also been considered by David Petts (2002). Based on the evidence from Western Britain, his study focused on the use of enclosures in both ecclesiastical and lay contexts, separating these spaces and clearly defining the function of the different parts of the settlement. Furthermore, his research highlighted the changes in the use of space in time and, as a result, the transformations of the links of the populations with their deceased members. Andrew Reynolds also dedicated some publications to the spatial relationship between the areas reserved to the living and those allocated to the dead (Reynolds, 1999, 2002, 2009). Reynolds further developed this research on the links between populations and their deceased members through the analysis of deviant burials, considering the treatment/maltreatment of the bodies and the location of these peculiar burials in relation to other contemporary graveyards and inhabited areas (Reynolds, 2009).

In parallel to these specific research themes, British literature also presents a lot of syntheses, addressing different themes related to the treatment of the dead and to the changing social, economic and religious situation on a national scale, and on some rare occasions considering other European areas yet undergoing similar transformations (see below V). In her 2011 publication, Robin Fleming considered the connections existing between the Continent and the British Isles through marriage and other political links, and highlighted the movement of populations as well as their implications on religion, beliefs and practices (Fleming, 2011). Similarly, the various articles published in Jo Burckberry and Annia

Cherryson's book each focused on one aspect of funerary rites or on the study of a particular site within British borders for the period c.AD 650-1100, once again with few comparison with the Continent but offering a generous survey of a variety of burial practices on a national scale (Buckberry & Cherryson, 2010). Another work to cite here is the survey undertaken by Alex Bayliss, John Hines and Christopher Scull (2013). Although this study does not focus on the burial practices observed in different parts of Britain, it is nonetheless a fundamental work for this project, as it offers a new perspective on the dating of Anglo-Saxon cemeteries by combining grave-goods and radiocarbon analyses (Hines & Bayliss, 2013), refining the chronological framework of analysis.

This rapid, and far from exhaustive, overview of British publication has demonstrated the importance of the study of burial practices in funerary archaeology. A gap does, however, appear when considering the areas considered in this work. Beyond questions of comparison with the Continent, rare are the studies focusing on the southwestern regions, often taking Hampshire as a westernmost limit. The work of Susan Pearce can be cited here (1982, 1985) as one of the few focusing on Devon, whilst Petts (2009) dedicated an general article to burial practices in the west for the period of c.400-700AD. Annia Cherryson's 2005 thesis provides a major exception to this general limited consideration, constituting one of the few works offering a detailed study of sites crossing the Hampshire 'border'. Cornwall and other neighbouring regions are to be found grouped with Wales and Ireland (Cunliffe, 2001; Lucy & Reynolds, 2002; Charles-Edwards, 2013), opposing "Anglo-Saxon" heritage to a "British" culture.

IV) Specific research context: study of burial practices in France

A similar cultural division to that between eastern and western Britain has also been perceived in France, but rather than a clear distinction between east and

west, French archaeology tends to focus on modern administrative boundaries, leading to the production of extensive syntheses by *région.* For the areas investigated in this thesis, the analysis carried out by Florence Carré (Carré *et al.,* 2011) in Normandy offers an exhaustive summary of early medieval life and death in this region. This work was completed by research undertaken by Vincent Hincker (2017) in the same region, with the difference of a much stronger funerary focus. Synthetic analyses in Brittany are best represented by Guigon, first through the study of sarcophagi (Guigon, Bardel, Batt, 1987) and later through more general studies. In 1997 and 1998, he dedicated two volumes to the thorough investigation of the development and influence of the Church through the analysis of major Breton archaeological sites. His 1994 publication is however the most relevant for this thesis, as it presents a detailed study of several aspects of burial practices in Brittany for the early medieval period alongside a catalogue of sites organised by *départements* (Guigon, 1994). To a certain extent, Laure Pecqueur's 2003 publication also joins this region-focused category. Similarly to Reynolds in Britain, Pecqueur focused on isolated burials in the Ile-de-France région, re-assessing previous theories that identified these graves as '*deviant'* burials and showing that their remote location was not necessarily subsequent to sanitary or juridical decisions, but linked to variations in the connection between societies and their dead members translated into locational differences.

As in England, the nature of the relationship between cemeteries and their environment is a central theme in French funerary archaeology. Through the study of the site of Ringy-Ussé, and with other research taking into account wider areas, the publications of Elisabeth Zadora-Rio constitute references on the evolution of the parochial system and its implication on the relation between the dead and the living and, incidentally, on the treatment of the remains of the deceased members of the society (Zadora-Rio, 2003; Zadora-Rio & Galinié, 1992a, 1992b, 1996, 2001; Boissavit-Camus & Zadora-Rio, 1996). Henri Galinié also contributed to this literature through the detailed study of the city of Tours in addition to more

general publications considering other French regions (Galinié, 1996, 2007; Zadora-Rio & Galinié, 1996, 2001). His work also gives an important place to the evolution of the parochial system. The relationship between graves and their foci, both pre-existing and contemporary, is also an extensively research theme (Duval *et al.*, 1991; Le Maho, 1994; Sapin, 1996, 1999; Delacampagne & Hincker, 2004; Gaultier, Dietrich & Corrochano, 2015), and was one of the subjects considered by Cécile Treffort in her 1996 publication. Her work focused on several aspects of this connection, with not only analyses of the physical links between a religious building and its associated cemetery, but also with consideration of the spiritual facets uniting death and religion (Treffort, 1996).

More recently, Cécile Treffort's contribution to *30 ans d'archéologie en France* (2010) offered a comprehensive overview of the main research questions currently addressed in France and highlighted a number of issues within the French approach to funerary archaeology (see below and chapter 2). In this chapter, Treffort pointed out the development of field archaeology, bringing new types of data to the traditional history-centric narrative. The rise of "*archéologie préventive*[1]" allowed the diversification of excavated sites, moving away from churchyard cemeteries and investigating the treatment of the dead in various settings to offer a new understanding of the spatial relationship between the dead and the living (Treffort, 2010:217). This synthetic work was further complemented in 2015 and 2017 by the publications of the Groupe d'anthropologie et d'archéologie funéraire (GAAF) proceedings, dedicated to the place occupied by funerary spaces in the landscape (Gaultier, Dietrich & Corrochano, A, 2015; De Larminat *et al.*, 2017). Treffort's article also accounts for the evolution of excavation techniques and scientific analyses, emphasising the level of detail in the recording of each feature giving birth to analysis of the body and the internal construct of the grave (on site and in laboratories), going beyond the simple classification of grave-goods and precious artefacts that used to characterise, and

[1] The equivalent in France of rescue archaeology.

which remains a major part of, early medieval funerary archaeology (Treffort, 2010: 216-218).

Indeed, French archaeology places a strong focus on the detailed study of the management of the structure and integrity of the grave, an analysis based on the precise recording of the burial position, the burial container and of any structural features of the grave below and above ground. Questions of identification of the decomposition space, and by extension, of the presence/absence of a burial container were first addressed by Henri Duday (1990), opening the way to a new field in funerary archaeology and offering a new perspective on the information transmitted by the grave and its associated skeleton(s) (*cf*. chapter 2). The characterisation of the structures then led to the creation of typologies directly dependent upon a specialist vocabulary, more or less clearly defined. In 1996, Galinié highlighted the need for a precise terminology, whist also providing an assessment of the reality of the study of funerary practices in archaeology and the difficulties it entails (Galinié, 1996). In the same publication, Fabrice Henrion and Jean-Yves Hunot dedicated an article to the construction techniques and use of wooden burial containers (Henrion & Hunot, 1996), suggesting terms and definition to describe the different elements constituting these structures, as well as general chronological considerations. The past few years have seen a renewed interest in these questions, the Association française d'archéologie mérovingienne (AFAM) dedicating, for instance, a publication to the use of wood in funerary context (Carré & Henrion, 2012). In 2019, issues of terminologies and of the use of types as chronological tools were the subjects of the GAAF annual meeting. The resulting publication (*forthcoming*) aims to offer some resolutions to miscommunication between teams on a national scale and provide regional overviews of the changes in funerary structures through time.

V) A strange gap in research: detailed comparative analyses in northwest Europe

Study of burial practices appears therefore to be undertaken in slightly different ways in France and in England, especially in regards to different recording practices and intensity of recording, which has produced a much broader specific vocabulary in France, with linked concepts that cannot be easily translated into a more limited descriptive vocabulary in English. These divergences and the contrasting methodologies they imply (*cf.* chapter 2) can partly explain the lack of direct comparison of funerary practices observed on either side of the Channel. If it is not uncommon to find thematic publication gathering articles considering different parts of northwest Europe, the information they provide is rarely compared to each other. This juxtaposition of data and ideas is for example visible in Carver's 2005 and 2006 publications, in which various authors address different aspects of burial practices (Carver, 2005a) or study the spread of Christianity during the late Roman to early medieval period (Carver, 2006), without considering the hypotheses expressed for other sites or regions. When comparison does occur, it is generally focused on the study of the social, economic or religious changes, not always taking into account the impact these transformations had on the relationship to death and burial practices. Adriaan Verhulst focused for example on the similarities and differences in the changes of the social order in different regions of northwest Europe, and on the influence of the Church as an estate holder in those same areas, but he did not consider the impact this reorganisation of society could have on the world of the dead (Verhulst, 2002). In a similar manner, the volume directed by Laurent Verslype in 2007 offered an interesting view on Neustria, crossing modern frontiers but once again failing to offer a comparative analysis. Richard Hodges investigated the links existing in Europe during the Early Middle Ages considering burial practices, but without directly comparing the data obtained in the different regions investigated (Hodges, 2000).

More recently, Christopher Loveluck published an extensive study of the connections existing between the Continent and the British Isles for the period c.600 to 1150AD, comparing the social, religious and economic transformations occurring throughout the Middle Ages in northwest Europe. If some analysis of the treatment of the dead is offered in this work, it is not the main focus of the study and thus remains quite broad. Potential evidence for the presence of settlers from across the Channel has been found at emporia, leading to some degree of comparison of practices, remaining heavily grave-good oriented. The sites of Ipswich, Buttermarket and St Stephen's Lane, and Southampton have for instance offered a number of wares and other artefacts coming from the Continent (Scull, 2009; Birbeck, 2005:64-65). Furthermore, the graves in which some of these objects were found have been identified as potentially those of foreigners, who lived and died in the Anglo-Saxon emporium, but kept the burial practices and grave-goods of their country of origin (Scull, 2011). Martin Welch undertook a similar study in 2002, highlighting the exchanges and connections existing between northern France and southern Britain and illustrating his work with examples of French artefacts found in British graves, but once again failing to really compare the funerary practices in themselves in those two regions (Welch, 2002). The research recently undertaken in France by Jean Soulat for the Merovingian period is very similar to these works (2009, 2015). Through inventories of Anglo-Saxon and Merovingian artefacts found on either sides of the Channel, Soulat highlighted the contacts and exchanges occurring between southern Britain and the directly facing regions and replaced the usage of such grave-goods in a chronological frame, showing the transformation of the practices through time. However, this study still does not directly compare funerary rites in those areas, once again showing the presence of foreign artefacts, and potentially of foreign individuals, without exploring the possible parallels or variations in the treatment of the dead in these closely connected regions. One exception needs however to be mentioned here. Kirtsy Squires (2016) publication does indeed provide a detailed comparison of

cremations observed in England and on the Continent, taking into account a variety of elements and highlighting the potential of such studies.

It is often necessary to turn towards other disciplines to find more European perspectives. In France, Cécile Treffort was one of the first to start considering the situation on the other side of the Channel, showing that the high mobility of these populations, and incidentally, of their beliefs and practices, implied the need for a comparison of data obtained in these regions (Treffort, 1996a). In this study, she particularly highlighted the links created between France and the British Isles through the travels of monks and other clerics. This aspect is particularly important to consider since no precise rules in regard to burial practices had yet been decided on by the Church. Exchanges and connections between different monasteries and other Christian institutions could therefore have influenced the way in which death was perceived and how the remains of the deceased should be treated to respect a Christian ideology (Treffort, 1996a: 185-186). These links between religious communities, and the lack of rules concerning Christian burial practices before the eleventh century, have also been researched by Bonnie Effros. Through the study of written documents, she compared the way in which Christianity was interpreted in different parts of northwest Europe during the Merovingian period, analysing the impact these various interpretations had on the treatment of the dead, and how the links between communities influenced this understanding (Effros, 2002). Despite the use of some archaeological evidence, this work provides a study of the body in history rather than an archaeological perspective on the treatment of the remains in early medieval northwest Europe. In addition to these mostly historical works, the epigraphic analysis undertaken in Brittany (Davis *et. al*, 2000) and the linguistic approach of Charles-Edwards (2013) highlighted the similarities existing between the Armorican peninsula and the British Isles, parallels generally attributed to migration between the westernmost regions of the Channel.

Through the direct confrontation of data obtained on both sides of the Channel, this project thus attempts to fill a gap in literature by providing a detailed

comparative study of burial practices in southwest Britain and northwest France between c.600 and 1050AD. By choosing a multi-scale approach, this work intends to assess the impact of migration on the treatment of the dead at individual, communal, regional and cross-Channel levels, challenging previous paradigms by means of a layered analysis. This thesis also endeavours to highlight the great potential of comparative study for the discipline, balancing out some of the issues present in both French and British archaeology: the extremely detailed recording and study of every aspect of the body, grave and burial ground characterising the French approach is therefore applied to the British case-studies, revealing new data and offering a new understanding of well-known sites. Conversely, the more theoretical and scholarly studies typical of British archaeology are applied to the French material, providing a wider and more intellectual context to pure excavation data rarely considered outside their own locality (Treffort, 2010: 218,219). In doing so, this project also highlights the difficulty of multi-national studies not only in terms of methodology, but also in matters of languages, simple translation often failing to convey the depth of certain concepts and resulting interpretations. Within the premise of early medieval funerary archaeology, this project ultimately aims to establish the bases for a new comparative archaeology, built on different methods and on a precise vocabulary, facilitating future cross-Channel and European studies. The following chapter offers a comprehensive presentation of the methodology designed to meet these objectives.

Chapter 2: Methodology

I) General considerations and approach

The multiple aims of this thesis and the novelty of this multi-scale comparative approach necessitated the creation of a new methodology allowing for the collection and detailed analysis of data obtained in countries of different archaeological traditions. This research intends to highlight cross-Channel parallels and differences alongside more focused regional profiles, characterising burial practices within national bounds before looking directly at communal and individual traditions, gradually building a picture of the treatment of the dead at different levels of analysis. Additionally, the thematic study intends to identify permanencies and transformations in funerary practices and explores their deeper meaning, considering for the first time various aspects of the treatment of the dead and their specific/common aims. By placing these observations in a wider social context, this thesis finally contemplates the place of the deceased in their communities and investigates the impacts of the various changes occurring throughout the early Middle Ages in the physical and spiritual relationship between the dead and the living.

This level of precision and the interpretations following them required an extremely detailed recording and meticulous study of every elements of the cemetery, the grave and the body, following the four main themes presented in the introduction: the funerary area in their natural and man-made environment, the layout of the burial ground, the internal organisation of the grave, and, finally, the skeletal remains (*cf*. chapter 1). The collection and analysis of data obtained on either sides of the Channel was made possible by the establishment of a specific strategy and a new vocabulary taking into account the differences in methods and terminologies used in both countries, bringing solutions to challenges inherent to

bi-lingual and bi-national research. These results are then considered through the lens of theory, borrowing from sociology, ethnology and anthropology to better understand the motivations and implications of the decisions taken throughout the funerary process. The following chapter offers a detailed presentation of the methodology created for this project and its applications, considering the rationale for the choice of case studies, the challenges encountered when designing the database and the solutions brought to each of them. Lastly, this chapter introduces the different types analyses undertaken in this work and offers an overall structure of the thesis.

II) Rationale for choice of regions and case studies

A) Scoping exercise

The regions considered in this thesis are Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset and Hampshire in Britain, and Brittany, Normandy and Loire-Atlantique in France, placing the focus on the often less considered western half of the Channel (*cf.* chapter 1). The selection of these eight counties and régions/départements was followed by a scoping exercise, aiming to identify the number of potential sites relevant to this study. This process started with the consultation of regional inventories.

For Britain, lists of sites by counties were accessed through the HeritageGateway[2], using the detailed search engine with keywords such as '*grave*', '*burial*' or '*cemetery*' and filtering the result for the early medieval period (c.410-1066AD). Unfortunately, some of the results did not offer any references or similar information to allow for further investigations. When this was the case, the sites were not recorded as part of the initial dataset (see below). A similar approach was

[2] https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/advanced_search.aspx

then taken in northern France, this time through the consultation of Bulletins Scientifiques Régionaux (BSR) and visits to the Services Régionaux de l'Archéologie (SRA) based in Caen, Rouen and Nantes. During these visits, I was provided with lists of sites drawn from the Carte archéologique nationale, compiling all the excavated and potential archaeological sites currently known on the French national territory. For Brittany, this research was undertaken directly on the SRA website through the new numerical database Bibliothèque numérique de Service Régional de l'Archéologie de Bretagne[3], offering a free online access to all excavation reports kept in the Rennes office and a search engine similar to the HeritageGateway.

This preliminary research led to the creation of a first database, recording in tabulated format the sites potentially offering information corresponding to the main themes explored in this thesis. Alphabetised tables were produced for each region, the rows corresponding to a site and the columns to a specific type of information: site name, localisation (including grid reference and/or GPS coordinates when available), date, general description (*i.e* rural, isolated funerary area, monastery…), number of graves, estimated number of individuals, type of specialist analysis ran on the data (*i.e* osteological analysis, archaeothanatology…) and main publication. This preliminary scoping provided a variable number of sites depending on the regions, spanning from c.400AD to the eleventh century in Britain and the fourteenth century in France. Taking into account the availability and quality of the data for each site, their relevance for the aims of this study and the level of details required for this project, it was then decided to organise the study around a number of key-sites (see below).

[3] http://bibliotheque.numerique.sra-bretagne.fr/

B) Sampling strategy for selection of sites with optimum evidence

The selection of these case studies went through the use of a precise sampling strategy allowing for the identification of an optimum dataset in accordance with the themes explored in this thesis:

- It was first necessary to remove the sites falling outside of the chronological bounds of the project. By looking at cemeteries used between the middle of the seventh- to the middle of the eleventh-century, this thesis aims to explore the impact of the preceding migration and conversion period and to compare practices on either side of the Channel before the Norman Conquest. The sample was therefore refocused on burial grounds dated to c.600 to 1050AD. The dating methods in use were considered, privileging when possible sites with radiocarbon dates (see below).

- Information on the environment of the burial ground was then considered. The selection of key-sites was made to cover a maximum diversity of funerary areas, taking into account religious contexts such as monasteries, rural and non-rural[4] cemeteries and more isolated burial grounds.

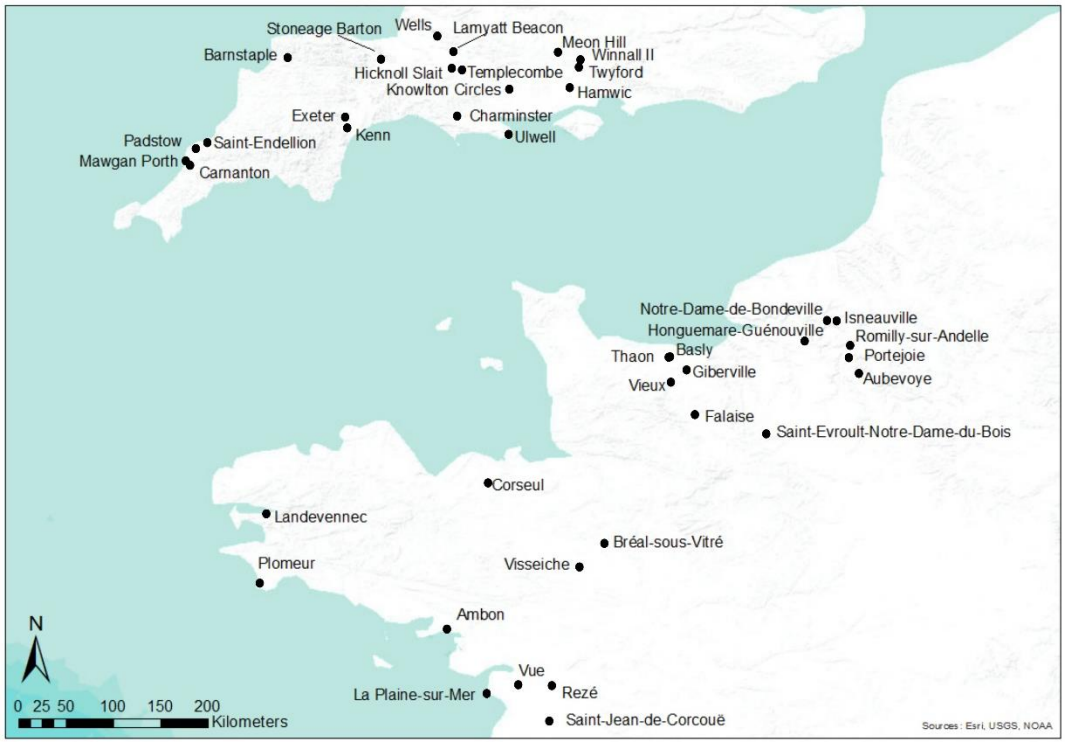
- This was then followed by an estimation of the number of graves and individuals, once again trying to diversify the database with cemeteries of different sizes and length of usage. The extent of the excavated area was also considered at this stage, due to its direct impact on the overall perception of the site.

- The availability of data on the internal organisation of the grave came next, evaluating the type and quality of the information offered in the excavation reports and associated publications on the funerary structures and potential artefacts deposited with the body.

[4] Due to the ambiguity of the term in the context of the early Middle Ages, the word '*urban*' has been avoided whenever possible throughout this work.

- The final criterion was osteological information, evaluating the degree of preservation of the skeleton and the type of biological and taphonomic data they could offer.

This sampling process led to the design and creation of the definitive database. Every aspect of the burial practices observed at the key-sites has been precisely recorded in tabulated format sorting out the information to allow for a multi-scale comparison and for a detailed analysis of the treatment of the dead in the early medieval western Channel. Sites that failed to meet enough criteria will not be part of the main analysis, but will be used to complement the argument when appropriate. Twenty-two key-sites were selected for France, and twenty-seven for Britain (nine of which are found in Hamwic) (map 1 – also available in vol.2 – maps 1, 2 and 3).



Map 1: Location of the key-sites (figure by Troadec, S.)

Brittany (Brit.)	Ambon Bréal-sous-Vitré Corseul Landevennec Plomeur Visseiche
Loire-Atlantique (LA)	La Plaine Rezé Saint-Jean-de-Corcouë Vue
Lower Normandy (LN)	Basly Falaise Giberville Saint-Evroult-Notre-Dame-de-Bois Thaon Vieux
Upper Normandy (UN)	Aubevoye Honguemare-Guénouville Isneauville Notre-Dame-de-Bondeville Portejoie Romilly-sur-Andelle

Table 1: List of the French key-sites (map 2, vol.2)

Cornwall (Corn.)	Carnanton Mawgan Porth Padstow Saint Endellion
Devon (Dev.)	Barnstaple Exeter Kenn
Dorset (Dor.)	Charminster Knowlton Circles Ulwell
Somerset (Som.)	Hicknoll Slait Lamyatt Beacon Stoneage Barton Templecombe Wells
Hampshire (Hants.)	Meon Hill Hamwic *(SOU414,207,862, Cook Street, Six Dials, SOU13, SOU32, Saint Mary's stadium cemetery I and II)* Twyford Winnall II

Table 2: List of the British key-sites (map 3, vol.2)

III) Data selection, collection and analysis

A) Data quality critique and comparative approach

Before presenting this database in more detail, it is important to review the various issues encountered in its creation. These were of three kinds: issues inherent to the discipline, issues relating to the differences of practice of archaeology in modern Britain and France, and their subsequent terminological problems.

The study of burial practice relies primarily on the survival of funerary structures and skeletal remains. Unfortunately, the preservation of organic materials rapidly appeared to be compromised as some of the selected regions have a naturally acidic substrate destroying most of the evidence both within the grave and on the surface, on occasion drastically limiting the overall analysis and interpretation of the sites. However, this is not to say that well-preserved cemeteries always offered all of the data necessary for a detailed study of the graves and their occupant(s). As mentioned in chapter 1, the methods and objects of study of archaeology have greatly evolved in the past few decades, operations undertaken at the end of the twentieth century thus lacking the precision now expected in the excavation and recording of burial grounds. Beyond the lack of recent research in some of the selected regions, the use of sites excavated in the 1970's and 1980's is also deliberate and aims to place these sites back in a greater narrative, revising the hypothesis formulated at the time with more recent theories. Whenever possible, previous osteological interpretations were re-assessed, the lack of radiocarbon dating for a large part of the sites - particularly in France where dating campaigns are less common that in Britain - was compensated by using comparison with better dated sites presenting similar or identical characteristics.

The last issue to mention here is one of the area opened during excavation. On both sides of the Channel, it is indeed quite rare to have a fully excavated site, the limitation imposed on the sizes of investigated zones by various constraints such as time and modern constructions, often only offering truncated versions of much larger sites. Moreover, the extent of the excavated space rapidly appeared to depend on the location of the site, leading us now to consider more precise issues directly linked to the comparative, and bi-national nature of this project. Whilst the tendency in France is to open large areas, proceeding to a *décapage* over a wide zone to obtain an overall view of the site followed by the opening of smaller survey pits, the British practice is generally more focused, investigating the site through precise case studies. Both techniques have of course their benefits and drawbacks, but they result in two different perceptions and understanding of the sites, particularly visible in the case of comparative analyses such as this one. This difference in approach is further complicated by distinctive excavation and recording methods.

French archaeology dedicates a central place to the study of the internal organisation of the grave, a study relying heavily on the application of the principles of archaeothanatology. Theorised by Henri Duday in 1990, the '*archéologie de terrain*' or archaeothanatology consists in the characterisation of the nature of the decomposition space through the study of post-decomposition bone movement. By looking at the state of anatomical connection of labile and permanent joints, it is indeed possible to determine if the body was placed within a filled or empty space, either keeping the skeleton in articulation or letting the gas produced by the decay of soft tissues move bones away of their normal position. From there, it is then possible to determine the possible presence and nature of the burial container: an empty space indicating the use of a sealed container and a filled space pointing towards the absence of a container or, at least, the presence of substrate within the grave during the decomposition process. Similarly, archaeothanatology can help in the identification of soft wrapping, which maintain

part of the skeleton in anatomical connection whilst other articulations are subjected to an empty space.

This method does, of course, have its limits, with more or less ambiguous interpretations. Deferred filled spaces are one of them. This term is probably best explained through an example: a body is placed in a coffin sealed with a wooden lid. Decomposition starts in an empty space, labile articulation moving out of alignment. Later in this process, and as a result of its own decomposition, the lid of the coffin collapses, and substrate penetrates within the original empty space, thus changing its nature to a filled space. It is of course arguable that the collapse of a lid is an archaeologically visible event, but deferred filled spaces can also occur less obviously, with the slow infill of the grave due to an originally poorly sealed grave or to a particularly volatile substrate like sand. Beyond these specific situations, interpretation can also be affected by later disturbance of the grave, either by animals (necrophage or burrowing) or human intervention (reopening of the grave, ploughing…) (Duday *et al.*, 1990, 2006; Duday, 2009). This overview summarises the main aspects necessary for the understanding of the results presented in later chapters and draws the attention to a technique still rarely used in British archaeology.

This difference in method and the general lesser importance given in Britain to the study of the internal organisation of the grave, gave rise to a few challenges. In order to fully compare burial sites, it was indeed necessary to record the same information on both sides of the Channel. Whenever possible, it was decided to proceed to an archaeothanatological analysis on all of the sites presenting photographs and/or detailed drawings of the skeletons within their grave, adding another level of ambiguity to the interpretation but ultimately producing promising results (see later chapters). In some cases, the interpretation offered in the excavation reports do not correspond to this analysis. When this is the case, a note is made in the database, indicating both mine and the excavator's interpretations. Depending on the quality of the data, and on the number of points

of divergence between the two characterisations, the excavator's interpretation is most often privileged with a few exceptions clearly addressed during the analysis of the sites in question.

The recording of this information however rose as another obstacle. On the French side, the abundance of terms used to describe different funerary structures sometimes made difficult the identification of the nuances setting them apart from one another. Indeed, it is not uncommon for several words to refer to the same element depending on the region considered. These issues and the use of ill-defined types as chronological tools were largely addressed during the GAAF meeting of 2019 (*forthcoming*) and are currently resting at the centre of funerary archaeological theory in France. Britain has the reverse problem. Instead of a plethora of terms, most publications only use a few selected words, without taking into account the variations between similar, but ultimately different, grave types. In order to palliate both of these issues, it was decided to create a common vocabulary, taking into account the nuances between translation and conceptualisation and normalising the data on a wide scale to allow for comparison. A list of these terms can be found in the form of a glossary in volume 2 (Appendix 1), with definitions either drawn from specialist publications or formulated on the basis of the data collected for this project. This list is to understand within the context of this thesis and is by no means an exhaustive glossary of early medieval grave types, but does hope to provide a basis for later multi-lingual comparative work.

B) Database creation and data standard

Once all of these factors were considered, it was possible to proceed to the collection and organisation of the data. Recording the majority of the information in tables appeared to be the most suitable choice for this study, allowing for the management and analysis of the data available for each of the key-sites and

themes. This organisation also provided pictures of burial practice at different scales and allowed the direct comparison of the multiple elements related to the treatment of the dead in the early medieval period. Other data that could not be tabulated or that did not lend themselves to such analysis – *i.e* information gathered through the study of the site plans – are presented during the study and comparison of each of the key-sites. Whenever possible, site plans have been made available in the appendix (see volume 2).

Each site was recorded in three tables dividing the information by type. The first table offers an overview of the site with:

- the number of graves: excavated and estimated.
- the overall date: noting the dating method, *i.e* typochronology, radiocarbon, textual sources.
- the possible nature of the site and its potential status: rural, non-rural, lay, lay high-status, ecclesiastical.
- a list of directly associated feature(s): natural, prehistoric, Roman, contemporary).
- the presence/absence of an associated settlement(s).

The presence of boundaries surrounding the burial area and the availability of a site plan were also recorded here, providing a picture of the cemetery in its natural and man-made environment. This information was used during the analysis of the location of the burial ground and of the graves characterising the relationship between the funerary area and its natural and/or man-built environment (theme 1).

The second table is dedicated to the graves. The level of detail aimed for in this thesis resulted in the detailed recording of each burial, each line of the table therefore representing one grave. Table 2 thus considered:

- the presence/absence of traces of container.

- the type of container: pleine terre, cist, sarcophagus, stone container?, coffrage, coffin, wooden container?, and other rarer types of containers such as mortared tomb, plastered lined graves,… (see glossary for definitions).

- its material: earth, stone, shelly limestone, brick, wood.

- the shape of the grave pit: oval, rectangular, sub-rectangular, trapezoidal.

- the presence of packing stone(s) or other similar element (s) such as nails.

- the general orientation of the pit.

- the presence/absence of a grave marker and its possible nature: wooden post, earth mound, headstone, tombstone.

- the content of the infill.

- the date attributed to the feature.

- complementary information not falling into any specific category, *i.e* observations made in the study the site plan and of any potential photo or drawing of the grave.

A precise reference of the grave and the publication in which these data were obtained are also recorded here. This inventory aimed to provide a clear picture of each individual grave, allowing to both draw general profile of the site by totalling each, and to highlight local variations.

The third table summarises the population data. Once again, each row is dedicated to one individual burial with:

- general information on the preservation of the remains: very poor, poor, good, very good, and with percentages if available.

- the presence/absence of miscellaneous bones.

- the sex and age of the individual (see below).

- the overall position of the body and its orientation: head, body, arms, legs, completed in the comment section by archaeothanatological observations.

- a summary of the pathologies and traumas observed on the skeleton.

- radiocarbon dates.

The sexual characterisation traditionally fell under male, possible male, female, possible female and unsexed. Seven age categories were determined based on the data offered by the osteological reports: perinatal, infant (0-2 years old), child (3-12 years old), adolescent (12-18 year old), sub-adult (18-25 years old), adult (25-35 years old) and mature (35+ years old). When data were insufficient, the term juvenile is used to refer to individuals from 0-18 years old. Individuals that could not be aged were recorded in a 'no age' category. Grave-goods and other items found in the grave, including clothes and soft-wrappings, were also recorded in this table. These elements were considered in terms of types and number, and when known, position in relation to the body. This last table allowed for the characterisation of the buried population, looking at the demography of the cemetery and at the lifestyle and health of each individual.

C) Multi-scale analysis

The analysis of this database is organised in two parts. The amount of information collected on both sides of the Channel and the level of detailed aimed for in this thesis emphasised the necessity of a gradual comparison, starting at local and regional levels to then undertake a more synthetic and theoretical work at a cross-Channel scale. Before detailing these processes, it is important to make a general vocabulary note: the words "cemetery", "burial ground" and "funerary area" are hereafter used interchangeably, but "churchyard" only refers to burial found in direct association with a church. The terms "pagan" and "Christian" have been avoided as far as possible to lessen any possible bias brought on by conversion periods theories and are only used when referring to the interpretations offered in the excavation reports.

The first part of the analysis is dedicated to intra and inter-regional comparisons, characterising burial practices within national bounds and providing strong bases for the subsequent cross-Channel investigations. Each of the four

main themes is considered separately, providing clear pictures of the various aspects constituting burial practices and optimising comparability of specific elements at the scale of the individual. This thematic plan also implied the establishment of regional profiles, drawn from the database in the form of tables and graphs, and for the detection of anomalies and other individual practices otherwise lost in a sea of many and varied information. Correlation between specific data are highlighted through the use of pivot table, their relevance then tested through statistical analyses run with PAST3. These quantitative analyses are then completed by the study of the deeper implications of each practice. Questions of the manifestation of privileged relationships with certain features of the landscape are then broadly considered, exploring the choice burial foci or the association of the funerary area close to distinctive natural elements. The social and religious connotations of different practices are also investigated, putting forward the interpretation offered in the excavation reports and related publications.

The cross-Channel comparison of these results then comes to shed a new light on these interpretations. The detection of similarities and differences in the treatment of the dead indeed allows for a re-assessment of previous hypotheses, considering data gathered and analysed with a new methodology (see above III.A & B) in a wider geographical context; and the suggestion of new chronologies for particular practices, using radiocarbon dates available on one side of the Channel to compensate for the lack of precise dates on the other. This approach allows for the study of shared and divergent behaviours in regions faced with similar important social, economic and religious changes, highlighting the various ways in which communities adapted to new realities in areas of known contact and exchange. This comparison also offers a new perspective on the expression of multiple layers of identity, each funerary choice resulting from a composite sum of influences and personal experiences (*cf.* chapters 7 and 8). These aspects are further explored through concepts borrowed from sociology, anthropology and

ethnology, providing a theoretical and, to some extent, more comprehensive framework to the pure archaeological data.

IV) Thesis structure

Following this bi-partite plan, Chapters 3 and 4 are dedicated to the French case studies, first presenting each key-site, then offering a thematic analysis of the burial practices observed on the French side of the Channel. Chapters 5 and 6 follow the same organisation for the British sites, mirroring the work undertaken for France to facilitate comparison. This analysis is then placed back into a cross-Channel context, highlighting parallels and differences in various aspects of the treatment of the dead. Chapter 7 is dedicated to the questions of location of the cemetery and grave, whilst Chapter 8 takes a closer look at the nature of individual burials. The final conclusions and future prospects presented in Chapter 9 then offer wider comparative perspectives and new lines of thought for the study of burial practices on a cross-Channel basis for the early Middle Ages.

Chapter 3: Presentation of the key-sites in northwest France

This chapter presents an overview of the twenty-two sites selected for northwest France (map 2, vol. 2). Each region or département is considered separately, starting with Brittany and Loire-Atlantique to then move north to Lower and Upper Normandy. The characteristics of the burial grounds are broadly considered to offer a general picture of the environment of the sites, the types of graves represented and, when possible, a profile of the buried population, finally reviewing the different artefacts found in association with the bodies. The majority of the information is presented in a tabulated format. The date of the excavation report consulted to gather the data is also given alongside the method used to date the remains and/or structures. As mentioned in the previous chapter, some of the information could be missing from the excavation report, making an individual and detailed recording of the characteristics of the graves impossible or approximate. Definitions of the terms used in the tables can be found in Appendix 1.

I) Brittany

Six key-sites were identified in Brittany. These burial grounds are placed both inland and close to the shore, offering a diversity of natural environments; and linked to diverse occupations. As stated in chapter 2, data were gathered from the excavation reports available online on the Bibliothèque Numérique du Service Regional de l'Archéologie de Bretagne website. It is worth noting that Brittany is mostly aceramic, often complicating the dating of settlement and by extension their associated cemeteries.

A) Ambon

The excavation undertaken at the church of Ambon (Morbihan) at the end of the 1980's revealed a small burial ground of 17 graves. These burials are probably part of a larger cemetery, destroyed by the addition of an apse to the original oratory now lying under the modern church (André & Triste, 1988:23; 1990:5, 33). The oratory is thought to have itself taken the place of a Roman construction, testifying to the long occupation of the site. This succession of structures allowed for the establishment of a general chronology, placing the funerary area between the Roman occupation and the Norman church (André & Triste, 1990:34). The limited extent of the excavation did not reveal any settlement in association with the graves. The excavation reports did not offer any information on the buried population and did not mention any grave-goods or other artefacts deposited with the deceased.

Pleine Terre	Cist	Sarcophagus	**Total**
15	1	1	**17**

Table 3: Grave types – Ambon

B) Bréal-sous-vitré

The recent excavations of Bréal-sous-Vitré (Ille-et-Vilaine) provide more information. The site is known as an important settlement from the Roman period onwards, strategically placed on the road linking Angers to Avranche and Saint Vitré to Laval (Le Boulanger, 2005:37). The early medieval cemetery was discovered at a few metres from the modern church, and was probably organised around its predecessor (Le Boulanger, 2005:5, 22). Radiocarbon dating undertaken on the skeletal remains placed the use of the burial area between the fifth and the

eleventh century AD (cal.) (Le Boulanger, 2005:29). 105 graves have been excavated for the period of study, with a majority in cists, followed by pleine terre burials and one unique sarcophagus.

Pleine Terre	Cist	Sarcophagus	Stone container?	Unknown	**Total**
35	61	1	2	6	**105**

Table 4: Grave types - Bréal-sous-Vitré

Assuming that the empty graves contained one individual each, the minimum number of individuals buried at the site reaches 120. This estimate needs however to be taken carefully as eight of the documented graves contained more than one individual, including an interment of three skulls and some long bones identified as a secondary burial, possibly in réduction. In terms of demography, information was available for ninety-four individuals of which thirty could not be sexed or aged.

	Perinatal	Infant	Child	Adolescent	Adult	Mature	?	**Total**
Males	0	0	0	1	15	0	0	**16**
Females	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	**6**
Unsexed	1	5	11	0	24	1	30	**72**
Total	**1**	**5**	**11**	**1**	**45**	**1**	**30**	**94**

Table 5: Population - Bréal-sous-Vitré

The use or possible use of soft wrapping was identified in fourteen graves (Le Boulanger, 2005:43). After further analysis of the evidence presented in the grave catalogue; this number rose to seventeen.

Soft wrapping	Soft wrapping?	Pillow	Jewellery	Pottery	Other metallic elements
6	11	1	1	1	1
Total: 21					

Table 6: Grave-goods and other artefacts - Bréal-sous-Vitré

C) Corseul

Upon its discovery in 1985, the burial ground of Corseul was dated to the seventh to ninth century (Clairefontaine, 1985:53, 107). This dating rested on two main aspects: a comparison of the practices used at the site with other cemeteries of the region (*ibid.*), and the mention in the *Vita Machutis* of a small early medieval settlement (*ibid.*) following the relocation of the capital of the Coriosolites at the end of the third century AD (Cassard, 1994:10). The presence of brick cist graves has however sometimes been attributed to an earlier date, placing the use of the cemetery in a 'Late Roman' period (Guigon, 1994:34). This project privileged the dating offered by the excavator (*cf.* chapter 4).

Pleine terre	Cist	Stone container?	**Total**
21	8	2	**31**

Table 7: Grave types - Corseul

Thirty-one graves were excavated at the site, five of which cutting the wall of a ruined unidentified and undated building (fig.11, vol.2). The report unfortunately offered only very little information on the buried population. Only one individual could be sexed and aged, a male adult, and five possible children were identified on the basis of the grave sizes. No grave-goods or other elements were found in

association with the bodies, and the lack of precise information on the position of the bones made the identification of potential soft wrappings impossible.

D) Landevennec

The monastery of Landevennec (Finistère) is particularly interesting for its long history and for the different populations it probably served (Bardel & Perennec, 2004:134-142). The first religious occupation appeared in the late fifth-sixth century, with a small number of graves organised around the oratory that later developed into a monastic complex (Bardel & Perennec, 2004:134). Inhumations were found both inside and outside of the precinct, with two major burial areas appearing in the late eighth-early ninth century (figs.12 and 13, vol.2). The second half of the ninth century sees the digging of graves around and inside the collegial church (figs.14 and 15, vol.2). The monastery is abandoned for a short period of time following the Viking invasions of 913AD, and rebuilt in the tenth-eleventh century, rapidly regaining its religious, and funerary, importance and remaining active until modern days (Bardel & Perennec, 2004: 142-145). After consultation of the multiple excavation reports, 116 funerary structures were identified as falling between the seventh and mid-eleventh (Bardel, 1984, 1985, 1988, 1989, 1992; Bardel & Perennec, 1994; 1999).

Pleine terre	Cist	Sarcophagus (wooden)	Coffrage	Coffin
41	6	6	1	12
Pleine terre?	Stone container?	Mortared tomb	Wooden container?	Undetermined
4	10	5	5	26
Total: 116				

Table 8: Grave types - Landevennec

In terms of population, 105 individuals could be characterised, only males or possible males and a small number of juveniles appear to have been represented at the site. This could be due to a problem in the preservation of the remains but even if the empty graves and the undetermined individuals were females, the male population would still largely be dominant. This is to a certain extent expected, as Landevennec is a monastic site, but still surprising when considering the possible different function and population of the burial grounds excavated in several areas of the site (*cf.* chapter 4). The individual placed in réductions are not represented in the below table, as the minimum number of individuals could not be determined from the data offered in the reports.

	Infant	Child	Sub-adult	Adult	Mature	?	**Total**
Males	0	0	1	18	20	1	**40**
Males?	0	0	0	2	0	0	**2**
Unsexed	1	2	1	6	2	57	**69**
Total	**1**	**2**	**2**	**26**	**22**	**58**	**111**

Table 9: Population - Landevennec

Wooden rods have been found in three of the graves. It is likely that these elements are to be identified as part of the burial containers rather than as grave-goods (Bardel & Perennec, 2004:128).

Pillow	Clothing item	Jewellery
1	1	2
Total: 4		

Table 10: Grave-goods and other artefacts - Landevennec

E) Plomeur (Saint-Urnel)

The use of radiocarbon dating at Plomeur (Finistère) allowed the detection of two funerary phases, the first one from the Late Antiquity, the earliest grave radiocarbon dated to 200-600AD cal. (Guigon, 1994:47), and the second one post-1005AD cal. (Giot & Monnier, 1973:2; 1975:1). The presence of a built focus is suspected for the first phase, and attested for the second, with the construction in the course of the ninth century of a small oratory, probably away from the original location of the primary structure (Giot & Monnier, 1974:8, 1975:13). A circular stone element probably made from an Iron Age stele was also discovered in a shallow pit of the superior dune and could represent part of a cross associated with one or both burial phases (Giot & Monnier, 1973:8). This cemetery is also to consider within a landscape strongly marked by prehistoric monuments, both inland and on the shore (Dolmen of the Point de la Torche).

The study of this cemetery is quite difficult as excavation took place sporadically from 1923 to 1975. The types of burials are not documented apart from four graves using whalebones creating pseudo cist-graves and one possible crib made out of the same material. The rest of the cemetery was probably constituted of pleine terre burials marked on the surface ground by rectangular stone-lining, not always precisely positioned above the inhumation (Giot & Monnier, 1974: 6), or in cists. However, this can only remain a hypothesis as no direct mention of the nature of the burials is made in the report. One noticeable exception is the use of whale bone in four graves as part of a potential container (*cf.* chapter 4). All of the graves were placed on a west-east axis with the heads to the west.

Despite providing radiocarbon dates for two phases of inhumations, the reports do not indicate which graves and individuals are related to the first or second funerary usage of the site, and generally provide very little information on the buried population. The data presented hereafter thus rely heavily on the

Master thesis of Mélanie Le Bihan (Le Bihan, 2013), consulted at the Musée de la Prehistoire Finistèrienne in Penmarch, where the skeletons are currently preserved. It is worth noting that part of the cemetery is still unexcavated, with graves probably present to the north of the excavated area where the first built focus might have been (Giot & Monnier, 1975:13). In 1994, the population of the cemetery was estimated to 280 to 350 individuals (Guigon, 1994:47).

	Juvenile	Adult	Mature	?	**Total**
Males	0	30	40	3	**73**
Females	0	20	14	1	**35**
Unsexed	3	27	22	25	**77**
Total	**3**	**77**	**76**	**29**	**185**

Table 11: Population - Plomeur

The focus of Le Bihan's publication was however not the population, but the exceptional number of trepanations recorded at the site. Her study highlighted 12 cases, against the eleven or fifteen mentioned by Giot and Monnier (1975:7). Due to the uncertainty of the numbers provided in the original excavation, the study of Le Bihan is the one used in this work. No artefacts appear to have been associated with the bodies.

F) Visseiche

Visseiche (Ille-et-Vilaine) possesses two burial grounds in association with a possibly poly-nuclear settlement of the early medieval period, following the Roman occupation of *Sipia* placed on the road linking Rennes to Angers (Le Boulanger, 2004:6). Both cemeteries appear to have been used at the same time

between the sixth and the eleventh century, and were both apparently placed outside of the settlement space, separated from the spaces of the living by one or several ditches (Guigon & Bardel, 1989:341, Le Boulanger, 2004:45). A total of 26 graves were recorded for necropolis 1 (Le Boulanger, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005), against 78 for necropolis 2 (fig.16, vol.2) (Guigon & Bardel, 1989), both funerary areas presenting quite different profiles despite their contemporary usage.

Pleine terre	Pleine terre?	Cist	Sarcophagus	Stone container?	Undetermined	**Total**
10	7	1	3	3	2	**26**

Table 12: Grave types necropolis 1 - Visseiche

Pleine Terre	Cist	Sarcophagus	Undetermined	**Total**
12	44	21	1	**78**

Table 13: Grave types necropolis 2 - Visseiche

No information was available for the buried population at either site. Only one inhumation contained artefacts in necropolis 1: a small glass bead, two rings and one earring and a fragment of a glass object, all dated to the fifth- to early sixth century. Necropolis 2 counts three potentially furnished graves, one with a small glass bead; another with a pin; and the last one with a fibula "*ansée symétrique*" and a bronze armature probably the only remnant of a purse (Guigon & Bardel, 1989:341-342).

II) Loire-Atlantique

Contrary to Brittany and to the Norman regions, Loire-Atlantic only offered a very small number of early medieval burial grounds offering enough data for the themes addressed in this thesis. The reasons for this difference in number can be partly explained by the size of the area, a département standing against three régions, but remains surprising considering the activity of this zone in throughout the period (*cf.* chapters 4 and 7). Nantes and Guérandes were not selected amongst the key sites, as excavation in these very active modern cities only offered a few isolated graves, cut from any precise archaeological context. Despite a strict selection of the optimum dataset (*cf.* chapter 2), the cemeteries presented hereafter are for the most part old and/or partial excavations with incomplete records.

A) La Plaine-sur-mer

The cemetery at La Plaine-sur-Mer, lieu-dit La Frenelle, suffered from important disturbance before the 1970 excavations. The burial ground appears to have been associated with a small bipartite structure, identified as a possible oratory or chapel (Tessier, 1970:7-10). No settlement was discovered in the vicinity of the cemetery and its possible focus.

Pleine terre	Sarcophagus	Stone container?	Ossuary	**Total**
10	2	2	1	**15**

Table 14: Grave types - La Plaine-sur-Mer

14 graves and one ossuary were excavated**.** The study of drawings of graves (Tessier, 1970: annexes) allowed for the identification of two potential cist-graves. A possibly brick cist was also mentioned in the excavation report, but the identification of this empty and partially destroyed structure as a grave is debatable. The majority of the buried population was found in the ossuary, with little information in terms of age and sex.

	Perinatal	Child	Adolescent	Adult	Mature	**Total**
Males	0	0	0	2	0	**2**
Females	0	0	0	1	0	**1**
Unsexed	1	4	2	7	1	**15**
Unsexed–ossuary	1	3	0	28	0	**32**
Total	**2**	**7**	**2**	**38**	**1**	**50**

Table 15: Population - La Plain-sur-Mer

Artefacts were found in association with five graves and in the ossuary. The presence of shells, represented in the other- organic elements category, is difficult to interpret, appearing either as intrusive or linked to the purple dye production known in this region since prehistory (Dupont & Doyen, 2017:58) (*cf*. chapter 4). The three small "horns" were also found in a child burial and in the ossuary. Their precise nature and function could not be determined due to the limited information available in the report.

Clothing items	Jewellery	Other metallic elements	Other organic elements	**Total**
1	1	1	7	**10**

Table 16: Grave-goods and other artefacts - La Plaine-sur-Mer

B) Rezé, Saint-Lupien

The excavation at Rezé is not yet completed. The data presented here were found in the reports published between 2007 and 2015 for the site of Saint-Lupien. The dating of a very well preserved wooden quay to the second century AD (cal.) and the port activity it is linked to lead to the identification of this site as Ratiatum, a major Roman lying on the side of the Loire, directly facing Nantes (Guitton *et al.,* 2014:21-22). Graves seem to appear slightly later with a change in the type of occupation in this area, offering a very long sequence of funerary occupation, with burials radiocarbon dated to the third up to the twelfth century AD (cal.) (Arthuis *et al.*, 2012: 82; 2015:116-117). This long and intensive use of the same funerary area engendered an important number of bones recorded as "layers or erratic bones". The early medieval and medieval phases of the cemetery were associated with a small the chapel, probably built between the seventh and the tenth centuries (Guitton *et al.*, 2014:24-25).

Consultations of the excavation reports offered information on 52 graves and 36 stratigraphic units of these erratic bones. The cemetery is, however, probably much larger as the majority of the research focuses on the Roman structures rather than on the later burial ground.

Pleine terre	Cist	Sarcophagus	Coffrage	Coffin
11	2	5	3	1
Mixed coffrages	Stone containers?	Wooden containers?	Undetermined	
1	1	17	11	
Total: 52				

Table 17: Grave types - Rezé

102 individuals were recorded in the graves and at least 74 individuals were represented in the stratigraphic units of erratic bones (Arthuis et al., 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013; Guitton et al.,2014, 2016).

	Perinatal	Child	Adolescent	Subadult	Adult	Mature	**Total**
Males	0	0	0	0	7	2	**9**
Females	0	0	0	2	4	2	**8**
Unsexed	9	21	4	3	48	0	**85**
Total	9	21	4	5	59	4	102

Table 18: Population (cemetery) - Rezé

The erratic bones are not dated to a precise period but are considered here as they still represent part of the buried population.

	Perinatal	Infant	Child	Adolescent	**Total**
Unsexed	6	1	13	3	**23**

Table 19: Juvenile population (layers of bones) - Rezé

	Subadult	Adult	Mature	?	**Total**
Males	0	1	0	0	**1**
Females	0	1	0	0	**1**
Unsexed	6	36	4	2	**48**
Total	**6**	**38**	**4**	**2**	**50**

Table 20: Adult population (layers of bones) - Rezé

The individuals were not deposited with any grave-goods, but soft wrappings and pillows are both suspected and attested.

Soft wrapping?	Pillow	Pillow?	Coin (unidentified)	Other metallic elements
4	4	1	1	1
Total: 11				

Table 21: Grave-goods and other artefacts - Rezé

C) Saint-Jean-de-Corcouë

The environment of the cemetery at Saint-Jean-de-Corcouë, and the history of the settlement are not well known. The modern church is thought to be standing near or on the location of a previous religious building (Meslat, 1964) but no textual or archaeological element can confirm this hypothesis. In addition to this lack of general context, the excavation report does not offer a lot of information on the graves. Indeed, only the inhumations in sarcophagi were documented, with the mention of "*countless pleine terre burials, occupying nearly all the free spaces between the sarcophagi, in pits dug to the same level as the bottom slab of these sarcophagi*"[5] (Meslat, 1964). There follows in the report a very rapid description of these burials, mentioning the absence of grave-goods and the very poor preservation of the skeletons. The author notes twenty individuals in slightly better condition, but does not give any further details.

The nine sarcophagi were the only inhumations for which more precise information was available. In addition to these, a possible cist was also recorded:

[5] « *Elles [les sépultures en pleine terre] sont innombrables, occupant pratiquement tous les intervalles libres entre les sarcophages, dans des fosses creusées au niveau des fonds de ces sarcophages* » Meslat, 1964 – translated by Troadec, S.

the structure is composed of Roman tiles standing on their edge and organised around a stain that could be the only remaining trace of a skeleton (Meslat, 1964). The use of these containers led to a very general "early medieval" dating. No artefacts were found in association with the graves.

D) Vue

As for the other sites of this department, the burial ground at Vue was only partly excavated following the construction of a road near the modern church. Only the area directly around the building was uncovered, revealing nineteen inhumations. The association between the modern church and the graves, and the presence of the same shelly limestone used to make the sarcophagi in the walls of the building, can indicate that the current church replaced an earlier, possibly religious, structure around which the cemetery was organised (Tessier, 1970:6, Charpentier, 1994). No evidence for a settlement could be found but this can once again be a consequence of the small scale of the excavation.

Some of the sarcophagi could not be excavated in their entirety as doing so might have threatened the structural integrity of the church (Tessier, 1970:1). As in Saint-Jean-de-Corcouë, these containers were considered to suggest an early medieval date.

Sarcophagus	Wooden container?	**Total**
17	2	**19**

Table 22: Grave types - Vue

Only two individuals could be characterised as female sub-adults, two graves were devoid of human remains and finally six inhumations belonged to unsexed individuals of undetermined age. The use of a soft wrapping is suspected for two instances, and stone pillow was noted in grave 6.

III) Lower Normandy

The two Norman regions are here presented separately following the modern division (until 2016, January 1st), allowing for a clearer introduction of the data. This arbitrary sub-division is explored in the later chapters within the context of the early medieval period. Six sites have been selected for Lower Normandy with excavation still in progress at Sainte-Evroult-Notre-Dame-du-bois and Thaon. The data presented here are based on the reports produced up to 2016-early 2017.

A) Basly

Basly (Calvados) is situated on the other side of the valley from Thaon at approximately 3.5 km flight distance (measured from the centres of the modern towns). The excavation was only partial but revealed some elements of prehistoric occupation in the area. Two roads have been uncovered in the vicinity of the cemetery, but their function is as of yet undetermined (San Juan *et al.*, 2012:86). No settlement or other structures have been found in association with the cemetery, but their presence cannot be excluded, as once again, the investigated area is quite small. The funerary usage of the site has been radiocarbon dated to the ninth-tenth centuries, making this burial ground contemporary to the one in Thaon (San Juan *et al.*, 2012:86).

The thirteen burials are all in pleine terre with the exception of a cist grave in which was placed the only juvenile found at the site (San Juan *et al.*, 2012, 2013). The pleine terre were dug in the very rocky and hard substratum, with a slight step or *banquette* on which stone slabs were placed to form a cover (San Juan *et al.*, 2012:85). A réduction was found on top of these covers.

All of the skeletons are in a near perfect preservation state. Unfortunately, they are still awaiting osteological study, thus only the general age groups could be

determined, with thirteen adults and one juvenile. These very good conditions did allow for an archaeothanatological study leading to the identification of potential soft wrapping and pillows.

Soft wrapping?	Pillow?	**Total**
3	3	**6**

Table 23: Grave-goods and other artefacts -Basly

B) Falaise

The cemetery at Falaise (Calvados) was discovered in the lieu-dit Vâton. The burial ground was found in direct proximity to a Roman mausoleum, possibly still visible as a ruin and earth-mound when the first graves were dug in the course of the seventh century (Hincker *et al.*, 2010:56; Hincker, 2012:159). The layout of the graves south of this structure may also indicate the presence of another building used as a focus for the cemetery (fig.17, vol.2). Whilst the area has been fully excavated, it is possible that the cemetery was originally larger, as important earthworks in the medieval period might have destroyed part of the burial ground (Hincker *et al.*, 2010:56).

Fifty-four graves were excavated and appear to represent the totality of the surviving cemetery.

Pleine terre	Pleine terre?	Coffrage	Wooden container?	?	**Total**
6	1	3	33	11	**54**

Table 24: Grave types - Falaise

The 51 individuals for whom information was available are mainly of unknown sex and age. The individuals placed in réduction are not documented in the report.

	Child	Adult	Mature	**Total**
Males	0	0	2	**2**
Females	0	2	0	**2**
Females?	0	0	1	**1**
Unsexed	3	40	3	**46**
Total	**3**	**42**	**6**	**51**

Table 25: Population - Falaise

Graves-goods were found in fifteen inhumations, making this site the one with the most furnished graves of the French sample. An adult individual was buried with a knife, and a scramasaxe was found in the graves of a mature subject, both of unknown sex.

Soft wrapping	Soft wrapping?	Clothing item	Weapon	Other metallic elements
6	1	23	2	2
Total: 34				

Table 26: Grave-goods and other artefacts - Falaise

C) <u>Giberville – Delle de derrière l'Eglise</u>

For this thesis, the cemetery considered at Giberville (Calvados) is the one excavated in 2008 at the "Delle de derrière l'Eglise" (Carpentier, 2008). The other burial grounds known in this town, at La Matray and Saint-Martin, are not

considered here despite their dating to the early medieval and medieval periods (Pilet *et al.,* 1990:18, 42, 67). This choice was made for chronological reasons, La Matray being dated to the fifth to seventh century and Saint-Marti to the seventh to fourteenth century, and for a lack of access to precise grave catalogue. It is however essential to note that the Delle de derrière L'Eglise site probably represent an isolated group of burial attached to the Saint-Martin cemetery (Carpentier, 2008:15, 24). Situate directly south of it, the graves are to be linked to same settlement and church as the larger cemetery (Carpentier, 2008:40-41).

Pleine terre	Cist	Coffin	Undetermined	**Total**
4	3	1	1	**9**

Table 27: Grave types - Giberville

Eight graves and one possible grave were recorded at the site. This last pit was found empty, raising the question of its function, but the limestone placed on its surface, both covering the pit and marking its location, seems to indicate a funerary function.

	Child	Adolescent	Subadult	Adult	**Total**
Males	0	1	0	1	**2**
Males?	0	0	1	0	**1**
Females	0	1	1	0	**2**
Unsexed	1	0	0	2	**3**
Total	**1**	**2**	**2**	**3**	**8**

Table 28: Population - Giberville

Elements were found in association with the bodies with four possible pillows and four burials in which the use of a shroud or other soft wrapping is suspected, including two possible clothed burials identified through the potential presence of belts.

Soft wrapping?	Pillow?	Clothing item	**Total**
3	3	1	**7**

Table 29: Grave-goods and other artefacts - Giberville

D) Saint-Evroult-Notre-Dame-du-Bois

The first coenobitic community probably established at Saint-Evroult-Notre-Dame-du-Bois (Orne) in the course of the seventh century, the monastery then developing to become a major centre by the eleventh century (Vigot *et al.,* 2015:32). These early phases are however not well known the excavation undertaken up until 2017 focusing on the more recent levels. As a result, most of the lower levels of the cemetery have not yet been reached, but some of the graves recently excavated were radiocarbon dated to the second half of the seventh to early eight century (Vigot *et al.,* 2015:61).

At present, twenty-four graves belonging to the period of study have been recorded (Vigot *et al*., 2015, 2016). Of these twenty-four inhumations, eleven have not been excavated. Little information was available on the nature of the grave, both due to the very poor preservation of the structures and human remains and to the non-excavation of some of the burials. The types of grave recorded in the database correspond to interpretation given by the excavators based on the shape of the grave pit, and, when undertaken, on the archaeothanatological analysis of the skeletons. Two graves have been recorded as being one of three container types, testifying to the difficulty of interpretations. Twelve individuals could be characterised.

Pleine terre	Pleine terre?	Wooden container?	?	**Total**
3	1	5	15	**24**

Table 30: Grave types - Saint-Evroult-Notre-Dame-du-Bois

	Juvenile	Subadult	Adult	Mature	?	**Total**
Males	0	0	2	1	0	**3**
Females?	0	0	0	1	0	**1**
Unsexed	4	1	1	0	2	**8**
Total	**4**	**1**	**3**	**2**	**2**	**12**

Table 31: Population - Saint-Evroult-Notre-Dame-du-Bois

A small bronze fragment was discovered in the pelvic area of one of the individuals. This object could be related to the presence of a shroud or other soft wrapping.

Soft wrapping?	Pillow?	Other metallic elements	**Total**
5	2	1	**8**

Table 32: Grave-goods and other artefacts - Saint-Evroult-Notre-Dame-du-Bois

E) Thaon

The first attested settlement of Thaon (Calvados) was dated to the second century AD (Chapelain de Seréville-Niel *et al.*, 2011:66), strategically placed near the ford on the River Mue. This phase also counts an oratory, a building later replaced in the course of the seventh century by a church and associated cemetery (Delahaye & Niel, 2009; Chapelain de Seréville-Niel *et al.*, 2011:66). The burial ground remained in use up until the eighteenth century (Chapelain de Seréville-Niel, 2013:10).

178 funerary structures were recorded for the period of study (fig.18, vol.2) (Niel & Delahaye, 2010; Chapelain de Seréville-Niel *et al.*, 2011, 2012). Since not all of the inhumations could be precisely dated, it is possible that some belong to a later period. The lack of differences in burial practices throughout this period is

particularly relevant and is explored in later chapters when considering issues of typochronology (*cf.* chapters 4 and 8). In addition to this dating issue, the characterisation of the types of graves was also often difficult due to a semantic problem. The majority of the inhumations are indeed recorded as "*tombe aménagées*", literally "fitted out graves" or "built graves". However it is not clear what is meant by this denomination: this term could define a wooden coffrage, or a cist, or a mixed coffrage using both stones and wood as hinted in a 2012 publication (Chapelain de Seréville-Niel & Delahayes, 2012:213-216), or a completely built structure in the ground. To this terminological issue needs to be added the complexity of some structures with, for instance, two depositions of coffins within sarcophagi and one grave recorded as a pleine terre occupying a sarcophagus.

Pleine terre	Cist	Sarcophagus	Coffrage	Coffin	?
4	8	33	17	2	11
Tombe aménagée	Stone container?	Wooden container?	Undetermined container?	Ossuary	
80	1	12	8	2	
Total: 178					

Table 33: Grave types - Thaon

Information was available for 166 individuals, including a very important number of immature individuals. Other than sex and age, very little information was given in the report on the buried population and on the possible elements associated with it. No artefacts or grave-goods were recorded in the report.

	Perinatal	Child	Adolescent	Juvenile	**Total**
Male	0	0	2	0	**2**
Female	0	0	1	0	**1**
Unsexed	47	41	4	2	**94**
Total	**47**	**41**	**7**	**6**	**97**

Table 34: Juvenile population - Thaon

	Subadult	Adult	Mature	?	**Total**
Males	2	19	0	0	**21**
Females	0	11	1	0	**12**
Females?	1	1	0	0	**2**
Unsexed	0	21	0	13	**34**
Total	**3**	**52**	**1**	**13**	**69**

Table 35: Adult population - Thaon

F) Vieux

Vieux (Calvados) was identified at *Aregenua*, the capital of the Viduscasse, a major Antique settlement following a probable prehistoric occupation in proximity to the River Guigne (Hincker & Marie, 2007a:5). The early medieval cemetery was discovered under the modern place Saint-Martin. This burial ground was probably associated to a church or other similar structure placed within the bounds of the Merovingian settlement (Hincker & Marie, 2007a:16, 32). The study focuses here on the 24 funerary structures uncovered at this location. It is however important to keep in mind that other burial grounds are also known in the vicinity of the early medieval settlement, both pre-dating and contemporary to the cemetery considered here. The excavation reports of these funerary areas could unfortunately not be consulted making their detailed study impossible.

Pleine terre	Cist	Stone container?	Wooden container?	Undetermined container	**Total**
11	2	4	1	6	**24**

Table 36: Grave types - Vieux

The overall poor preservation of the remains does not offer much information on the buried population. No grave-goods or other elements were found in association with the bodies.

	Perinatal	Child	Adult	?	**Total**
Female	0	0	1	0	**1**
Unsexed	1	3	3	11	**18**
Total	**1**	**3**	**4**	**11**	**19**

Table 37: Population - Vieux

IV) <u>Upper Normandy</u>

The Upper Normandy case studies represent the biggest sample in terms of graves and number of individuals. This imbalance is partly due to the site of Portejoie (see below), but also due to the generally bigger sizes of the cemeteries in this region.

A) <u>Aubevoye</u>

The site at Le Chemin Vert, Aubevoye (Eure) has a long occupation sequence. The first known structure appears to be three Bronze-Age ring-ditches including one barrow burial, next to which was built a villa in the Roman period (Guillier,

2013:201, 223). The cemetery, used between the seventh and tenth centuries (cal.), is organised in three groups placed in different parts of the villa: Cour Nord, Cour Sud-Ouest where the graves are in direct association with the barrow burial, and Cour d'Apparat (Guillier, 2013:201-208). A contemporary settlement is known at the site of La Chartreuse, a few hundred metres away from the cemetery. The smaller burial ground identified near this settlement is not included as part of the key-sites here but is considered in later chapters under the spatial/locational theme (*cf.* chapter 4). 74 graves were recorded for the three areas of inhumation of the Chemin Vert site.

Pleine terre	Cist	Stone container?	Wooden container?	Undetermined container	?	**Total**
7	5	1	44	5	12	**74**

Table 38: Grave types - Aubevoye

Information was available for 83 individuals. The higher number of individuals than of graves is explained by the presence at the site of multiple burials and réductions, sometimes found in the backfill of the graves. The proportion of juveniles is quite important, and they appear to have been found in all three groups. A more detailed analysis of the distribution of this population over the three burial areas is undertaken in the following chapter (*cf.* chapter 4).

	Perinatal	Infant	Child	Adolescent	**Total**
Males	0	0	0	1	**1**
Females	0	0	0	1	**1**
Unsexed	4	4	19	2	**29**
Total	**4**	**4**	**19**	**4**	**31**

Table 39: Juvenile population - Aubevoye

	Subadult	Adult	Mature	?	**Total**
Males	3	4	11	1	**19**
Males?	0	1	0	0	**1**
Females	1	7	9	1	**18**
Females?	0	0	3	1	**4**
Unsexed	1	7	1	1	**10**
Total	**6**	**18**	**24**	**4**	**52**

Table 40: Adult population - Aubevoye

Potential grave-goods have been found in four graves. Some of the individuals might also have been buried in clothes/soft wrappings.

Soft wrapping?	Pillow?	Clothing item	Weapon	Other metallic elements	Other organic elements
42	11	3	1	1	3
Total: 61					

Table 41: Grave-goods and other artefacts - Aubevoye

B) Honguemare-Guénouville, Le Moulin Vaquet

The settlement of Honguermare-Guénouville (Eure) knows its apogee during the early medieval period, with different zones of activity and an extensive cemetery (Deshayes, 2011:49). The burial ground was placed in an enclosure, close to the settlement but not merging with it (Honoré, 2007:37; Deshayes, 2011:89). The graves appear to have been associated with a religious structure placed in the center of the burial area (Deshayes, 2011:135). The cemetery characterised by a very high number of multiple burials, with 157 graves for a minimum of number of individuals of 210. The “caveau” or funerary chamber was built out of wood, planks placed on the sites and bottom of the pit (Deshayes, 2011:101-102). Unfortunately,

no further information was offered on the construction of this structure, which was only partially excavated.

Pleine terre	Pleine terre?	Cist	Coffrage	Wooden container?	Caveau	?	**Total**
28	1	1	26	41	1	59	**157**

Table 42: Grave types - Honguemare-Guénouville

None of the individuals could be sexed and the ages indicated in the report correspond to very general age groups with children - recorded here as juveniles as they might have included perinatal and infants -, and adults, probably also including sub-adults and mature individuals.

	Juvenile	Adult	?	**Total**
Unsexed	33	17	160	**210**

Table 43: Population - Honguemare-Génouville

Grave-goods could not be attributed to specific individuals and were discovered in the backfill of several multiple burials. The denier of Louis the Pious (*terminus post quem:* 820AD) is the only coin found at the site and was discovered during the first manual superficial excavation of 2009 (Deshayes, 2011:111). These elements allowed for the dating of the cemetery to the seventh to ninth century (Deshayes, 2011:116).

Clothing item	Jewellery	Weapon	Pottery	Coin	Other metallic elements
3	2	1	1	1	1
Total: 9					

Table 44: Grave-goods and other artefacts - Honguemare-Guénouville

C) Isneauville

The cemetery of Isneauville (Seine-Maritime) was closely associated to a Roman building. The inhumations, radiocarbon dated to the sixth to tenth century (Adrian et al., 2011:101, 103), are placed around the vestiges, respecting its ruined walls and not encroaching upon the main four rooms (fig.19, vol.2) (Adrian et al. 2011:103-104). No traces of a settlement contemporary to the cemetery could be found in the direct vicinity of the burial ground (Adrian et al., 2011:107). 53 graves and a layer of erratic bones have been recorded. No precise information was available on this layer.

Pleine terre	Pleine terre?	Coffrage	Wooden container?	?	**Total**
16	7	19	5	6	**53**

Table 45: Grave type - Isneauville

Information was available for fifty-two individuals, only two of which could be fully characterised: a male adult and a possible male adult. A small pin or spoon in bronze and one agrafe a double crochet[6] have been found in two separated graves, the latter found on the thorax. One possible shroud and one possible soft wrapping were also identified in two other graves. No other elements were found in association with the bodies.

	Child	Adolescent	Juvenile	Subadult	Adult	?	**Total**
Males	0	0	0	0	1	0	**1**
Males?	0	0	0	0	1	0	**1**
Unsexed	12	1	3	1	25	8	**50**
Total	**12**	**1**	**3**	**1**	**27**	**8**	**52**

Table 46: Population - Isneauville

[6] Pin with double hook - translated by Troadec, S.

D) Notre-Dame-de-Bondeville

The cemetery of Notre-Dame-de-Bondeville (Seine-Maritime) is directly linked to the church, with graves found both outside and inside the apse (fig.20, vol.2) (Langlois, 2001:8). As only the eastern end of the church was excavated, the burial ground and its immediate context is limited, but the data available for the graves that were uncovered is particularly interesting (Langlois, 2001:19). Similarly to Honguemare-Guénouville, the cemetery counts an important amount of multiple burials with 41 graves for at least 76 individuals, some of them placed in réduction whilst others were deposited on top of the previous occupant(s) (Langlois, 2001:39-40). All were dated to the seventh century (Langlois, 2001:47).

Pleine terre	Sarcophagus	Coffrage	Wooden container?	?	**Total**
4	14	17	5	1	**41**

Table 47: Grave types - Notre-Dame-de-Bondeville

Osteological studies were available for 76 individuals, with a strong emphasis on pathologies and trauma (*cf.* chapter 4). Only three objects were discovered in two different graves an agrafe a double crochet and another agrafe with a pin and spatula. No shrouds or pillows were mentioned in the report.

	Child	Adult	**Total**
Males	0	22	**22**
Males?	0	14	**14**
Females	0	14	**14**
Females?	0	8	**8**
Unsexed	8	10	**18**
Total	**8**	**68**	**76**

Table 48: Population - Notre-Dame-de-Bondeville

E) Portejoie

Portejoie (Eure), is the biggest site of the sample and has a complex funerary sequence (fig.21, vol.2). The first graves are implanted next to prehistoric long-barrows in the seventh century (fig.22, vol.2) (Carré, 1996:155-156). This small cemetery is then abandoned in the eighth century, and a new burial ground appeared around the newly built oratory (*ibid*). The church that later developed in the same location become the main focus for burials until the abandonment of the settlement in the fourteenth century (Carré, 1996:162). Throughout this period, the cemetery is in turn outside and integrated to the settlement space, testifying to changing spatial relationship between living and funerary areas (*cf.* chapter 4).

This very long period of occupation induced a very densely packed burial area with several layers of graves placed one on top of the other, making precise dating of the burial often very difficult (fig.21, vol.2). The graves recorded in the database are those thought to belong to the period of study, but contamination of the database with later graves cannot unfortunately be avoided. 1317 graves were registered for the period of study. The characterisation of the grave types was often difficult, the report only mentioning the nature of the decomposition space with limited additional information. Discrepancies were also noticed from one excavation report to the other. Therefore, the numbers given here for the different types of grave found at the site need to be taken extremely carefully. The identification of cist-graves is based on an analysis of the drawings of the burials, rather than on the information offered in the grave catalogue.

Pleine terre	Cist	Sarcophagus	Coffrage	Coffin
416	2	38	9	45
Pleine terre?	Stone container?	Wooden container?	Undetermined container	?
251	3	100	17	436
Total: 1317				

Table 49: Grave types - Portejoie

Population data was less problematic, and information could be gathered for 1300 individuals.

	Perinatal	Perinatal?	Infant	Child	Adolescent	**Total**
Males	0	0	0	0	5	**5**
Males?	0	0	0	0	6	**6**
Females	0	0	0	0	4	**4**
Females?	0	0	0	1	2	**3**
Unsexed	91	1	26	208	62	**387**
Total	**91**	**1**	**26**	**209**	**79**	**406**

Table 50: Juvenile population - Portejoie

	Subadult	Adult	Adult?	Mature	?	**Total**
Males	15	290	0	11	0	**316**
Males?	5	35	0	3	0	**43**
Females	12	284	0	14	0	**310**
Females?	3	23	0	0	0	**26**
Unsexed	3	172	1	3	20	**199**
Total	**38**	**804**	**1**	**31**	**20**	**894**

Table 51: Adult population - Portejoie

Grave-goods and other artefacts were found or suspected in 116 graves. Eight graves contained more than one element, with rings, pottery buckles and other clothing items or jewellery, and three of them containing a knife, a scramasaxe and a belt buckle.

Soft wrapping?	Pillow	Pillow?	Clothing item	Jewellery
36	2	23	24	7
Weapon	Pottery	Other metallic elements	Other organic elements	
6	15	21	4	
Total: 138				

Table 52: Grave-goods and other artefacts - Portejoie

F) Romilly-sur-Andelle

Romilly-sur-Andelle had a similarly large cemetery used between the sixth and mid-eleventh century directly associated with a church (fig.23, vol.2) (Colleter *et al.*, 2014:143). As for Portejoie, the relationship between the settlement and the funerary area appears to have changed multiple times during the occupation of the site (*cf.* chapter 4).

The study of the site was once again complicated by the nature of the records. Information was indeed obtained from both excavation reports published in 2005 and 2009, and an article published in 2014 (Luka, 2005; Jouneau & Guillon, 2009; Colleter *et al*., 2014). The latter contained far more information on the cemetery than the reports, but lacked a precise grave catalogue. The reports provided information on 91 graves.

Pleine terre	Pleine terre?	Stone container?	Coffrage	Wooden container?	?	**Total**
15	61	3	2	5	5	**91**

Table 53: Grave types - Romilly-sur-Andelle (report)

This general picture changes when considering the 2014 article. With 395 graves recorded for the first burial phase (sixth to eighth century) and 325 attributed to the second phase (eighth to mi-eleventh century), the 2014 article records wooden containers, undetermined containers, pleine terre burials, sarcophagi and plastered grave pits (Colleter et al., 2014:158). The latter are mainly represented in the first phase, whilst nearly absent from the second one. Conversely the number of pleine terre burials appears to increase significantly in the second period (Colleter et al. 2014:158). The following analysis uses the information presented in the report (see above) to draw regional profiles, and takes into account the data and observations made in the article in the interpretation.

Population profiles were more clearly offered in the 2014 article (Colleter et al, 2014:149-155), and are therefore the data chosen for the rest of the study.

Phase 1	Juvenile	Adult	?	**Total**
Males	0	75	0	**75**
Females	0	102	0	**102**
Unsexed	121	64	4	**189**
Total	**121**	**241**	**4**	**366**

Table 54: Population phase 1 - Romilly-sur-Andelle

Phase 2	Juvenile	Adult	?	**Total**
Males	0	71	0	**71**
Females	0	64	0	**64**
Unsexed	171	14	5	**190**
Total	**171**	**149**	**5**	**325**

Table 55: Population phase 2 - Romilly-sur-Andelle

The excavation report accounts for 24 grave-good and other artefacts (see table below). This number needs to be complemented by the 188 graves containing one or more artefacts (Colleter et al., 2014:159). These objects are divided in five categories: vases, belt-buckles and other clothing items, tools and keys, jewellery, weaponry, and finally suspension elements like chatelaines, chains and rings (Colleter et al., 2014:160-161). The weapons are the only element for which a detailed record is available, as they appear to be associated with a specific population of adult or sub-adult individuals and with four females on five sexed individuals (Colleter et al., 2014:161) (*cf.* chapter 4).

Soft wrapping?	Pillow?	Clothing item	**Total**
10	7	7	**24**

Table 56: Grave-goods and other artefacts - Romilly-sur-Andelle

Chapter 4: Inter-regional comparison and intra-regional complexities – Study of the French sample

Following the quantitative data presentation of the previous chapter, the focus is here placed on a detailed analysis and interpretation of the French sample, comparing data on an inter-regional level and highlighting the specificities and complexities found at sites within a same region. The emphasis is thereafter placed on the differences and similarities in funerary rites, allowing for the detection of shared practices and communal specificities in the treatment of the dead. The inter-regional analysis is organised around the main themes presented in chapter 1: the environment of the burial ground; the layout of the cemetery, the study of the internal organisation of the grave; and overall interpretation of the buried populations. Palaeopathological data is used when appropriate to illustrate, support and expand the interpretation. They are, however, not presented in their entirety due to the scale of the task, but details for each individual are available on request.

I) Burial grounds in their natural and man-built environments

This section aims to provide an understanding of the relationship between the graves and their immediate environment, considering the different types of associations with natural and/or man-made features and their influence on the organisation of the burial ground. Yet, it is important to remember that the majority of the sites have not been fully excavated, implying partially known contexts, with settlement or built foci sometimes suspected but not attested due to the limited excavation areas.

A) Natural features

As observed in the previous chapter, the cemeteries of the French sample are found in association with different types of structures, sometimes contemporary, sometimes pre-dating the installation of the funerary area by several centuries; and/or linked to natural features acting as focal points in the landscape. Proximity to waterways, or to the sea, appears to be the most common association in this sample (map 2, vol.2). Ambon (Brit.), Plomeur (Brit.) and Ladevennec (Brit.) are all placed in locations highly visible from both land and sailing routes (maps 1, 4, 5, vol.2), and for the latter, ideal for coenobitic life. Similarly, the first occupation at La Plaine-sur-Mer (LA) was probably placed closer to the sandy coastlines than the modern village (Tessier, 1970:4). At Plomeur, this proximity to the beach is especially relevant when considering the whale bones used as grave lining, an aspect developed later on in this study (see III below). All of the other sites of the sample are found near freshwater with the only exception of Balsy (LN). Honguemare-Guénouville (UN) appears slightly further away from the Seine than the other cemeteries of Upper Normandy, but with only 3km separating it from the River (Deshayes *et al.,* 2011:43), some level of association with it can be considered. At Rezé (LA), if the Seil has disappeared today, the significant port activity of the Roman period and written evidence of its presence up until the middle of the twentieth century testify to its close association with the funerary area (Guitton *et al.*, 2014:18). A similar situation is observed at Isneauville (UN), where the hydromorphic substratum hints at a marshy landscape, possibly linked to a waterway (Adrian *et al.,* 2011:43).

The proximity between burial grounds and waterways needs of course to be considered in parallel to the presence of settlements in association with the cemeteries, providing access to water to the inhabitants, but also conveying a certain control over the landscape. This is particularly visible at Visseiche (Brit.) where the settlement appears to be linked to the management of the river crossing

(Le Boulanger, 2004:6). This control could also be exerted over major communication axes, generally created during the Roman period, as at Corseul (Brit.) or Bréal-sous-Vitré (Brit.), where the crossing of two major axes, linking Avranche to Anger and Vitré to Laval, gave the settlement, and its associated cemetery, a strategic location (Fichet de Clairefontaine, 1985:52-53, Le Boulanger, 2005:37, 40). Furthermore, the graveyard of Bréal-sous-Vitré is found on a hilltop, implying high visibility and impact over the landscape. At Basly (LN), the natural rocky spur is likewise used, the cemetery dominating the landscape and becoming a focal point in the horizon.

Control over the landscape can also be manifested through association with woodlands linked to elite practices such as hunting, as witnessed in the forest near Honguamare-Guénouville (UN) (Honoré, 2007:10). The monasteries of Landevennec and Saint-Evroult-Notre-Dame-du-Bois (LN) were also established in wooded areas, a slightly remote location particularly suitable for coenobitic communities. The proximity of forests is also particularly interesting when considering the nature of burial containers, with a close and readily available material and control over this resource (see below III.A.2). The placement of cemeteries in association with specific natural features thus appears to go beyond simple topographical influence, hinting at the use of natural elements as focal points, conveying if not control over an area, a strong presence in the landscape for both cemeteries and settlements.

B) Prehistoric features

Association with anthropogenic features is where differences start to appear between the regions. During the early medieval period, it is common to find in northern France cemeteries associated with older structures, reusing these elements already marking the landscape as foci for their spatial development (Guigon, 1994:10, 13-14; Billard *et al.,* 1996; Le Maho, 2004). In the sample,

seventeen sites were found in direct association with a building, feature or settlements pre-dating the creation of the burial ground. Of these, four are linked to prehistoric features: Aubevoye (UN), Basly (LN), Portejoie (UN) and possibly Romilly-sur-Andelle (UN). The graves excavated at Basly were found close to a fortified enclosure dated to the Bronze Age (San Juan *et al.,* 2012:55, 72). Another structure was uncovered in close proximity to the cemetery, the graves potentially associated with it, but its dating is too uncertain to allow the formulation of any hypothesis as for the nature of their relationship. The association at Romilly-sur-Andelle is also difficult to characterise: a circular ditch, possibly prehistoric (Jouneau & Guillon, 2009:42), might have attracted burials at the beginning of the medieval period, but the relationship between the graves and this possible Bronze-Age tomb is not documented enough to draw conclusions here. Aubevoye and Portejoie offer different types of associations. The site of Portejoie is well known in French archaeology for its very long funerary occupation, starting in the seventh century with three burial areas, two of which appear to have been focusing on a Neolithic burial, slightly encroaching on the structure (fig.21 & 22, vol.2) (Carré, 1996: 155). The two other graveyards were found in proximity to the settlement for one, and for the other, potentially within the inhabited space (Carré, 1996:155-156). Later, the funerary usage of the sites changes, with the abandonment of two of these graveyards in favour of a unique one organised around a chapel (see below I.D). Aubevoye "Le Chemin Vert" presents yet another profile with three inhumations areas organised around a Roman villa, itself associated with Bronze Age barrow burials (Guillier, 2013:40, 201). Two of the early medieval burial groups are organised around two separated barrow burials, whilst the third group appears in the villa yard or Cour d'Apparat, away from the prehistoric features. Outside of Normandy, direct association between prehistoric features and early medieval cemeteries does not appear in the sample. Several sites in Loire-Atlantique and Brittany did offer evidence for prehistoric occupation, with for example the

possible reuse of an Iron Age stele as a cross at Plomeur (Brit.) (Giot & Monnier, 1973:8), but without clear intentional reuse of a feature as a burial focus.

C) Roman features

In this sample, association with Roman structures is far more common. Most of the sites were found in proximity to former Roman settlements, and in the case of Corseul (Brit.), Rezé (LA) and to some extent Visseiche (Brit.), these earlier communities are more researched than the succeeding early medieval occupations and funerary areas (Fichet de Clairefontaine, 1985:107; Le Boulanger, 2004:6; Guitton *et al.,* 2014:18-24). In Brittany, the majority of the links with this Antique past are visible in the location of the cemetery rather than in the reuse of a feature as a burial focus. Ambon is the exception, with a church built on top of what has been interpreted as a possible Roman mausoleum (André & Triste, 1988:30-31). Corseul (Brit.) is more difficult to interpret. Two graves were indeed found cutting an earlier structure, raising the question of the conscious reuse of what was probably already a ruined, potentially Roman, building (fig.11, vol.2) (Fichet de Clairefontaine, 1985:53, 108). The Loire-Atlantique sites show similar associations to those observed in the Breton cases-studies. La-Plaine-sur-Mer provides an example akin to Visseiche (Brit.) and Corseul, with artefacts found near the cemetery attesting a Roman occupation in the vicinity of the early medieval cemetery. Despite its "*paléo-chrétien*" dating, the lack of a precise chronology for the structure found in association with the grave does not allow the characterisation of this cemetery as associated with a Roman feature. Rezé Saint-Lupien (LA) can also be compared to this type of occupation with however one major difference. The site is known to have been a major port during Antiquity, and if the nature of the Roman occupation is quite well known, the early medieval settlement has yet to be found (Guitton *et al.,* 2014:24). Yet, contrary to the other sites of Loire-Atlantique and Brittany presented above, the funerary use of the site

appears to have started very early in the history of the site and carried on into the early Middle Ages, with radiocarbon dates ranging from the third/fourth century up to the eleventh/twelfth century (Guitton *et al.,* 2016: 117,170,179). If the settlement activity appears to have moved or changed in nature over time, these dates suggest that the usage of the burial ground carried on for a very long period, with the construction of a chapel between the seventh and tenth century (Guitton *et al.,* 2014:24) as the only apparent major architectural manifestation of the early medieval period.

With the exception of Thaon (UN) where the church took the place of a second century Roman mausoleum (Delahaye & Niel, 2009:1; Chapelain de Séreville-Niel, 2013:20), the Norman sample offers a different type of association with Antiquity. Aubevoye (LN) was already presented in terms of reuse of prehistoric features as burial foci, but the presence of the Roman villa was also certainly a factor in the installation of the funerary area. The burials appear to have been placed outside of the building itself, the three groups organised in three yards around the building (Guillier*,* 2013:207). Only one grave in the Cour Nord and the burials of the Cour d'Apparat were found on top of the Roman masonry or intruding in the space defined by the earlier building. At Isneauville (UN), the graveyard is also organised around a Roman structure (fig.19, vol.2). This building was at least partially ruined, as testified by the digging of two graves in its foundations and by the presence of gravel in the backfill of a few inhumations, but the main room was strictly respected, with no early medieval feature encroaching upon it (Adrian *et al.,* 2011:103). The alignment of the graves and their orientation also seem to define clear boundaries, possibly indicating the presence of a physical element enclosing the burial ground (*ibid*). At Falaise (LN), the association of the early medieval graves with the high-status second century Roman mausoleum is more difficult to characterise as the visibility of the ruined, or partially ruined structure, is debatable (fig.17, vol.2) (Hincker *et al.*, 2010:56; Hincker *et al*., 2012:159, 161). It is however worth considering that the function of the area might

have survived the decrepitude of the building, the cremations taking place between the construction of the last mausoleum room in the third century, and the installation of the cemetery in the seventh century testifying to a possible continuous funerary usage (Hincker *et al.*, 2012:158-159). Furthermore, the presence of an early medieval grave on top of the ram burial discovered in the initial mausoleum, reusing the skull of the animal as packing material in the construction of the coffrage (Hincker *et al.*, 2008:50), can be considered as evidence of visibility of the ruins, and, possibly, of the Roman graves. It is also important to note the use of another focus to the south of this area, the layout of the grave leaving an empty rectangular area, potentially representing a building of undetermined nature (fig.17, vol.2) (Hincker *et al.*, 2008:57).

Association with a Roman structure thus appears common to all regions, but is manifested in different ways: in Brittany, the cemeteries and their settlements are placed close to former Roman occupations with little clear reuse of the buildings, whilst in Normandy, where relationships between Antique features and early medieval cemeteries has been the object of several studies (Le Maho, 1994, 2004; Delacampagne & Hincker, 2004), the association is more direct. In Loire-Atlantique, the small size of the sample does not allow many conclusions to be drawn, but the potential continuous use of Rezé as a funerary area from the third century right through the medieval period is remarkable.

D) <u>Association with contemporary features</u>

The third and last category of association addressed here is with contemporaneous features. Their presence in close association with cemeteries often leads to their identification as shrines, funerary chapels or churches. Additionally, when no such structures could be found in the immediate vicinity of the burial grounds, it is generally accepted that the initial focus lies under the current church for sites still occupied today, as observed in Ambon (Brit.) and

Thaon (LN) (see above), or that it is yet to discover beyond the limits of the excavated area, as suspected at Plomeur (Brit.) (Giot & Monnier, 1975:13). It is conceivable that at Isneauville (UN), the Roman building was seen and used as a religious focus for the burial area. However, it is not possible to determine if this was in the context of Christianity or if the religious allegiance of the communities using these spaces was rooted in other traditions (Adrian, 2011:107). A similar issue is raised at Falaise (LN) (fig.17, vol.2), where the rectangular empty space mentioned earlier could be negative left by a structure deliberately placed to defy the pagan ruins, an interpretation that cannot however be proven by the means of archaeology (Hincker *et al.*, 2008:57).

The most obvious, and unquestionable, association with Christian buildings are the monasteries of Landevennec (Brit.) and Saint-Evroult-Notre-Dame-du-Bois (LN). If the development of the former is well known (Bardel & Perennec 2004), the study of the foundation and growth of the latter is still in progress (*cf.* chapter 3). The cemeteries at Notre-Dame-de-Bondeville (UN) and Romilly-sur-Andelle (UN) have also been considered as potentially linked to monastic or parochial occupations (Carré, 2011:131). For Romilly-sur-Andelle, the extension of the excavated area and more recent publications (Colleter *et al.*, 2014; Jouneau *et al.,* 2015) are more in favour of a parochial interpretation, which concurs with the population data (see below IV). The interpretation for Notre-Dame-de-Bondeville is more complex, first due to the very small area excavated and second due to the unknown relationship between the church and the parish church found in its immediate vicinity (fig.20, vol.2) (Langlois, 2001:19,69). Indeed, if their occupation was contemporaneous, Notre-Dame-de-Bondeville could be interpreted as an abbey with two churches, an argument supported by the presence of fragments of stained-glass windows in the dark earth in which the graves and church's foundations were dug (Langlois, 2001:69; Langlois, 2009). However, several elements are in opposition to this interpretation. First, the chronological relationship between the two churches remains unknown and as such cannot be

used as the main argument here. Then, the faunal remains and artefacts found in the dark earth, appear more consistent with an aristocratic occupation than with a monastic one (Cammas, *et al.*, 2015; Langlois & Adrian, 2004:107; Clavel & Yvinec, 2010:80). Finally, the profile of the buried population seems closer to that of an aristocratic group than to a coenobitic one (see below IV.A).

The ambiguity embodied by Romilly-sur-Andelle and Notre-Dame-de-Bondeville is representative of this period of change during which Christianity is still spreading and developing, sometimes coexisting with pagan beliefs and practices (Effros, 2002:36, 205; Treffort, 2010:217). This aspect is particularly relevant in the study of the location of the cemeteries, even more so as the Church does not seem to take interest in burial practices before the eleventh century (Treffort, 1996a:12; Zadora-Rio, 2003:2, Treffort, 2010:217, Fleming 2011:148). These considerations also bring out the issue of parish cemeteries in France, their nature and role in the funerary landscape of the early medieval period. As stated by Cécile Treffort in 2010, parish cemeteries, defined as large, organised cemeteries focusing around a religious building, are already appearing during the seventh century (Treffort, 2010:216-217). This definition can however be a problem when considering some of the sites of the present sample. Taking the example of Upper Normandy, the major cemetery at Portejoie (UN) and the slightly smaller, but still sizable burial ground of Romilly-sur-Andelle (UN), both lie within a c.10km radius of each other and are used simultaneously between the seventh and eleventh centuries, highlighting the issue of the catchment area of the buried population and of the identification of parochial structures simply on the basis of number of individuals and presence of a church. Similarly, in Lower Normandy, the graves found at Basly (LN) are contemporary to the major cemetery of churchyard of Thaon (LN), less than three kilometres away. This chronological concurrence and spatial proximity can be placed in the context of the spread of Christianity (San Juan *et al.,* 2012:86), the same community or two separated settlements each expressing different religious affiliations. Isneauville (UN), despite its smaller size,

also relates to this situation as other contemporaneous cemeteries have been found in its direct vicinity (Adrian *et al.,* 2011:107, 111), with no explanation so far for their usage or potential differences. Aubevoye (UN) can finally be added to this list, the major cemetery of Le Chemin Vert being contemporary to the isolated burials of La Chatreuse, found in the early medieval settlement (Ravon, 2002:9) (see below I.E). This ambiguity does not appear in the Brittany sample, which, if not a false image due to the sample, could convey a difference in the management of the dead, or in the patterns of occupation and spread of population in the early Middle Age.

E) Burial areas and their related settlements

The increasing influence of the parochial system in these regions potentially from the seventh to the ninth century, and the growing importance of burial around a church are also accompanied by a change in the perception of the funerary space. Whilst during Antiquity the dead were placed outside of the inhabited areas, the early Middle Ages sees the slow movement of the burial grounds towards the settlement space, gradually merging until the world of the dead and that of the living become one (James, 1982:46; Treffort, 1996b:56, 2010:217). In Brittany, only Visseiche, Bréal-sous-Vitré (Brit.) and possibly Ambon (Brit.) have offered some information on the contemporary inhabited areas. The burial areas at Visseiche (Brit.) appear to have been linked to a poly-focal settlement, necropolis 1 probably attached to a church now lying under the modern building, whilst necropolis 2 was found further south with no known focus (Le Boulanger, 2004:6) but within sight distance of the church. The discovery of ditches in 1985 and during the more recent excavations of the early 2000s, indicates that the burial space and the possible multiple inhabited areas were close to each other, but nonetheless clearly and intentionally separated from one another (Le Boulanger, 2004:9, 43). At Ambon (Brit.) and Bréal-sous-Vitré, the

relationship between the cemeteries and the inhabited spaces is difficult to determine due to the meagre information available on the early medieval settlements. Inhumation at Bréal-sous-Vitré probably occurred around a chapel, abandoned in the course of the eleventh century in favour of the new parish church and funerary space clearly defined by an enclosure (Le Boulanger, 2005:47, 93). Between the late fifth- to the eleventh century, it is possible that the graves and funerary chapel were in contact with the settlement, but the partial excavation of the cemeteries, with only the southern limit identified, makes the characterisation of the dynamics between the two spaces difficult, a task further complicated by the very small movement of the church, cemetery and probable village. Ambon presents a similar issue with the early medieval and later churches built on top of a Roman mausoleum (André & Triste, 1988:30). The relationship between the cemetery and the settlement space before the ninth century is consequently uncertain, the limited data obtained in the excavation not allowing the detection of the possible slight movements of settlement space around one religious focus over several centuries. In the Loire-Atlantique case studies, at least two sites could follow the same pattern. At Vue and Saint-Jean-de-Corcouë, the walls of the current churches and chapels show shelly limestone probably taken from early medieval sarcophagi (Meslat, 1964; Tessier, 1970:6), a practice also observed at Bréal-sous-Vitré (Brit.) (Le Boulanger, 2005:36), whilst other preserved sarcophagi were found under the foundation of the church (Tessier, 1970:1). Thaon (LN) can also be grouped with those sites, for if the graveyard is enclosed by earth-banks in the medieval period (Chapelin de Séreville-Niel, 2013:20), the relationship between settlement and burial ground is not known for the early Middle Ages.

The Norman sites for which occupation was found give a very similar image to the probable Breton poly-focal settlements. For Honguemare-Guénouville (UN), the cemetery was placed close to one pole of the settlement but still clearly separated from the structures by a ditch (Honoré, 2007:37, Deshayes, 2011:51-52, 89). Living and dead were co-existing, but the funerary area was still defined by a

physical limit, preventing complete merging of the two types of occupation. Vieux appears to be very similar with at least two burial grounds in use in Late Antiquity, the dead then gathering around the single focus of Saint-Martin church in the course of the seventh and eighth century (Hincker & Marie, 2007a: 31), with only a ditch separating the settlement space from the graveyard (Hincker & Marie, 2007b :8). Giberville (LN) may have developed in a similar way, but the dynamics between the small funerary area and the Saint-Martin churchyard is difficult to determine, even more so as the few graves considered here materialise the southern limit of the larger graveyard (Carpentier, 2008:30). Separation between the dead and the living seems quite clear at first sight when considering the cemetery of Aubevoye Le Chemin Vert (UN), as the contemporary settlement probably using this funerary area was found about 500m away at La Chartreuse (Ravon, 2002:1). However, isolated burials were recorded at La Chatreuse site (Riche & Ravon, 2007:9*),* reminding to a certain extent the situation of Thaon (LN) and Basly (LN), and highlighting once again the existence of contemporary burial grounds serving different individuals potentially from the same community.

The main cemetery of Portejoie (UN) offers a clearer example of change in this relationship with first multiple burial areas apparently serving a poly-focal settlement and, in the course of the eighth century, the movement of the settlement around the one of the inhumation spaces (fig.24, vol.2)(Carré, 1996:155-156). This movement has not been seen as linked to the construction of the church (Carré, 1996:162) but to the phenomenon described here of the merging of worlds in the early medieval period. The two elements are then separated again in the tenth century as the village moved to its current location (Carré, 1996.162). The situation at Romilly-sur-Andelle (UN) appears to be the exact reverse of Portejoie. In the first phases of the burial ground, the settlement was placed close to the cemetery but maintained some distance with it (Jouneau & Guillon, 2009:42,46). However, in the course of the ninth century through the eleventh, this separation disappears with the movement of the inhabited space

towards the possible church and its cemetery (Jouneau & Guillon**,** 2009:72), with graves cutting into storage structures and other features and *vice-versa* (Jouneau & Guillon**,** 2009:265). The precise relationship between these different elements would however need to be refined chronologically to allow more precise conclusions on the merging of space and the cohabitation of the dead and the living. The hypothesis of a rapid change in mortality causing the extension of the cemetery into the settlement space exposed in the excavation report (Jouneau & Guillon, 2009: 265) also needs to be considered.

More than a regional evolution, the relationship between cemetery and settlement spaces appears to depend on the communities, overall mirroring the development of Christianity and of the attitude of the Church in regards to the treatment of the dead, but showing important local variations in the speed and processes of these transformations. In the middle of the seventh century, the antique rule of separation of the two worlds seems to still be in effect, with the cemeteries placed outside of the settlements sometimes accompanied by a physical boundary. But through the late ninth- tenth century and into the eleventh century, the two spaces slowly merge to become one, later separating once again as at Portejoie (UN), or staying as the focus for the settlement until the present days, as is probably the case for Ambon (Brit.) and Thaon (LN). A more precise dating of both the structures and graves would allow a better understanding of the slight movements and alterations between them but the picture observed here does offer a good insight into the diversity of choices of cemetery location and in the complex spatial relationship with the dead between the middle of the seventh and the middle of the eleventh century.

II) Organisation of the burial areas

The association between burial grounds and natural or anthropogenic features thus appears to be diverse and related to different factors, showing both local and regional specificities, and broader chronological changes. To complete this study of the environment of the grave, it is now necessary to consider the organisation of these funerary areas. The layout of the cemetery and the relationship between the grave and their focus are hereafter analysed through the study of cemeteries plans alongside reflections on the issues of commemoration and respect for the dead in different contexts. Whenever possible the plans are available in the appendices. Unfortunately, the majority of them were accessed in excavation reports and cannot be reproduced here.

A) Association with pre-existing features

First it is important to remember that the cemeteries selected for this study are linked to different types of occupation, with funerary area usage varying from short periods to several centuries. The durability of certain sites, and the attraction exerted by others, influenced their layout on different levels. In order to facilitate the study of these variations, the analysis follows here the same order of presentation as the previous section, starting with sites associated with older structures to then move on to contemporaneous contexts.

The layout of the burials found in association with prehistoric features appears to be slightly different depending on the sites. Basly (UN) stands out once again, with the pleine terre burials all placed next to each other in orderly rows organized in five lines in the middle of the area delimited by the Bronze Age enclosure. None of the graves are overlapping with each other, and only one réduction was recorded for the site, the skeleton placed on top of the lid of grave 2204 (San Juan *et al.,* 2012:67-69). The placement of the graves at Portejoie (UN)

is mostly similar to what is observed at Basly, with neatly arranged rows in a west-east orientation, but also differs from it with some burials placed on a north-south axis that appear to be leaning against the Neolithic burials (fig.22, vol.2). Proximity to the burial focus seems to be sought after at the other two Portejoie cemeteries, with graves potentially invading the space of the prehistoric interments (figs.21 and 22, vol.2) (Carré, 1996:155-156). At Aubeboye (UN) the orientation of the graves also appears to vary, but the relationship between the Bronze Age enclosures and the early medieval inhumations is more difficult to determine due to the influence of the Roman villa. In the Cour Sud-Ouest, some of the burials are overlapping with the ditch, and grave 7221 is found in the middle of the feature. In the Cour Nord, the graves are more respectful of the enclosure, placed around it without intruding on its delineation, once again following diverse orientations. This difference in the encroachment on the prehistoric feature, and the proximity of the Roman villa, raise the question of the visibility of the enclosures and of the influence exerted by the Antique building. Other similar Bronze-Age enclosures are indeed found slightly away from the main building, but none of them appear to have attracted inhumations. The two groups of isolated burials placed further west and east of the villa also appear to ignore these other Bronze Age features but are still found in association with elements related to the villa. However, the higher density of burials placed around the two prehistoric enclosures, in the yards within the limit of the villa space, does seem to plead in favour of their use as burial foci. Aubevoye seems therefore to present a picture of dual association, with at least two burial groups organised around the Bronze-Age enclosure and delimited by the villa's features. A funerary chapel or similar structure could be suspected between Cour Sud-Ouest and Cour Nord, where graves 7160 and 7199 were discovered (Guillier, 2013:224), but its influence on the two burial groups is debatable as they appear closer to the Bronze Age features than to this small area. Traces of a settlement potential from the late eighth – ninth century have also been recorded close to the Cour Nord (Guillier, 2013:226), but their relationship to the

burial grounds and to the pre-existing structures, as well as the durability of its occupation, is still uncertain.

The third group, in the Cour d'Apparat, seems to belong to a different kind of association, as it is not placed in the vicinity of any of the prehistoric features. The graves are once again following different orientations, but with less important variation, *i.e* the heads to the west-north-west instead of north. Only a few graves intrude upon the structures, but the rest of the interments appear to respect the space of the villa as observed in the other Cours. This organisation is to a certain extent found at Falaise (LN). The cemetery appears to be organised in two areas: the northern part with graves scattered close to the Roman building and four within the structure, and the southern part more densely occupied leading to some intercutting and overlapping, either associated with the same building or with another structure now disappeared (fig.17, vol.2) (Hincker *et al.*, 2010:57). In both groups, orientation of the graves is again varied, possibly influenced by the Roman vestiges or by the rectangular empty area in the southern zone. The layout of the cemetery at Isneauville (UN) is very similar, with however much more regular orientations (fig.19, vol.2). In the northern group, the inhumations are placed in more or less regular rows, with the grave sometimes overlapping due to their closeness. As they go south, the concentration becomes more sparse and draws an ellipse with some of the inhumation placed on a north-south axis to come back to a west-east orientation. This layout has been interpreted as potentially following a physical limit of the funerary area otherwise not visible through archaeology (Adrian *et al.*, 2011: 106). This time again, the inhumations are respecting the main structure, the only intrusion on the Antique walls being in the southern zone, where a few graves are placed on the foundation wall of the smaller building. Similar cluster-and-row layout and encroachments on the masonry are visible at Corseul (Brit.), with grave 5 even reusing part of the foundation wall as a logette céphalique, but the very limited data on the built environment of the area does not allow the identification of the structure to which the walls were related (fig.11,

vol.2). The layouts of the cemeteries of Aubevoye (UN), Falaise (LN) and Isneauville (UN) therefore show that some care was taken in avoiding implantation of the graves within the Antique structures, with little intercutting between inhumation and older features, Falaise being the only exception as for inhumation placed within the structure itself.

B) Association with contemporaneous features

At first sight, the layout of cemeteries associated with contemporaneous features does not appear widely different from that observed at the burial grounds linked to pre-existing man-built features. For the majority of the sites, the graves are placed in regular rows and/or small groups, and generally placed on a west-east axis, as observed for example at Vieux (LN) or Vue (LA). It is not rare, however, to find individuals buried on other orientations (fig.1 vol.1), a trait common to all regions and appearing in all contexts.

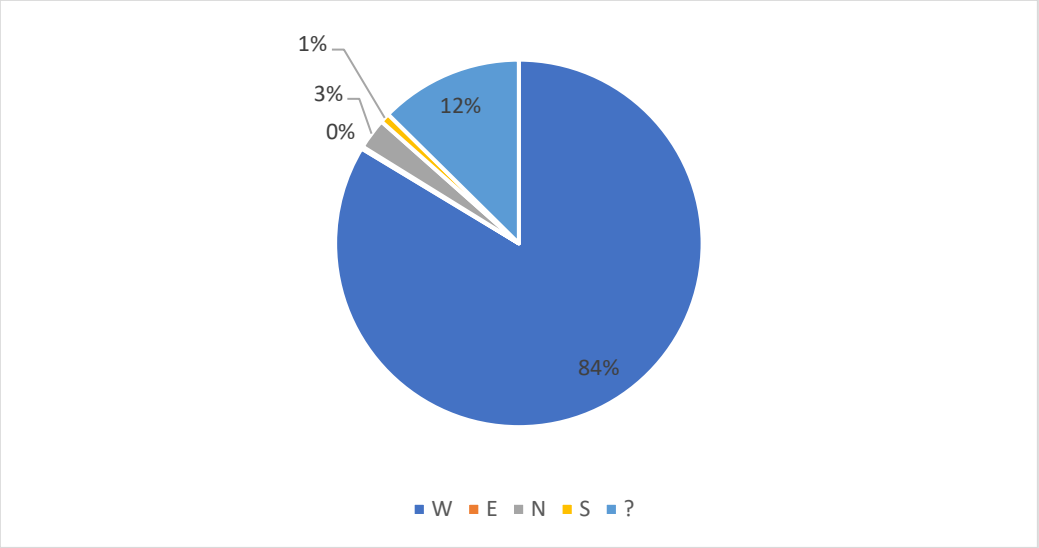


Figure 1: Orientations of the graves - French key-sites (n= 3205)

Yet, these apparent similarities hide some differences at a local level. Giberville (LN) stands out as the clearest example: two graves are placed away from

the main group of burial, both oriented west-east and perpendicular to the Roman ditch, whilst the seven others are placed on a line on a north-south axis, closer to the church and the Saint-Martin cemetery. This difference in orientation and the distance from the main cemetery makes these graves appear as outliers, or possible isolated burials, with no clear discernible reasons for their segregation from the rest of the churchyard. At Bréal-sous-Vitré (Brit.), and to a lesser extent at Visseiche (Brit.) necropolis 2 , it is the trapezoidal shape of the containers that influenced the layout of the burial area, creating a 'fan-shaped' organisation, a common occurrence in cemeteries of the early Middle Ages using these types of containers (Guigon & Bardel, 1989:348-349, Le Boulanger, 2005:22). Small groups of burials can also be identified at these two sites, with several individuals placed in the same grave-pit but separated by stone slabs (Guigon & Bardel, 1989:335-336, Le Boulanger, 2005:22-24). The precise nature of these groups will be discussed later on when looking at the buried populations (see below IV.B), but it can already be said that this organisation shows a desire to optimise the limited space available close to the possible churches suspected at both sites.

This attraction exerted by burial foci led, in other cases, to the graves being placed directly within the building, showing once again that despite written rules and interdictions, certain practices were in effect in "Christian" contexts. Notre-Dame-de-Bondeveille (LN) is a good example of this practice, with nearly all of the graves placed within the apse (fig.20, vol.2). Similarly at Ambon (Brit.) and Thaon (LN) burials were found both outside and inside the church from the seventh to the tenth century (fig.18, vol.2), with for the latter, a concentration of juvenile burials at the apse until the eleventh century (Chapelain de Séreville-Niel*,* 2013:36). The attraction that represents burial in a monastic context also had an influence on the management of the dead. At Landevennec (Brit.), from the first funerary usage of the site in the sixth century, different burial areas are observed, with some graves placed within the oratory whilst others are organised either on its northern side, or close to another structure at its south-west (figs. 12-15, vol.2). These areas

seem to be kept in function until at least the middle of the eleventh century despite the development of the precinct and the various modifications brought to the church and communal buildings (figs. 12-15, vol.2). It has been theorised that the different areas of burial at Ladenvennec are related to different types of population (Bardel & Perennec, 2004:135-136, 144), the monks placed between the primitive oratory and the apse of the church, whilst the lay community might have been buried along the southern wall of the church and close to the monastic enclosure depending on the periods (figs. 12-15, vol.2). Between the sixth and the end of the ninth centuries, the primitive oratory appears to have in turns been respected by the graves, and in other periods, be used as a funerary chapel (Bardel & Perennec, 2004:138-139). The internal space of the church was also devoid of burial apart from the tomb of the saint and three pleine terre burials placed during the rebuilding of the complex in the course of the tenth century, but proximity to the church seems to have been a concern from the edification of the abbatial church up until the eleventh century (Bardel & Perennec, 2004:143, 146). This burial and its precedent occupations, as well as graves placed close to the walls of the church but clearly separated from the communal buildings and possible monk's cemetery, are thought to belong to the leaders of the coenobitic community and possibly to a lay elite (Bardel & Perennec, 2004: 140-141, 147), an interpretation supported by the type of containers and elements found in association with the deceased (see below III.A.2 and III.B.3).

Both this desire to be placed as close as possible to the burial focus and the controlled access to the inner parts of the church, led to the establishment of different strategies designed to approach or even take already occupied spaces. Through the means of reuse, with or without réduction, it became possible to be buried in an already claimed spot. This practice is observed at lay sites like Bréal-sous-Vitré (Brit.) with reduced skeletons placed at the feet or along the legs of the new occupant but also in monastic context with the reuse at Landevennec (Brit.) of a mortared stone tomb placed in the mausoleum directly adjacent to the apse

of the church, granting to the new individual a privileged location and a prestigious built grave (Bardel & Perennec, 2004:142). Multiple burials - *i.e* the placement of different individuals on top of one another in the same funerary structure at different periods - are another well-used strategy. Examples can be found at several sites in the sample, but are pushed to the extreme at two of the Upper Normandy sites. The graves at Notre-Dame-de-Bondeville (UN) could indeed contain up to four individuals in addition to several réductions and/or ossuaries, and at Honguemare-Guénouville (UN), is it 210 individuals that were found in only 157 funerary structures, with up to seven deceased placed in the same grave. Different approaches to the management of the dead can thus be found at the sites composing this sample, showing that despite the apparent uniformity in the layout of the burial areas, some distinct regional or communal patterns can be highlighted.

C) Social life in death: commemoration

The organisation of the burial area and this diversity in management raises the question of the place of the dead in the memory of the community. Indeed, the regular layout in rows or the formation of clusters, and the intentional reuse of some graves do imply a certain knowledge of the location of the interments. This awareness can be linked to the short period of use of a cemetery, the refilled grave pit still visible on the surface ground due to lack of grass or freshly turned soil for example, or can be related to the use of grave markers, manifesting the grave on the surface ground for a longer period of time. Physical remains of grave markers are unfortunately very rare, as small earth mounds or wooden elements are not archaeologically visible, but this sample did offer a few pertinent examples. At Notre-Dame-de-Bondeville, seven burials, two of which with more than one individual, were signalled in the apse by a floor coating of a different colour (Langlois, 2001:39). In addition to this marking, three recumbent stones have also

been discovered, all bearing the representation of a cross, and for burial 46 an empty engraved rectangle, which might represent a notch for a possible name-plate (fig.25, vol.2) (Langlois, 2001:39). Traces of commemoration through epigraphy are also visible at Visseiche necropolis 2 (Brit.), where two inscriptions were found in association with grave 33 (fig.26, vol.2*).* However in that case, the inscriptions were placed on stone slabs used to separate individuals in the same grave pit, probably indicating that the name written on them does not belong to one of the individuals found in the grave pit but to another deceased, the name-plate of whom was simply reused here (Guigon & Bardel, 1989:335). It is also possible that one of these name-plates was used to differentiate one individual from the other three buried in the same grave pit. Similarly, at Bréal-sous-Vitré (Brit.), two incomplete slate slabs bearing the same kind of inscriptions were interpreted as possible name-plates (Le Boulanger, 2005:31). At Plomeur (Brit.), pebble-stones materialised the outlines of the inhumations sometimes with large stones placed at the head (fig.27, vol.2) (Giot & Monnier, 1973:6), although it has been noted during the excavation of these interments that the stones were not always placed correctly above the grave (Giot & Monnier 1975:5), raising the question of the time spent between the burial of the individual and the marking of their graves. This aspect is developed in later chapters.

The manifestation of the grave on the surface implies that the memory of the deceased continued through time, and also offered the possibility for members of the family to recognise and visit the burial (Williams, 2006:145,150, 171). Grave marking did not however prevent the destruction of the tomb. Once again at Plomeur during the second phase of occupation starting in the course of the eleventh century, the oratory and its associated burial ground were established directly on top of the previous cemetery destroying part of the graves from the first phase (Giot & Monnier, 1973:6). If it is possible that some of the inhumations were not visible anymore due to the movement of the sand dune (Giot & Monnier, 1973:5), the use of markers should have allowed the identification of these

structures as funerary ones and prevented their destruction. At Landevennec (Brit.), it is the modification brought to the buildings and the construction of the precinct that caused the destruction of some of the graves placed outside of the monastery in the possibly lay area, with however some skeletons placed in ossuaries showing to a certain extent respect to the older remains (Bardel & Perennec, 2004:132-133). This practice is however not observed at all the sites: at Rezé, the remains of at least 73 individuals were found out of context in layers of erratic bones, showing the that the durability of the memory of an individual, and the protection of the physical integrity of their graves and their remains, was limited.

The general organisation of the burial areas thus seems to follow in all regions a row and/or group layout with the majority of the graves placed around the burial focus and orientated according to a west-east axis. However, the influence exerted by these foci can sometimes cause variations in these orientations and imply a higher density of graves in the areas closest to it. This phenomenon also led to the establishment of different strategies depending on the regions, with the reuse of already occupied plots leading to réductions or multiple burials, or to overlapping and intercutting with more or less care given to the disturbed remains. Changes in commemoration might also have had an impact on the organisation of the cemeteries and on the perception of the remains, with the intensification of reuses and réductions at the end of the period, developing further in the later Middle Ages with mass and other rituals possibly replacing more physical commemorative elements (Treffort, 1996a:89, Effros, 2002:11, 206; Treffort, 2010:217)

III) Internal organisation of the grave

Following the analysis of the environment of the burial grounds and of the relationship between the dead and the living in a topographical and memorial perspective, attention needs now to be drawn to the graves themselves. This section focuses first on the nature of the burials, considering the use of different types of graves and the implications of these choices, to then review the grave-goods and other artefacts placed with the deceased and address the issues linked to their presence in early medieval burials.

A) Grave types

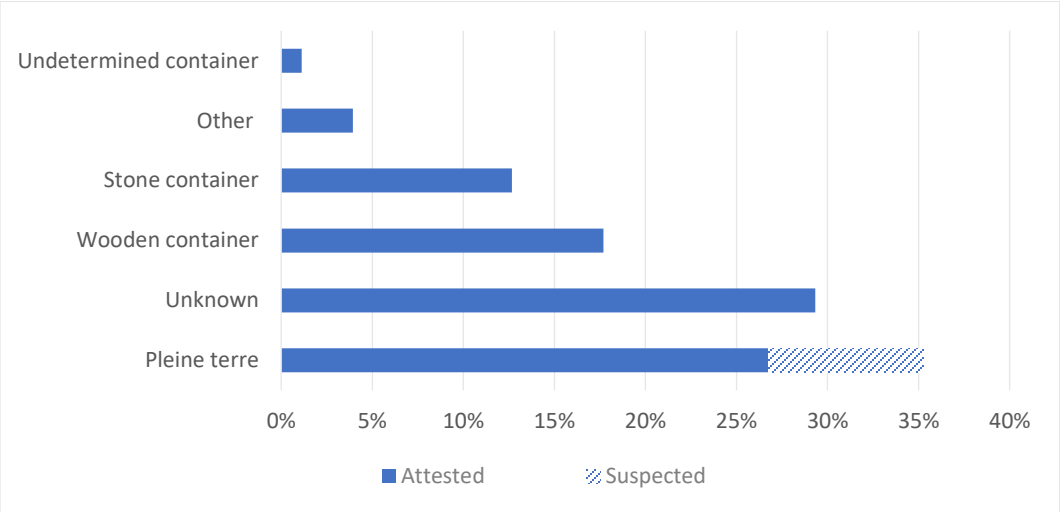


Figure 2: Percentages of grave types in the French sample (n=3205)

The first picture obtained when looking at the French sample in its entirety is one of diversity (fig.2, vol.1). Inhumation seems to be most often in pleine terre, however the high percentage obtained for this category of grave needs to be taken carefully as some of the pleine terre burials could have originally used containers that are now archaeologically invisible. The suspected pleine terre category

represents part of these ambiguous graves, when the evidence left room for doubt in the interpretation of the funerary structure in use. Wood then appears to be the main material for burial containers followed by stone. For a small proportion of graves (1.12%), the use of a container was identified, but its precise nature could not be determined. Finally, the rest of the sample is divided between the 'unknown' category, when the interment could not be characterised, and the 'other' category regrouping grave types found at only one or a few sites (see below III.A.4).

1) Pleine terre burials

Looking in more details at the distribution of these various grave types, some regional specificities start to appear (fig.3, vol.1).

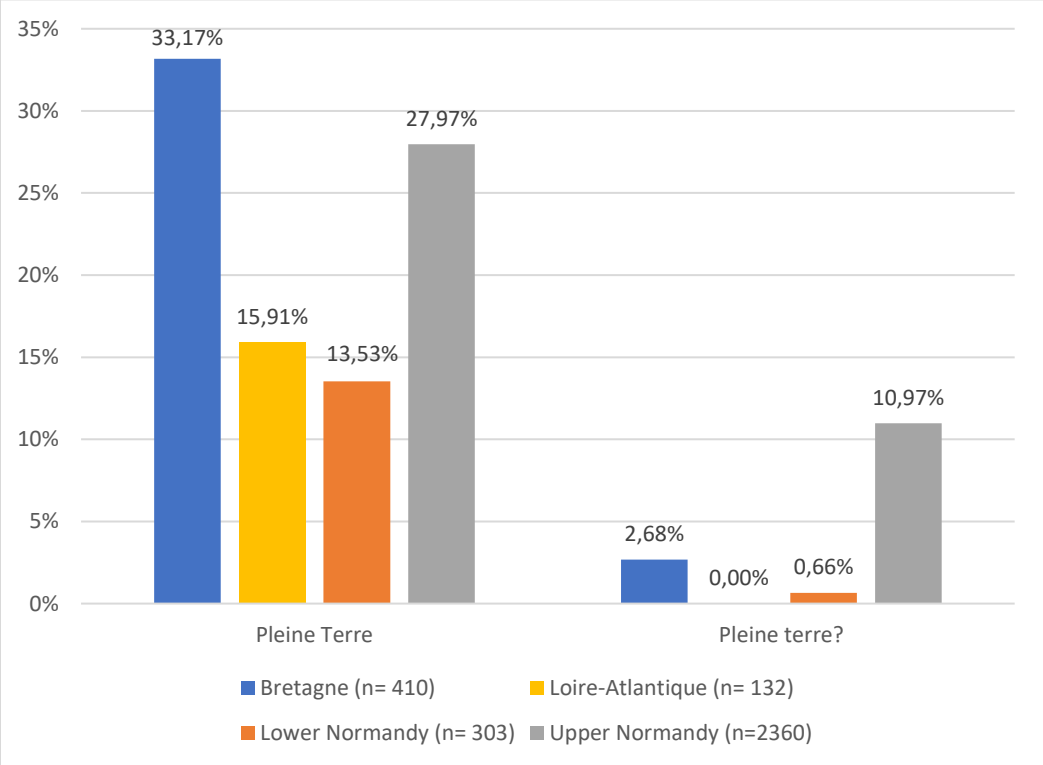


Figure 3: Regional distribution of pleine terre and suspected pleine terre in the French sample

Pleine terre burials seem to be mainly represented in Brittany and Upper Normandy, whilst their usage in Loire-Atlantique and Lower Normandy is more discrete (fig.3, vol.1). Data from Loire-Atlantique need however to be considered carefully due to the vagueness of some of the reports, especially that of Saint-Jean-de-Corcouë (LA), mentioning *'countless pleine terre burials'* without offering any precise quantitative data (Meslat, 1964). Similarly, possible pleine terres were mainly recorded in Upper Normandy, the sample influenced by Portejoie (UN) and its very long and dense occupation that made the identification of the grave arduous. Besides these fluctuations, other differences can be noted in the nature of the pleine terres. At Basly (LN), the inhumations were practiced in the rocky substrate, the body placed in oval or anthropomorphic grave pits then sometimes covered with stone slabs (San Juan *et al.,* 2012:35-36). The use of wooden or stone lid at other sites is also attested at Landevennec (Brit.) (Bardel & Perennec, 2004:124). Covered pleine terre burials were possibly in use at other sites but the issues linked to the preservation of organic material do not always allow their identification during excavation. On a chronological point of view, these graves are generally considered as representative of the Carolingian period in Northern France (*i.e* late eighth to tenth century) (Treffort, 1996a: 73-75) and linked to a desire to show Christian humility, the austerity of the inhumations contrasting with more elaborated and probably expensive types of inhumations of the Merovingian period (*i.e* fifth to late eighth century) (*ibid*). This chronological change has been highlighted at Romilly-sur-Andelle (UN), with pleine terre becoming the main type of graves in the second phase of the cemetery starting in the late eighth-early ninth century (Colleter *et al.,* 2014:156, 162). At Bréal-sous-Vitré (Brit.), the second phase of inhumation starting in the late ninth- tenth century is also defined by the use of pleine terre burials, with some reuse of cist-graves but no addition of new stone containers. (Le Boulanger, 2005:31, 33). The proportion of pleine terre burials also appears to have increased in the monastic context of Landevennec around the tenth century (Bardel & Perennec, 2004:144), following a period of

more ostentatious burials from the middle of the ninth century (Bardel & Perennec, 2004:141).

2) Wooden containers

The distribution of wooden containers offers a very different picture (fig.4, vol.1). When possible, distinction was made between coffrages and coffins, as their degrees of mobility could influence some aspects of the burial practice (see below III.B.1). Unfortunately, the subtle disparities between those two types of containers are often lost due to the poor preservation of organic materials. When this identification was not possible, the graves were categorised as 'wooden containers?', forming the main sub-group of this grave type.

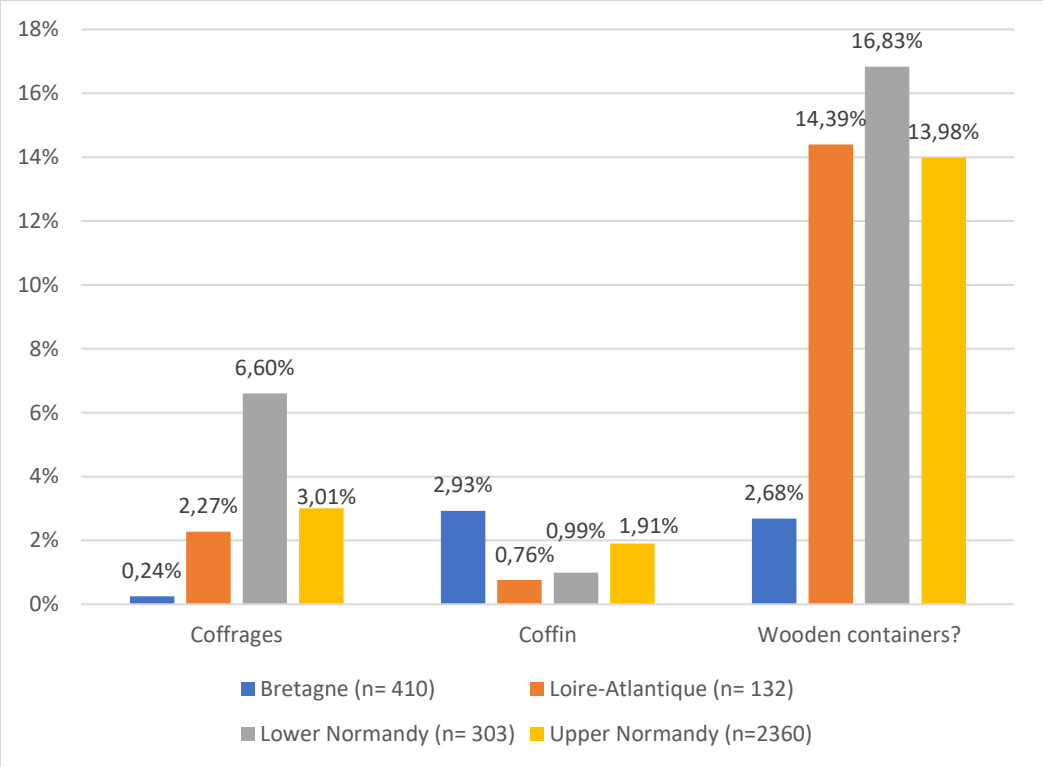


Figure 4: Regional distribution of wooden containers in the French sample

If coffins appear to have been found in approximately equal quantities in all regions, coffrages were mostly found in Lower Normandy. This regional difference increases when considering the undetermined wooden containers, rarely used in Brittany (2.93%) contrasting strongly with the rest of the sample where they are found at an average of 15.07%. Once again, these figures need to be considered carefully. In Loire-Atlantique, the near totality of wooden containers was recorded at Rezé: the overrepresentation at this site could either be the result of the unbalanced amount of information available between the sites of this region, or could be linked to the longer occupation of the funerary area, implying changes in burial practices through time. Indeed, out of six carbon-dated wooden containers, two appear to have been installed between the ninth and twelfth century (cal. 2σ)[7].

Similarly, Landevennec (Brit.) is the only site of the Breton sample showing use of wooden containers. Coffins and coffrages were discovered at the monastery alongside other more peculiar containers such as eleven wooden monoxyle sarcophagi (fig.28, vol.2) and three coffins '*à claire-voie*' (Bardel & Perennec, 2004:128-130), that can be defined as a wattle-based wooden coffin (fig.29, vol.2). Their use has been linked to the water saturated environment in which they were placed, the open rod-base either allowing the settling of the container at the bottom of the grave by avoiding flotation, or linked to concerns of evacuation of decomposition liquids (Barde & Perennec, 2004:128; Bardel & Perennec, 2012:198-199). However, their precise construction is difficult to determine as the 1994 excavation report only mentions wooden rods placed along the femur and across the knee for grave 6056 (Bardel & Perennec, 1994:16), a wooden cane found on the leg of 3036bis in grave 3036 (*ibid*., 21) and wooden rods placed on either sides of the body in grave 3070 attached to each other by transversal rods (*ibid*., 21). They could thus be interpreted as grave-goods, especially in the case of grave 3036, or could have been used to keep the body in position or to level the ground

[7] Due to the small amount of carbon-dated graves, a χ^2 test could not be realised.

on which the container was placed or even to elevate it slightly and let the water flow underneath.

The wooden sarcophagi are also an oddity in the French sample, as they are not found at any of the other sites. Their use at Landevennec is particularly interesting first because they can be linked to individuals with enough influence and wealth to justify the cutting of large trees to realise a one-piece sarcophagus of important dimensions, one of them with an internal length of 2.75m (fig.28, vol.2) (Bardel & Perennec, 2004:129), and second because they do not seem to have been used only in one period, the first one indeed dated to the seventh-eighth century, whilst others appear to have been installed in the same timeframe as the other wooden container in the ninth century (Bardel & Perennec, 2004:130). Their small number, the prestige they can be linked to and their durability at the site could be linked to high-status individual burials, possibly the abbot. At Saint-Evroult-Notre-Dame-du-Bois (LN), the five excavated wooden containers also appear to have been used between the ninth and the twelfth centuries (Vigot *et al.,* 2015:79-80). This chronological pattern is not however verified at Falaise (LN), where the burials dated through the analysis of grave-goods seem to have been installed between the seventh and mid-eighth century (Hincker *et al.*, 2008:59). Do the inhumations of Falaise stand out in their region? Is Saint-Evroult-Notre-Dame-du-Bois peculiar due to its monastic nature? The lack of precise dating for the other sites of this region does not unfortunately allow to answer these questions.

However, the chronological distribution of wooden container in Upper Normandy could hint at a difference between the Norman regions and the rest of the sample. Indeed, the few carbon-dates obtained at Aubevoye (UN) and Isneauville (UN) show that their use seems to increase around the late seventh-eighth century, as observed at Falaise (LN), providing another counterpoint to their later augmentation in Brittany and Loire-Atlantique. Romilly-sur-Andelle (UN) shows a similar change in the nature of the burial containers in the second phase, the occurrence of wooden container increasing of 5.8% between phase 1 and 2

(Colleter, *et al.,* 2014:158). Honguemare-Guénouville (UN) might have followed the same pattern, with also a possible change from coffrages to coffin at some unknown point of the funerary usage of the site, if not linked to differences in the status of the buried individuals (Deshayes, 2011:163). The short period of use of Notre-Dame-de-Bondeville (UN) cemetery and the numerous reuses of the containers do not allow the detection of a chronological pattern in the use of the different grave types (Langlois, 2001:41), a problem also encountered at Portejoie (UN), this time due to the long occupation of the site and to the numerous intercutting and overlapping of graves making the dating of individual graves arduous and hazardous in most cases.

3) Stone containers

The distribution of stone containers comes to reinforce this picture of regional traditions (fig.5, vol.1).

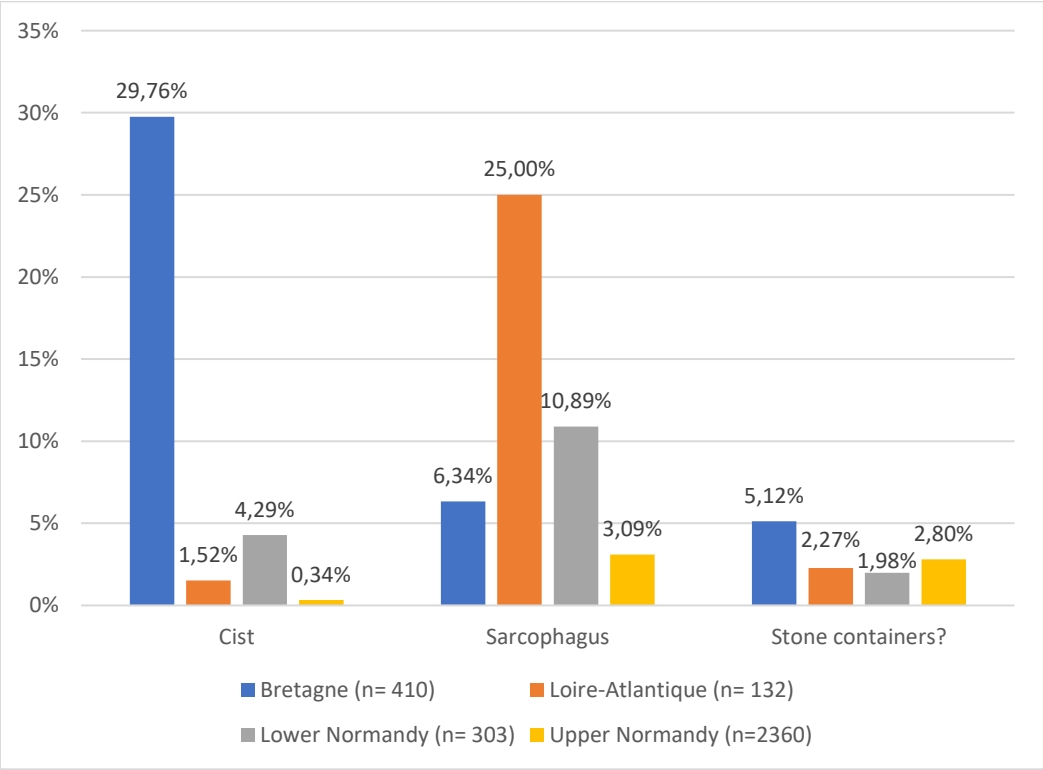


Figure 5: Regional distribution of stone containers in the French sample

Brittany and Loire-Atlantique stand apart from the Norman regions with high concentrations of cist-graves for the former, and of sarcophagi for the latter. The availability of the resource, especially for Breton sites, does not appear to be the only possible explanation for this contrasting choice in burial containers. At Corseul (Btir.), La Plaine-sur-Mer (LA) and in one case at Honguemare-Guénouville (UN) (burial 1044), Roman architectural terracotta (*e.g* tiles, bricks,…) was used as the main material for cist-graves (Tessier, 1970:14; Fichet de Clairefontaine, 1985:46 Deshayes, 2011:102). Whilst stone is generally preferred, the use of construction material could theoretically have occurred at other sites, especially when situated close to Roman ruins, to create burial containers. The fact that it is not the case could be indicative of the conscious choice of a material over another beyond its availability.

Furthermore, at Visseiche necropolis 2 (Brit.), the sarcophagi have been identified as coming from Anjou, implying the importation of the material, or more likely, of the sarcophagi (Le Boulanger, 2003:19). This phenomenon shows not only the links and movement of burial containers from one region to another, already known in Northern France (Delahaye & Périn, 1991:293-294), but could also reflect a difference in status between the two cemeteries at Visseiche. Indeed, necropolis 2 is characterised by the extensive use of stone containers, including these imported sarcophagi, whilst they are far less present in necropolis 1[8]. The smaller scale of the excavation of necropolis 1 could explain this difference, assuming that the stone containers are still to be uncovered, but the poly-focal nature of the settlement, this difference in the choice, and possibly in the access to specific burial containers, could be the manifestation of two groups of individuals of higher, for necropolis 2, and lower status, for necropolis 1. The use of stone containers as a means to display social status could also explain the discovery at Romilly-sur-Andelle (UN) of plaster-lined grave pits (fig.30, vol.2) (Jouneau *et al.*,

[8] χ^2showing statistically significant difference in the use of pleine terre against stone containers between necropolis 1 and 2 (χ^2= 14.8 ; p=0.005)

2015:370,372). The coating of the grave pit walls with plaster creates the illusion of a sarcophagus, possibly corresponding to a less expensive version of this container. The prestige and wealth attached to burial in sarcophagi is also witnessed at Notre-Dame-de-Bondeville (UN) where they are found in the privileged area of the apse and reused on several occasions (see above III.A.1), but the similar usage of wooden containers at this site raises once again the question of other factors in the choice of burial container.

This reason might be simply a change in practice through time. Indeed, looking at the entirety of the sample, the use of stone containers and particularly of sarcophagi appears to be characteristic of the late seventh-early eighth century. This change is particularly noticeable at Bréal-sous-Vitré (Brit.), Romilly-sur-Andelle (UN) and Portejoie (UN) where the use of sarcophagi and cists are characteristic of the first burial phases ending in the course of the eighth century (Carré, 1996:158, Le Boulanger, 2005:33, Colleter, 2014:158-159). The same phenomenon is observed in Lower Normandy and Loire-Atlantique, at both small cemeteries like Vieux (Hincker & Marie, 2007a), Saint-Jean-de-Corcouë (Meslat, 1964) and possibly Vue (Charpentier, 1994), and at larger funerary sites like Thaon (Chapelain de Séreville-Niel *et al.*, 2011:91, 98). The use of stone containers thus appears to have been linked to three main factors: the regional tradition, the wish to display a certain status, and the period of the cemeteries, with pleine terre burials and wooden container replacing these heavier structures in the course of the eighth and ninth centuries.

4) Undetermined and peculiar structures

Alongside these general chronological trends, the regional characteristics and the local variations, the detailed record of each individual grave also revealed peculiar burials, found only at some very specific sites. Landevennec (Brit.) already stood out in this study due to the use of wooden sarcophagi and coffins *à claire-*

voie, but these wooden containers are not the only unusual structures of the site. Indeed, the presence from the ninth-century of the remains of Saint-Guénolé led to the installation within the choir of a mortared-stone tomb, designed to shelter the bones of the patron saint of the community (Bardel & Perennec, 2004:138). Another similar structure, this time placed outside of the church, was also built and used during the same period, probably for the burial of an abbot or other important member of the community, emulating the tomb of the saint (Bardel & Perennec, 2004:141). This ostentatious grave, in comparison to the other inhumations of the monastery, was re-used in the tenth century, probably by equally important individuals, with the previous occupant placed in réduction within the tomb (Bardel, 1985:16). A similar conspicuous funerary structure is also found at Honguemare-Guénouville (UN), with skeletons 890 and 891 found in wooden containers placed within a burial chamber (Deshayes, 2011:102). As in Landevennec, this construction is probably to link to the social status of the deceased, an hypothesis even more likely considering the link between elite and burial chambers in the Frankish world, and more specifically in northern France during the seventh century (Billion, 2009:104, Deshayes, 2011:102). The occupants of graves 890 and 891 could have been important members of the society or even leaders of the community attached to this burial area explaining these funerary arrangements. Expression of social status in death might also be the reason for the use of whalebones in four graves at Plomeur. At first sight, nothing distinguishes them from the rest of the cemetery but in three adult burials, two males and one unsexed individual, whalebone was placed along the body, defining one or two sides of what is otherwise a common cist grave (fig. 31, vol.2). It is also used slightly differently in the child's burial, as the funerary structure appears closer to a crib than an actual cist grave (fig.31, vol.2) (Giot & Monnier, 1974:5-6). As the cemetery is located close to a beach on which whales often stranded in the early middle

ages[9], the use of this material is not particularly surprising. What is more unexpected is its rarity overall in the burial ground, making the few graves using it stand out. Manifestation of a different status? Parental links? Simple use of a readily available material? All these hypotheses and other are plausible, with unfortunately no means to support or negate any of them.

Social status is however not the only element leading to particular burial containers. Indeed, at Thaon, 80 children and adolescents appear to have been buried mainly in "*tombes aménagées"* (Chapelain de Séreville-Neil, 2011:96-97). No clear definition of this term was given in the excavation reports, but they seem to correspond to burial containers halfway between coffrages and cist-graves or stone-lined graves (*ibid*). The choice was made here to keep this terminology, highlighting the peculiarity of this type and its relevance in terms of social implications. They also appear to have been covered with evidence of a stone slabs lid for grave 423 amongst others (Chapelain de Seréville-Neil, 2011:79) and decomposition generally occurring in empty or deferred sealed spaces. Eight other graves that were not identified as *tombes aménagées* in the excavation reports appear to have followed a similar construction, the position of the stones in the grave pit consistent with both cists-grave and packing stones for a wooden coffrage. These were mainly associated with adult individuals (5/8), a difference in demographic that could explain their non-classification as *tombes aménagées*. At Vieux (LN), five graves were also recorded using similar undetermined containers. These structures mainly used stones but the presence of wood was also suspected (Hincker & Marie, 2007a:23). Contrary to Thaon (LN), they were not found in association with specific individuals or placed in particular areas, their undetermined nature thus probably resulting from issues of archaeological interpretations rather than to a demarcation in the burial practice. The same can

[9] To these medieval occurrences can be added a very recent case (13/08/2019) of a whale found on the beach of Penmarc'h near the Pointe de la Torche, only a few meters away from Plomeur. Other cases were also recorded in the Prequ'île de Crozon, a few kilometres north. (source: Ouest France, Le Parisine, Les Echos)

be said for the undetermined containers recorded at Portejoie (UN) and Aubevoye (UN), where differentiation between coffrages, coffins or pleine terre burials was often difficult. Similarly, a composite container was recorded at Rezé (LA) for grave 4831(=40105), this time using only stone, the feet of the grave reusing the end of a sarcophagus whilst the rest of the pit was covered in slate slabs as observed in cist-graves (Arthuis *et al.*, 2011:69, 86-87). In this case, the creation of a composite container does not appear to have been linked to the identity of the deceased, but rather a question of convenience re-using element possibly lying around or disturbed during the digging of the grave pit. This last hypothesis is also particularly plausible at Rezé when considering the 36 units of erratic bones recorded during excavation, representing a minimum of 74 individuals.

Different factors thus seem to play a part in the choice of the grave type. A chronological aspect is clearly visible when looking at the sample as a whole, with stone containers characterising the seventh century whilst wooden structures and pleine terre burials become the norm in the course of the ninth century and remaining the main types until the mid-eleventh century. However, a closer analysis of the different regions revealed specific practices linked to more local traditions, sometimes even unique to one community, one group or even one individual. If availability of certain resources seemed to have an impact on the nature of the burial containers, the identity of the deceased and religious concerns were equally influential on their selection, leading on occasions to emulation and adaptations of the funerary structures whilst in other cases, simple recuperation of material was enough to construct the final resting place of an anonymous.

B) <u>Grave-goods and other artefacts</u>

Further chronological, regional and communal variations become visible when looking at the grave-goods and other artefacts accompanying the deceased.

The relatively small proportion of graves with such deposits (15.60% of 3205 graves) is expected as the practice starts to decline in the course of the sixth century and becomes exceptional in the seventh century in northwest France (Treffort, 1996a:72-75, Effros, 2002:11, 47), making the items and the burials in which they were found even more significant. Looking first at the overall distribution, Upper Normandy clearly stands out with 17.20% of furnished or clothed burials, closely followed by the other Norman region at 15.18% and Loire-Atlantique (fig.6, vol.1). Once again, this picture needs to be moderated as Falaise heavily influences the sample with 61.82% of its graves furnished or clothed. Similarly, in Upper Normandy, 82.43% of the graves at Aubevoye were identified at probably using soft wrappings. The difference with Brittany is however clearly noticeable.

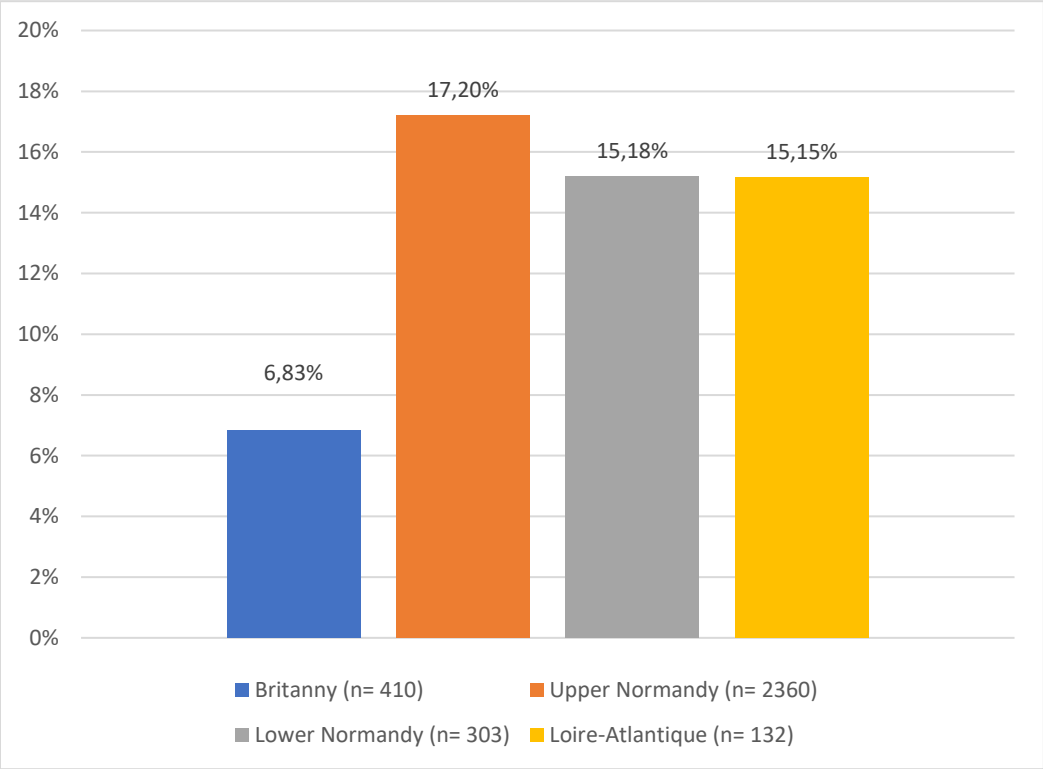


Figure 6: Regional proportions of furnished graves in the French sample

Within these regional variations, it is also possible to highlight differences in the types of items placed with the dead or used during the funerary rite.

Following the same method as for the study of grave types, the following sections present each type of grave-goods by categories gathering items of similar nature or usage (fig.7, vol.1). Distinction is thereafter made between possible soft-wrappings and soft-wrappings, the presence of the former determined through archaeothanatology, whilst the use of the latter is attested by both skeletal and other archaeological evidence. The same method was applied for pillows (in stone) and possible pillows (in organic material). Finally, the 'other' categories correspond to elements that could not be clearly identified due to preservation issues or items that were found at specific sites or within a very small number of graves.

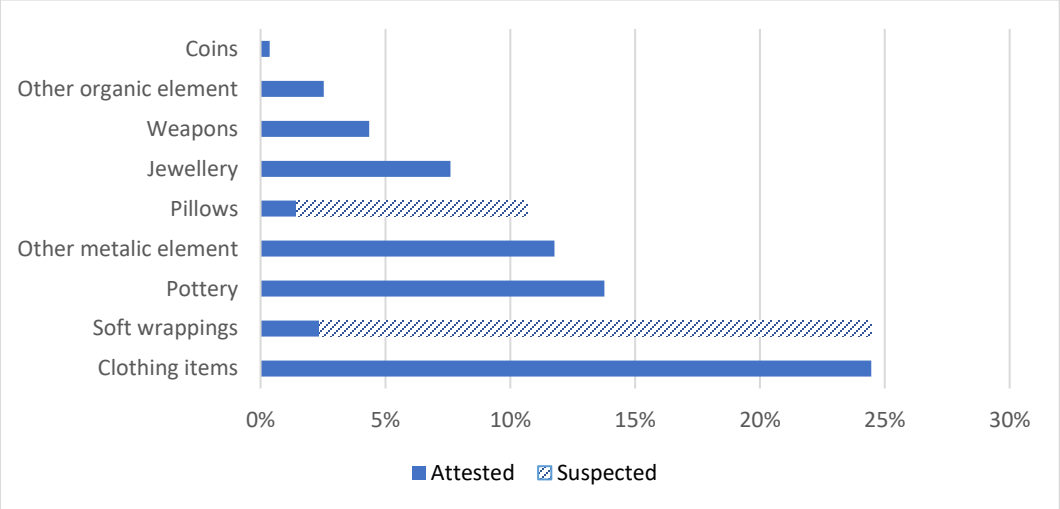


Figure 7: Proportion of the different types of artefact in the furnished graves (n=550)

The following analysis presents the proportion of each item in relation to the total number of graves in each region. When relevant, a mention is made of the proportion of these artefacts in relation to the total number of artefacts found within the region, highlighting privileged elements at a smaller scale.

1) Soft-wrappings and clothing items

In this sample, the most frequently encountered artefacts were clothing items and soft wrappings (fig.7, vol.1).

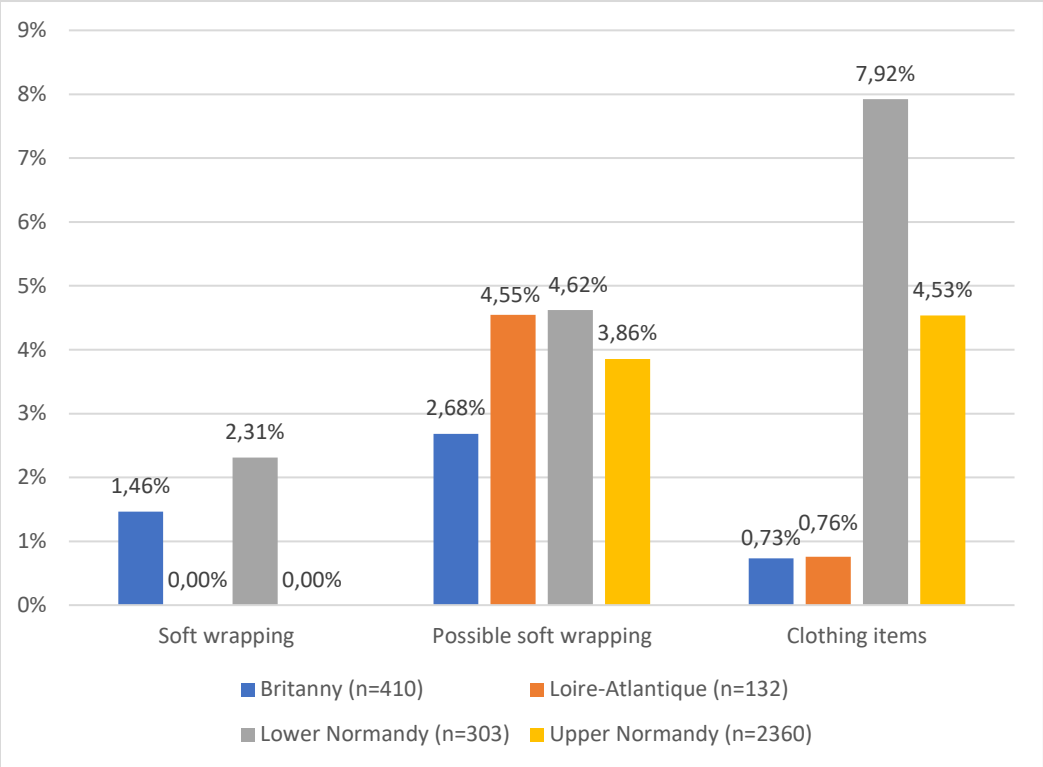


Figure 8: Regional distribution of soft-wrappings, suspected soft-wrapping and clothing items in the French sample

Looking first at these shrouds and other wrappings, Lower-Normandy appears as the region where they were the most common, followed by Brittany, Loire-Atlantique and finally Upper Normandy (fig.8, vol.1). Once again, these profiles need to be considered carefully as for Loire-Atlantique and Brittany, soft wrappings only occurred at one site in each region. It is however worth noting that soft wrapping, either attested or suspected, is the most represented within the furnished graves of Brittany, representing 20% of the furnished graves in this region. Their use in Normandy is slightly more balanced with examples at nearly

every site, but Aubevoye (UN) still stands out with the over-representation of possible soft wrappings in 56.76% of the graves and 68.85% of the furnished graves, a preponderance that can be partly explained by the better preservation of the skeletal remains at the site, making identification of these wrappings easier than at other cemeteries.

In contrast, the distribution of clothing items reveals much more important and defined regional differences (fig.8, vol.1). These figures need however to be considered in parallel to the types of sites and graves they were associated to. The clothing items uncovered in Brittany seem indeed to be linked to very specific usage. At Visseiche, the fibula and bronze frame (probably the remains of a leather purse) (Guigon & Bardel, 1989:341) in grave 55a, and the pin discovered in grave 17 were both found in necropolis 2, a burial-ground already identified as potentially linked to higher status individuals (see above III.A.3), their presence reinforcing at the same time this interpretation. At Landevennec, *sarcophage monoxyle 1*, already conveying a certain status through its burial container, shows evidence of a clothed burial. Shoe elements and a possible belt were found along trace of textiles either covering the inside of the sarcophagus (Bardel, 1985:9) or the only remains of clothes worn by the deceased (Bardel & Perennec, 2004:140). *Sarcophage monoxyle 1* is also particularly relevant as it demonstrates that Christianity, and more specifically, inhumation in monastic ground, is not incompatible with clothed burials in the early medieval period (Young, 1999; Effros, 2002:21-22).

In Normandy, if the presence of clothing items appears more common, some differences do still exist between the two regions. In Lower-Normandy, clothing items were nearly all recorded at Falaise (23/24), the only other example found in grave 507 at Giberville. Their distribution in Upper Normandy is more balanced with Notre-Dame-de-Bondeville and Romilly-sur-Andelle showing slightly higher concentrations. For Romilly-sur-Andelle, this could be explained by the earlier dating of some of the graves, but this cannot be verified due to the lack of

precise record of the graves and their respective artefacts; the numbers presented here being based on the data published in 2014 (Colleter *et al.,* 2014:159-161). At Notre-Dame-de-Bondeville, only two graves contained clothing items (two *agrafes* and one pin), the relatively high percentage in comparison to the other sites thus biased by the quantitative analysis. Loire-Atlantique can be grouped with these regions, the belt buckle of La-Plaine-sur-Mer showing a similar "*causal*" deposition, on comparison to the Breton examples.

Therefore, use of soft wrappings and the presence of clothing items appear to be linked to regional contexts and possibly to social status in the case of Brittany. But the detailed recording of the graves and their artefacts revealed a third potential influencing factor. Using a Chisq test, it was possible to show a correlation between attested and possible soft wrappings, clothing items of which nature and position in relation to the body (when recorded) could indicate worn clothes, and the nature of the grave. The very statistically significant result[10] shows that the presence of these artefacts is mainly recorded in unmoveable grave types such as pleine terre burials, coffrages and cist. A possible explanation for this phenomenon is linked to transportation issues from the place of death or funerary rite to the grave pit: when in a moveable container, the body seem to have been bare or in a wrapping not archaeologically visible, whilst when the burial container was directly built within the pit, the body was apparently more often dressed or wrapped, facilitating transportation whilst also covering the cadaver.

To these three aspects can be added a chronological change. Clothing items, and by extension potential clothed burials, were mainly found in cemeteries dated to the seventh-early eighth century like Falaise (LN), Romilly-sur-Andelle (phase 1) (UN) and Visseiche (Brit.), whilst shrouds and other soft wrappings are found throughout the period of study. As the difference between clothes and shrouds is not always possible to make through archaeological means, this observation needs to be considered with caution. Therefore, if the practice of

[10] χ^2very statistically significant (χ^2= 18,112 ; p= 0,006)

burying with belt buckles and other clothing items dressed individuals fades through time, it does not completely disappear but rather changes in nature, a transformation possibly mirroring the one observed in grave type and linked to an ideal of Christian humility, at least for the lower members of the society.

2) Funerary pillows

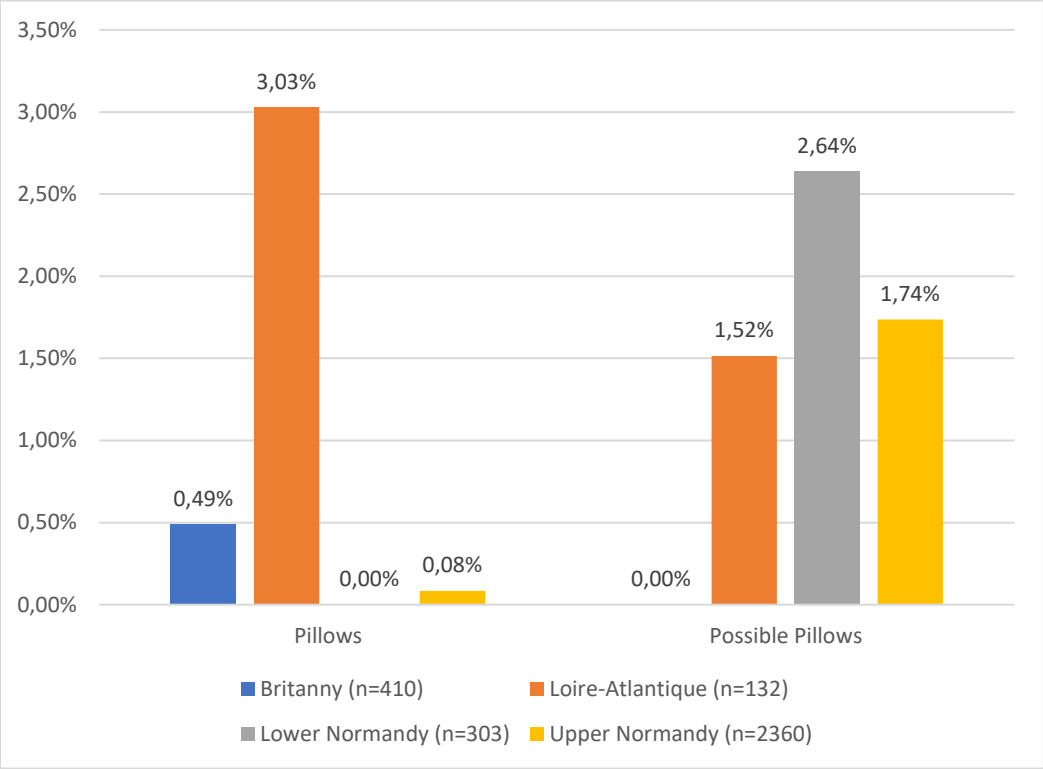


Figure 9: Regional distribution of pillows and possible pillows in the French sample

If the presence of soft wrappings and clothing items can be influenced by different factors, the reasons behind the use of funerary pillows are however more difficult to determine. Loire-Atlantique seems to be the area with the highest proportion of these items, followed by the Norman regions (fig.9, vol.1). Their presence in Brittany is discrete, with only two examples recorded one of which is the mortared stone tomb of Landevennec. In this grave, the stone pillow comes to complement the internal organisation of the mausoleum, at least in its reuse by

individual E with whom it is clearly associated, if not from the first occupation of the structure (Bardel, 1895:16). As observed for clothing items, the use of this stone pillow might be associated with the higher status of the deceased, a link that does not however appear to exist at Bréal-sous-Vitré where the other pillow was discovered. In Loire-Atlantique, the majority of these elements were found at Rezé (5/6) with the last specimen recorded at Vue. In Normandy, the distribution between the different sites is more even with pillows identified at three sites in each region in similar proportions. This more common presence in terms of number of sites in Normandy could however be caused by the better preservation of the remains or availability of photographs and precise drawings of the individuals *in situ* in the reports making an archaeothanatological study possible. The majority of the pillows found in Upper Normandy and the entirety of those recorded in Lower Normandy were indeed identified through the study of bone movements, an analysis impossible in case of poor preservation or lack of detailed indications on the position of skeletal elements in the excavation reports. This ambiguity in the data further complicates the determination of potential factors influencing the use of mineral or organic pillows in early medieval graves.

The presence of pillows does not seem to be linked with the grave type or the sex/age of the deceased[11]. Landevennec appears to be the only site where such item was found in clear association with individuals of higher status, showing once again a correlation between status and internal organisation of the grave lacking from the rest of the sample. Their use is the most common in this sample in the period between the seventh and the ninth century, with a few examples in the tenth century, but the lack of precise dating for the majority of the graves does not allow the detection of a more precise chronological pattern. The increasing number of pleine terre burials in anthropomorphic grave pits in the ninth century (Treffort, 1996a:73-75) could partly explain their lesser representation from that point onwards. Regional and even communal traditions thus seem to have been

[11] Chisq tests not statistically significant in all three cases

the main elements influencing the use of organic or mineral pillows, an aspect that needs once again to be considered carefully due to the preservation issues mentioned earlier.

3) Jewellery and weapons

The deposition of jewellery and weapons in the grave also appears to have been strongly linked to regional traditions (fig.10, vol.1).

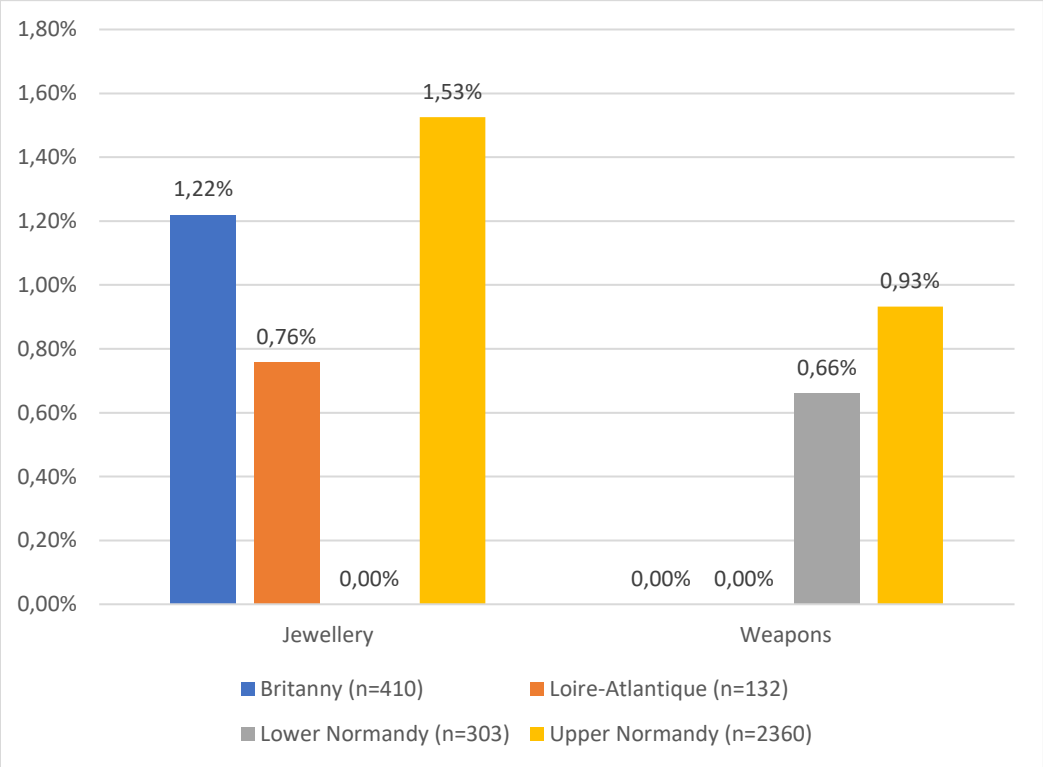


Figure 10: Regional distribution of jewellery and weapons in the French sample

In this sample, jewellery is mainly encountered in Upper Normandy, but is apparently totally absent from Lower-Normandy. Only a few examples were recorded in Brittany and Loire-Atlantique only offers a decorated bronze ring found in the ossuary at La Plaine-sur-Mer, a context that does not allow much interpretation. It is still worth noting that this item was not stolen during the relocation of the remains to this funerary feature. In Brittany, the objects

discovered at Landevennec and Visseiche appear to once again be associated with individuals of higher status. Various jewellery elements, like rings and necklaces, were found in *sarcophage monoxyle 1* adding to the prestige and complementing this already rich clothed burial. At Visseiche, glass-beads probably from necklaces, were discovered in two graves of necropolis 1 and 2. Surprisingly enough, the richest burial appears to be the one in necropolis 1, with gem and amber-beads completing the possible necklace along with two rings, an earring and a fragment of glass (Le Boulanger, 2004:29-32). This assemblage was dated to the end of the fifth-early sixth century, therefore slightly before the beginning of the use of necropolis 2, if the dating of both cemeteries based on their grave-goods is accurate. A relocation of the elites to necropolis 2 at a later date is thus conceivable and would explain this richer grave. Another possibility is simply the desire of this specific individual to be buried in necropolis 1. The last item for Brittany was discovered at Bréal-sous-Vitré, a bronze ring placed in burial 13 for which the sex/age of the individual could not be determined. In Upper Normandy, rings are the most common type of jewellery, found at Portejoie, and Honguermare-Guénouville. In addition to these, two graves at Portejoie also contained "*perles*" which could either be pearls, or, more likely, beads. Finally, jewellery appears to have been associated with the first phase of funerary use at Romilly-sur-Andelle, disappearing in the course of the eighth century (Colleter *et al.,* 2014:160). As the majority of the individuals with whom jewellery was placed could not be characterised (6/15), links between sex/age and the deposition of these items in the grave is difficult to prove, the rest of the sample being too small to draw significant statistical conclusions.

The same problem occurs when looking at weapons. Overall, nine graves were equipped with either a knife or a scramasaxe and in one exceptional case, a possible sword - grave 6648, Aubevoye (UN). To these can be added fourteen other graves from Romilly-sur-Andelle (UN) (Colleter, *et al.*, 2014:160), dated to the sixth-early seventh century (*ibid*). These are slightly more varied with spearheads

and arrowheads, alongside knives and scramasaxes. Due to the small number of graves and to the even smaller number of sexed individuals, is was not possible to realize a statistical study here to show different association depending on the biological identity of the individuals. Considering the high proportion of unsexed individuals (64.56% of the graves with weapons), the higher number of females equipped with such items in comparison to males (17.39% against 13.04%) cannot be used to argue their predominant association with an arsenal. Despite these issues, the association of females with offensive weapons is still important to note and is considered more thoroughly in chapter 8. In terms of age, 78.26% of these graves were adult burials, showing a higher frequency in their association with weapons but once again not statistically evaluable. No weapons were recorded in Brittany or Loire-Atlantique.

As for the chronological perspective, both jewellery and weapons appear to be characteristic of the fifth to early eighth century, with deposition of jewellery stretching slightly in time and reaching the ninth century at Landevennec and potentially Honguermare-Guénouville. Furthermore, the results obtained here despite the limitations caused by lack of data on some of the skeletons seem to confirm the recent observation on what used to be considered female or male specific grave-goods. Statistical analysis being impossible here, it cannot be affirmed that the sex/age of an individual did not have any link with the deposition of jewellery or weapons in the grave, but the sites like Romilly-sur-Andelle or Landevennec emphasise the complexities and regional traditions in the decisions the practice of grave-good deposition in the early medieval period.

4) Pottery, other metallic and organic elements

Like jewellery and weapons, the deposition of pottery could not be linked to a specific group of individuals due to lack of osteological data. Ceramics were mainly found in Upper Normandy, with only one other specimen in Brittany at

Bréal-sous-Vitré. A large quantity of pottery, comparatively to the other types of artefacts and to other sites of the sample, was discovered at Romilly-sur-Andelle (UN) (Colleter *et.al,* 2014:159) in the graves of the first burial phase dated between the middle of the sixth to the eighth century. At Portejoie (UN), pottery was also more frequent than at the other sites and could have been deposited in both early graves and inhumations of the later period, following the development of the practice in the later medieval periods. In some cases, only sherds could be found raising the question of the nature of this deposition: grave-goods broken at a later date due to the intensive use of the cemetery? Or intrusive sherds fallen in the grave pits as a result of regular digging? A more precise dating of the graves in question and detailed record of the position of these pieces in relation to the funerary structure and the body might provide an answer to these questions, but are unfortunately not available at present. Honguermare-Guénouville is the last site at which pottery was found, 28 sherds identified as part of a pitcher in grave 1013, but could once again correspond to intrusive elements (Deshayes, 2011:114, annexe 6:118). The period of this possible deposition is uncertain as the site was dated through typochronology and one *denier* of Louis the Pious found near, but not necessarily associated with, grave 309 (Deshayes, 2011:111). This uncertain date makes difficult comparison with Romilly-sur-Andelle and Portejoie, but if accurate, would fall in the same pattern as these two sites: a deposition of pottery in the early phases, and, later from the eleventh century, with a gap in the practice of approximately three hundred years.

The remaining grave-goods can be divided in three main groups: the 'other metallic elements' and the 'other organic elements', and a few unique elements of uncertain characterisation or other material. The metallic elements are generally identified as potential decorative pieces, clothing items or jewellery. As their interpretation is uncertain, they were not taken into account in the analyses of these two types of grave-goods (see above III.B.3). Some nails were also recorded as probably belonging to objects placed with the deceased rather than to the burial

container, the metallic element from grave 401 in Thaon (LN) being the only exception (Chapelain de Séreville-Niel, 2011:71). The remains of this child are indeed thought to have been buried within a box of which only the metal components have been preserved. A number of iron elements were also reported, with one 'of probably significant size' [12] in grave 168 at Hongumare-Guénouville (UN). Unfortunately, all these items were too worn to be characterised and thus cannot be interpreted further than as indicating the deposition of metal grave-goods in these inhumations. To these can be added at Portejoie (UN) and Isneauville (UN) less common objects: three keys for the former and an "*épingle à spatule*" or small spoon in bronze for the latter. The keys were all found in different grave types and with different individuals (one female and one male adult, and one child), possibly indicating a connection to the social identity of the individual rather than to their biological characteristics. If the other item is indeed a spoon, its placement in the grave can appear as unusual and unique in this sample. However, the uncertainty of this identification does not allow any further interpretation on the nature or possible meaning of this deposition.

Interpretation of the other organic elements is equally difficult. As can be expected, their number is smaller than the metallic elements, the conditions of preservation complicating their detection. In the French sample, they were only recorded at three sites. At Aubevoye (UN), the position of the bones indicates the potential use of binding elements at the ankles for grave 7145 and 6327 and at the wrists for grave 7232 (Guillier, 2013 vol.II: 308, 360, 406). Use of soft wrappings is also suspected for these three burials and is probably to link to the presence of these binding elements. Indeed, no trauma or other mark on the skeleton seem to indicate a violent death or execution, and the three individuals were all buried in the same manner as the other deceased discovered at the site. Therefore, the binding elements are most likely to link to an attempt to maintain the body in a

[12] *« grand élément en fer très fragmentaire dispersé dans la moitié est de la sépulture »* (Deshayes, 2011 : annexe 7 :123)– translated by Troadec, S.

certain position, keeping the feet together and the hands on the pelvis whilst wrapping a possible shroud around the cadaver. At Portejoie, a peculiar element appeared this time when looking at the arrangement of the grave 1267: a "pillow made out of filling vertebrae"[13]. This element is difficult to explain considering the nature of the grave (a coffin as indicated by the 24 nails found in the grave), and the lack of inhumation under this individual. Was another deceased disturbed during the digging of this grave and its remains used to rest the head of the new individual on? Did the vertebrae migrate here after decomposition of the coffin due to the earth movements of to the intervention of a third party (animal, insects, …)? Those are only a few of the questions raised by this item, the precise nature of which will here remain a mystery. The other graves of Portejoie also offered a possible sheath in wood or bark in grave 721 associated to a knife. Finally, at La Plaine-sur-Mer, the discovery of animal remains and shells in both the graves and the ossuary stands out in this sample. Two horn-cores, five shells and a bovine tibia were recorded in the ossuary. The presence of the latter in this structure could be intrusive, as other animal bones have been recorded at the site outside of the funerary context (Tessier, 1970:25). However, the two other elements were also discovered in other graves of the cemetery and can therefore be positively identified as intentional depositions (*ibid*). One horn-core was indeed discovered in grave 12 accompanying the remains of a perinatal and in grave 9 it is seven shells (three littorine and four pourpres) that were deposited with a male adult, a child and an unsexed adult. Proximity to the sea can explain to some extent this deposition but is it also crucial to note the purple production activity of the area (map 6, vol.2) (Dupont & Doyen, 2017:58) potentially linking this deposition to the activity of the deceased (*cf.* chapter 8).

A few other items could not be categorised here due to their unique material or type, often with very little elements allowing their characterisation. It

[13] *« coussin céphalique constitué de vertèbres de remplissage »* (Carré & Guillion, 1992 : annexes) – translated by Troadec, S.

is the case for the bronze coin discovered at Rezé in grave 16024 for which no information was available in the report, a small fragment of glass in grave 1349 at Portejoie and an 'object placed on the thorax"[14] of the individual buried in grave 448 at the same site. Another inhumation at Landevennec, this time of a child aged between 3-5 years old, contained 12 small coloured pebbles that have been identified as a marble game (Bardel & Perennec, 2004:147). As the grave was placed near the entrance of the collegiate church, and not in the monk's cemetery, this child might have been a member of a lay elite influential enough to obtain burial close to the Carolingian church, rather than a novice.

The presence of grave-goods thus seems to be linked first to chronology, the majority of the artefacts found in cemeteries or graves dated to the sixth- to the middle of the eighth century, as for example at Falaise (LN), Romilly-sur-Andelle (UN) and La Plaine-sur-Mer (LA). In parallel, regional traditions appear to have played an important part in the type and quantity of objects placed within the grave, Lower Normandy standing as the area where the practice is the most important. In addition to these temporal and geographical factors, the deposition of artefacts in the grave or in the use of elements in more direct association with the body are influenced by the role of the deceased in their community. The impact of social status is clearly visible in Brittany conveying the identity of potential high-status individuals, but more difficult to determine in other regions due to the lack of osteological data or to more ambiguous contexts. Finally, practical concerns are also reflected in the use of wrapping elements and other items linked to the treatment of the remains and to the internal organisation of the grave, with patterns brought out by statistical studies. In contrast, the religious affiliation of the deceased or their community does not appear to have had a major impact on the choice and deposition of grave-goods and other artefacts accompanying the

[14]*« objet sur le thorax »* (Carré & Guillon, 1990- annexes :12)– translated by Troadec, S.

body, with furnished graves in clearly Christian context, and burials empty of such elements in more ambiguous contexts.

IV) Buried population

Various elements related to the identity of the deceased can thus be conveyed by the location of the grave, its nature and the artefacts found within it. To complement this picture, it is now time to focus on that for which the funerary structures were created: the dead bodies. The aim of this section is not to provide a detailed profile of the buried population at each site (*cf*. chapter 3) but rather to offer another perspective on the burial areas by considering peculiar elements, going down to an individual study of the ensemble that constitute these cemeteries and, by extension, burial practices in these regions of northwest France.

A) Monastic and elite burials

The elements presented above already highlighted different treatment for certain groups of individuals. These variations are particularly visible at monastic sites, with burial areas serving the religious community but also attracting a wider lay population. At Landevennec, the inhumations are in majority male adult burials, of which 48.78% are categorised as 'mature' individuals. To these can be added a small proportion of juveniles (2.70%) aged between 2 and 12 years old. No females were recorded in any of the inhumation areas, but this absence needs to be considered carefully as 51.35% of the individuals uncovered at the site could not be characterised. When the preservation allowed a more detailed analysis of the remains, paleo-pathological studies revealed that joint diseases and spinal joints diseases were the most common ailment. Five individuals showed more specific

pathologies: the mature male of grave 6031 (Bardel & Perennec, 1994:16) found at the south-west of the church, had very strong muscular insertion, with possible tearing of the muscle fibres, in addition to joint diseases affecting mainly the upper part of the skeleton and osteoarthritis on the lumbar spine. These elements have been considered as indicating an important physical activity, possibly related to agrarian work (Bardel & Perenec, 1999, annexe 6:7). In contrast, graves 2 (Bardel, 1989:19) contained the remains of a possible male infirm from birth. The scoliosis and the near total absence of muscular insertions seem to indicate that this individual was bed-ridden and probably entirely dependent (Bardel & Perennec, 1999, annexe 6.2:8). That he managed to reach adulthood is in itself an indication of the care he was given, if not by the monks, by his potentially wealthy family, also granting him a burial in the nave of the church in the course of the eleventh century**.** The three other outstanding cases are all male individuals (one adult and two mature) who showed diverse trauma and diseases, which when present simultaneously, are known in French publications as the "horse-rider pathology" (Baillif-Ducros, Truc, Paresys & Villotte, 2012). To cause this condition, a very regular practice of equitation is required, an activity that is in the early middle ages more often associated with an elite lifestyle. Population and pathology data thus seem to confirm the presence of two or three groups of individuals at the site: a lay population with elites and the monastic community. However, these specific cases and the large proportion of uncharacterised skeletons prevent the confirmation of the hypothesis of a Monk cemetery and a lay burial area within and outside the monastic precinct.

The situation is slightly different at Saint-Evroult-Notre-Dame-du-Bois (LN). If the predominance of the male adult group follows what is observed at Landevennec, a possible female group was also identified, accounting for 16.67% of the sexed adult population. Furthermore, juveniles also constitute a significant part of the population (33.33%), notably higher than the 2.70% of the Breton monastery. Only one individual seems to have been affected by diseases consistent

with the horse-rider pathology, the rest of the sample appears nearly free of archaeologically visible ailments, with a few cases of dental pathologies and a few joint diseases. The population of this monastic site thus appears to be different on more than one aspect from that of Landevennec, but this can partly be attributed to the smaller scale of the excavation. Indeed, only the Chapter room was investigated, with mere 12 graves dated to the period considered here. This area could thus offer a different profile from the rest of the site, with a possible monk cemetery existing at another location as suspected in Landevennec. This interpretation must, however, remain a hypothesis as at present, the too small amount of data does not allow its confirmation. Similarly, the grave discovered in this room, and by extension within the monastic precinct, could belong either to elite members of the society, as might be indicated by the demographics and by the overall good health and horse-riding pathology, or to individuals serving the monastic community.

In contrast to both of these attested monasteries, the profile obtained at Notre-Dame-de-Bondeville (UN) is quite different. Indeed, despite being dominated by male individuals, the adult population of this site appears much more balanced than at Landevennec or Saint-Evroult-Notre-Dame-du-Bois with a ratio of 53:32 (considering both attested and possible males and females), and with a proportion of juveniles halfway between that of the two monasteries (10.53%). The partial excavation of the site could again have had an impact on the perception of this burial ground and its function, but the more detailed analysis of the remains revealed that 63.88% of the male population and 22.73% of the females were affected by the horse-rider pathology. Therefore, if the identification of Notre-Dame-de-Bondeville as an elite burial site can be supported by the osteological data, that of a monastic cemetery does not seem consistent with the elements discussed above, with a more varied population and a concentration of pathologies linked to an elite rather than to a more peaceful coenobitic lifestyle. It is however possible that a funerary chapel dedicated to the burial of a lay elite was erected in

association with the abbey, but once again the issues of the contemporaneity of these structures makes the interpretation of the site difficult. A comparison with Visseiche necropolis 2, identified as a potential elite burial ground, would have been particularly interesting in that context but, unfortunately, no data on the population buried at this site was available.

Demographic and osteological studies thus appear to correspond to the interpretations presented during the analysis of the burial areas and the grave. The hypothesis of elite burials is reinforced here by the paleo-pathology and offers a solid ground for possible further analyses at the sites where population data is still lacking or where larger excavations are planned, potentially confirming the existence of multiple burial areas based on social status or belonging to certain communities. Religious vows and high position in the social hierarchy are however not the only elements influencing the location of the graves and the grouping of certain individuals.

B) Rural sites: groups and zoning

As mentioned in the analysis of the organisation of the burial area, small groups of graves were identified at both Bréal-sous-Viré (Brit.) and Visseiche necropolis 2 (Brit.) (see above II.B). They are defined by individuals placed in the same grave pit and separated by stone slabs creating individual cist-graves (Guigon & Bardel, 335-336, Le Boulanger, 2005:22-24). Groups have often been interpreted as reflecting family links between the deceased (Guigon & Bardel, 1989:349), but this hypothesis needs to be considered carefully as the study of non-metric traits undertaken at Bréal-sous-Vitré showed that individuals from a same kin are not necessarily buried in the same grave pit or even close to one another (Le Boulanger, 2005:29). It is of course not possible to exclude grouping according to marriage or other links between individuals, but these cannot be determined

through the means of archaeology or osteology. In contrast, the study of non-metric traits and cranial biometry revealed at Notre-Dame-de-Bondeville (UN) a desire to keep family members together, either by burying individuals on top of one another or by placing the remains of the previous occupant in réduction (Langlois & Gallien, 2012:320). These analyses are naturally not as definite as DNA ones would be, but the identification of this site as a potential elite burial ground does appear to be a favourable context for the presence of familial multiple burials. Groups, or rather multiple burial areas, were also observed at Aubevoye (UN). The detailed population study realised in the report showed that all groups were constituted of similar population with males, females and children represented in all the Cours (Guillier, 2013:220). Considering all burial areas, the sexual ratio also appears to be balanced with slightly more females than males (41:38). Overall, the paleo-pathological data show evidence of important physical activity with various joint diseases and trauma especially affecting the male population (Guillier, 2013:221). Oral hygiene also appears to have been very poor with 51.01% of the population, including juveniles, presenting at least one dental pathology. If morphological variations have been recorded for 35 individuals, no link was made in the report between these non-metric traits and the grouping of individuals in the different *cours*. Thus, distribution of the individuals in the three different burial areas at Aubevoye does not appear to have followed any pattern that could be archaeologically determinable.

If the desire to bury related individuals together seems to vary depending on the sites, another major factor appears to have engendered zoning at several cemeteries of the sample. Demographic study coupled with an analysis of the layout of the cemetery revealed at Thaon (LN) a very important concentration of juveniles, especially noticeable around the apse (Chapelain de Séreville-Niel, 2013:36); making this site the only one in the sample where young individuals are more represented than the adult ones. Even more peculiar is the overrepresentation of perinatal and children, representing respectively 28.31%

and 24.69% of the entire population, and with comparatively few adolescents (4.22%). The adult population is in contrast more balanced with a ratio of 37:24, the males slightly more represented and affected by pathologies consistent with important physical activity as is commonly observed at rural cemeteries of the early Middle Ages (Chapelain de Séreville-Niel, 2013:43-44). Unfortunately, no osteological data was available for Basly (LN) making impossible the comparison of the two sites lying only a few kilometres apart but used simultaneously. It can however be said here that only one child was discovered at Basly for 13 adults, possibly hinting at a difference in the recruitment of the buried population at these two sites, an observation that needs to be taken with extreme caution due to the very small size of the sample at this site. If the proportion of juveniles at Thaon is exceptional, it is however not the only site where they are found in specific and privileged areas. At Plomeur (Brit.), the eastern end of a built structure was apparently dedicated to the burial of young individuals (Giot & Monnier, 1973:10) described as buried "quickly" or "quite simply"[15], but close to the burial focus and, if the building was indeed a chapel or church, near its apse. The same can be said at Portejoie (UN), where several layers of burials of young individuals were discovered along the south wall of the church (Carré & Guillion, 1993:13). No precise dates are available for these graves but the superimposition of graves does appear to show a continuous use of this area for the burial of juveniles. At La Plaine-sur-Mer and Romilly-sur-Andelle, it is within the burial foci that these individuals were found (Colleter *et al.,* 2014:151). The selection is even more precise at both of these sites as only perinatal seem to have been accepted within the walls of the church/chapel, whilst for Romilly-sur-Andelle at least, the rest of the juveniles appear to have been buried alongside the adult population. Phase one also saw a statistically significant over-representation of female individuals to the north of the church/chapel (Colleter *et al.,* 2014:155), possibly hinting at their particular status within the community.

[15]*« assez sommairement »* (Giot & Monnier, 1973 :10) – translated by Troadec, S.

Osteology and palaeopathology also highlighted the lack of segregation of individuals affected by illness or showing physical deformities. To the case of the obviously infirm individual from grave 2 at Landevennec (Brit.) can be added a possible case of rickets at Aubevoye (UN) and a male adult affected by several malformations of the feet, including atrophies and deformations at Portejoie (UN) (Guillier, 2013:209; Carré & Guillon, 1991:annexes). Several cases of congenital anomalies such as developmental dysplasia of the hip (DDH) and coxa valga/vara were also recorded at these sites. However, none of them appear to have been placed away from the other individuals or treated differently in terms of burial practice. Their visible ailments and, in some cases, deformity, do not seem to have impacted their inclusion in their respective communal cemeteries. Infectious diseases appear to have been equally disregarded in in terms of burial practices. Cases of tuberculosis and possible meningitis having caused death were indeed recorded at Landevennec (Brit.) and Aubevoye (UN), the individuals once again placed with their peers. At Falaise (LN), grave 1009 was inhumed slightly away from the main group in the south, but still close to the burial focus, thus still including this male adult probably dead following an osteomyelitis in the cemetery. Similarly, individuals who underwent a surgical intervention like trepanations were found alongside other graves, as it observed at Plomeur (Brit.), with no elements allowing their distinction from the rest of the population. It has also been theorised that the possible grave placed in the chapel of the second burial phase contains the remains of the healer who practice these surgeries, putting this person in a privileged place rather than rejecting them to another area of the cemetery (Giot & Monner, 1975:12). Finally, at Bréal-sous-Vitré (Brit.), the only attested case of violent death of the sample – a trauma to the head probably caused by an axe or a sword - was also integrated in the burial ground (Le Boulanger, 2005:annexe).

The more detailed study of the buried population thus revealed some interesting aspects linked to social hierarchy but also to the biological identity of

the deceased. If status appears to have played a role in accessing the most privileged burial areas, dying at a young age also seem to have granted this right, be it in monastic, elite or rural context. In terms of grouping of individual, the desire to keep members of a same kin together appears as more acute at elite burial grounds than at rural cemeteries. This interpretation must however be taken carefully as it is based solely on the evidence from Notre-Dame-de-Bondeville (UN) and might thus be the result of a sample bias. Finally, the lack of segregation of individuals affected by various pathologies or congenital anomalies raises once again the question of the reasons behind the isolation of certain burials or grouping of specific graves together in some early medieval burial areas, reasons that might unfortunately not be identifiable archaeologically.

V) Conclusions

The inter- and intra-regional comparison of the French key-sites thus reveals a diversity of practice coexisting at different scales. The location of the burial area appears to follow strong regional traditions, Upper Normandy cemeteries often focusing on Roman structures, whilst other regions favoured proximity to the sea or placement on a prominent natural feature. The reasons for these associations are further explored in chapter 7, but it can already be said here that the choice of focus seems to correspond a desire to mark the landscape through funerary usage, whilst also potentially reflecting spiritual concerns, linking the dead to the past and/or to specific natural elements. Rules of organisation of the cemetery seem to have been shared across the sample. Overall, burial areas appear to follow a cluster-and-row organisation, the profile of the individuals gathered in the same groups and/or areas of the cemetery depending on the community (*cf.* chapter 7). Thaon (LN) showed for instance an exceptional concentration of juveniles near the church apse, whilst the cemetery of Romilly-

sur-Andelle (UN) placed females together in the first phase. Landevennec (Birt.) can also be cited here, dividing the lay and monastic population between different areas. The reasons motivating the gathering of some individuals within the same group or the same grave are however not always archaeologically visible, but possible hypotheses can be explored (*cf.* chapters 7 and 8).

The wish to be buried close to a burial focus was common to all of the key-sites, engendering different management strategies depending in the density and length of the funerary usage of the site. Concerns over the preservation of the remains seem to have been variable and subject to expiry, raising the question of the length of memory and the importance of the maintained physical integrity of the grave and of the body in both monastic (Landevennec, Brit.), parochial (Portejoie, UN) and non-rural (Rezé, LA) contexts. This issue also highlighted the functional and symbolic nature of the grave markers not always accurately indicating the location of the grave, as seen in Plomeur (Brit.), but keeping an important role in the conveyance of individual identity, as observed at Notre-Dame-de-Bondeville (UN). The internal organisation of the grave comes to complement this display.

The choice of burial container or deposition in pleine terre appears to be linked to several factors. Once again, this aspect will be examined more thoroughly in chapter 8 but some trends can be mentioned here. In this case study, Brittany offered the most clearly defined examples of display of status burial container, the rest of the sample showing an overall chronological change from sarcophagi to pleine terre and wooden container in the course of the late eighth-ninth century. This overall typochronological observation needs however to be considered carefully as the use of specific containers appears to vary from one site to the next, once again highlighting the importance of a more detailed approach. By looking at individual graves, it was also possible to show the ultimately personal nature of the choices, adding to regional variations, a local and individual diversity. Grave-goods and other artefacts also reflected regional specificities and personal display of both

biological and social identity, whilst serving more practical purposes linked to the transportation of the body.

The following chapters will now offer a directly comparable presentation (chapter 5) and analysis (chapter 6) of the key-sites and findings from southwest Britain, using the same methodology and thematic approach for clarity and comparability.

Chapter 5: Presentation of the key-sites in Southwest England

The following chapter offers a detailed analysis and presentation of the results from of the twenty-seven sites selected in southwest Britain, starting with Cornwall and moving eastwards to Devon, Dorset, Somerset and Hampshire (map 3, vol.2). Data linked to the main themes of study are once again presented in tabulated format, offering a clear view of the main characteristics of each of the cemeteries in terms of location, grave types, populations and artefacts deposited with the dead. Radiocarbon dates were available for half of the sites. The twelve other cemeteries were dated with different techniques - immediate built context, stratigraphy, typochronology of the burials, grave-goods and other artefacts found in close association with the graves – resulting in various degrees of precision. As for chapter 3, a list of terms used in the tables and their definitions is available in volume 2 Appendix 1.

I) Cornwall

Four sites were selected in Cornwall, all located on or in close proximity to the coast. Data was collected from different publications sometimes presenting excavations that took place at an earlier date, leading to imprecisions or to fluctuating quantity and quality of data depending on the theme considered.

A) Carnanton

Carnanton is a good example of this variable quality of data. Indeed, information for the cemetery was quite limited due to a lack of a detailed report following the investigations of 1943 (Preston-Jones, 1984:157). The burial ground

appears to have comprised 16 cist graves placed on a ridge dominating the coast (fig.32, vol.2) (Preston-Jones, 1984:157,159). The use of this type of container, and comparisons drawn from other sites from the same region, led to the dating of this cemetery to the tenth or eleventh century (Preston-Jones, 1984:168), thus significantly later than in other areas (*cf.* chapters 4 and 6). No definite structures seem to have been in direct association with the burial ground, but the "stony patches" discovered at c.45m from the graves were interpreted as potentially representing a building linked to the inhumations (Preston-Jones, 1984:159). The population of the site seems to have been composed of males, females and children, their precise numbers not being given in the publication. Shrouds might also have been used but once again, no detailed record or explanations of the methods used for their identification were available (Preston-Jones, 1984:161).

B) Mawgan Porth

Situated on a slope overlooking the sea, the early medieval cemetery of Mawgan Porth follows a long occupation of the valley starting in the Bronze Age with a few dwellings and a round-barrow, and carrying on until the second century AD (Bruce-Mitford, 1997:3-4). In the Late Saxon period, the burial ground seems to have been associated with a settlement, clearly separated from it by a wooden palisade or a similar post-built structure (Bruce-Mitford, 1997:63, 70). The precise chronology of the site is not known, the only dating elements being a silver penny from c.990s AD of uncertain stratigraphic position; and to a certain extent, the types of grave found at the site, placing its funerary usage in the tenth century (Bruce-Mitford, 1997:87).

Pleine terre	Pleine terre?	Cist	Stone container?	Unknown	**Total**
6	2	12	1	2	**23**

Table 57: Grave types - Mawgan Porth

The 23 graves recorded at Mawgan Porth include one empty plot and one pit containing the remains of a child and the skull of an adult (fig.33, vol.2). Grave-goods are represented by one pottery sherd in grave 6 and white quartzite pebbles in grave 9. Quartzite was also found in grave 4 but its presence there seems to be connected to the burial container rather than to a more ritual deposition.

	Infant	Adolescent	Juvenile	Subadult	Adult	?	**Total**
Males	0	0	0	0	1	0	**1**
Males?	0	0	0	0	1	1	**2**
Females	0	0	0	0	2	0	**2**
Females?	0	0	0	0	1	0	**1**
Unsexed	2	1	7	1	3	3	**7**
Total	**2**	**1**	**7**	**1**	**8**	**4**	**23**

Table 58: Population - Mawgan Porth

C) Padstow

The precise context of the graves discovered at Padstow is more difficult to characterise. 17 cists probably belonging to a much larger burial ground were partially uncovered in close proximity to the modern churchyard (fig.34, vol.2) (Manning & Stead, 2002-3:80). Four graves, including two double burials, were fully excavated, whilst the others were left sealed by their stone lids, depriving us of the majority of the population information for this cemetery. One of the unexcavated graves could however be identified as an infant burial due to its very small dimensions (Manning & Stead, 2002-3:86).

The inhumations were placed in fan-shaped rows, indicating the influence of a common burial focus located beyond the limits of the excavated area (Manning & Stead, 2002-3:83). It is assumed that the cemetery was associated with the monastery of Saint Petroc or with a parish church, the former hypothesis being the most probable one according to Manning and Stead (Manning & Stead, 2002-

3:92). Radiocarbon-dates were obtained for four individuals, skeleton 1005 (cal. 650-890AD 2σ) and skeleton 1004 (cal. 680-980AD 2σ) providing the earliest and latest dates for the funerary usage of this site (Manning & Stead, 2002-3:96).

	Perinatal	Subadult	Adult	Mature	**Total**
Males	0	0	0	2	**2**
Males?	0	1	0	0	**1**
Females?	0	0	1	0	**1**
Unsexed	1	0	0	0	**1**
Total	**1**	**1**	**1**	**2**	**5**

Table 59: Population - Padstow

No artefacts were found in association with the deceased, but this information needs to be considered carefully due to the partial nature of the excavation.

D) Saint Endellion

The graves discovered at Saint Endellion were divided in three groups of slightly different orientations placed on either side of a parish boundary, with the church of Saint Endellienta situated only a couple of hundred metres to the northeast of group 1 (fig.35, vol.2) (Trudgian, 1987:146-147). Of the 24 inhumations, twelve were placed in cists, whilst the type of the other six graves could not be determined. The precise chronology of these clusters is not known, but their relationship with the parish boundary could indicate that they belong to different phases: the first inhumations installed in the course of the seventh century or earlier, and the last in the eleventh century in direct association with manor of Lanowe (Trudgian, 1987:149).

	Child	Subadult	Adult	No age	**Total**
Males	0	1	2	0	**3**
Females?	0	0	1	0	**1**
Unsexed	3	0	0	17	**20**
Total	**3**	**1**	**3**	**17**	**24**

Table 60: Population - Saint Endellion

The few elements discovered in association with the grave - some flint, charcoal fragments and pottery sherds - were considered as potentially intrusive but the iron-like stain recorded in grave K seems to indicate a metallic grave-good (Trudgian, 1987:150-151).

II) Devon

Devon, only three sites offered enough information for the purposes of this study. If this small number stands out, the important funerary usage of each of these cemeteries and their various contexts provide a good overview of the early medieval burial practices in this region.

A) Barnstaple castle

The cemetery discovered under the motte-and-bailey castle of Barnstaple, on the River Taw, is thought to have been associated with the minster church of the *burh*, or at least with a religious structure standing on this small peninsula before the establishment of the mint in the tenth century (Miles, 1986:62,73). The lack of evidence for this building could however negate this hypothesis. Alternatively, this structure could have been located in the area destroyed by later constructions (Miles, 1986:78). An important quantity of flint testifies to the

occupation of the site during prehistory (Miles, 1986:61). If some of them were found in graves, the intentionality of their deposition cannot be assured, and their identification as grave-good is therefore equally uncertain (Miles, 1986:62).

A total of 105 graves were excavated, all with very different degrees of preservation (fig.36, vol.2). The coffin category includes one charcoal burial.

Pleine terre	Pleine terre?	Coffin	Wooden container?	Unknown	**Total**
10	35	46	12	2	**105**

Table 61: Grave types - Barnstaple Castle

No detailed record of the individuals placed in each grave was available, but an overall picture of the buried population was offered in the osteological report, allowing for a demographic analysis (Miles, 1986:82).

	Perinatal	Infants	Child	Adolescent	**Total**
Unsexed	3	8	7	4	**22**

Table 62: Juvenile population - Barnstaple Castle

	Subadult	Adult	Mature	?	**Total**
Males	5	17	2	0	**24**
Females	10	8	6	0	**24**
Unsexed	6	10	1	18	**35**
Total	**21**	**35**	**9**	**18**	**83**

Table 63: Adult population - Barnstaple Castle

The presence of stones in the graves was identified in some instances as intentional deposition not to be linked to any structural concerns. Two lithic pillows were

recorded along with white quartz (Miles, 1986:66) and other stones placed in different areas in relation to the body.

B) Exeter

Burial in Anglo-Saxon Exeter appears to have taken place on the site of the former Roman basilica (Bidwell, 1979:112-113, Henderson & Bidwell, 1982:149). The first phase, also known as cemetery I, was radiocarbon dated to the fifth century, and was followed by cemetery II and III, respectively in use between the seventh and the tenth century and between the tenth and the twelfth century (figs.37, 38 and 39 vol.2) (Henderson & Bidwell, 1982:150, 154-155). Only six pleine terre burials were recovered for the first funerary phase, the rest partly destroyed by potential later structures still to be uncovered beyond the limits of the excavated area (Henderson & Bidwell, 1982:152). These graves were implanted on the basilica and forum, following the same orientation as one of the antique walls.

The two later phases, comprising 53 inhumations for cemetery II and 35 for cemetery III, overlap with cemetery I but follow a different orientation. Both phases appear to have been organised around what has been identified as the minster church (Henderson & Bidwell, 1982:151). To these 94 inhumations can be added 19 others that could not be attributed to a phase and will thus not be part of the main analysis of the site. Unfortunately, no information on the individuals was available for either of the cemeteries (Henderson & Bidwell, 1982:155). A gold ring discovered in the burial of a mature male is the only grave-good found at the site.

Pleine terre	Coffin	Charcoal burial	**Total**
31	14	8	**53**

Table 64: Grave types - Exeter cemetery II

Pleine terre	Coffin	Charcoal burial	**Total**
9	10	16	**35**

Table 65: Grave types - Exeter cemetery III

C) Kenn

111 graves were identified on a small combe opening on to the Exe estuary and on the River Kenn (Weddell, 2000:93-94). Pottery sherds of high quality dated to the fourth century were the only evidence for a settlement in the vicinity of the cemetery (Weddell, 2000:117). The relationship between this area and the burial ground is however difficult to determine. Indeed, radiocarbon dates were obtained for both human bones and buried soils, the former offering a combined date range of 530-660AD (92.2% confidence) and the latter of 130-430AD (95.4% confidence) (Weddell, 2000:117). Expansion of the excavated area could also reveal earlier graves making the Late-Roman settlement at least partly contemporary with the cemetery.

47 graves, including five enclosures, were fully investigated (fig.40, vol.2). The very poor preservation of the remains made impossible the characterisation of the buried population, most of the skeletons only surviving as a stain or completely absent (Weddell, 2000:95). No grave-goods were identified, the only elements found in the grave pits being traces attributed to wooden containers (Weddell, 2000:95).

Pleine terre?	Wooden container?	**Total**
98	13	**111**

Table 66: Grave types - Kenn

III) Dorset

As in Devon, three sites were recorded for Dorset. Despite some partial excavation and the old date of the Knowlton Circles investigations, their distribution over the region and the diverse nature of their contexts constitute a limited but high quality sample for this area.

A) Charminster

The early medieval cemetery of Charminster was discovered in very close proximity to the modern graveyard and could represent part of the first minster church burial ground (Bellamy, 2001:1). The site itself is situated in the plains near the River Cerne, the Anglo-Saxon occupation probably to be found under the current town (Bellamy, 2001:2). Due to the constraint of urban excavation, only 12 graves could be uncovered, most likely representing only a small sample of the totality of the cemetery (fig.41, vol.2). All the burials appear to have been unfurnished pleine terre belonging to 9 adults, one possible adult and an individual of undetermined age. The skeletons were left in place, making sexual characterisation impossible and preventing any radiocarbon dating.

B) Knowlton Circles

At the Knowlton Circles, the prehistoric main barrow or 'Great Barrow' seems to have attracted burial in the early medieval period (fig.42, vol.2). During the 1958 excavations, three groups of graves were identified: two discovered within the area defined by the ditch and one just outside of it to the south (Field, 1963:117). A church was also found within the limits of the Great Barrow, its presence attested in documentary sources of the twelfth century (Field, 1963:121). It is possible that this building had a precedent to link to the early medieval graves,

but this must remain a hypothesis, as the precise relationship between these structures is not known. The sex and age of only three individuals could be determined: one juvenile, one possible male adult and one possible female adult. This identification needs, however, to be treated with caution as it is based on photographic analysis only (Field, 1963:124). The ten pleine terre graves and six other burials of unknown types were all unfurnished, making their precise dating difficult.

C) Ulwell

The burial ground of Ulwell is strategically placed next to one of the few paths going through the chalk ridges characterising its immediate vicinity, both dominating the coast and marking the passage on the Goodligton Hill (Cox, 1988:37). Occupation in the area seems to have started in the prehistoric period, intensifying later on with a Romano-British settlement from the first century AD onwards (Cox, 1988:46), possibly still inhabited in the early medieval period. Alternatively, the modern village could lie on the remains of an early medieval settlement linked to the funerary area (Cox, 1988:47). The cemetery itself was radiocarbon-dated to the seventh to ninth century (Cox, 1988:42) and comprised 54 graves containing 57 individuals (fig. 43, vol.2).

Pleine terre	Cist	Stone lining	Stone container?	**Total**
25	13	6	10	**54**

Table 67: Grave types - Ulwell

Grave-goods were only identified in two graves, an iron knife for burial 50 dated early into the use of the cemetery, and a possibly intrusive iron nail in burial 39. The rest of the inhumations appearing unfurnished.

	Infant	Child	Adolescent	**Total**
Unsexed	1	7	2	**10**

Table 68: Juvenile population – Ulwell

	Subadult	Adult	Mature	?	**Total**
Males	1	4	4	0	**9**
Males?	3	2	1	1	**7**
Females	4	7	3	0	**14**
Females?	0	2	1	1	**4**
Unsexed	4	1	0	8	**13**
Total	**12**	**16**	**9**	**10**	**47**

Table 69: Adult population - Ulwell

IV) Somerset

The Somerset key-sites offer more information. The five sites scattered across the county offer a comprehensive picture of the different burial practices in various contexts, from small cemeteries linked to old structures to large burial areas associated with important religious centres.

A) Hicknoll Slait

In the late 1960s, a few graves were uncovered by workers at Hicknoll Slait, a site lying directly east of South Cadbury and strategically placed to offer a view on the interior of the hillfort (Davey, 2002:80). To these four pleine terre burials can be added two others discovered more recently in the same area (Taylor, 1967:68; Davey, 2002:84). No settlement was found in association with this burial

ground. Indeed, if the hillfort appears to have been occupied between the fifth and sixth century, activity seems to stop from c.600AD to reappear only in the eleventh century (Alcock *et al.*, 1997:111, 152; Barett, Freeman & Woodward, 2000:43), burial at Hicknoll Slait thus occurring during the occupational hiatus.

	Adolescent	Adult	?	**Total**
Male	1	3	0	**4**
Unsexed	0	0	2	**2**
Total	**1**	**3**	**2**	**6**

Table 70: Population - Hicknoll Slait

The presence and type of weaponry discovered in some of the graves led to the dating of this cemetery to the seventh century (Taylor, 1967:64), the rest of the burials to potentially place earlier or later than this date. Remains of charcoal, cereals and other charred wild species were recovered in the graves excavated in 2000 (Davey, 2002:94-95). It is unfortunately not possible to say if the same elements were also present in the other burials, as the inhumations had already been heavily disturbed before the arrival of the archaeologists at the site (Taylor, 1967:68).

Jewellery	Weapons	Other organic elements	Other	**Total**
2	3	2	1	**8**

Table 71: Grave-goods and other artefacts - Hicknoll Slait

B) Lamyatt Beacon

At Lamyatt Beacon, it is the presence of a Romano-Celtic temple that seems to have attracted burials in the early medieval period. Built in the third century and probably in use until the fifth century (Leech *et al.,* 1986:259), this building and the

antler-burials that accompanied it were probably still marking the landscape in the early medieval period, providing a focal point for 16 pleine terre burials (figs.44 and 45, vol.2). Another structure found directly to the north of the Romano-Celtic building could also have played an important role in the cemetery, but its ambiguous relationship to the temple (Leech *et al.*, 1986:274) and equally uncertain dating (*terminus post-quem*: 291AD obtained from a coin) (Leech *et al.,* 1986:268), make its interpretation difficult (*cf.* chapter 6). Un-calibrated radiocarbon dates place these inhumations between the sixth and eighth centuries (Leech *et al.*, 1986:272), the Romano-British pottery found in the graves considered intrusive. No contemporary settlement was discovered in the vicinity of the cemetery, the temple standing as the only built element in the direct environment of the graves.

	Infant	Child	Adolescent	**Total**
Females	0	0	1	**1**
Unsexed	1	1	0	**2**
Total	**1**	**1**	**1**	**3**

Table 72: Juvenile population - Lamyatt Beacon

	Subadult	Adult	Mature	?	**Total**
Males	0	0	1	0	**1**
Males?	0	1	0	1	**2**
Females	3	4	2	0	**9**
Unsexed	0	0	0	1	**1**
Total	**3**	**5**	**3**	**2**	**13**

Table 73: Adult population - Lamyatt Beacon

Details on the buried population were available in the report (Everton in Leech *et al.,* 1986:326-328), but some elements like the sexual characterisation of juveniles,

were here left out, as they are often considered very uncertain in more recent osteological publications.

C) Stoneage Barton

The excavation of prehistoric and Roman features at Stoneage Barton led to the partial discovery of a seventh century burial area (Webster & Brunning, 2004:54). Five graves, three of which were divided up between two enclosures, were uncovered on a promontory to the west of the Quantock Hills (fig.46, vol.2) (Webster & Brunning, 2004:56). The cemetery seems to extend to the south, with one possible funerary enclosure partially visible at the limit of the excavated area, the entirety of the burial ground potentially delineated by a prehistoric enclosure ditch (Webster & Brunning, 2004:57,61). Radiocarbon dating of the skeleton from grave 1 – combined at cal. 600-690AD 2σ - places these inhumations between the later sixth- and the early eighth century (Webster & Brunning, 2004:63).

Pleine terre	Wooden container?	Undetermined container	**Total**
1	1	3	**5**

Table 74: Grave types – Stoneage Barton

The poor preservation of the remains made the identification of the individuals difficult, the majority being of unknown sex. Grave 2 was not excavated but its dimensions seem consistent with an adult burial. One hobnail was discovered in grave 5, but its presence is considered as intrusive (Webster & Brunning, 2004:62).

	Juvenile	Adult	Mature	**Total**
Females?	0	0	1	**1**
Unsexed	1	3	0	**4**
Total	**1**	**3**	**1**	**5**

Table 75: Population - Stoneage Barton

D) Templecombe

The twelve pleine terre burials of Templecombe were not found in association with an earlier feature but placed to the north of a boundary dividing the parishes of Abbas and Templecombe (Newman, 1992:61). Earthworks were also discovered in the immediate proximity of the graves, but their unknown chronological relationship with the other features of the site makes their interpretation difficult (fig.47, vol.2) (Newman, 1992:67,71). No other structures seem to have been found near the cemetery (Newman, 1992:70), the use of which was radiocarbon-dated to the late seventh to the eleventh century (sk256: cal.681-974 2σ – cal.918-942 1σ; sk266: cal. 794-1026 2σ, cal.892-998 1σ) (Newman, 1992:65).

	Child	Subadult	Adult	Mature	?	**Total**
Males	0	1	1	1	0	**3**
Females	0	1	3	0	0	**4**
Unsexed	1	0	3	0	1	**5**
Total	**1**	**2**	**7**	**1**	**1**	**12**

Table 76: Population – Templecombe

No grave-goods or other artefacts were found in association with the eleven individuals, nor with the bone-scatter that represent the twelfth inhumation of the site (Newmann, 1992:62).

E) Wells

Excavation at Wells Cathedral partially uncovered an extensive Anglo-Saxon cemetery (figs. 48, 49 and 50 vol.2) (Rodwell, 2001:55), the earliest use of which was radiocarbon-dated to the late seventh-later eighth century (Rodwell, 2001:82). The graves were first organised around a Roman mausoleum, replaced in the course of the tenth century by another structure identified as a mortuary chapel (Rodwell, 2001:61,85), showing a continuous funerary usage of this area, and an uninterrupted occupation of the cathedral site from the Roman period onwards. Burial at Wells carried on well after the eleventh century, but the later inhumations will not be considered here as they fall beyond the chronological limits of this study.

A total of 242 funerary structures and one empty grave were recorded for a period stretching from the seventh to the eleventh century, some graves possibly dated from slightly later, as was the case at Portejoie (Upper Normandy) and other densely occupied burial areas selected for this study.

Pleine terre	Pleine terre?	Cist	Coffin	Wooden container?
193	2	3	4	34
Mixed coffrages	Mortared tomb	Plaster lined	Ossuary	Unknown
1	1	1	1	2
Total: 242				

Table 77: Grave type – Wells

248 individuals were recorded, the difference between this number and that of the funerary features explained by the use of an ossuary and by some multiple burials.

	Perinatal	Infant	Child	Adolescent	**Total**
Males?	0	0	0	3	**3**
Unsexed	10	7	20	9	**46**
Total	**10**	**7**	**20**	**12**	**49**

Table 78: Juvenile population – Wells

	Subadult	Adult	Mature	No age	Adult?	?	**Total**
Males	8	24	7	0	0	0	**39**
Males?	4	8	1	0	0	0	**13**
Females	7	24	7	0	0	0	**38**
Females?	2	7	1	0	0	0	**10**
Unknown	5	84	4	2	1	3	**99**
Total	**26**	**147**	**20**	**2**	**1**	**3**	**199**

Table 79: Adult population – Wells

The number of elements placed with the deceased is comparatively very small with only one Frisian series X scaetta dated to c. 720-730 (Rodwell, 2001:72,516) found in possible association with grave 140, an undated silver coin near grave 150 and a possible pillow in grave 55. The Anglo-Saxon glass fragment (grave 154), the bronze and iron fragments (grave 210 and 65) are difficult to positively identify as grave-goods and could be intrusive.

V) <u>Hampshire</u>

Eight sites were selected for Hampshire, nine of which are situated in Hamwic-Southampton. For the sake of clarity, these five burial areas will be presented independently from each other after a rapid presentation of the emporium.

A) Meon Hill

The several cases of decapitation, prone burials and other peculiar burial practices, led to the identification of the cemetery of Meon Hill as an execution one (fig.51, vol.2). The ten pleine terre burials were placed on the ramparts of an Iron Age hillfort, materialising the limit between the parishes of Lonstock and Houghton (Reynolds, 2009:116-117).

	Subadult	Adult	Mature	**Total**
Males	3	1	4	**8**
Males?	0	1	0	**1**
Females	0	1	0	**1**
Total	**3**	**3**	**4**	**10**

Table 80: Population - Meon Hill

A few objects were discovered in association with the skeletons, mostly as part of their clothing or jewellery these individuals might have been wearing at the time of their death (Reynolds, 2009:177-178), the only other element being a coin dated to the reign of Edward the Confessor. All these objects were dated to the seventh to eleventh century (Liddell, 1933:132; Reynolds, 2009:116).

Clothing items	Jewellery	Coins	**Total**
2	3	1	**6**

Table 81: Grave-goods and other artefacts – Meon Hill

B) Hamwic-Southampton

The establishment in the late seventh-early eighth century of the emporium at Hamwic appears to follow a long but disparate occupation of the outskirts of the Itchen estuary (Birbeck *et al.*, 2005:190). The numerous excavations offered clear and comprehensive evidence of the activity of this port

and its connections with the Continent (Birbeck *et al.*, 2005:191, 193), and revealed a number of burial areas linked to different phases and areas of the settlement (Cherryson, 2005:79-82, 243-245). The following sections present some of these cemeteries and their possible contexts. Once again, the burial grounds that did not provide enough information for the purpose of this study are not considered here but will be mentioned in the detailed analyses in later chapters.

1) SOU 414, 207 and 862

These three burial grounds are presented here together due to their common location away from the Anglo-Saxon settlement of Hamwic (Cherryson, 2005: 264-265). These three small cemeteries were discovered in the Antique settlement of Clausentum, SOU414 and 207 most likely representing one cemetery standing inside the settlement walls, and SOU 862 a bit further way, outside of the precinct (*ibid*). Radiocarbon dates place the use of these cemeteries in the seventh-ninth century (Cherryson, 2005:265), with a slightly earlier start for SOU 862 in the sixth century (*ibid*).

The very poor preservation of the remains made impossible the study of their population and complicated the identification of the grave types. In this thesis, the 15 graves of SOU 862, 6 graves of SOU 414 and 8 graves of SOU 207 are all considered as possible pleine terre burials.

2) Cook Street

The cemetery of Cook Street was first discovered in 1994, two later excavations in 1997 and 2001 revealing a few more graves raising the number of inhumations to 25 (Garner, 1994, 2001; Garner & Vincent 1997). Other burials are probably still to be uncovered between the different excavation trenches (Garner, 1994:84). The cemetery seems to have been enclosed to the west by a boundary

ditch (Garner, 2001:188), and discrete traces of occupations characterise its northern and eastern sides, the latter partially destroyed by later features (Garner, 2001:170, 188). Pen-annular ditches mark several graves at the surface (Garner, 2001:179), potentially providing foci and attracting other burials (fig.52, vol.2). Samples from skeleton 201 and 5690 were radiocarbon dated respectively to cal. 675-885AD and 642-777AD at 2σ, or 691-800AD and 658-762AD at 1σ (Garner, 1994:84; 2001:175-177), placing the use of the cemetery between the mid-seventh to the late-eighth century. The much later date obtained for skeleton 5663 (cal.978-1206AD 2σ or 1001-1156 1σ) is considered inaccurate by the excavators (Garner, 2001:177, 181).

Pleine terre	Pleine terre?	Coffrage	Wooden container?	Unknown	**Total**
7	5	1	5	7	**25**

Table 82: Grave types - Cook Street

Two graves were identified on the basis of the presence of a pen-annular ditch. However, no skeleton, and in one case, no grave-pit, were found in relation to these structures (Garner, 1994:86, 86). The other 23 burials each contained one individual.

	Child	Juvenile	Adolescent	**Total**
Females?	0	0	1	**1**
Unsexed	1	1	1	**3**
Total	**1**	**1**	**2**	**4**

Table 83: Juvenile population - Cook Street

	Subadult	Subadult/ Adult	Adult	Adult/ Mature	Mature	?	**Total**
Males	0	0	0	1	3	0	**4**
Males?	0	0	1	0	1	0	**2**
Females	0	0	1	0	2	0	**3**
Females?	0	1	1	1	0	0	**3**
Unsexed	2	0	3	0	1	1	**7**
Total	**2**	**1**	**6**	**2**	**7**	**1**	**19**

Table 84: Adult population - Cook Street

Some items were found in association with the deceased: one knife, one copper-alloy strip and a clothing item possibly indicating a clothed burial or the use of soft wrapping. Similarly, the position of the bones in grave 1 could also indicate the presence of a shroud or similar element.

3) Six Dials

The small burial area discovered at Six Dials is probably associated with the early occupation of the northern extremity of the settlement (fig.53, vol.2) (Morton, 1992:28,39). If this zone appears to have developed into a densely populated area (Birbeck *et al.*, 2005:197), no structures were found in association with the graves. The empty area in the middle of the cemetery could be interpreted as the negative of a structure (Andrews, 1997:203) but no clear evidence was found to confirm this hypothesis. Recent radiocarbon dating on grave 6004 seems to place the use of this cemetery around cal.550-690AD 2σ (Cherryson, 2005:48, 2010:58), a date consistent with the few artefacts already testifying to quite early occupation of this area (Birbeck *et al.*, 2005:195).

Fourteen funerary structures were identified, including one ossuary. None of the graves were furnished, but charcoal was found in several graves leading to

their identification as "*charcoal or pseudo-charcoal burials*" (Andrews, 1997:202). These peculiar inhumations will be analysed in more detail in the following chapter.

Pleine terre	Wooden container?	Ossuary	Unknown	**Total**
5	2	1	6	**14**

Table 85: Gave type - Six Dials

19 individuals were recovered from these funerary structures, the ossuary containing the remains of at least six individuals.

	Infant	Juveniles	Subadult	Adult	?	**Total**
Males	0	1	2	3	0	**6**
Females	0	1	1	1	0	**3**
Unsexed	2	2	0	5	1	**10**
Total	**2**	**4**	**3**	**9**	**1**	**19**

Table 86: Population - Six Dials

4) <u>SOU 13</u>

The site of SOU 13 has been interpreted as one of the two possible churchyard cemeteries of Anglo-Saxon Hamwic (Cherryson, 2010:60-61). The clear association of the graves with structure 2, its overall plan, and the discovery of pieces of glass possibly linked to the presence of glazed windows led to the identification of this building as a church (fig.54, vol.2) (Morton, 1992:123-124, Cherryson, 2005:277, 2010:61). The cemetery itself probably extends to the west and east of the structure, but the limits of the excavated area and the important later disturbances did not allow further investigation (Morton, 1992:132). The chronology established in 1992 on the basis of the church plan and on one sceat (Morton, 1992:136) seems to be confirmed by recent radiocarbon dating realised on four skeletons placing the use of this cemetery between cal.540-645AD 2σ (grave 40) and cal.685-885AD

2σ (grave 59) (Cherryson, 2005:48, 2010:58). These dates could also be consistent with the five burial phases identified by Morton (1992:135).

60 funerary structures and 16 un-stratified bone layers were recorded on either side of the building. Wooden containers were identified on the basis of the presence of wood-stains, *effets de paroi* and archaeothanatological study of the precise drawings of the skeletons *in situ*.

Pleine terre?	Coffin	Wooden container?	Un-stratified bones layers	Unknown	**Total**
8	1	24	16	27	**76**

Table 87: Grave types – SOU 13

81 skeletons were identified in total (45 on the north side and 36 on the southern side). No precise record of the different age categories was available in the report. Similarly, both possible males and possible females were recorded along the male and female individuals.

	Child	Adult	?	**Total**
Males	0	34	0	**34**
Females	0	17	0	**17**
Unsexed	22	7	1	**30**
Total	**22**	**58**	**1**	**81**

Table 88: Population - SOU 13

Only two knives and one undetermined object were found in association with the deceased. The use of soft wrappings is possible in four other graves, bringing at six the number of furnished graves.

5) SOU 32

The interpretation of the environment of the SOU 32 cemetery has changed through the years. At first, a post-built structure, possibly a church, was thought to be associated with the graves, making this site one of the churchyards of the settlement (fig.55, vol.2) (Addyman, 1968:224; Morton, 1992:176; Andrews, 1997:203). However, more recent publications call into question this identification (Cherryson, 2005:257-259; 2010:63), considering the graves to stand without any associated structures. Once again, the presence of a possible pen-annular ditch at the centre of which lies grave 560 (Morton, 1992:177) could have attracted burials in this area (*cf.* chapter 6). Grave 428 provided a calibrated date at 2σ of 640-780AD (Cherryson, 2005:48, 2010:58), therefore possibly slightly earlier than the late eighth century date suggested in the original excavation report (Morton, 1992:179).

In addition to sixteen graves, five pits containing redeposited human remains were also identified. These structures have here been considered as potential ossuaries.

Pleine terre	Coffrage	Wooden container?	Ossuary?	Unknown	**Total**
7	1	6	5	2	**21**

Table 89: Grave types - SOU 32

Only ten individuals could be characterised, as six of the grave-pits were found empty. No precise minimum number of individuals was offered for the ossuaries, making impossible the representation of these individuals here.

	Juvenile	Adult	No Age	**Total**
Males	0	1	0	**1**
Females	0	2	0	**2**
Unsexed	3	3	1	**7**
Total	**3**	**6**	**1**	**10**

Table 90: Population - SOU 32

Grave 447 is the only structure in which grave-goods were recorded: four beads possibly originating from a necklace.

6) Saint Mary's stadium – Cemetery I

For the sake of clarity, the two phases of the Saint Mary's stadium cemetery are hereafter presented in two separated parts. Despite its very close proximity to part of the Anglo-Saxon waterfront, the site does not appear to be linked to any settlement features, the closest structure suspected at a couple of hundred metres to the northwest (Birbeck *et al.*, 2005:194). Commercial activity in this area is however undeniable, clearly demonstrated by the assemblage of continental pottery and coins found in the immediate vicinity (Birbeck *et al.*, 2005:203).

The first phase of this cemetery stands out from the other burial grounds presented so far due to the presence of both inhumations and cremation burials (fig.56, vol.2). As radiocarbon dating are considered less reliable on cremated human bones than on the pyre charcoal, they will not be considered here. The three samples of charcoal seem to place the cremation in cal.550-680AD (context 5115), cal.610-770AD (context 5107) and cal.670-880AD (context 7140) all at 2σ (Birbeck *et al.*, 2005:11). The inhumations of this phase were unfortunately not dated by radiocarbon, but the range obtained through the study of the grave-goods, c.650-720AD (*ibid*), seem to indicate that these different burial rites were used simultaneously in the course of the seventh century.

Pleine terre	Wooden container?	Cremation	Un-stratified bone layer	Unknown	**Total**
9	13	18	14	3	**57**

Table 91: Grave types - Saint Mary's stadium cemetery I

18 cremations were identified at the site. Identification of sexes was often difficult or impossible, but enough data could be recovered from the burnt remains to allow demographic study.

	Infant	Child	Adolescent	Adult	Mature	**Total**
Males	0	0	0	1	0	**1**
Males?	0	0	0	0	2	**2**
Females	0	0	0	1	0	**1**
Females?	0	0	0	1	0	**1**
Unsexed	2	3	3	4	1	**13**
Total	**2**	**3**	**3**	**7**	**3**	**18**

Table 92: Population (cremations) - Saint Mary's stadium cemetery I

In addition to these cremations, 25 inhumations were fully excavated. Six of them were found empty, whilst burial 3520 contained two individual and the remains of an adolescent were identified in the fill of grave 4425.

	Child	Adolescent	Sub-adult	Sub-adult/ adult?	Adult	Mature	**Total**
Males	0	1	1	0	2	1	**5**
Males?	0	0	0	0	1	0	**1**
Females	0	1	1	0	0	0	**2**
Females?	0	1	2	0	0	0	**3**
Unsexed	1	2	4	1	2	0	**10**
Total	**1**	**5**	**8**	**1**	**5**	**1**	**21**

Table 93: Population (inhumations) - Saint Mary's stadium cemetery I

Layers of redeposited bones were also identified. Despite the uncertainty of their dating, they are considered for the population analysis alongside the individuals identified in the cremations and inhumations.

	Child	Juvenile	Adolescent	**Total**
Male	0	0	1	**1**
Females?	0	0	1	**1**
Unsexed	1	2	1	**4**
Total	**1**	**2**	**3**	**6**

Table 94: Juvenile population (redeposited bones) - Saint Mary's cemetery I

	Subadult	Subadult/ adult	Adult	Mature	No age	**Total**
Male	0	0	0	1	0	**1**
Males?	1	0	0	0	0	**1**
Unsexed	1	1	1	0	2	**5**
Total	**2**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**2**	**7**

Table 95: Population (redeposited bones) - Saint Mary's stadium cemetery I

Saint Mary's cemetery I also stands out from the other burial areas by the number and types of artefacts found in association with the deceased, making both these cremations and inhumations the most furnished burials of the emporium.

Soft wrappings?	Clothing items	Jewellery	Weapon	Pottery
4	15	6	35	1
Coin	Other metallic elements	Other organic elements	Other	
1	12	12	3	
Total: 89				

Table 96: Grave-goods and other artefacts - Saint Mary's stadium cemetery I

7) Saint Mary's stadium – Cemetery II

The second funerary phase at Saint Mary's stadium strongly contrasts with the first period. Only eight graves and one pit containing the possibly redeposited remains of an adolescent were identified to the north of the earlier cemetery (fig.57, vol.2). These inhumations were placed in one row, possibly indicating some kind of constraint, with once again no associated structure or apparent burial focus (Birbeck *et al.,* 2005:107). Grave 7380 was radiocarbon dated to cal.650-950AD (2σ) (Birbeck *et al.*, 2005:107).

Pleine terre	Wooden container?	Redeposited bones	**Total**
1	7	1	**9**

Table 97: Grave types - Saint Mary's stadium - cemetery II

Preservation of the remains was better than at cemetery I, allowing for a more detailed population profile. None of the graves appear to have been furnished.

	Child	Adolescent	Subadult	Adult	Mature	**Total**
Males	0	1	2	0	0	**3**
Females	0	0	3	1	0	**4**
Females?	0	0	0	0	1	**1**
Unsexed	1	0	0	0	0	**1**
Total	**1**	**1**	**5**	**1**	**1**	**9**

Table 98: Population - Saint Mary's stadium cemetery II

C) Twyford

The cemetery at Twyford was discovered c.500m east from the River Itchen in a landscape already marked by several Bronze-Age round barrows and a Roman villa and bath house to its south, occupied at least until the early fifth century (fig.58, vol.2) (Egging Dinwiddy, 2011:75, 121). The cemetery comprised 19 pleine terre inhumations, some of which containing more than one skeleton. Cremated remains were also recovered from grave 1080, 1128 and 1130 and have been identified as belonging to at least one sub-adult individual (Egging Dinwiddy, 2011:110). These redeposited bones could indicate that cremation and other inhumation burials are to be found further east beyond the limits of the excavated area (Egging Dinwiddy, 2011:110).

	Perinatal	Infant	Child	Adolescent	**Total**
Females?	0	0	0	1	**1**
Unsexed	1	2	4	0	**7**
Total	**1**	**2**	**4**	**1**	**8**

Table 99: Juvenile population (cemetery) – Twyford

	Subadult	Subadult?	Adult	Mature	**Total**
Males	0	1	1	4	**6**
Females	1	0	2	2	**5**
Females?	0	0	1	0	**1**
Unsexed	0	0	1	0	**1**
Total	**1**	**1**	**5**	**6**	**13**

Table 100: Adult population (cemetery) - Twyford

In addition to these individuals found 'in place' within the grave pits, other skeletal remains were recovered from the topsoil and in nine un-stratified layers. As they

probably represent disturbed burials, they will be considered in later chapters for the analysis of the buried population of this site.

	Child	Adolescent	Subadult?	**Total**
Male	0	0	1	**1**
Unsexed	1	1	1	**3**
Total	**1**	**1**	**2**	**4**

Table 101: Population (topsoil) – Twyford

	Adolescent	Subadult?	Adult	Mature	**Total**
Males	0	0	0	1	**1**
Males?	0	1	0	0	**1**
Females?	1	2	2	0	**5**
Unsexed	0	1	0	0	**1**
Total	**1**	**4**	**2**	**1**	**8**

Table 102: Population (un-stratified remains) – Twyford

Grave-goods and other artefacts were found in several graves. The nature of the weapons, jewellery and clothing items provided a date range between the late sixth and the early eighth century for this cemetery (Egging Dinwiddy, 2011:116, 119). The heavily worn disc-brooches from grave 1049 (a child burial) are the only exception with a slightly earlier date, placing this grave in the fifth to mid-sixth century (Egging Dinwiddy, 2011:113-114), but their association with a young individual and their important wear could indicate an earlier use of this object before its deposition here (*ibid*, *cf.* chapter 6).

Pillow?	Clothing items	Jewellery	Weapons	Other metallic elements	Other
1	4	1	8	12	2
Total:28					

Table 103: Grave-goods and other artefacts - Twyford

D) Winnall II

The cemetery of Winnall II is also situated along the River Itchen, and at less than 1km from the entrance of Roman Winchester (Meaney & Hawkes, 1970:2). Other Anglo-Saxon burial grounds are also to be found in the direct environment of Winnall II, but their earlier dating place them out of the chronological bounds of this project. Therefore, they will only be mentioned and used as comparative material but not considered here in the optimum sample.

Of the 45 graves recorded, 41 were pleine terre burials and one appears to have used a wooden container. The last two inhumations could not be characterised. No features, either pre-dating or contemporary, could be found in association with these graves (fig. 59, vol.2). Equally, the precise location of an Anglo-Saxon church and settlement remains elusive with the earliest mention of Winnall dating from the Domesday Survey of 1086 (Meaney & Hawkes, 1970:56). Two individuals were recorded in grave 1, taking the total number of individuals to 46.

	Perinatal	Infant	Child	Adolescent	**Total**
Males	0	0	0	1	**1**
Females	0	0	0	1	**1**
Females?	0	0	0	1	**1**
Unsexed	1	1	7	1	**10**
Total	**1**	**1**	**7**	**4**	**13**

Table 104: Juvenile population - Winnall II

	Sub-adult	Adult	Mature	**Total**
Males	3	4	4	**11**
Males?	0	0	4	**4**
Females	3	7	5	**15**
Females?	0	0	2	**2**
Unsexed	1	0	0	**1**
Total	**7**	**11**	**15**	**33**

Table 105: Adult population - Winnall II

A variety of items were discovered in association with several individuals, dating these burials to the middle of the seventh century (Meaney & Hawkes, 1970:59). The less lavishly furnished graves and the unfurnished inhumations are thought to belong to a slightly later period, following the model of the Final Phase cemeteries (Leeds, 1936; Meaney & Hawkes, 1970:50, Geake, 1995:107).

Soft wrapping?	Clothing item	Jewellery	Weapons	Grooming items
1	17	2	20	3
Craft items	Pottery	Other metallic elements	Other organic elements	Other
2	1	10	2	2
Total: 60				

Table 106: Grave-goods and other artefacts - Winnall II

Chapter 6: Inter-regional comparison and intra-regional complexities – Study of the British sample

This chapter offers intra- and inter-regional comparative analyses mirroring the study undertaken for northwest France in chapter 4. Using the same methodology and thematic plan, study of the burial grounds in their natural and man-made environment is first undertaken, followed by an analysis of the layout of the cemeteries and of the internal organisation of the graves to finally examine the buried populations. Once again, paleopathological data is presented only when relevant to the argumentation. As the aim of this chapter is to highlight similarities and differences in the treatment of the dead within the British sample, no comparison with northwest France is realised until chapter 7.

I) Burial grounds in their natural and man-made environment

This section aims to review and analyse the relationship between burial areas and their direct environment, looking first at their association with natural topography, and then at their links with both pre-dating and contemporaneous man-made features found in their immediate vicinity.

A) Natural features

When considering the association of burial grounds with natural features, it is essential to keep two factors in mind: that it is the cemetery, and not its potentially related settlement that is associated with the natural element, and the extent to which the feature linked to the funerary area marks the landscape. Once these two aspects have been taken into account, it is possible to determine the relevance and characteristics of the relationship between the cemetery and its

natural environment. This need for caution is particularly important for sites like Hamwic (Hants.). Indeed, the very nature of this settlement makes its proximity to the River Itchen, and by extension that of its various cemeteries, inevitable. Yet, some of the burial areas seem to have a closer relationship with the waterway. This is the case for SOU13 discovered at only c.100m from the waterfront (fig.60, vol.2) (Cherryson, 2010:57-60). This cemetery was identified as one of the two, potentially three, churchyards of the settlement (Morton, 1992:124, Cherryson, 2010:60), and appears to be the most densely populated funerary ground excavated to this date in the city (*cf.* chapter 5). This churchyard would therefore have been a well-known area for burial but would also have had a strong presence in the landscape, clearly marking part of the waterfront of the emporium and linking the river to the settlement spaces through funerary usage. Alternatively, the association of the dead with the waterway could mark a negative liminal location. The Saint Mary's Stadium burial ground was also found close to the river, albeit slightly further away than SOU13 (c.250m) (fig.60, vol.2) (Cherryson, 2010:57-60). This time, no church, or other above-ground structure was found in association with the cemetery, but the cremations and the grave-goods characterising its first phase represent another type of divergence from the other burial grounds of the settlement (see below, III.A.4 and IV.B).

Marking the landscape seems also to have been a concern at Mawgan Porth (Corn.). The cemetery was discovered on a promontory (Bruce-Mitford, 1997:63), at c.30m from the contemporary settlement situated downhill (Bruce-Mitford, 1997:87). The graves appear once again to have been placed in a highly visible position from the sea but also clearly identifiable from the land, overlooking the beach and the inhabited spaces. At Ulwell (Dor.) the funerary area was similarly discovered on a prominent and strategic location near the coast. The graves are placed immediately to the north of a pass through the Purbeck Chalk ridge (Cox, 1988:37), a position implying both a high visibility from land and from the sea, but also conveying control over one of the only ways through the uneven relief. A

similar approach was taken at Hicknoll Slait (Som.). The graves were discovered on a promontory which not only gives an open view on the South Cadbury hillfort, less than 1km away, but is prominent enough to offer a panorama over the surrounding area, including Lamyatt Beacon (Som.) at c.10km north (Davey, 2002:80). The cemetery therefore lies on a notable feature marking the horizon for several kilometres. The same desire to secure strategic location seems to have been a concern at Barnstaple (Dev.), as the site of the early medieval cemetery also happens to be that of the Norman motte-and-bailey castle (Miles, 1986:62). Situated on the banks of the River Taw, the cemetery and later structures would have been nearly completely surrounded by water (Miles, 1986:59), dominating the mouth of the river and strongly marking the landscape. At Wells (Som.), the springs and stream appear to have attracted occupation from the prehistoric period, later developing into a religious complex (fig.61, vol.2) (Rodwell, 2001:120-121). A similar situation is observed at Exeter (Dev.) where the spring is thought to have influenced the orientation of the seventh-century church (*ibid*). For both of these sites, the association with the spring not only shows a desire to control a resource or to gain a high visibility, but shows the active integration of a natural feature into the fabric of the later religious and funerary establishments, a practice potentially following pre-existing rituals linked to the streams.

For the other burial grounds, the nature and significance of the association is more difficult to determine. At Padstow (Corn.), the proximity to the Camel estuary could be linked to a desire to clearly mark the access to the land, but the small scale of the excavations makes the characterisation of the precise context of this cemetery impossible. At Exeter (Dev.), the placement of the cemetery near the river Exe could be related to the influence of the Roman structures (see below I.C), but the spring found to its north-east also played an important part in the establishment of the cemetery and is thought to have influenced the orientation of later churches (Henderson & Bidwell, 1982:156, Rodwell, 1981:142-4). Similarly, the proximity of Twyford (Hants.) and Winnall II (Hants.) to the River Itchen needs

to be considered alongside the presence in the immediate landscape of prehistoric and Roman features, including the settlement of Winchester (Meaney & Chadwick Hawkes, 1970:1; Eggin Dinwiddy, 2011:75). The same can be said of Stoneage Barton (Som.), as the few graves discovered on the low promontory (Webster & Brunning, 2004:56) are possibly linked to earlier features, particularly the Roman farmstead (Webster & Brunning, 2004:57). Placement of burial grounds in association with natural features appears therefore to be common to all of the regions considered in this sample, the variations in the types of elements used being directly linked to the local topography. Two main objectives seem to define this practice: a desire to strongly mark the landscape by creating focal points on the horizon, and a display of control over strategic locations through the establishment of a funerary area.

B) Prehistoric features

The association of a cemetery with pre-existing features often reinforces this impact on the natural environment. In those cases, distinction must be made between different levels of significance with less meaningful links – absence of reuse of the pre-existing feature in the cemetery – and more meaningful ones – reuse of the feature as a burial focus and/or its full integration within the funerary area. At Mawgan Porth (Corn.), Barnstaple (Dev.) and Ulwell (Dor.), the cemeteries are not directly linked to or reusing an earlier element as a burial focus, but they were found in close proximity to a prehistoric or contemporary settlement and/or activity (Bruce-Mitford, 1997:3-4; Miles, 1986:61; Cox, 1988:37). For Barnstaple, this new occupation is particularly visible as some of the 174 worked flints recorded during the excavation were found within the inhumations (Miles, 1986:61-62). Whether these artefacts are to be considered as grave-goods or simply as by-products of the filling of the grave pits is a question that will be addressed later in this chapter (see below III.B.4). Finally at Hicknoll Slait (Som.),

the cemetery discovered at c.1km from the South Cadbury hillfort was placed in such a way as to offer a direct line of sight on its interior (Davey, 2002:80), creating a strong spatial and visual link with the prehistoric and earlier medieval central place without directly reusing it as a burial focus.

Interpretation of the relationship between funerary space and prehistoric features can, however, be more ambiguous. At Stoneage Barton (Som.), the potentially Bronze-Age oval enclosure ditch was significantly encroached on by the enclosure of grave 3 (fig.46, vol.2), the feature therefore not appearing to influence the early medieval cemetery and potentially indicating that this element was no longer visible or known at the time of the establishment of the funerary area. The Twyford (Hants.) cemetery presents an even more complex situation. The presence of Bronze Age barrows in the immediate landscape seems to have influenced the choice in the location of the cemetery, but the lack of direct influence on the layout of the burial area does not seem to indicate a meaningful association. Furthermore, the lack of dating of the pen-annular ditch uncovered to the west of the graves (structure 1002, fig.58, vol.2) makes the interpretation of its function difficult (Egging Dinwiddy, 2011:80, 85). Such pen-annular ditches are indeed found in other funerary contexts in the region – *e.g* Hamwic Cook Street (fig.52, vol.2) SOU32 (fig.54, vol.2) (Hants.) – where they have been dated to the Anglo-Saxon period rather than to prehistory (Morton, 1992:177; Garner, 2001:181; Cherryson, 2005:257-259).

Other burial grounds show a much more direct association with prehistoric elements. This is the case at Knowlton Circles (Dor.) where two groups of burials were identified adjacent to the main prehistoric barrow ditch, directly reusing the feature as a burial focus, with a third group of inhumations placed slightly further away (Field, 1963:118). A similar relationship between cemetery and a pre-existing feature is illustrated at Meon Hill (Hants.). The execution cemetery was indeed placed on the northwest rampart of a prehistoric hillfort (Liddell, 1933:132), a feature that was later reused in the establishment of an estate boundary (see

below I.D) (Reynolds, 2009:116). Both the prehistoric feature and the boundary could therefore have influenced the choice of location of these special burials. Furthermore, the hillfort provided an ideal location for the gallows (*ibid*), making the area and its function easily identifiable.

Association with prehistoric features can thus sometimes be ambiguous to interpret and take various forms. Passive relationships appear to be the most common in this sample, with only a few examples of direct and meaningful reuse of a feature as a burial focus. This can be surprising considering the extensively documented links between early Anglo-Saxon and prehistoric landscape features (Longley, 2009; Semple, 2013) and could reflect a bias in the sample or regional and chronological specificities.

C) Roman features

Early medieval cemeteries were also found in different degrees of association with Roman structures. The burial grounds of Twyford (Corn.) and Stoneage Barton (Som.) were linked with Bronze-Age features, but their location was also probably influenced by the Roman structures in their immediate vicinity. At Stoneage Barton, the graves were positioned within the limits of the Roman farmstead, respecting the outlines of the fields potentially delineating a funerary enclosure (Webster & Brunning, 2004:61). The villa and bathhouse near Twyford probably exerted a certain attraction but were not directly reused, the graves lying at c.500m from the Roman site (Egging Dinwiddy, 2011:75). A similar association with Roman occupation is visible at Ulwell (Dor.), where the antique settlement was possibly still occupied in the early medieval period (Cox, 1988:47). Kenn (Dev.) can also be cited here, the cemetery placed in the immediate vicinity of a Roman settlement detected through aerial photography and dated on the basis of a fourth century pottery assemblage (Weddell, 2000:117). The situation is however different at Hamwic (Hants.), where two - or three - funerary areas were uncovered

on the site of Roman Southampton, therefore clearly separated from any contemporary occupation or funerary area (fig.62, vol.2). SOU414 and 207, most likely representing one cemetery, were both found within the antique walled precinct (Cherryson, 2005:265) whilst SOU862 was discovered outside said area (Cherryson, 2005:264). These burials were the only early medieval inhumations found in association with the Roman settlement, all of the other contemporary cemeteries being found in the Anglo-Saxon zone. This special location, in addition to other peculiarities (see below III.A.1), could be the manifestation of a more privileged link with the past, of the desire of a specific group of individuals to bury their dead in the former settlement, once again without apparently reusing any features as a burial focus.

Some communities made the choice of a more "*active*" association with pre-dating features when burying their dead. The best examples of this phenomenon can be found at Exeter (Dev.) and Wells (Som.). The first phase of the Exeter early medieval cemetery was situated on the site of the Roman basilica and forum (fig.37, vol.2) (Henderson & Bidwell, 1982:150; Allan, Henderson & Hingham, 1984:386). If the state of preservation of the Roman walls and their degree of influence on the cemetery can be called into question, the knowledge of these structures and their function was likely still fresh in the mind of the grave-diggers (Henderson & Bidwell, 1982:152). The basilica and forum were probably used until the late fourth century, whilst the first phase of the cemetery is thought to start in the fifth century (Henderson & Bidwell, 1982:150). At Wells, it is a Roman mausoleum that attracted the first Anglo-Saxon cemetery, therefore perpetuating the funerary use of the area and probably testifying to an *ad sanctos* burial association (figs.48 and 50, vol.2) (Rodwell, 2001:85). In the tenth century, a funerary chapel takes the place of this Roman building, without deviating from the original function of the area (see below I.D.2) (Rodwell, 2001:82, 85). Another site shows more ambiguity in its active reuse than the two cathedrals. At Lamyatt Beacon (Som.), the cemetery was discovered in close proximity to a Romano-Celtic

temple (figs.44 and 45 vol.2), but this time the graves seem to have been more closely associated with a small building (building 2) placed directly between the funerary area and the temple. If this structure is also dated to the Roman period, its precise function and relationship with the other building and the cemetery are unclear (Leech, 1986:274). Keeping in mind that the plan of building 2 was heavily reconstructed, comparisons were made with Irish oratories and with the site of Brean Down (Som.), where a small structure was also discovered in association with the remains of a Roman temple (*ibid*).

As observed for the prehistoric features, association with Roman structures or occupation took different forms: the establishment of a funerary area near or on the site of settlement continually occupied from the Roman period; or the direct reuse of an antique building as a burial focus. In both cases, the location of the burial grounds created a strong link between the community using these funerary areas and the previous inhabitants of the land. This practice appears to have characterised the sixth to eighth centuries, carrying on in later centuries for Exeter (Dev.) and Wells (Som.) with the development of episcopal complexes.

D) Association with contemporary features

1) Boundaries

Now that the association with natural and pre-existing features has been reviewed, it is time to consider the links existing between early medieval cemeteries and their contemporaneous environment. In this sample, three sites were associated with various types of boundaries. At Templecombe (Som.), the earthwork found at the south of the cemetery, identified as a possible funerary enclosure, is also known to follow the line of the parish boundary between Templecombe and Horsington (Newmann, 1992:67). The establishment of this division is thought to have occurred in the course of the eleventh century whilst

the skeletons provided radiocarbon-dates at 2σ between cal.681-974AD and cal.794-1026AD (Newman, 1992:65). If these dates are correct, the boundary would not have had any influence on the position of the cemetery, but the graves and the earthwork that enclosed the burial grounds might have been a factor in the drawing of this delineation. Conversely, if the boundary existed before 1086 when it is first mentioned in documentary sources (Newman, 1992:71), it could have provided a strong feature attracting burials.

The chronological relationship between the graves and the parish boundary is also an essential question at Saint Endellion (Corn.). The boundary appears to cut through the burial area, separating graves A to F from the other inhumations recorded at the site (fig.35, vol.2). To explain this phenomenon, Trudgian hypothesised that the eastern half of the cemetery (graves A to F) had been abandoned prior to the establishment of the western half and before the first appearance of the parish/manorial boundary (Trudgian, 1987:149). For him, this argument could also be supported by the difference in grave types between the eastern group, in pleine terre, and the western group, all in cists (*ibid*); with graves Q to T dug last due to their "*better-built*" nature (*ibid*). The boundary would have been established later, respecting the most recent part of the cemetery, with no knowledge of the first burial ground only a few metres to the east (*ibid*). The organisation in clusters of the burial area and the difference in grave types could, however, be linked to factors other than chronology (see below III.A.3), the two perceived halves of the cemetery being used in the same period. The parish boundary could very well have been established at a later time, without ever being aware of the existence of an earlier burial ground. This does not, however, explain the sudden deviation and series of sharp angles in the drawing of the boundary upon its passage through the burial area (fig.35, vol.2). If the graves were contemporary with this feature or still visible, then the hypothesis advanced by Trudgian is possible, but it is also important to keep in mind that other elements not archaeologically visible could have influenced the shape of the boundary,

without forgetting more prosaic interests that often intervene in the establishment of a boundary.

The last cemetery left to discuss here offers a very different perspective on the association of the dead with boundaries. The Iron Age hillfort rampart in which the graves of Meon Hill (Hants.) were dug is placed on the Somborn Hundred boundary, running on the side of the prehistoric feature (Reynolds, 2009:117). The establishment of this execution cemetery far away from settlements and on a liminal location is not surprising and even appears to be a common practice for the disposition of the bodies of criminals in early medieval Hampshire (Reynolds, 2009:117, 222). Meon Hill is not the only execution site found on this boundary: the Sockbridge Down cemetery is located only a few kilometres to the east (Reynolds, 2009:117), and confirms again the deliberate association of the judicial burial ground and the estate border.

2) Suspected and attested built foci

The rest of the sites found in association with contemporary features can be divided in two groups. The first category represents the cemeteries for which no actual foci were found but are suspected on the basis of various types of evidence. At Mawgan Porth (Corn.), comparisons with other local sites make the presence of an early chapel possible (Bruce-Mitford, 1997:87). As the southern and eastern limits of the cemetery were reached, this hypothetical building could be placed to the north of the funerary area or beyond its known limits (*ibid*). At Carnanton (Corn.), it is the mention of 'stony patches' at c.45m from the burials and the regular orientation of the graves that led to the identification of a possible stone-built burial focus (Preston-Jones, 1984:157, 161). Conversely, at Barnstaple (Dev.), no physical evidence was found, but the mention of a church in twelfth-century documentary sources (Miles, 1986:76) and the layout of the cemetery (see below II.C) are consistent with the presence of a contemporary built focus. At the

Knowlton Circles, both physical and documentary evidence of a church are attested for the twelfth century (fig.63, vol.2) (Field, 1963:121), a building that could have taken the place of an earlier structure associated with the graves. Alternatively, the church could have simply taken advantage of the Bronze-Age feature already attracting burials (see above I.B)

At other sites, interpretation is more difficult and can sometimes be controversial. The identification of a bicameral church at Hamwic SOU32 (Hants.) relies on a series of postholes discovered amongst the graves (fig.55, vol.2) (Morton, 1992:176). If these elements could indeed indicate the presence of a building, their position and the presence of grave 421 on top of the structure's internal demarcation (Cherryson, 205:257-259) make its interpretation difficult. This latter argument needs however to be taken carefully as the organisation of the space within the structure could have changed through time, the grave being dug in a second phase after some internal restructuring. If this were the case, and if we accept the identification of the structure as a church, SOU32 would represent the only example in the British sample of the placement of a burial within a Christian religious structure. This interpretation remains however controversial due to the complexity of the stratigraphic sequence and the position of the numerous post-holes within this small area. At Charminster (Som.), the identification of the excavated graves as part of the eleventh century St Mary's church cemetery is conditional on the dating of the inhumations. Indeed, if the existence of the church at this period is attested (Bellamy, 2001:7), and the regular layout of the cemetery is consistent with the presence of a unique burial focus, the complete lack of dating element makes the attribution of these burials to a wider churchyard only hypothetical. The context of Padstow cemetery (Corn.) is similarly difficult to determine, but the radiocarbon dating undertaken on three individuals at least confirms their belonging to the early medieval period (Manning & Stead, 2002-3:96). The graves have been identified as part of a possible lay cemetery attached to the monastery of St Petroc (Manning & Stead, 2002-3:92-3) known

from the eleventh or twelfth century *Vitae Sancti Petroci* (*ibid*) but of uncertain location. The proximity of the parish church of St Petroc, less than 100m to the east, needs to be taken into account along with the remains of a potentially eleventh century cross discovered in the modern cemetery (Manning & Stead, 2002-3:91). The early medieval graveyard could indeed belong to a lay community using a chapel or cross as a burial focus in the eighth or ninth century (the date of the inhumations), a feature later replaced by the parish church, without necessarily being linked to a monastic occupation.

The rest of the sample offers more substantial evidence for the presence of churches or other similar burial foci. SOU13 (Hants.) was already mentioned for its proximity to the waterfront and its resulting high visibility in the landscape. It is now time to look in more details at the cemetery and the building it was associated with. The south and part of the west and eastern side of a 12.94x4.2m structure were uncovered alongside graves to its north and south, leading to the identification of the building as a church (fig.54, vol.2) (Morton, 1992:122-124). The radiocarbon dates obtained on four individuals from this cemetery place the use of the funerary area in the seventh to ninth century (Cherryson, 2005:58), which also provides a provisional *terminus ante quem* to the construction of the structure. This dating implies an overlap between the use of this churchyard and that of the St Mary's Church cemetery (not to be confused with the Saint Mary's stadium cemeteries) (fig.60, vol.2) where a few very poorly preserved graves discovered in the periphery of the modern church were also dated to the early medieval period (cal.680-950AD 2σ) (Cherryson, 2010:61-62). These dates could imply that the modern St Mary's Church and its churchyard started earlier than the eleventh century as previously thought (Cherryson, 2010:62-63). Such continuity is observed elsewhere in the British sample at Exeter and Wells, this time starting in the Roman period (see above I.C) and carrying on to the modern days. In the case of Exeter, cemetery II could either have been established directly after cemetery I, or a period of time could have passed between the two funerary usage, the

funerary function of the area remaining in the general consciousness or still visible above ground (Henderson & Bidwell, 1982:156). The former hypothesis presupposes the construction of a new focus, influencing the alignment of the graves (*ibid*), the analysis of their orientation suggesting that this building is to be found under or in the direct vicinity of the later St Mary Major (*ibid*) (figs.38 and 39, vol.2). As for cemetery III, the difficulty in differentiating its graves from those of the later phase directly associated with St Mary Major (Henderson & Bidwell, 1982:156) attests to the close relationship and continuity between the Anglo-Saxon cemetery and the later funerary phases of the minster church (fig.39, vol.2). At Wells (Som.), the Roman mausoleum is replaced in the tenth century by what has been identified as a small mortuary chapel (structure 3 on the plan, figs.48 and 50 vol.2) (Rodwell, 2001:85), the building changing in form but not in function. In addition to this structure, two potential stone-cross bases have been identified to the north of the mausoleum/chapel, perfectly integrated in the layout of the cemetery and possibly to link to the eastern boundary of the area (figs.48 and 49, vol.2) (Rodwell, 2001:74). Beyond their contemporaneity, the precise relationship between these crosses and the Anglo-Saxon burials is difficult to determine, the later eleventh century graves established on top of the seventh century phase seemingly being more closely linked to them, possibly seeking their proximity. These various features are of course to be considered in the context of the minster church of St Andrews, thought to lie to the west or north of the mausoleum/mortuary chapel and of which no definite physical remains have been so far positively identified (Rodwell, 2001:86). Depending on its exact location, this structure could have had a major role in the layout of the later burial phases until the construction of the rest of the episcopal complex.

Association with contemporaneous features can therefore take several forms. For the majority of the sites constituting this sample, the actual presence of these structures is only suspected, the positive identification of churchyards sometimes proving to be a difficult task. Furthermore, the lack of precise dates for

the majority of the cemeteries makes the detection of any chronological patterns of change arduous. When dates could be assigned, the key-sites offered a diversity of associations, from the continuous use of burial space of the Saint Mary's cemetery at Southampton despite the relocation of the settlement in the later Anglo-Saxon period, to the transformation of the Roman forum into an early medieval funerary space at Exeter (Dev.).

E) Burial areas and their related settlements

For the majority of the sites, evidence of contemporary settlements is elusive, an absence often resulting from the limitations of the excavated areas, as observed at Stoneage Barton (Som.) (Webster & Brunning, 2004:56,61) and/or linked to the constraints exerted by modern construction, as at Padstow (Corn.) and Charminster (Dor.) (Manning & Stead, 2002-3:80,90; Bellamy, 2001: 3,5). In other cases, the presence of a contemporary settlement in the vicinity of the cemetery is suspected but not attested. Chronology can also be an issue. This is perfectly illustrated at Hicknoll Slait (Som.), as the South Cadbury hillfort, only c.1km away, experienced a hiatus in occupation in the seventh-eighth century, precisely when the cemetery is thought to have been in use (Taylor, 1967:64; Alcock *et al.*, 1997:111, 152; Davey, 2002:99). At Carnanton (Corn.), the lack of precise dating of both the funerary area and the manor estate centre situated at c.300m to its north (Peterson-Jones, 1984:166) makes their hypothetical association uncertain. At Saint Endellion (Corn.), features G and H, respectively a gully and a cooking area or refuse pit located on either side of the parish boundary, are considered as potentially unrelated to the cemetery (fig.35, vol.2) (Trudgian, 1987:147).

For other sites, evidence for contemporary settlement is more substantial and testifies to a separation between the spaces dedicated to the living and those used for the dead. The cemetery of Winnall II (Hants.) was recently linked to an

early medieval settlement discovered outside of Roman Winchester (Cherryson, 2005:270), only c.800m away. If the two entities were indeed linked, the cemetery would have been placed at a distance from the inhabited areas, showing a clear separation of the two spaces. This partition could also be reinforced by boundaries of various types, enclosing the burial areas, a practice best illustrated at Mawgan Porth (Corn.). The cemetery was indeed found at c.30m from what has been identified as the contemporary settlement, a distance already marking a clear separation between the two uses of space (Bruce-Mitford, 1997:87). To this can be added the postholes identified at the south-west and north-east of the cemetery, possibly representing the remains of a palisade of similar installation (Bruce-Mitford, 1997:70). This feature could however not be dated and could very well be later than the use of the cemetery (*ibid*). Similarly, at Templecombe (Som.), if the earth-bank delineating the cemetery to the south enclosed the totality of the burial area, it would have provided a further layer of separation with the contemporary settlement suspected at the north of the burial area (Newmann, 1992:67), the issue here being the partial excavation and uncertain extent of this boundary element. At Exeter (Dev.) and Wells (Som.), the durability of the funerary areas are to be put in the context of developing episcopal complexes, the settlement first placed at some distance from the burial foci and their linked cemeteries, slowly moving to encompass these religious centres (Allan, Henderson & Hingham, 1984:394-395; Rodwell, 2001:120-121). This assimilation is however still accompanied by a separation of the settlement space from the dead through the intermediary of the religious precinct. Finally, a more radical distance between the dead and the living is visible at Meon Hill (Hants.). In this case, the segregation of the burial area is easily explained by its judicial nature (Reynolds, 2009:116, 241), the cemetery placed outside and probably far away from any settlement spaces, whilst the individuals are also denied access to the communal burial ground (Reynolds, 2009:241-242), marking a further separation between the community and these special dead.

The last situation to analyse here is that of multiple burial areas related to a unique settlement. At Hamwic (Hants.) the first cemetery linked to the emporium appears to be Saint Mary's Stadium I (Birbeck *et al.*, 2005:194; Stoodley, 2010:40). At this phase, no related occupation was identified in the immediate vicinity of the burial ground, the inhabited spaces thus apparently clearly separated from the funerary area. The Cook Street cemetery is the only one for which a boundary was identified (Garner, 2001:170, 188), but it is possible that the other areas were also enclosed, the partial excavations and later destruction possibly making their archaeological perception impossible. A boundary is also suspected at Six Dials, where the cemetery was separated from the nearby major thoroughfare and possible market place, perfectly integrated in the urban area (Andrews, 1997:204). Finally, and as the settlement was slowly relocated Southampton, the Saint Mary's stadium cemetery II found itself marginalised on the northern limit of the occupied area (Birbeck *et al.*, 2005:84). In parallel to these *intra muros* cemeteries, two or three additional burial areas were also found on the site of Roman Southampton, clearly separated from the Anglo-Saxon settlement (fig.62, vol.2). This distance is difficult to explain, especially considering the fact that only very tenuous evidence for early medieval occupation was discovered in this area (Cherryson, 2005:266). Did these burials belong to a different community? Are these cemeteries dedicated to a specific group of individuals following other burial practices? No definite answer can be given here.

Despite a number of issues linked to the archaeological discipline, the study of the relationship between funerary areas and their contemporary settlements highlights certain patterns. The majority of the cemeteries considered here were placed clearly outside of the inhabited spaces, a separation sometimes reinforced by an enclosure. The tenth and eleventh centuries then saw the integration of the burial grounds in the urban fabric, with a maintained delineation of the area at the religious settlements. No clear regional specificities seem to emerge here, as only

Hamwic (Hants.) clearly diverges from this pattern with the presence of burial grounds within the settlement from the eighth century onwards, the spaces then separating in the course of the tenth-eleventh century with the relocation of the settlement, a difference certainly related to the exceptional nature of the settlement in this sample rather than to any regional trend.

II) Organisation of the burial areas

The early medieval cemeteries selected for this study thus appear to have been placed in association with various features, both predating and contemporary to their establishment. The following paragraphs look in more details at the layout of these funerary areas, considering the relationships between the graves and with their burial foci, also raising the question of the place of the dead in society through the archaeological study of commemoration.

A) Cluster-and-rows organisation

The first sites that need to be considered are those for which no burial foci could be identified. These cemeteries appear to follow a cluster and/or row organisation with regular orientations, a layout particularly well represented at Kenn (Dev.). The burial ground is divided into seven clusters and five enclosures (fig.64, vol.2). The graves are placed in more or less regular rows within each cluster and follow a unique orientation (fig.64, vol.2), with the exception of cluster V in which the pits seem to have been more erratically positioned. The layout of these groups is also characterised by the near total absence of overlapping or intercutting, once again with only one example: grave 1110 placed on top of grave 1112. These two inhumations also stand out due to a west-north-west/east-south-east orientation for 1112 and west-south-west/east-north-east for 1110, both

distinctive from the west-east axis followed by the rest of the group. Unfortunately, the complete lack of skeletal remains does not allow the explanation of this anomaly, nor to establish the reasons behind the composition of these clusters. The same can be said for the eleven graves found outside of these groups and for those placed within the square enclosures (fig.64, vol.2). In a very different context, a cluster organisation also seems to have characterised the St Endellion (Corn.) cemetery. This time, the units are less clearly defined, with three or four potential groups, graves K and J either standing on their own or joined with graves L, M, N, O and P (fig.35, vol.2). This ensemble is completed by a few isolated burials (W, X, Y and Z), fortuitous discoveries of the early twentieth century for which only very limited information was available. As described above, the organisation of the burial area was linked to chronology, the eastern group being established first, the cemetery then relocating further west (Trudgian, 1987:149). However, no information on the internal organisation of each group was available, the relationship between the graves, and therefore potential information on their chronology, remaining unknown. Furthermore, other factors could have played a role in the composition of these clusters, kinship and status amongst them. Unfortunately, the poor preservation of the remains makes the determination of specific population patterns difficult (see below IV.A).

In opposition to these two sites stands the Saint Mary's Stadium cemetery I (Hants.). Constituted of both inhumations and cremations, a cluster organisation grouping each funerary type separately could have been expected. If it is true that the urns were discovered mostly to the north of the burial area and the grave pits to the south, the central zone of the cemetery is characterised by the presence of both practices (fig.56, vol.2), an intermingling area that could expand beyond the limits of the excavated space. Segregation between inhumations and cremation areas could, however, exist at Twyford (Hants.). The small amount of burnt remains recovered from three grave pits, and the identification of structures 1017, 1149 and 1150 as potential pyre supports (fig.58, vol.2) (Egging Dinwiddy, 2011:81)

would be consistent with the presence of other cremations in their own dedicated space beyond the excavation limits. The rest of the cemetery is more erratically organised. Apart from a possible central cluster, no discernible layout methods seem to characterise this burial ground. Similar irregular orientations are observed at Hicknoll Slait (Som.). Despite the spatial and visual links between the burial area and the South Cadbury Hillfort, the positioning of the inhumations does not appear to have been affected at all by this feature, the heads placed to the north (1), north-west (1), south-west (1) and west (3). Equally, at Hamwic SOU862, 414 and 207, the graves were placed on a west-east orientation (with one exception at SOU862 following a southwest-northeast axis), therefore not reproducing the north-south alignment of the inner and outer ditches of the Roman settlement (Cherryson, 2005:265-266).

With the exception of Twyford (Hants.) and Hicknoll Slait (Som.), regular orientation and layout seems therefore to characterise the organisation of funerary areas with no identified foci.

B) Regular layout and orientation

But what about cemeteries possessing a burial focus? Overall, the situation appears to be very similar. Regularity also seems to be present at the execution cemetery of Meon Hill (Hants.) were the graves were placed in a row following the same south-north orientation (fig.51, vol.2). The placement of the corpses is however less regular with some overlapping and superimposition. The heads of the decapitated individuals were placed between the legs of their potentially respective bodies, with the only exception of individual 2 placed in a pile at the feet of individual 1 (fig.51, vol.2).

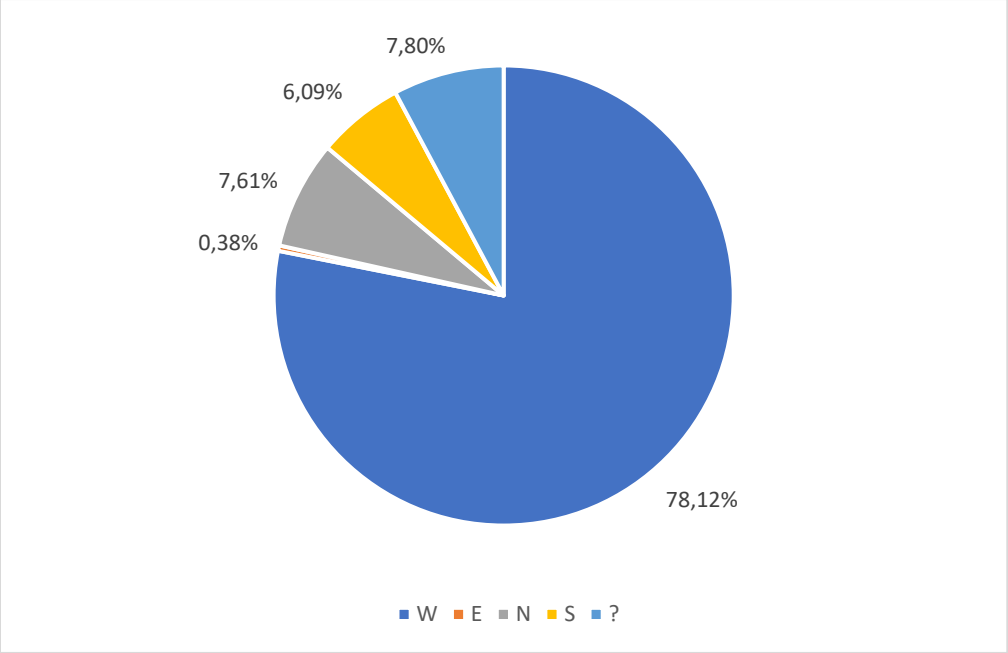


Figure 11: Orientation of the graves – British key-sites (n=1068)

For the rest of the sample, rows and clusters also seem to be the main organisational model, with a west-east orientation for the majority of the graves (fig.11, vol.1), as observed for instance at Carnanton (Corn.), or Mawgan Porth (Cor.), Charminster (Dor.) or the Six Dials (Hants.) (figs.32, 33, 41 and 53, vol.2). At SOU13 (Hants.), the entirety of the graves was placed on a west-east axis, the only exceptions being pits sheltering redeposited remains, the church not exerting any clear influence on the layout or orientation of the inhumations (fig.54, vol.2). The limitation of the excavated area and later destruction do not enable verification of whether this orientation is also respected by burials placed further away from the church; and which could be influenced differently by the focus due to their more marginal location. If the detection of the cemetery layout at Wells (Som.) is made difficult by the long period of use of the funerary area and by later disturbances and destruction, the placement of the graves does appear to have been regular and following either a west-east orientation (group 1) or a west-south-west/east-north-east axis (group 2) (fig.48, vol.2). These variations were not attributed to any chronological development of the funerary area (Rodwell, 2001:55), and are

difficult to explain for the reasons discussed above. The same can be said for the later graves associated with the cross-bases in the north, and mortuary chapel taking the place of the mausoleum, their layout showing very few modulations in grave orientation (figs.49 and 50, vol.2).

The analysis of the cemeteries associated with pre-existing features reveals a similar pattern. At Exeter (Dev.), despite the state of ruin of the Roman structures, the graves were placed in a row aligning on the antique wall of the basilica and following its northwest-southeast axis (Henderson & Bidwell, 1982:151). Similarly at Lamyatt Beacon (Som.), the overall southwest-northeast orientation of the inhumation is close to the axis of building 2 (fig.44, vol.2), and follows an organisation in two rows: the first starting with graves 25 and 26, the closest to the structure, and developing northwards; and the second starting with grave 146 and finishing with graves 160. The only exception to this pattern is grave 142, placed further north and at some distance from the rest of the inhumations but clearly aligned on the same focus. Additionally, a note should be made of the antler burials, as their disposition seems to complete the rows of early medieval inhumations, with the only exception of pit F153 placed further south (fig.45, vol.2). Their integration within the burial area could indicate an above ground visibility and testify to the respect given to them by the gravediggers, an attitude that cannot be explained here further than deference towards earlier features. At Knowlton Circles (Dor.), the graves were divided in two groups arranged in rows directly on the edge of the barrow ditch, following the same general west-east orientation (Field**,** 1963:118). A third group of graves was also uncovered slightly away from the barrow (Field, 1963:118).

The burial foci therefore appear to have had various degrees of influence on the organisation of the funerary areas, an impact more visible at sites associated with pre-existing features. Indeed, if the church at SOU13 and the mausoleum, chapel and crosses at Wells seem to have had little impact on the layout of the funerary area, other contemporaneous burial grounds discovered in similar

context show the establishment of different management strategies destined to optimise the use of space, illustrating major concern in the relationship between the graves and their associations.

C) Influences and management strategies

The desire of connection with the burial focus is clearly visible in different aspects of the orientation and position of the graves, one of the most obvious manifestations of this connection being the fan-shaped layout. In this case, slight variations in the orientation are visible, from west-north-west/east-south-east to west-south-west/east-north-east. This phenomenon is discernible at Exeter cemetery II and at Ulwell (figs.65 and 66, vol.2) (Henderson & Bidwell, 1982:153, Cox, 1988:45-46), but more evident at Barnstaple (trench C- fig.36, vol.2) (Miles, 1986:62). The burials are indeed gradually changing in orientation, starting from west-east to a more radical south-west/north-east, drawing multiple semicircles aligning on a unique focus found beyond the limits of the excavated area (trench C - fig.36, vol.2). This site is also particularly interesting for the presence of a reversed inhumation (grave 14), the head of the deceased placed to the east, a variation that has been linked to the identity of the dead: a priest facing his parish (Miles, 1986:66), emulating the world of the living in the funerary organisation. At Padstow (Corn.), the fan-shaped layout was interpreted as the negative of a boundary, the burials curving to follow the line of the enclosure (fig.34, vol.2) (Manning & Stead, 2002-3:92), but this position could also be considered as evidence of a burial focus, mirroring the situation described at Barnstaple on a smaller scale.

Orientation is however not the only factor that could be influenced by the burial foci. Indeed, proximity to these structures appears to have been sought after, a desire clearly visible in the organisation of the burial areas. At Lamyatt Beacon (Som.), the graves were placed in proximity to the wall of building 2 (figs.44

and 45, vol.2), a closeness that reinforced the identification of this feature as the burial focus rather than the temple. This is pushed even further at Knowlton Circles (Dor.), as graves were encroaching on the barrow ditch, creating a further physical link between the inhumations and the prehistoric feature. Similarly, the higher density of burials in the western part of the Barnstaple (Dev.) cemetery, near the supposed location of the church, led several intercutting and overlapping (trench C - fig.36, vol.2). These superimpositions could of course also be the result of several phases of burial, the most recent graves taking the place of forgotten inhumations, but they still indicate the strong attraction exerted by the burial focus on the layout of the cemetery. Furthermore, at Wells (Som.), if the two different orientations were not considered as linked to the chronology of the burial ground (Rodwell, 2001:55), their overlapping can similarly be unrelated to dating issues and linked to the management of a restricted area attached to the mausoleum and later to the mortuary chapel (Rodwell, 2001:56-60). Association with the crosses in the northern part of the cemetery also appears to have led to overlapping of graves, a phenomenon particularly visible around F832 (fig.49, vol.2).

Crowding of the burial space is also sometimes accompanied with a more radical reuse of previously occupied spots. At Ulwell (Dor.), new individuals were placed into existing grave pits, the remains of the previous occupant placed in réductions within or in immediate proximity of their original burial (Cox, 1988:42). A similar practice could be represented at SOU13 (Hants.) with the re-deposited bones discovered in different pits, but as it is impossible to determine from which graves these remains originated or when they were reburied (Morton, 1992:124), this comparison needs to be taken with extreme caution. For Barnstaple (Dev.), the situation is more ambiguous. Indeed, a number of grave pits found empty were interpreted as exhumations linked to the relocation of the remains of certain individuals before the construction of the castle (Miles, 1986:68). If this interpretation is correct, it would imply not only the knowledge of the precise location of the graves, but also a desire to protect and re-bury a certain group of

individual, either due to their status within their own families or more largely in their community. The attraction exerted by the new church will thus have impacted the layout of the previous cemetery.

D) Social life in death: commemoration

These considerations over the organisation of the funerary space and management of the remains in the case of reopening, raise the question of the visibility of the burials on the surface-ground. If, for the small cemeteries used for a restricted period of time, the memory of the location of the graves could explain the regular layout and lack of intercutting or overlapping (*e.g* Mawgan Porth (Corn.), Carnanton (Corn.), Winnall II (Hants.), Templecombe (Som.)), it seems unlikely to be the case for larger burial grounds. Taking the example of the possible reburials of Barnstaple (Dev.), it is strongly probable that some kind of marking manifested the location of the graves and maybe the identity of the individuals, allowing for their transfer to a new cemetery. Similarly, at Wells (Som.), it is first the mausoleum and then the mortuary chapel that mark the location of special burials. Radiocarbon dates coupled with a study of the remains seem to indicate that a few inhumations were placed within the structure in the early medieval period and were preserved in the same area after the réduction of the bodies in the burial chamber when the building was replaced by the mortuary chapel (Rodwell, 2001:78). This practice is most likely to link to a group of individuals important enough within the community to gain access to burial within the antique structure, perpetuating its primary function. Emulating this practice in the tenth century, the mortuary chapel was built on top of a group of seventh-eighth century burials (Rodwell, 2001:83). The construction implies that the knowledge of the location of these inhumations and of the identity of these specific dead carried on through the centuries and lead to the edification of what can be considered as a monumental grave marker. Furthermore, Wells is one of the few sites of this

sample that offered physical evidence for markers, all in stone, placed at the head of the grave or as cover/recumbent stones (Rodwell, 2001:106-107, 110). Another possible example comes from Hamwic SOU32 grave 421, where a sub-rectangular pit was found at the top of the grave possibly marking the position of a tombstone (fig.55, vol.2) (Morton, 1992:173-174).

Graves could also be manifested by other elements. At Twyford (Hants.), the post-built structure identified as potential pyre-supports could have been used to store the remains of certain individuals (Egging Dinwiddy, 2011:81), making these burials highly visible on the surface. Twyford is also of interest here due to the presence of a pen-annular ditch to the west of the cemetery (fig.58, vol.2). Despite its uncertain dating, parallels were drawn with a similar feature found at Hamwic SOU32 (Hants.) (Egging Dinwiddy, 2011:80), a comparison that can also extend to the ring-ditches recorded at Cook Street (Garner, 2001:181). Yet, if the similar shape and lack of influence on the cemeteries' layouts are akin, their function might have been different. Indeed, all but one of the Hamwic enclosures sheltered an inhumation, whilst the Twyford one appears devoid of any burial (Egging Dinwiddy, 2011:80). Only the Hamwic features can therefore be positively identified as mortuary enclosures, marking the presence of specific graves on the surface ground and differentiating these individuals from the rest of the buried population of the sites. The pen-annular ditch of Twyford could have had another role, possibly delineating the burial area to the west, as was hypothesised for other contemporary funerary sites (Hogarth, 1973:118).

Mortuary enclosures were also discovered further west. At Stoneage Barton (Som.) and Kenn (Dev.), these structures were found sheltering up to three graves (figs.46 and 40, vol.2), deviating from the single inhumations associated with the Hamwic enclosures. Another difference from the Hampshire models is the shape of the features. Indeed, a rectangular outline appears this time to be favoured. At Stoneage Barton, this form and the regular base of the ditch are thought to indicate the presence of a substructure, a hypothesis also formulated

for graves 3 which was surrounded by three postholes (Webster & Brunning, 2004:62). A similar arrangement is suspected at Kenn for enclosure A, the post-hole found at the level of the gap in the ditch interpreted as the evidence for a door or similar pivot element (Weddell, 2000:101). The four other enclosures did not however show such features, indicating a possibly different type of structure, like a mound, or a simple lack of construction. Parallels between these two sites and Welsh cemeteries have been drawn on multiple occasions (Weddell, 2000:119-118; Webster & Brunning, 2004:65-79; Longley, 2009:115), the mortuary enclosures in Tandderwen or Capel Eithin (fig.67, vol.2), amongst others, displaying the same characteristics and functions. Despite some dating issues linked to the radiocarbon samples (wood in most cases, against bones for Kenn and Stoneage Barton), the practice appears broadly contemporary in the British and Welsh regions (Webster & Brunning, 2004:74), also joining the possible example discovered at Twyford (Hants.). The Hamwic circular enclosures seem, however, to appear slightly later, in the mid-seventh to later eighth century.

The layout of the burial areas seems therefore to be influenced by a number of elements, but is characterised overall by regular rows and/or cluster organisation with the graves placed in the same axis. When churches were attested the graves appear to have been kept firmly outside of the building despite a clear desire to obtain a plot as close as possible to the walls, and a recurrent influence of the focus on the orientation of the burial. The organisation of the funerary areas also highlighted the use of different types of grave markers. Once again, their form seems to depend on the nature of the cemetery but regional differences and chronological patterns do appear, particularly in the case of the mortuary enclosures. Beyond their organisational function in the cemetery layout, these features also clearly played a central role in the memory of the identity of specific individuals, sometimes leading to the erection of monumental structures, differentiating these special graves from the rest of the burial area, and

transmitting a social status, kinship or other individual characteristic through centuries.

III) Internal organisation of the grave

After the detailed analysis of the location and organisation of the burial areas, this section presents a detailed study of the grave types, offering hypotheses for the reasons behind the use of certain types of containers or lack thereof, and highlighting regional and chronological patterns. These considerations are then followed by the review of the various grave-goods and other artefacts discovered in association with the deceased, focusing on their role and significance in the early medieval period.

A) Grave types

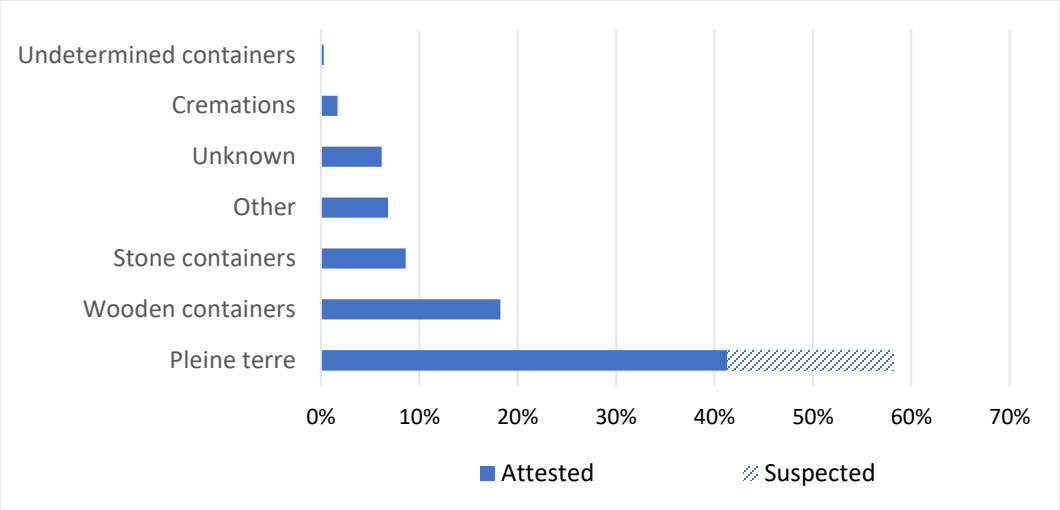


Figure 12: Percentages of grave types in the British sample (n=1068)

Looking first at the sample as a whole (fig.12, vol.1), pleine terre burials appear to be the most common grave type, representing 41.29% of the total, to

which could be added with some caution the 16.85% of possible pleine terre. Wooden and stone containers, counting both attested and suspected ones, follow at 18.26% and 8.61% respectively. The proportions of the next two categories, excluding the unknown grave types (6.18%), need to be considered carefully, as "other" is constituted of more than one type of funerary structure – namely: charcoal burials, ossuaries and layer of redeposited or unstratified bones. The cremations were only represented at one site, the burnt remains of Twyford (Hants.) being considered in the other category due to their fragmentary nature and placement within inhumations (see below III.A.4). Finally, the undetermined containers characterise the last 0.28% of the overall grave types, with only three examples, all recorded at Stoneage Barton (Som.).

1) Pleine terre burials

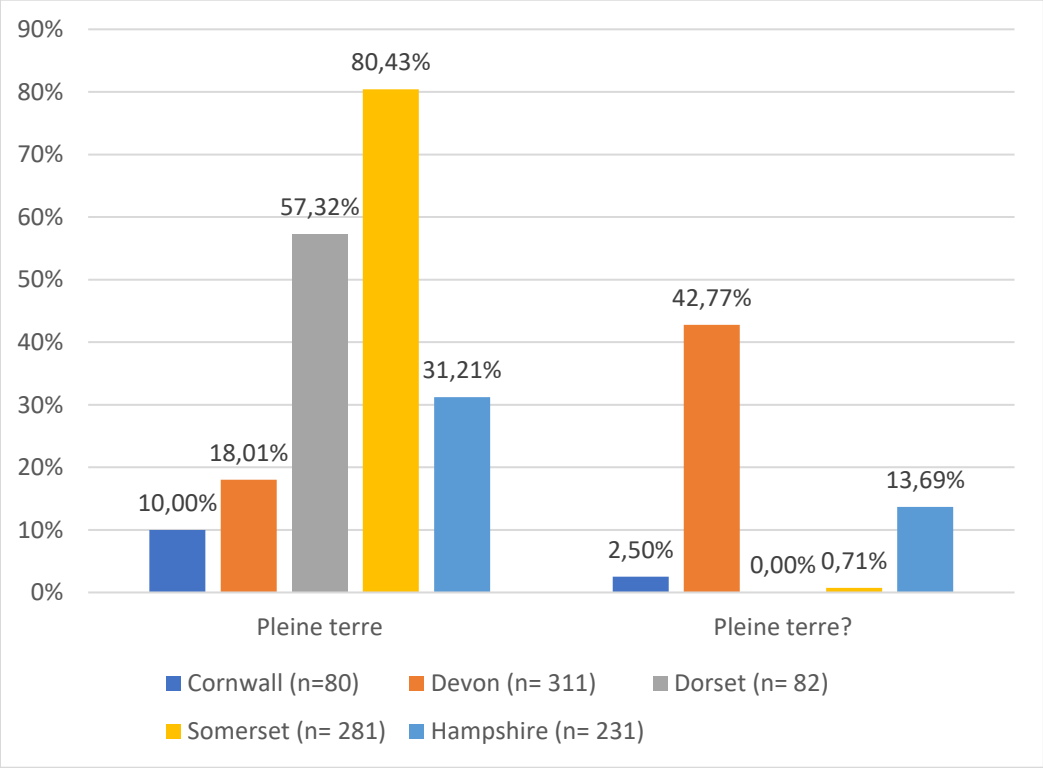


Figure 13: Regional distribution of pleine terre and suspected pleine terre in the British sample

As could be expected from the overall grave types review, pleine terre burials are recorded in every region of this sample. This apparent omnipresence needs however to be tempered by the detailed study of regional variations (fig.13, vol.1). Somerset and Dorset appear indeed to be the areas where this type is the most common, representing the totality of the inhumations at Lamyatt Beacon (Som.), Templecombe (Som.) and Charminster (Dor.), and more than 50% of the graves at Knowlton Circles, Hicknoll Slait (Dor.) and Wells (Som.) where they characterise the first funerary phases (Rodwell, 2001:542). Only two sites diverge from these apparent patterns. At Stoneage Barton (Som.), only one of the five graves could be positively identified as a pleine terre burial. This difference could be attributed to the small size of the excavated area and of the cemetery. But this explanation is not applicable at Uwell (Dor.), where more expansive excavations revealed a higher proportion of stone containers than pleine terre burials (see below III.A.3), marking a clear difference with the two other sites of this region.

Interpretation of these numbers is more difficult in other counties, as heavily depending on the positive versus suspected identification of pleine terre burials. This issue is best illustrated by Devon. If all the suspected pleine terre recorded there are to be confirmed, then pleine terre burial would become the most represented grave type in this region, counting more occurrences than in Dorset. Exeter (Dev.) cemetery is, for instance, characterised by the exclusive use of pleine terre burials, whilst cemetery II displays an extensive use of the type representing 58.49% the burials. But it is the burial ground of Kenn (Dev.) that could tip the scale as 88.29% of the pits were potentially devoid of containers. Unfortunately, the complete lack of skeletal remains, preventing any archaeothanatological study, and the detection of wooden traces in a few grave pits (Weddell, 2000:104) (see below III.A.2), make the positive identification of these burials as in pleine terre impossible. This issue also applies to a lesser extent at Barnstaple (Dev.), where 33.33% of the graves were potentially in pleine terre, the majority of the inhumation occurring in wooden containers (see below III.A.2).

Similar issues are encountered in Hampshire: at Meon Hill, Winnal II and Twyford, the majority of the graves are in pleine terre, a pattern hidden by the weight of the Hamwic sites, overall characterised by the use of wood (see below III.A.2). It is also worth noting that the two or three cemeteries uncovered in Clausentum could also have used pleine terre, the identification of the grave types once again complicated by the poor preservation of the remains and later disturbances (Cherryson, 2005:264-265). These preservation issues are also raised at Six Dials and Cook Street, both sites showing an important proportion of unknown grave types (42.86% and 28% respectively).

The last region left to consider is Cornwall, where the number of pleine terre burials appears to be the lowest of the sample, even when taking into account the possible pleine terre. In addition to their small quantity, these inhumations have the particularity at Mawgan Porth (Corn.) to be covered with slate slabs (Bruce-Mitford, 1997:66-69). Presence of covers is often difficult to determine and can only be fully attested in the case of stone lids as in Hicknoll Slait (Som.) and Wells (Som.) (Taylor, 1987:68; Rodwell, 2001:65). Grave 48 in Wells could also show evidence of the reuse of a wooden plank as a lid, explaining the presence of nails in the grave pit (Rodwell, 2001:105). Unfortunately, the poor conditions of preservation at the majority of the site probably hide the use of similar elements in organic material.

The detailed study of the distribution of pleine terre burials reveals therefore some strong regional patterns, sometimes difficult to interpret due to preservation issues. These geographical trends seem to be accompanied by chronological changes, the majority of the sites using this deposition method in use between the seventh and the early-ninth centuries. This temporal divide is particularly visible at Exeter (Dev.) and Wells (Som.), where pleine terre characterise the first funerary uses (Henderson & Bidwell, 1982:154; Rodwell, 2001:542), and can also be highlighted in Hampshire, where Twyford and Winnall II were dated to these early centuries. This chronological divide could explain the

difference between the various cemeteries of Hamwic, placing the use of the Roman settlement as a burial ground early in the funerary history of the settlement. One exception to this pattern could be Meon Hill (Hants.), dated between the seventh and tenth centuries (Reynolds, 2009:116), but is easily explainable by the judicial nature of the cemetery probably linked to rushed and low-cost burial.

2) Wooden containers

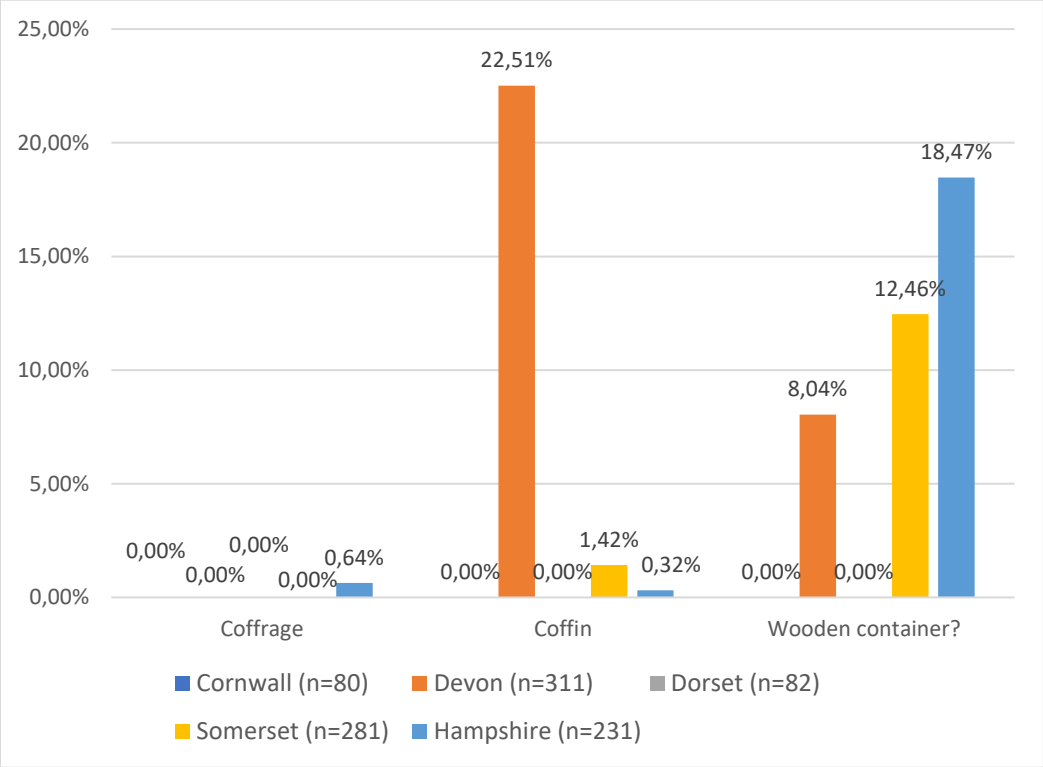


Figure 14: Regional distribution of wooden containers in the British sample

Similar strong regional patterns are visible in the distribution of wooden containers (fig.14, vol.1). Whilst completely absent from Cornwall and Devon, this grave type is fairly well represented in the three other counties. As for the French sample, distinction between coffrages and coffins was attempted, with however very little success, the difference between the French and British recording on site

influencing the ability to distinguish one types from the other (*cf.* chapter 2). When characterisation appeared too hazardous, the burials were recorded as possible wooden containers. This attempt at categorisation revealed, however, the important use of coffins in Devon, their presence detected through a combination of wood stains, nails and other fittings at Exeter cemetery II and III (Henderson & Bidwell, 1982:155) and Barnstaple (Miles, 1986:63). In the latter case, the positive identification of coffins was however not always possible, leading to the categorisation of some burials as in possible wooden containers, the available data being too limited to consider coffrages. The same can be said for Kenn (Dev.), where the traces of wood indicate the presence of containers in 13 graves[16]. The lack of nails could indicate that we are here in the presence of coffrages, but no clear evidence allows for their identification as such, the only information obtainable from the very poorly preserved graves and skeletons being their narrow built (Weddell, 2000:110). These graves were scattered across the burial area, Enclosure A being the only place where they are found within the same cluster (fig.64, vol.2). As the other enclosures were not excavated, it is unfortunately not possible to check if wooden containers were primarily used in these specific graves, adding another particularity to these special inhumations.

The next region to consider is Hampshire. The important proportion of possible and attested wooden containers in this region needs once again to be moderated, as apart from Hamwic (Hants.), only one grave at Winnall II (Hants.) might have used such burial structure. This identification is based on the presence of two iron nails, the regular sides and a flat bottom surface of the grave pit (Meaning & Chadwick Hawkes, 1970:18). As in Devon, the different cemeteries of Anglo-Saxon Southampton were often difficult to interpret. At SOU13 (Hants.), the use of at least one coffin was indicated by the presence of iron fittings in the grave

[16] 15 graves are mentioned in the article (Weddell, 2000:110), only but 13 are accounted for on the distribution map presented in the same paper (Weddell, 2000:104). The choice was made here to consider the distribution map over the later mention, as no precise list of graves was offered beyond their cartographic representation.

pit (Morton, 1992:129). At the other sites, the identification of coffins is more controversial. No fixture elements were indeed found alongside the wood traces detected at SOU32 (Hants.), making impossible the distinction between a dowelled coffin, a coffrage or another similar element. Equally, if coffins were identified at Saint Mary's Stadium cemetery II (Hants.) (Birbeck *et al.*, 2005:107), they were not recorded as such in this study as no clear physical proof was available for the use of this precise type of container. Furthermore, archaeothanatological study seems to indicate that at least in two cases, decomposition of the body occurred in a filled space, most likely ruling out the use of a coffin (*cf.* chapter 2). Few coffrages were recorded, with only one example at SOU32 and another one at Cook Street. The rest of the Hamwic sample, excluding the graves found in Clausentum (see above III.A.1), is dominated by possible wooden containers, marking a clear difference from the other cemeteries of the region.

In Somerset, the sample is also influenced by the major site of Wells, with Stoneage Barton (Som.) being the only site were three graves were identified as in possible wooden container. However, if Wells (Som.) does appear as the site with the most wooden containers in the regional sample, their proportion is however not very high. Only four coffins with metal fittings could be identified, to which can be added thirty-four burials in possible wooden containers, the use of which indicated by the presence of wood stains. No statistically significant difference in the distribution of these containers was revealed between the northern and southern areas, or depending on the two main orientation groups[17]. A chronological factor in the choice of burial container was however noticed in the study of the totality of the graves: the early phase marked by pleine terre as visible in this sample, whilst the later periods seem to be characterised by the use of wooden or stone containers (Rodwell, 2001:537-538).

[17] Areas: $\chi^2 = 7.9628$; $p=0.09295$
Orientation: $\chi^2 = 2.44$; $p=0.65541$

In addition to the strong regional trends already observed in the case of pleine terre burials, the distribution of wooden containers also appears to be partially related to chronology. If in Wells (Som.), this pattern is not clearly visible due to the chronological bounds of this study, it is however noticeable in Hampshire, with the Hamwic cemeteries presenting different profiles from the earlier burial grounds of Winnall II and Tywford. This contrast raises once again the question of the potential use of pleine terre in the Roman Southampton funerary areas, and could indicate either a different burial practice completing the estranged location of these inhumations, or an earlier use, an interpretation consistent with the radiocarbon dates (*cf.* chapter 5). This needs of course to be considered in the context of very poor preservation of the burials, possibly hiding the use of organic containers, but could indicate a specific pattern in Hampshire.

3) Stone containers

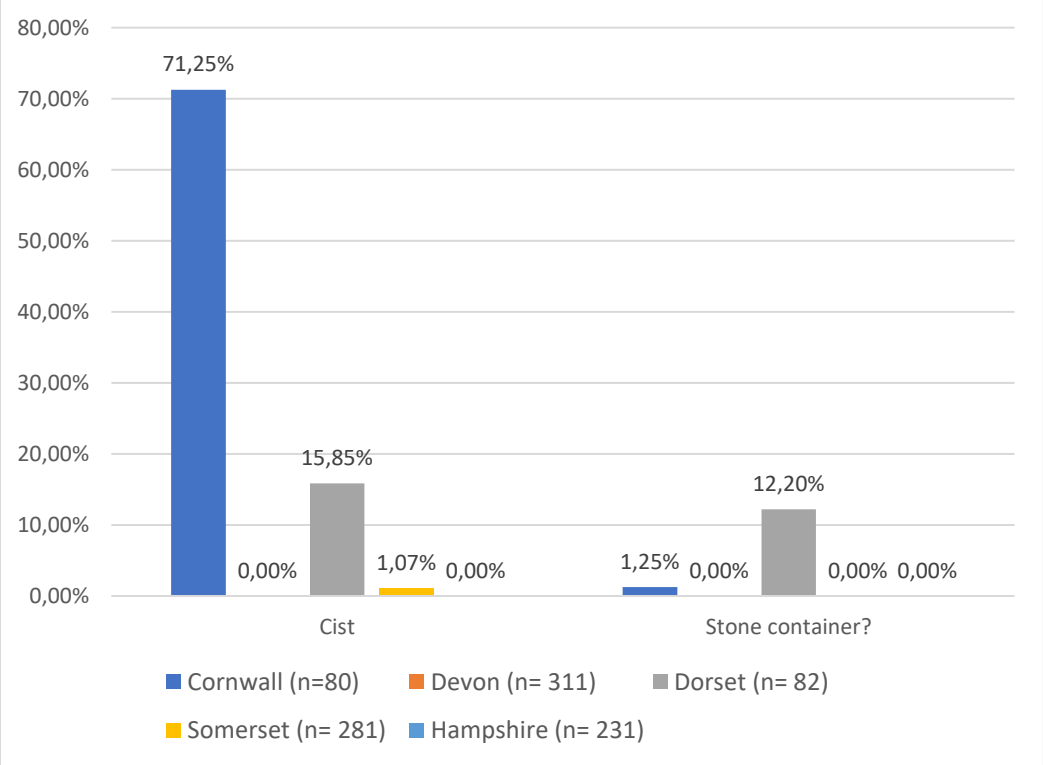


Figure 15: Regional distribution of stone containers in the British sample

The last major category left to be discussed is that of the stone containers. Their distribution reflects of course that of the other main grave-types, with once again very strong regional patterns (fig. 15, vol.1). This time, Cornwall shows the highest proportion with a total of 71.25% of burials in stone containers, making it the only region in this sample were the pleine terre burial is not the most represented inhumation method. In addition to this uniformity in practice, the Cornish cemeteries also display a remarkable regularity, as cist graves appear to be the only stone container structure in use. The only case of possible stone container from Mawgan Porth was indeed interpreted as a destroyed cist of which only the bottom slab remained *in situ*, the other sides moved by precipitations (Bruce-Mitford, 1997:63). Dorset then appears as the region where stone containers are the most common, this time under various forms. This picture needs however to be considered carefully as all of these structures were recorded at only one site: Ulwell (Dor.). There, 53.70% of the individuals were buried in cists (15.85%), stone linings (7.32%) or other possible stone containers (12.20%). Due to the reuse of certain grave pits, it was sometimes difficult to determine if the structure was already in place before the deposition of the second body or if these new inhumations led to the construction of a container (Cox, 1988:37-42).

The three other regions show a very different profile, Hampshire and Devon particularly standing out due to the total absence of attested or possible stone containers. As for Somerset, only very rare examples of these funerary structures were recorded, all once again to be found at one site only: Wells. Despite their small quantity, these graves deserve all our attention. Indeed, in addition to three cist graves, one mortared-stone tomb and one plaster-lined grave were also uncovered in area 7. Their presence is especially remarkable as the majority of the stone containers were dated to the later period, starting from the eleventh century and carrying on until the thirteenth century (Rodwell, 2001:538-539). If this dating is consistent with that of the mortared-stone tomb (grave 72), found in the Saxo-Norman cemetery, the plaster-lined burial (grave 152) was dated to the Middle

Saxon period (fig.69, vol.2) (Rodwell, 2001:565). Both were however found in close proximity to the possible cross base F832.

The distribution of stone containers reveals once again regional specificities, this time pushed to their extreme with the over-representation in Cornwall and a total absence in other regions. The question of the chronological aspects of use of these structures is also central: if they seem to characterise later burial practices in Wells (Som.), their presence in Ulwell (Dor.) is however linked to the seventh and eighth century. In Cornwall, a temporal factor can unfortunately not be detected as the grave types have been used as a dating tool, creating a circular argument often encountered in typochronology. Other elements therefore need to be considered. The coastal location of both the Cornish sites and Ulwell could indeed have played a role in the choice of material, simply due to its immediate availability, but would not explain the lack of stone containers at other sites in similar location such as Barnstaple. The identity of the buried individual could also have played a role in the construction of some of these structures, a hypothesis particularly relevant at Wells and which will be developed further in later chapters through comparison with the French sample.

4) Undetermined and peculiar structures

After the analysis of these main grave types, the attention needs to be turned towards the more peculiar and rare funerary structures encountered in the sample. The very low number of undetermined containers is remarkable, with only three graves at Stoneage Barton (Som.), and a unique attested mixed coffrage at Wells (Som.) (grave 48). These low numbers can be partly explained by the poor preservation conditions at most sites, but are also heavily influenced by the impossibility of realising a detailed archaeothanatological study, either due to the lack of representation of the skeleton in the graves, or to a lack of records precise enough to interpret post-depositional bone movements. This issue is well

illustrated at Stonage Barton where the stone placed within the grave pit could indicate a simple stone lining or could be related to the use of a coffrage with or without lid, the absence and/or poor condition of the skeletal remains making further interpretation impossible. Combined use of organic and mineral material could therefore pass undetected in numerous occasions, and if little can be done at present to correct this false image, it is important to be conscious of this bias.

The same care needs to be taken in the analysis of charcoal burials. In this sample, the presence of charcoal in graves was identified mainly at Exeter cemetery II and III (Dev.), and was identified in both pleine terre and coffined burials. Their number is however debatable as their identification was easier than more traditional pleine terre or disturbed grave pits (Henderson & Bidwell, 1982:154; Holloway, 2010:85). The reasons behind the use of charcoal in burial are still debated and can very well correspond to the expression of different concerns (Holloway, 2010:87,89). Their use has, for instance, been linked to penitential or other religious motivations, and/or to more practical sanitary concerns (*ibid*). Charcoal in burials has also been linked to a possible high status of the buried individual (Fleming, 1993:26), a parallel that would be consistent with the location of the graves close to the church. Another example of this practice was detected at Barnstaple (Dev.), in grave 79, where a layer of c.30cm of charcoal covered the bottom of the grave (Miles, 1986:66). This time the burial is however placed further away from the possible church, or at least, from the more densely occupied area of the cemetery. The last examples were recorded at the Six Dials (Hants.), where the graves were placed in close proximity to layers of slag and charcoal (Andrews, 1997:202). This placement led, if not to true charcoal burial as described above, to an emulation of this grave type and potential religious or societal implications[18].

As the question of re-deposition, ossuaries and reduction was addressed earlier during the analysis (see above II.C, D), it is now time to consider the final

[18] As the positive identification of this grave type and the number of inhumations following this practice uncertain at the Six Dials, these graves are placed in the unknown category in figure 12, vol.1.

practice observed in the sample: the cremation. Saint Mary's stadium cemetery I (Hants.) is the only site in this sample were this rite is attested, as once again, only a very limited amount of burnt bones and no urns or other vessels were found at Twyford (Hants.). The near-certain use of the practice there does however show a marked difference between Hampshire and the other areas considered here. At Saint Mary's stadium cemetery I, the remains of the individuals were placed in pottery vessels, some decorated and some not, and none with any significant trait allowing their identification as produced for funerary purposes or reused potteries from the settlement (Birbeck *et al.*, 2005:24). Their presence and contemporaneity with the inhumations raises the question of the identity of the individuals using this particular burial practice, which does not seems to be conveyed by the vessel or by the location of the burial in the cemetery as a whole, but which might be displayed through other means (see below IV.B).

B) Grave-goods and other artefacts

To complement the analysis, we must now consider the artefacts placed within these various funerary structures. The general overview of regional proportions of furnished graves reveals strong patterns (fig.16, vol.1), despite a relatively low number of furnished graves overall - 11.42% of the 1068 graves recorded at the key-sites. The practice was nevertheless important in Hampshire where 27.07% of burials contained one or more items, contrasting with the lower percentages of the western regions (fig.16, vol.1), potentially testifying on a large-scale to cultural differences between Hampshire and the rest of the British case-studies (see below V).

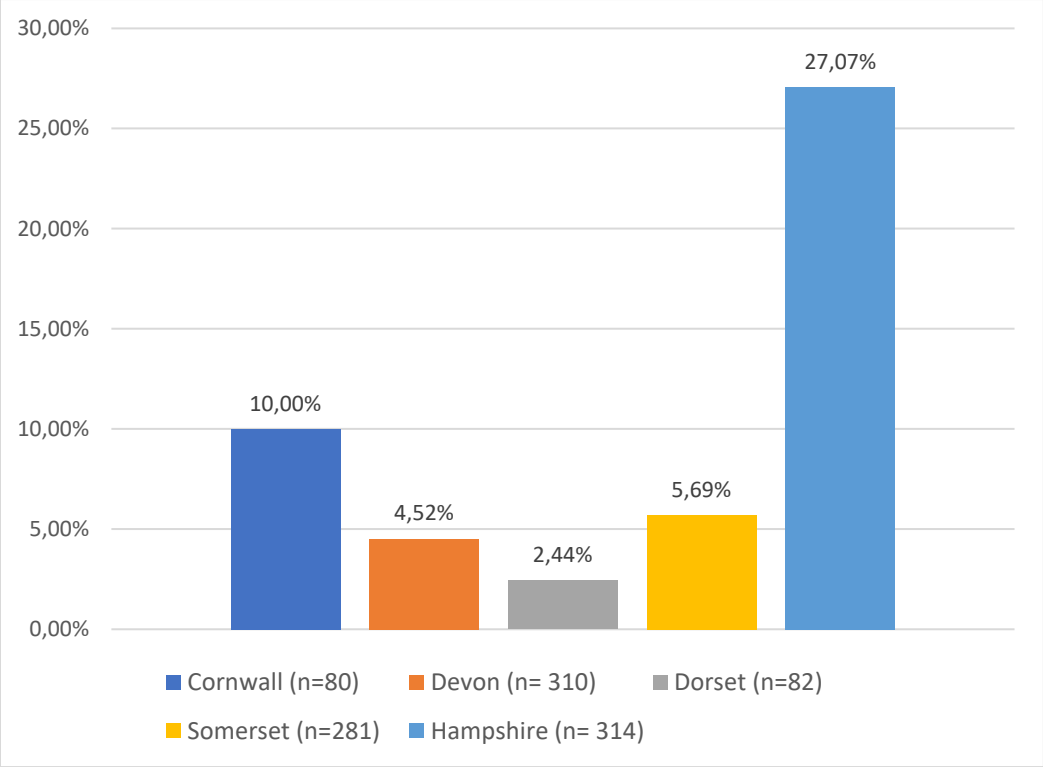


Figure 16: Regional proportions of furnished burials in the British sample

Regional distribution is not the only element to take into account in the study of grave-goods and other similar artefacts. Their types and proportions in relation to the total number of artefacts, represented in figure 17, needs also to be studied in detail to understand the implication of the presence of furnished graves in each area. As for the grave types, and following the method used for the French sample, the items were divided between different main categories, their analysis presented in the following sections. Brooches were placed in the clothing item category due to their functional use, but a few examples will also be mentioned in the jewellery section in relation to very specific contexts. The "other" category corresponds to various items in different materials (*i.e* lithic, glass, and undetermined), and will be addressed in their own part.

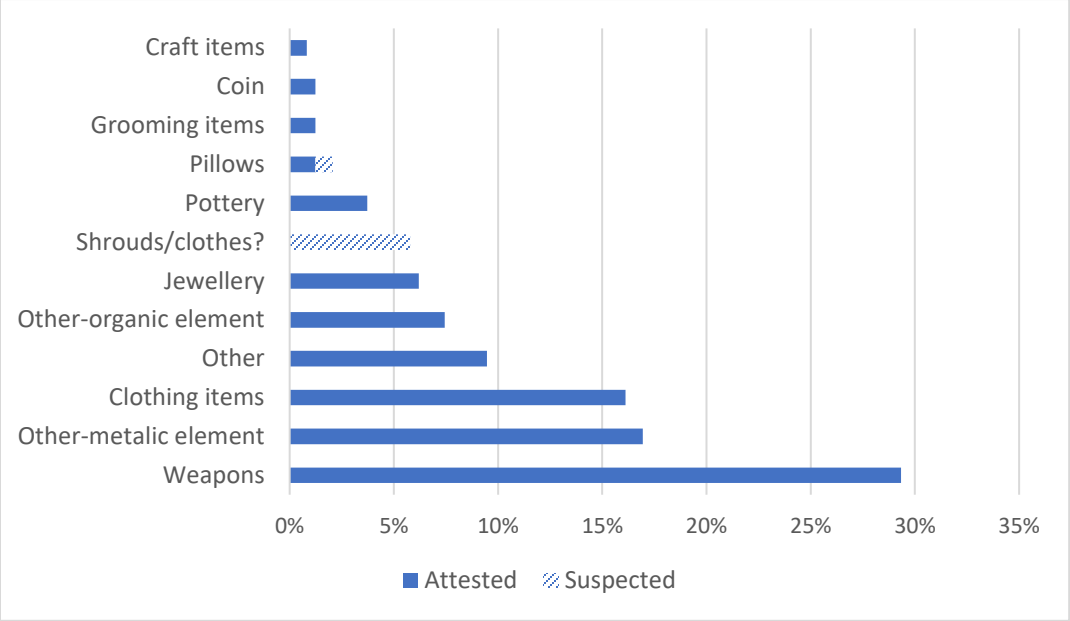


Figure 17: Proportion of the different types of grave-goods and other artefacts in the British sample (n=243)

1) Soft-wrappings and clothing items

Regions	Soft wrapping?	Clothing items	Grave total
Cornwall	1 (1.25%)	0	80 (n=80)
Somerset	2 (0.71%)	0	281 (n=281)
Hampshire	11 (3.50%)	39 (12.42%)	314 (n=314)

Table 107: Regional distribution of possible soft wrappings and clothing items in the British sample

In this sample, only 14 graves provided enough evidence to suggest the use of shrouds and other soft wrappings (table 107). Of these, 6 were probably clothed burials, a distinction made possible by the precise recording of clothing items and their position in relation to the bodies. It is strongly possible that the use of these soft wrappings/clothes was more important than observed here, but their identification is once again confronted to preservation issues, lack of detailed

illustration and various recording methods applied at the different sites (*cf*. chapter 2). This issue is partly represented by the Cornish example: if shrouds are suspected at Carnanton (Corn.), the method used to determine their presence is not indicated and no picture or drawing of the skeletons *in situ* were available. The grave was therefore recorded here only as a possible occurrence rather than an attested use of soft wrapping. Traces of textile were also identified at Wells (Som.) in the mortared-stone tomb, and the use of a shroud is suspected in grave 163, a pleine terre burial (Rodwell, 2001:65). If the textile fragments have been interpreted as indicating the use of a shroud or other soft wrapping (Rodwell, 2001:65), this interpretation does not seem consistent with the position of the bones which indicates a decomposition in empty space and possible later disturbance of the remains, with no constraining effect beyond that of the narrow of the grave pit. The movement of the skeletal pieces were not however identified as evidence against the presence of a shroud by the excavators (Rodwell, 2001:65). This question will be explored further in later chapter, with direct comparisons to other burials in which the use of soft wrapping cannot be doubted (*cf.* chapter 8). Finally, Hampshire appears to be the region where the deceased were the most often wrapped in soft material (5) or clothed (6) upon burial. Clothed burials were mainly encountered at the early cemeteries of Winnall II and Saint Mary's stadium I, whilst the possible soft wrapping appeared in the churchyard context of SOU13, possibly indicating a chronological and/or contextual difference in practice. The two graves of Cook Street, one in possible shroud and the other potentially clothed come to complement this picture.

This distribution matches to a certain extent that of the clothing items. The 39 pieces recorded in this sample, including those used to determine the possible clothed inhumations, were all discovered in Hampshire. The majority was recorded in Winnall II (Hants.), with a total of 17 items divided up between eleven graves, closely followed by Saint Mary's stadium cemetery I (Hants.) with 15 items in thirteen inhumations. Twyford (Hants.) and Cook Street (Hants.) also offered some

material, but in much lesser quantity with 4 items in three graves for the former and only 1 at the emporium's cemetery. If the context and number of artefacts vary between the burial grounds, they remain united by a similar chronological span, going from the seventh century to the eight-early ninth century at the latest, showing a temporal trend in addition to the regional one. One site does however stand out from this apparent uniformity. The situation at Meon Hill (Hants.) is indeed very different, as the clothing items (fig.70, vol.2) were found in the context of an execution cemetery. The individual was probably dressed when he was decapitated, the body then placed with the other convicts still clothed. It is possible that the other deceased were also dressed upon burial, as observed at other similar site throughout Britain at the same period (Reynolds, 2009:236), but the lack of any clothing items accompanying them does not allow the confirmation of this hypothesis.

The question of the use of soft wrappings is therefore a difficult one to answer. Despite the limited amount of data, strong regional differences appeared here with Hampshire displaying different practices at the beginning of the period. The tradition of clothed burial seems to slowly fade out to be replaced by the use of other soft wrapping, a change potentially reflecting some influence of Christianity on the treatment of the remains. This interpretation needs however to be considered carefully as other factors might have affected the use of these elements, like social status as suspected at Wells (Som.) and Saint Mary's stadium cemetery I (Hants.). The nature of the grave could also have influenced the use of soft wrapping or clothed burial as they were encountered exclusively in unmoveable containers, with only two exceptions of unknown grave types. This result is of course biased by the difficulty of determining certain grave types, but is still worth mentioning here.

2) Funerary pillows and lithics

Moving on to other elements present in the grave and in direct association with the skeleton, it is now time to consider the use of funerary pillows. As they were only scarcely recorded in this sample, their distribution is not represented in a table or chart. Pillows, or possible pillows, were only reported at four sites: Barnstaple (Dev.), Exeter cemetery III (Dev.), Twyford (Hants.) and Wells (Som.). At Twyford, the position of the skull could indicate the possible use of a pillow made out of organic material, the head fallen backwards after decomposition of both the artefact and the soft tissues of the neck (fig.71, vol.2), whilst in Exeter and Wells stone pillows were mentioned in the report with little other information (Henderson & Bidwell, 1982:155; Rodwell, 2001:564). The two last pillows were encountered at Barnstaple, the stones placed under the skull with no ambiguity for interpretation (graves 37 and 81 - fig.71, vol.2).

In addition to these pillows, stones were also found at various sites in direct association with the bodies. At Barnstaple (Dev.), these "coffin furniture" (Miles, 1986:66) appear to have been a particularly common grave-good. In some cases, these elements had a clear structural function, acting as packing stones when outlining the grave on the outside or inside of the coffin, or when found surrounding the head of the deceased, acting as *logette céphaliques* (grave 85 – fig.72, vol.2). This functionality does not however apply to all of the stones. In some cases, their presence has been identified as an attempt to make the grave more "*pleasant*" for the dead (Miles, 1986:66). If this interpretation is possible, it does not however explain the variation in position of the stone in relation to the body – on the throat, the chest or between the knees – nor the variation in types – pebbles, quartz blocks and white quartzite (*ibid*) – that could be linked to a variety of reasons. Stone deposition was indeed observed at other sites in the sample, linked to different practices and diverse contexts. The closest parallel to Barnstaple would be Mawgan Port (Corn.), where white quartzite rocks were discovered in

grave 4 and 9. Their presence in these graves appeared to have served structural purposes (Bruce-Mitford, 1997:64), but the use of this very specific type of stone seems akin to the selection of grave-goods. This intentional deposition joins that of the same mineral in several of the Barnstaple graves (Miles 1986:66). If this material was easily accessible in this location, and could therefore appear as intrusive, the deliberate cutting of the yellow exterior of the stone revealing the white interior would point towards an intentional deposition (Edwards, 2013:177-178). The choice of white quartzite could therefore be linked to a specific aspect of the burial practice, to the location of the cemetery or to the identity of the deceased (*cf.* chapter 8).

The use of stone as part of the funerary rite also appeared at Hicknoll Slait (Som.) and Meon Hill (Hants.). At Hicknoll Slait, the more recent excavation revealed the presence of flint within the mouth of the grave 1 individual (fig.73, vol.2) (Davey, 2002:84). The position of the mandible seems to indicate that the lips were kept shut, effectively preventing the flint from slipping out after the end of *rigor mortis* (*ibid*). This practice was linked in other areas to individuals affected by specific pathologies (*ibid*), a link that could not be established here due to the lack of paleopathological data. Beyond this particular element, the individual does not stand out from the rest of the cemetery, be it in practice or in location. A possible analogy can be made with grave 56 of Barnstaple (Dev.), in which a stone was found in the throat of the skeleton (Miles, 1986:66). This grave is however apparently devoid of the strong wish of keeping the rock in position. Other hypotheses for this Barnstaple example could be that a stone was placed on the side of the neck and fell on it after decomposition of the soft tissues, or was deposited on the lid of the coffin, then falling down after decay of the cover. Both interpretations can however only remain hypotheses due to the lack of precise recording of the position of the skeletal pieces. Finally, at Meon Hill (Hants.), a stone was discovered on top of two individuals buried in a prone position. If this could be compared to the rocks found on the chest of certain individuals at

Barnstaple, the very different context of the Hampshire cemetery implies two very different interpretations, one linked directly to the perceived malfeasant personality of the deceased, whilst the other is more elusive and could once again be linked to post-depositional skeletal movements, structural factors or diverse superstitious practice.

The presence of lithics in graves can, therefore, be linked to a variety of factors, going from simple structural functions supporting the side of the containers, to the organisation of the internal space of the inhumation, directly engaging with the skeletons. The various types of cemeteries in which these depositions were encountered highlights once again the issue of the meaning attached to certain practices, similar in execution but with fundamentally different meaning. The detailed record and study of the stones and their relation to the body also reveals kindred practice at Mawgan Porth (Corn.) and Barnstaple (Dev.), with the apparent importance of the white quartzite, a subject that will be developed in more details in later chapters through the comparison with other British, French and Manx sites (*cf.* chapter 8).

3) Jewellery and weapons

These considerations lead us now to the study of more personal items, often qualified in the literature as gendered grave-goods. Weapons appear to have been the most common element found in association with the deceased (fig.17, vol.1). Their distribution is, as could be expected, mainly focused on Hampshire, with three items at Hicknoll Slait (Som.), and one iron knife at Ulwell (Dor.) as the only exceptions. To this regional trend can be added a chronological one as only cemeteries dated to the seventh to eighth centuries feature this practice, the later burial grounds being devoid of such depositions. Distinction between knives, seax and scramasaxe was based on the nomenclature used on the report and on the measures suggested by Härke (1989:144) and Geake (1995:164), seax and

scramasaxe being characterised by blades longer than 180mm. After verification of these sizes, the scramasaxe recorded at Winnall II (Hants.) in grave 39 was placed here in the "knife" category, as the blade appears to only be c.154mm long. Iron knives were the most represented item in this category followed by spearheads, seax and shield bosses (fig.18, vol.1). Finally, grave 5537 from Saint Mary's stadium cemetery I (Hants.) stands out with the only sword in the sample placed alongside of seax with an individual of unknown sex and age. Overall, weapon deposition does not appear to have been linked to the sex of the individuals as these artefacts were discovered in both male and female graves, with no statistically significant difference in their distribution[19]. The age of the deceased could however have been influential as only two of the 73 items recorded were placed with juveniles (an adolescent and a child) both in Winnall II. Unfortunately, the small quantity of younger individuals prevents any statistical study on this front.

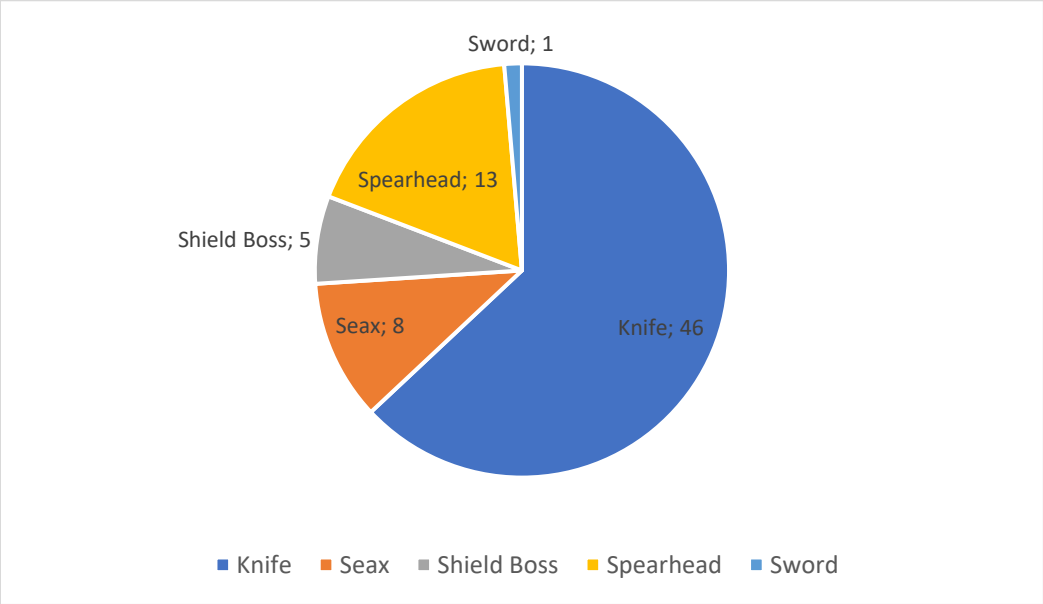


Figure 18: Number of weapons by categories - British sample

[19] $\chi^2 = 0.9982$; p= 0.98568

Similar observations can be made when considering the other main gendered grave-good: jewellery. As for the artefacts discussed above, the near totality of jewellery was recorded in Hampshire, with only a ring and a possible necklace and bracelet in burials from Exeter cemetery II (Dev.) and Hicknoll Slait (Som.). The chronological span of the practice is however slightly wider than for the deposition of weapons with some occurrences in the ninth and tenth century. This later date needs, however, to be seen in the particular context of the execution cemetery of Meon Hill (Hants.). As mentioned during the study of the clothing items, the individuals buried at the site were probably dressed upon execution and inhumation (see above III.B.1). The presence of earrings with skeletons 9 and 4, in addition to wrists fasteners with individual 4, seem to indicate that the convicts were not stripped of their more conspicuous belongings at the time of death and ultimate burial. Less than an intentional deposition, the presence of jewellery in these graves thus appears as circumstantial. Deliberate depositions are, however, not in doubt at the other sites, although this does not make their interpretation easier. The best example of these difficulties is represented by the pair of copper-alloy brooches discovered at Twyford in grave 1049[20] (fig.74, vol.2). These accessories were indeed placed with a child, possibly female although this sexual characterisation was undertaken solely on the basis of the presence of jewellery, which is questionable. These artefacts showed clear traces of wear, as if worn for several years before their deposition with skeleton 1050 (Egging-Dinwiddy, 2011:85,113-114), highlighting the issues of the life of the object before reaching the location of their discovery, and that of the identification of heirlooms in archaeological context (Gilchrist, 2012:237-238, 2013), influencing our perception of the duration of certain practice in cemeteries at sites where the only dating methods available are typological study of grave-goods. These inherent biases to the practice of archaeology are also apparent when considering the use

[20] These artefacts do not appear in the list of jewellery as they are primarily clothing items, and were therefore recorded in this latter category.

of grave-goods to determine the sex and age of the deceased. The very small number of jewellery items recorded in the sample does not allow statistical study, but it should still be mentioned here that these items were discovered in similar quantities in females (4) males (6) and juvenile graves (6), the 3 other elements placed with individuals of unknown sex and age, therefore not showing any clear distribution depending on the biological identity of the deceased.

The study of gendered assemblages thus raises a certain number of questions challenging traditional interpretations whilst highlighting issues linked to the identity of the dead in its most intimate aspects. Beyond sex, age and status, the selection of specific items for funerary purposes could also have reflected kinship and other more personal links.

4) Peculiar items, other metallic and organic elements

Personal identity was also conveyed by more unusual elements, found in much smaller quantities in this sample, as the grooming and craft items discovered at Winnall II (Hants.). These bone combs and spindle-whorls (one in bone and one in clay) (fig.75, vol.2) are indeed linked to more practical aspects of life, offering a glimpse on the everyday activities of these individuals whilst also being artefacts commonly found in Anglo-Saxon graves (Geake, 1995:132-133, 143). Their deposition also appears to be linked in majority to female adults, with one female sub-adult, buried with the clay spindle-whorl, and one child, with one of the combs, as the only exceptions. To these can also be added two iron pronged objects placed with the mature female of grave 29, possibly linked to craft activities. Fragments of what have been identified as keys were also uncovered at the site, this time in a mature male and mature possibly female graves (fig.76, vol.2). The only parallel to these practices is to be found in another of the Hampshire sites, Saint Mary's stadium I, where a sub-adult was accompanied by a possible key or tool (fig.78, vol.2). Deposition of more personal possessions connected to activity and/or the

household therefore appears to be once again focused in Hampshire, and more specifically in Winnall II. Whilst it is possible that some of the 12 uncharacterised iron elements recorded in the rest of the sample represent similar items, their distribution would still be focused on the region with occurrences in Twyford (Hants.) in addition to Winnall II (Hants.) and Saint Mary's stadium cemetery I (Hants.), therefore not straying from the regional nor from the chronological patterns visible here.

Interpretation of the 'other metallic elements' is often more arduous. In some cases, the nails and other metallic fixtures could be linked to the use of burial containers, as illustrated in grave 5414 of Cook Street (Hants.), where the copper-alloy strip probably originated from a reused plank making the *coffrage*. The overall lack of precise recording of the number of elements and/or of their position in the grave pit and in relation to the body makes their identification as such generally only hypothetical. In other cases, the metallic items could be elements of clothing, as observed in grave 5 of Winnall II with small bronze cylinder possibly representing lace-tags (items 2 and 3 grave 5- fig.75, vol.2), or unidentified jewellery, the spirally coiled bronze strip of grave 7 (items 3 and 4 grave 7- fig.75, vol.2) also at Winnall II standing as the most representative example. These hypothetical identifications could equally be applied to the 10 small fragments of a perforated copper-alloy sheet found in grave 4037 at the Saint Mary's stadium cemetery I. This element was discovered in a dark stain at the bottom of the grave, probably materialising the only traces left of a bag placed in this sub-adult inhumation. Other graves of the Saint Mary's stadium cemetery I also offer another possible interpretation for metallic fragments. The five rivets found with the male adolescent from burial 5352 were for instance identified as the remains of a shield (fig.77, vol.2). Another weapon could also be represented in grave 4037 by a small iron rivet on which mineralised wood was identified. Equally, the iron stain recorded close to the head of the individual buried in grave K at Saint Endelllion (Corn.) could be the only remaining evidence for the deposition of a weapon. The lack of any further

information on this stain and the paucity of grave-goods in this region make further interpretation impossible, but the very presence of a metallic element within the cist grave is an exceptional occurrence in Cornwall and should not therefore be discarded. The last metallic items that need to be mentioned here are the coins. Only very rarely found, their links with the grave is often difficult to establish. The Frisian sceat from Wells grave 140 is however considered to be in possible association with the individual (Rodwell, 2001:72). The other coin mentioned in the same report as being possibly from grave 150 but discovered in grave 42 was not recorded here, as its original location cannot be confirmed.

Apart from the few glass fragments discovered at Winnall II (Hants.), Wells (Som.) and Saint Mary's stadium (Hants.) - one grave and one item each – the last category left to discuss here is that gathering the different types of other organic elements identified as intentional depositions. They can be divided into three main categories: plant remains, animal remains and other miscellaneous elements. The last group is represented only by three items, namely the possible bag from grave 4037 of Saint Mary's stadium cemetery I identified through the discovery of a few artefacts on a dark stained area of the bottom of the grave, and a triangular piece of sea-shell recovered from grave 10 (mature possibly female individual) at Winnall II, the function of which remains unknown as the report does not mention any pierced hole or even if the shape resulted from human action. Fragments of wood accompanied by some metal fittings represent the last item of this sub-category, and was interpreted as a possible casket containing a workbox placed in the grave of a female sub-adult, an item often found in association with female burials in Anglo-Saxon England (Geake, 1995:82-83). Looking now at the vegetal remains, a few graves from Saint Mary's stadium cemetery I and also from Saint Endellion (Corn.) showed some evidence of charred wood and a few fragments of charcoal possibly related to the nature of the burial container at the Hampshire site, but more difficult to explain for the Cornish one as the charcoal was discovered in a *pleine terre* burial. The very small quantity of charcoal recovered from Saint

Endellion grave A is not enough to qualify it as a charcoal burial but could find some parallels with graves 1 and 2 from Hicknoll Slait (Som.). There, evidence of cereals and wild species were indeed recovered from both burials (Davey, 2002:94-95) and interpreted as possible evidence for ritual practice, with specific plants burnt as part of the funerary rites for their odorous properties (*ibid*).

If animal remains are equally scarce in the inhumation corpus, with only one attested example at Winnall II, they are much more represented in the cremations. Six of the eighteen cremations were indeed accompanied by some animal bones, with at least three ungulates and one possible pig in grave 5001, 5023, 5114 and 7138 respectively. Grave 5137 (mature individual) and 7152 (adult individual) stands out from this assemblage with the presence a small ungulate and a hare-size animal or bird for the former, and evidence of pig, cattle and possibly other species for the latter. To these can be added in three other urns the presence of artefacts made in animal bones: a bone or antler amulet in grave 7138 (Birbeck *et al.*, 2005:27), and an ivory bag ring in grave 5126 accompanying a female adult. The presence of this last item is not uncommon in cremation or inhumation of the Anglo-Saxon world (*ibid*) but does denote, if not a higher status individual, an access to exotic materials and a desire to be buried with it.

These peculiar artefacts thus come to complement the picture obtained so far in the study of grave-goods. If their concentration in Hampshire follows the trend observed for the other types, other sites also showed depositional practices potentially related to one community or even to specific individuals, conveying the identity of the deceased in unique way and reinforcing the distinction between different groups (*e.g* cremation rite). These items thus highlight once again the important of a deep understanding of the context and of the multitude of elements related to funerary practices in the diverse and ever-changing societies of the early Middle Ages.

IV) Buried population

After the detailed analysis of the location of the cemeteries, the relationship between the graves and their foci, the study of the different grave types and of the various items placed within the grave, it is now time to finally consider the most central element of the funerary practices: the dead body. As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, no detailed pathological study of the populations will be undertaken here, the data only presented when illustrating and supporting the argument.

A) Demographic profiles: monasteries, elites and rural populations

The study of the buried population needs to start with some considerations over the issues intrinsic to skeletal remains. As mentioned throughout this chapter, preservation was often a major limit to the detection and interpretation of various elements. Of the twenty-seven sites selected for this study, six did not offer any information on the buried individuals, both due to preservation and recording issues, the twenty-one other cemeteries also containing an important proportion of undetermined individuals. The problems caused by this lack of population data are particularly visible at Kenn (Dev.), where the complete absence of human remains made impossible the detailed study of the individuals buried within the enclosures or of the possible reasons behind the cluster organisation of the burial area. The same can be said for Saint Endellion (Corn.), despite slightly better preservation conditions, with only three sexed and seven aged individuals in a population of 24.

At Padstow (Corn.), it is the lack of excavation of the majority of the graves that makes the characterisation of the buried population difficult. It can however be said that two juveniles - one perinatal and one infant - were identified, in addition to at least three possible males and one possible female. Furthermore,

two of the mature males displayed evidence of fractures, associated to a fall from a certain height in the case of skeleton 1005 (Manning & Stead, 2002:96). If these few data are not enough to offer any interpretation on the population using this cemetery, the presence of a possible female and very young individuals, in addition to a possible active lifestyle leading to trauma for at least two of the four adults recorded, does not seem fully consistent with a coenobitic life, and can therefore put in question if not the identification of the site as linked to a monastic occupation, the identity of the individuals buried here.

The rest of the sample seems to display the same characteristics, with overall balanced populations in terms of sexual distributions along with the predominance of adults over juveniles. The cemetery of Winnall II (Hants.) illustrates well this tendency, with a male to female ratio of 56:48, and with juveniles representing 28.26% of the population. Tywyford (Hants.) offers a very similar picture, with this time the females being slightly more represented than the male (36:48), and with a more important juvenile population (33.33%). This important presence of young individuals is even more noticeable when putting aside the unstratified remains and individuals identified in the topsoil and considering solely the inhumations. Similar demographic patterns are observed at churchyards, as at SOU13 (Hants.), where juveniles constituted 27.16% of the burials for 71.60% of adults themselves divided up between 29.31% of females against 59.62% of males. The buried population of Wells appears to have been even more balanced in terms of sexual distribution with a male to female ratio of 25:28. Hyperostosis frontalis interna (HFI), a pathology that has been linked to the old age of certain individuals but also to important consumption of animal products (Szeniczey, 2019), affected five individuals in this sample, possibly indicating an easier access to diary and meat linked to a high status lifestyle. It would not be surprising to find elite burials at this monastery, and later construction of the funerary chapel certainly points to high-status individuals, but this interpretation needs however to be considered carefully as HFI is also linked to nomadic pastoral

societies (Szeniczey, 2019). Juveniles are fairly represented at 19.76% with however a small number of infants despite a fair representation of the other young individual groups, including perinatal (4.03%). This limited representation of very young individuals also appears to characterise the cemetery of Ulwell (Dev.), with this time a complete lack of perinatal and only one infant, whilst the rest of the buried population is comparable to that of described above for Wells (Som.) and SOU13 (Hants.). A complete lack of juveniles, as well as the under-representation of females is also visible at Meon Hill (Hants.). However, the special nature of this cemetery plays once again a central role in this deviation, the absence of young individuals possibly explained by a difference in legal status and/or in the severity of the sentence before a certain age. Similarly, females could have been subjected to particular punishment with different outcomes having various effects on the physical remains (Reynolds, 2009:170-172), or buried at other locations.

B) Zoning and grouping: a place for the dead

This last hypothesis brings us to the question of zones and groups dedicated to specific individuals created within the burial grounds. The recruitment of the buried population at Lamyatt Beacon (Som.) appears for example to have been influenced by specific criteria linked to the biological sex, the majority of the population being represented by females (10/16 individuals). The reasons for this concentration remain unknown (Leech, 1986:273). At other sites, the age at death appears as an influencing factor in the location of the grave. The few juveniles identified at Barnstaple (Dev.) and Mawgan Porth (Corn.) were, for instance, all uncovered in Trench A for the former, and placed in majority on the western end of the burial ground for the latter (Miles, 1986:66). This deliberate placement of the juvenile graves in specific areas of the cemetery could explain to some extent the small number of young individuals in other cemeteries mentioned above. In addition to the location of the grave, age also appears to have influenced the

nature of the burial. The detailed study of the population of Saint Mary's stadium cemetery I (Hants.) revealed strong pattern with a greater proportion of juveniles in the cremations than in the inhumations (Birbeck *et al.*, 2005:49) (fig.19, vol.1). If Chisq test shows no statistically significant results[21], the total absence of infants from the inhumations of this cemetery does seem to indicate a specific treatment of the remains of the very young individuals within one funerary area.

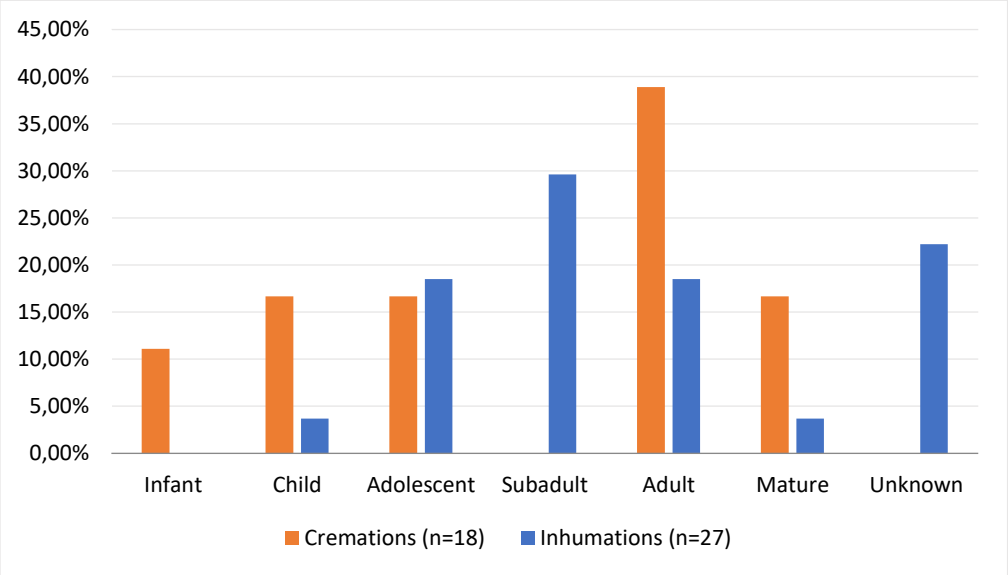


Figure 19: Demographic profiles of the cremation and inhumation burials at St Mary's stadium cemetery I

Deposition of several individuals in the same grave could also reflect a similar selection within the population. Often referred to as 'peculiar' or 'unique occurrences' (Birbeck *et al.*, 2005:11, Egging Dinwiddy, 2011:99), multiple burials were actually recorded at several sites in this sample. At Padstow (Corn.), two of the three excavated graves contained more than one individual, grave 4 sheltering the remains of a mature male and a perinatal and grave 17 containing a possible sub-adult male and a mature male, the latter found in a disarticulated state

[21] $\chi^2 = 0.002424$; $p = 1$

(Manning & Stead, 2002-3:95). This condition could potentially indicate the reopening of the grave rather than a double burial, the individual placed in réduction alongside the other occupant. A double burial was also identified at Twyford (Hants.), this time showing combined inhumation of a mature male and possible female adult (grave 1143). As they were disturbed by later activity at the site, it is once again difficult to determine if burial of both individuals was simultaneous or not. Multiple burials were also observed at larger cemeteries, grave 100 at Wells (Som.), being one example. If it does appear that the deposition of both individuals – a mature male and an adult female, was not simultaneous, the lack of disturbance of the first individuals as well as the high quality of the grave - a coffrage with evidence of laid out floor - seem to indicate a desire to unite these two individuals in death. Two individuals placed in the same grave pit were also discovered at Saint Mary's stadium cemetery I, a sub-adult and an adult, both individuals unsexed, discovered in the South Stand therefore slightly away from the rest of the uncovered cemetery. This location and the presence of pottery as part of the grave-good assemblage were the only elements differentiating this grave from the rest of the cemetery. Finally, the last grave that needs to be considered here is the triple burial of Knowlton Circles (Dev.). As the characterisations of the individual was undertaken from photographs (Field, 1963:124), they are not considered here as accurate, the only possible identifications being the presence of a short, possibly juvenile individual with two possible adults.

The study of buried population seems therefore to reveal very few variations between the different cemeteries, with only scarce evidence for higher status individuals in terms of osteological data. Similar patterns were observed in the different regions, with specific areas of the cemetery or burial practices linked to the sex or age of the deceased. Double burials also appear to have occurred in various contexts, without showing particular associations between sex or age groups.

V) Conclusions

The detailed and thematic analysis of the British key-sites thus revealed a picture of great complexity. Few differences were observed in the choice of location for the funerary area, with only a slightly higher number of associations with Roman features in the eastern regions (*i.e* Somerset and Hampshire). Variations did however appear on a more local level when considering the meaningfulness of these associations, the lack of impact of the Roman villa of Twyford (Hants.) on the cemetery layout contrasting, for instance, with the central role of the mausoleum at Wells (Som.). Yet these different degrees of connection seem to have conveyed a common goal, communities tying themselves to a more or less distant past, claiming ownership over the landscape by placing their dead in strategic locations, and marking their area of influence through the establishment of various types of cemeteries on boundaries and major communication axes. The organisation of the burial area was also similar across the sample, with a general row-and-cluster layout. Disruption of this model, with, for instance, higher density of graves and/or the deformation of the row into a fan-shape, allowed for the identification of a burial focus beyond the limits of the excavated area, and highlighted the importance of the proximity to said focus.

Other aspects of the management of the burial area did however highlight some regional variations. Beyond questions of social status, a clear difference appeared with the use of square or rectangular enclosures in the west (Kenn, Dev.), against circular structures in the east (Hamwic, Hants). This west-east dichotomy was further reinforced by the analysis of the graves types and of the artefacts deposited with the dead. Despite the difficulties of characterising the internal organisation of the grave in the British sample (see above III. A) (*cf.* chapter 2), the prevalence of stone containers in Cornwall stood strongly against the wood and pleine terre burials of the other regions, an imbalanced then observed in terms of grave-goods, with higher proportions in Hampshire than in any of the other British

regions (see above III. B), nuancing to some extent typochronological observations (*cf.* chapter 8). To this west-east divide can be added a more local one. The simultaneous use of multiple burial areas in Hamwic does indeed testify to a certain level of division within a probably composite population, each group being buried within their own cemetery, or, as observed at Saint Mary's stadium cemetery I, following their own burial rite. This is not to say that individuals from overseas were not integrated within the life of the settlement, or that cultural heritage was the only factor in the selection of a burial area, but it is crucial to remember the very intimate nature of any funerary process, the grave and its various components constituting the last manifestation of an individual's social and biological identity.

The intra- and inter-regional analysis undertaken here thus revealed the diversity of practices coexisting throughout the period within the British sample. It is now time to move on to the cross-Channel comparative perspective, challenging the old models of cultural affinities and possible population movements between southwest Britain and northwest France in the early Middle Ages.

Chapter 7: Perspective on locational influences of cemeteries in southwest Britain and northwest France, c.600-1050AD

The detailed analysis of the French and British samples revealed the complexity of funerary practices on both inter and intra-regional scales. In the following chapters, these observations are placed into a cross-Channel context, offering a new understanding of the treatment of the dead and a new consideration of their wider social implications in these maritime facing regions of southwest Britain and northwest France. Following once again a thematic plan, this chapter focuses on perspectives relating to the location of the cemeteries, aiming to provide a new understanding of the complex relationships between the living, the dead and their natural and anthropogenic environments. Similarities and differences between the British and French samples are analysed, highlighting common shared trends and more unique practices revealing the diversity of mortuary choices and multiple layers in the expression of identities. Issues related to the definitions attached to certain concepts and other difficulties inherent to comparative works are also addressed throughout the discussion.

I) Choices of cemetery locations and natural topography

Let us start then by considering the links existing between choices of cemetery locations within the natural environment. In both samples, burial grounds were found to often be deliberately associated with significant landscape features, a connection that was mainly interpreted in the detailed analyses as functional. Cemeteries placed on higher ground could, for example, have been used as landmarks, indicating the approach to a settlement whilst also delineating its area of influence. This demarcation function can be observed at both Hicknoll

Slait (Som.) and Basly (LN), the graves placed on hilltops clearly visible on the horizon (*cf*. chapters 5 and 6). In both cases, no settlements were discovered in the immediate proximity of the burial grounds, an absence that can partly be explained by the small size of the excavated areas. This distance from the settlement could however also convey the role of the dead as representatives of the community, conferring authority through ancestry and standing as emissaries on the edges of its territory. This statement of power, or even ownership, is even more visible in the placement of cemeteries on strategic locations, overlooking routeways through uneven landscapes, as seems to have been the case at Ulwell (Dor.), the burial grounds acting as 'checkpoints' under the direct authority of the community. This idea of control over major communication axes through funerary presence can also be applied to the coastal context, the cemeteries overlooking sea routes and acting as landmarks, indicating safe landing-places, or conversely pointing out dangerous areas with strong currents or hidden reefs, a usage of funerary areas already observed in other northwest European regions long before the early medieval period. Westerdahl noted, for instance, the use of Bronze Age monuments and graves to mark the Scandinavian shorelines, indicating both the presence of nearby settlement and its control over the immediate environment (2000:12-13). A similar function could be attributed to the early medieval cemetery of Barnstaple (Dev.), the dead marking the entrance of the settlement territory on the Taw estuary, and could explain the placement of the graves at Rezé (LA) and Hamwic SOU13 so close to the waterfront. The deliberate association of burial grounds with specific natural features can therefore be seen as a form of dialogue between the living and their immediate environment, conveying authority and power whilst informing travellers of safe land or sea routes.

The other aspect mentioned, albeit briefly, in the case studies, is that of the perception of these natural features. These more abstract, and often ambiguous, links are probably best explored through the example of coastal cemeteries. On the one hand, documentary sources depict the sea and its shore as liminal places,

sordid and dangerous (Cassard, 1998: 79-81; Loveluck 2013:178), the waters often thought to shelter evil creatures and other abhorrent beings (Cassard, 1998:81). This reserve towards the sea and its approaches is also witnessed in Breton toponyms and anthroponyms, often more related to inland activities than to maritime occupations (Cassard, 1998:77, 80), despite the proximity of the settlement to the shores. On the other hand, the thriving maritime activity of the emporia and other smaller landing and trading sites does testify to an engagement with the sea (Lebecq, 1997; McCormick, 2001:420; Loveluck, 2013:198-204**,**). Furthermore, Loveluck pointed out the issues linked to the use of textual sources due to their inland origins, the authors considering the worth of the land on the basis of its potential agricultural production and therefore logically rejecting the often unfertile coastal plains (2013:178). Beyond this bias, poetry and religious tales also illustrate a duality in the relationship with the ocean. Cassard noted, for example, the paradoxical view of the surface of the water, associated with divine grace, and the malevolence associated with the depth of the sea (1998:81) whilst Rose drew attention to dual feelings of fright and appeal exerted by the sea in Anglo-Saxon poetry (2007:1-3). In parallel, examples from the case studies also showed the deliberate deposition of artefacts related to the sea with the deceased, without any apparent negative connotations (*cf.* chapter 8), testifying to a degree of engagement with the maritime world in funerary practices, a connection that was central in other northwest European cultures, probably best represented by boat burials.

The placement of cemeteries near the waterfront could therefore be interpreted in different ways. It could first convey the rejection of the dead clearly separated from their society, the remains relegated to marginal and dangerous areas. Conversely, they could act as full-fledged continuing members of their community, acting as intermediaries and possibly protectors, creating a link between the world of the dead, materialised by the deep and unknown waters, and the world of the living developing on land. The perception of natural elements,

whether the sea or a spring, can also change through time. For instance, at Exeter (Dev.), the spring seems to have influenced the position of the first Anglo-Saxon church (Henderson & Bidwell, 1982:156), and by extension, its associated cemetery, but it did not seem to have had any impact on the location of the first phase of the cemetery focused on the ruins of the Roman forum. This situation also brings the question of locational influence: does the perception of a natural feature result in the establishment of a cemetery in its direct vicinity, as in the case of coastal cemeteries, or does the presence of a burial ground change the perception of the natural feature it is associated with, as can be argued for the cases of more functional usages and changing attitudes? The answer seems to depend on the communities and their traditions, directly impacting the nature and meaning of the connection between the dead and the natural topography. This "*power of the cemetery*", as defined by Härke (2001:19) seems therefore to work both ways, burial grounds influencing and being influenced by various features. These variations are furthermore found on both sides of the Channel, showing a similar thought-process in the selection of suitable places for funerary areas and testifying to a complex and composite shared relationship and perception of funerary areas and the natural environment.

II) Relationship to pre-existing man-made features

A) Prehistoric features

Similar concerns and intricate relationship can be observed when considering the nature of the links existing between pre-existing man-made structures and the early medieval cemeteries. The influence of prehistoric monuments, and particularly of barrow burials and ring-ditches, was clearly observed on both sides of the Channel, the features acting as burial foci for the graves. The grave pits are generally placed as close as possible to the edges of the

structures, sometimes slightly encroaching on them as at Aubevoye (UN) and Knowlton Circles (Dor.), but overall respected their delineations. As for the association with natural features, the placement of these early medieval cemeteries in direct proximity to these monuments can be linked to a functional usage. In this case, communities placed their dead in the continuity of the previous landowners, gaining legitimacy through ancestry (Williams, 1997:2; Härke, 2001:20, Semple, 2013:44, 195). This reuse can also be seen in a more aggressive way, the association showing the appropriation of the landscape by new settlements covering with their dead the remains of a time long past (Semple, 2013:190-191). Basly (LN) can be taken here as an example of this superimposition, as the graves were found on the site of a prehistoric settlement (San Juan et al., 2012:86), a situation that is also reflected in the clear topographical dominion of Hicknoll Slait (Som.) cemetery over South Cadbury hillfort (*cf.* chapter 6). Another, and maybe more prosaic, explanation for these associations is that of convenience: the monuments would have indeed been visible and probably used as a landmarks through time, the placement of the cemetery in their immediate vicinity therefore making the funerary areas easily identifiable. This could, for example, be the case for the cemetery of Meon Hill (Hants.), the nearby prehistoric hillfort facilitating the detection of the burial area (Reynolds, 1999:78, Semple, 2013:196, 201; Reynolds, 2009:117, 242), the structure serving as a marker for the later graves.

The situation at Meon Hill is however quite peculiar, and brings us now to consider the issues of perception of these prehistoric monuments and the implications of such associations. The first observation that can be made is the concentration of this type of reuse in the easternmost regions of both samples (map 7, vol.2). These strong regional patterns appear indeed common to southwest Britain and northwest France, showing clear geographical trends shared on both sides of the Channel. A simple explanation for this mirror effect could be the lesser number and/or preservation of prehistoric monuments in the western areas (Williams, 1997:19), an argument that does not appear convincing especially

in regions like Brittany where standing stones and similar structures are still today an integral part of the landscape. Another possibility would be that of a different relationship to the past. Connection to previous generations might not have been sought after, or could even be rejected in the western regions, conveying a different perception of these features and their suitability as burial foci. If religion, and more specifically Christianity, could have had an impact on this dichotomy, let us not forget the general level of syncretism pervading the early medieval world and cases like Portejoie (UN) and Knowlton Circles (Dor.) which saw the building of churches in direct proximity and on top of the prehistoric feature used by the early graves as a burial focus. The establishment of these religious structures testifies to an adaptation of the features to a new social reality whilst also showing a continuous attachment to these funerary places. These conversions are however not the only changes occurring in the relationship with these pre-existing features in the later centuries.

As was stated in the case of association with natural features, the perception of specific landscape elements could change through time and in the case of prehistoric monuments in Britain, this alteration appears to be mainly negative. Prehistoric features seem indeed to become in the course of the ninth-tenth centuries the foci of judicial cemeteries, receiving the remains of individuals rejected from society (Reynolds, 2009:242; Semple, 2013:206-207). This usage, illustrated in the samples at Meon Hill, does not appear in the French sample, where the sites are either relocated to a close-by church or abandoned. The different scales of study of the reuse of prehistoric features in early medieval funerary practices thus reveals once again local variations within an otherwise shared practice, showing that if the nature of the associations was probably similar in the early centuries, and occurred in the same areas, the evolution of the practice followed different routes depending on the countries, testifying to the complex links existing between populations, their dead and their environment.

B) Roman features

The situation in the case of association with Roman features raises similar questions of perception and local traditions. It is also during the study of this connection that differences started to appear between the French and the British samples. The first major divergence is that of occurrences: the reuse of Roman structures appeared more commonly in the French case studies, with very few examples on the British side, despite similar distribution patterns. The eastern most areas appeared once again more concerned by the practice, the lesser occurrences in the west linked to the general lack of Roman foundations in southwest Britain, a situation reflected to some extent on the French side, where Roman cultural influence was more ephemeral and coupled with the abandonment of certain major settlement sites. This situation is clearly illustrated in the sample by Corseul (Brit.), capital of the Coriosolites, where evidence for occupation after the third century is nearly non-existent (Fichet de Clairefontaine, 1985:107; Cassard, 1994:10). Despite the presence of early medieval graves at the site, the significance of their association with the Roman ruins is debatable, as the structure might not have been visible on the surface at the time of the establishment of the funerary area (*cf.* chapter 4). Even if recent research shows that the post-Roman decline was probably not as extreme as once thought (Cassard, 1994:15), as illustrated for example at Le Yaudet where the continuous occupation was only interrupted very briefly in the fourth century (Cunliffe & Gaillou, 2015:193), a direct link with the past does not appear to have been particularly sought after, at least in a funerary context. Rezé (LA) stands as an exception. This particular occurrence needs however to be understood in the context of a port, the funerary usage of the site carrying on as did the activity of the settlement from the Roman period into the early Middle Ages, the continuous burial sequence reinforcing the longevity of the site (*cf.* chapter 4). Interestingly, Roman Southampton was also used by one of the cemeteries of the emporium, despite a lack of early medieval

occupation within Clausentum (Cherryson, 2005:266). A certain connection to the past was therefore also desired by some members of the Anglo-Saxon community despite the relocation of the settlement and the existence of other burial grounds within the new occupied area.

This engagement with the past, or conversely this distance from it, links back to the question of the function and perception of the Roman features in an early medieval context. On both sides of the Channel, the buildings in various degrees of preservation are used as burial foci, and, as was the case for the association with prehistoric elements, rarely encroached upon. The dead thus once again occupy the spaces of older generations, the communities placing themselves in their continuity whilst also appropriating the place. The functional use of the cemetery, and its "*power*" seems therefore similar in both samples; but what about the more abstract reasons motivating these associations? The most common interpretation is that of religious, and more specifically Christian, concerns. These preoccupations are particularly visible in the placement of cemeteries near Roman mausolea, showing the first developments of *ad sanctos* burials (see below III.B). Wells is probably the best example of this practice, the Anglo-Saxon cemetery being organised around the mausoleum, which remained a central feature in the funerary area until the tenth century (Rodwell, 2001:85). Similar associations are also observed in the French sample at Thaon (LN), possibly Ambon (Brit.), and to a certain extent at Landevennec (Brit.). Le Maho also stressed the possibility of a more ephemeral religious usage of non-funerary Roman sites (2004:58-59). In this case, the only archaeologically visible evidence of such association would be the graves, with only very rarely other traces of occupation. This hypothesis follows to a certain extent the situation evoked above of churches built near/on prehistoric sites (see above), and can indeed be applied to some sites, as at Isneauville (UN), where the graves were organised around the non-ruined part of the Roman villa in a possibly enclosed space (Adrian *et al.,* 2011:106). That the structure was reused as a church is a possibility that cannot be discarded, but equally difficult to prove.

Furthermore, these reoccupations might not have been systematically Christian. Sites like Aubevoye (UN), where graves were organised in several groups distributed between the different areas of the Roman villa, whilst also in association with prehistoric features, show the limitations of such interpretation. Falaise could also be taken as an example, the nature of the association even more ambiguous due to the ruined state of the Roman structure (*cf.* chapter 4). Lamyatt Beacon (Som.) is comparable to these reuses, the early medieval cemetery being organised around a Roman structure. In this case however, the population buried in the cemetery appears to be nearly exclusively female, showing the deliberate association of specific individuals with the monument (*cf.* chapter 6) (Leech, 1986:273). If religion and beliefs could explain such specific gendered population, the total lack of other structures or evidence beyond the temple and the graves prevent us from identifying this cemetery as a Christian one. Other sites also testify to a progressive change in the relationship to the feature or, conversely, conveyed a rupture with the past. For instance, the first phase of the early medieval cemetery at Exeter does not seem to convey any religious concerns and appears more akin to the idea of '*power of the cemetery*' mentioned earlier (Härke, 2001:19). The place of life, at the heart of the settlement, is thus transformed into an area dedicated to the dead, clearly showing a change in function and perception of space by the community occupying the nearby areas. The later evolution into a major religious centre comes here as both an evidence for the longevity of the site, and as a rupture, the perception of the area changing once again with, however, this time a maintained funerary function. The same could be said for France, where the association with villas in Upper Normandy contrasts with the reuse of Roman funerary structures in the rest of the sample, adding another level to the regional specificities observed on this side of the Channel. Caution is therefore essential in the interpretation of these associations, the local traditions and beliefs playing an important, and sometimes indecipherable, role.

Cross-Channel parallels can therefore be drawn despite the lesser occurrences of these associations in the British sample. The lack or lesser Roman influenced in the westernmost regions resulted in similar distribution patterns, echoing the situation already observed in the association with prehistoric features. To this comparable geography can be added a similar eclecticism in the type of monument chosen as foci, raising similar issues of interpretation, ranging from Christian concerns to more ambiguous connections, perpetuating the funerary function of the sites or endowing it with a completely new usage. The development or desertion of these cemeteries, particularly from the middle of the ninth century, appear to also reflect the transformations in the perception of space and of the dead, adapting to and reflecting new social realities and changing settlement layouts.

III) Relationship to social organisation: kinship, communities & the Church

A) Cemeteries and settlement space

It is now time to consider the more contemporary settings of these burial areas, looking at the spatial relationships between cemeteries and settlement spaces and considering the level of influence of churches in the choice of burial location. Before starting this analysis, a preliminary point needs to be made on the difference in the practice of archaeology in both modern France and Britain. Chapter 2 already highlighted the overall larger surfaces opened in France, contrasting with the more focused approach of British archaeology (*cf.* chapter 2). As a result, the settlements related to the cemeteries were often not documented in the British case-studies, probably lying outside of the excavated areas, a situation that appeared more rarely in the French sample but which does of course still occur (*cf.* chapters 3 and 4). If the location of the settlement is thus sometimes

more difficult to determine, its absence from the immediate proximity of the tombs does however indicate a distance between the spaces used by the living and the areas dedicated to the dead (*cf.* chapters 4 and 6), a separation expected for the early centuries still influenced by Roman *extra-muros* burial (Reynaud, 1996:24; Treffort, 1996a:133). It is indeed generally accepted that the seventh to eleventh centuries saw the slow integration of funerary areas within the settlement spaces, a movement most commonly attributed to the influence of the church, which became both a central element in the settlement layout and in burial practices (Zadora-Rio, 2003:2). But if this movement is undeniable on a generalised cross-Channel scale, the detailed research undertaken in this study revealed that this change in relationship is not always straightforward, showing local specificities and questioning the role of Christianity in these transformations.

The integration of funerary areas into the settlement space appeared to occur at different periods and following different incentives depending on the communities. The sample study highlighted variations on a regional scale; the community of Mawgan Porth (Corn.) placed its dead close to but outside of the settlement space (Bruce-Mitford, 1997:70), whilst only a few miles away, the cemetery of Saint Endellion (Corn.) seemed perfectly assimilated into the early medieval inhabited spaces (Trudgian, 1987:149). These different paces of assimilation are also witnessed on an even smaller scale. At Portejoie (UN), the settlement and funerary spaces are first separated, later merging, to ultimately split again, reinstating a distance between the living and the dead. Similar shifts are suspected at Romilly-sur-Andelle (UN) (*cf.* chapter 4), albeit not at the same speed, showing communal specificities despite similar social contexts. This very changeable relationship is also observed at poly-focal settlements, where several burial areas linked to multiple occupation/activity clusters could be used simultaneously. If at the sites previously mentioned, the cemeteries were attached to a church or similar structure, the multiple funerary areas of poly-focal settlements did not always show such association. At Visseiche (Brit.) for example,

only one of the two cemeteries was organised around the church, the other funerary area being placed a few meters away, possibly associated with its own, unknown focus (Guigon & Bardel, 1989:332). Despite this difference, both burial grounds were clearly separated from the early medieval settlement areas, showing a similar relationship to the inhabited space. Similarly, at Hamwic (Hants.), the majority of the burial areas were integrated into the settlement layout from the early phases of the emporium (*cf.* chapter 6). Both "Christian" and "pagan" cemeteries had therefore a place in the world of the living at the same time. Paradoxically, the Saint Mary's Church cemetery was not abandoned when the settlement relocated in the medieval period, thus relegating once again the burial area outside of the new centre.

The degree of integration of the dead to the settlement space needs also to be taken into account. The evidence of a possible palisade recorded at Mawgan Porth (Corn.), and the boundary suspected at Bréal-sous-Vitré (Brit.) and Visseiche (Brit.) do testify, for instance, to a physical separation between funerary and inhabited areas, clearly defining zones and their usage within the settlement space. These structures, often made out of perishable material, are unfortunately only rarely archaeologically visible, making their presence difficult to prove in most cases. In other circumstances, the dead could also be placed outside of the main funerary areas discussed so far. These graves, often referred to as isolated burials, deviant burials or more recently in France as "sépultures seules" (GAAF, 2019 conference - *forthcoming*), reveal yet another layer to the complex spatial links existing between the living and the dead. Within the samples, these outliers are most clearly represented at Meon Hill (Hants.) and Giberville (LN). The reasons for their distance from both settlements and major burial areas are however very different and representative of the issues of interpretation of this phenomenon. At Meon Hill, this remote location is directly to link to the deeds of the dead, most likely criminals denied the right to be buried with the rest of the community (Reynolds, 2002:177, 2009:96). At Giberville however, the reasons motivating the

placement of these graves away from the main cemetery are more difficult to determine and open to debate (Carpentier, 2008:30) (*cf.* chapter 4). Isolated burials are indeed a common phenomenon in early medieval France, and one that is still not fully understood. If it can, in some cases, reflect similar judicial circumstances as observed at Meon Hill (Pecqueur, 2003:3-4: Gleize, 2017:206), the practice does not always appear to carry a negative connotation (*ibid*), linked once again to communal or even individual practices that cannot always be perceived archaeologically or understood in our modern settings. The graves can either be found within the settlement space, sometimes directly next to the buildings (Pecqueur, 2003:10: Gleize, 2017:204), or clearly separated from the inhabited areas, as was the case in our samples. Besides, the general lack of any marking elements on the surface ground also highlights our inability to detect these types of funerary areas, the location and connotation of which were probably part of an innate knowledge shared by the members of a same community.

The placement of the cemetery within or outside of the settlement space seems therefore to depend on various factors, the locational influence of which makes their identification difficult on both sides of the Channel. It can however be said that the presence of a church does not appear to systematically influence the choice of location of the burial grounds and their links to inhabited areas, with movement of both funerary and occupation structures through time. Whilst they might have been acting as representative of the community when associated with natural or pre-existing man-made features, the integration of the dead into the settlement spaces testifies to a closer physical relationship, now kept within the same areas as the living, staying in close contact to the other members of the society. That some individuals did not follow this general pattern does however raise the question of the degree of freedom in the choice of the location of the grave and of the social implications of such decisions. What impact had communal practices and individual wishes on the selection of a suitable burial area? To what

extent did the development of Christianity influence the management of the dead? These are the two main aspects that need now to draw our attention.

B) Communities, individuals and religious concerns

Since the end of the nineteenth century, the study of early medieval cemeteries has largely been influenced by the confrontational debate between their "*pagan*" or "*Christian*" nature (Bailey-Young, 1999). If this opposition is now less present in literature, it still stands as one of the pillars of funerary archaeology of this period in both France and Britain. The next section endeavours to refer as little as possible to these great labels, looking directly at the locational data and taking into account the syncretism and social complexities characterising these early centuries. It should indeed be borne in mind that the Church does not appear to be particularly concerned with burial practices, be it in kind or regarding the location of the grave, rules about the treatment of the dead bodies starting to clearly appear in texts only in the eleventh century when they become more widespread and enforced on both sides of the Channel (Effros, 2002:10; Zadora-Rio, 2003; Treffort, 2010: 214, 217; Lauwers, 2005:96,106). A certain freedom in the choice of grave location and other funerary rites can therefore be expected until this later period, making the very definition of a Christian burial location debatable and ambiguous, not to be reduced solely to the proximity of a Christian building. Besides, chapels, churches and other similar structures are often only suspected, with rare physical remains and debatable archaeological evidence as was the case at Mawgan Porth (Corn.), Carnanton (Corn.), Plomeur (Brit.) or Isneauville (UN) (*cf.* chapters 4 and 6). The attested presence of such structures does not however equate with a more straightforward interpretation. Hamwic possessed several burial areas, used simultaneously over the seventh to tenth centuries (Cherryson, 2010:57-58). This phenomenon can be attributed partly to a diverse population within which small communities held different views on the

treatment of the dead and on where the remains should be buried, mirroring on a smaller scale the contemporaneous usage of the small burial grounds of Basly and the large parish cemetery at Thaon in Lower Normandy (San Juan *et al.*, 2012:86) (*cf.* chapter 4). It cannot however justify the existence of three potential contemporaneous churchyards (SOU13, SOU32 and Saint Mary's Church cemetery) (*cf.* chapter 6). The size of the population and the dispersion of the settlement could be taken as plausible explanations, proximity to one of these burial areas justifying the choice of cemetery. But individual preferences might also have been a significant part of this decision, with, for instance, families or other similar units placing their dead together regardless of convenience or belonging to the catchment area of either churches.

The influence of specific features impacted greatly the choice of the grave location, with individuals sometimes buried at a significant distance from their place of death. The study of the association with Roman features already highlighted the attraction exerted by mausolea and other similar structures on early medieval graves (see above II). At Wells (Som.) and Landevennec (Brit.), but also at non-monastic sites like Thaon (LN) and Rezé (LA), the Roman structures drew large populations leading to the establishment of substantial and durable burial grounds. The accumulation and superimposition of burials testify to the continuous importance of these structures in the religious landscape and social construct, carrying on in use until the modern era and remodelling through the centuries to adapt to new realities. In addition to this longevity, the sizeable buried population could also be explained by the desire to be buried in close proximity to a saint's burial, in the hope of obtaining guidance and protection in death (Sapin, 1999:39; Lauwers, 2015:56-60), leading some individuals to have their remains transported over some distance, as was suspected at Rezé from the fifth century onwards (Arthuis *et al.,* 2012:29). The location of the grave would therefore here be directly influenced by the religious concerns but also by a personal wish, overruling the practicality of a burial in a nearby cemetery, and ignoring the parish

cemetery in later centuries. However, this movement of the dead and their concentration at Rezé also need to be considered on a more functional level: communities could indeed shy away from the estuary and salt producing areas unsuitable for burial, and send their dead to this major burial ground where inhumations was easier. This strategy could explain the very small number of early medieval cemeteries uncovered in the region, mirroring the situation in other coastal plains of northwest Europe where cemeteries are only sporadically encountered (Soulat, 2009:fig.2). The mobility of the dead can also convey concerns over the preservation of the remains. At Barnstaple (Dev.) the graves of some individuals might have been emptied, the corpses transported to a new burial site after the abandonment of the initial cemetery (Miles, 1986:68), testifying to the importance of the location and protection of the remains.

Beyond religious concerns, this adaptability, alongside issues of local context and perception of space in relation to the changing social reality and organisation of the landscape, need therefore to be considered in more detail. The gradual abandonment in the seventh to late eighth century of funerary areas in favour of new or existing larger churchyards is a phenomenon observed in both samples, with an intensification from the middle of the ninth century, when the Church seems to start taking an interest in burials, and more specifically, their location (Colardelle, 1991; Treffort, 1996a:165-166; 1996b:59; Lauwers, 2016:106). But how much of this relocation of the dead is to be linked to the Church, both as an institution and a belief system, and how much conveys communal choices and local context? Let us take the example of Portejoie (UN) and Romilly-sur-Andelle (UN), two sizeable cemeteries located at c.10km from each other. These burial grounds seem to appear from an early date, with a movement of the dead from the prehistoric long-barrow focus at Portejoie to a chapel occurring in the eighth century, illustrating the relocation just described, whilst Romilly-sur-Andelle seems to have possessed such structure from the start of the funerary usages in the last sixth-early seventh century (Carré, 1996:155-156;

Colleter *et al*., 2014:144 (*cf.* chapter 4). Both of these cemeteries were therefore in existence and used by two distinctive, if geographically close, communities, before the '*upgrade'* of the churches to a parochial status. Zadora-Rio pointed out the issues of defining parish territories in the ninth and tenth centuries and the possible role of cemeteries in this delineation (2003:18). The Church could therefore not have influenced the placement of the dead, nor would it have led specific communities to change their burial locations, but took advantage of already existing systems linked directly to the communal identity and territory. The dead would here once again act as intermediary between the landscape and different elements of the society, a role also observed in the British sample with the placement of the "deviant burials" on parish boundaries as in Meon Hill (Hants.), or of cemeteries on either sides of the parish border as probably the case at Saint Endellion (Corn.) (*cf.* chapter 6), stating ownership as was observed in other association with various landscape features (see above I and II).

The level of influence of the Church on burial location thus appears to have been quite limited. The attraction exerted by *ad sanctos* burials is clearly visible on both sides of the Channel and does convey Christian concerns, but the mobility it induced can also be seen as a manifestation of an individual will, not always complying with the catchment areas of their local church or with other practices considered Christian in the modern era (*cf.* chapter 8). In the French sample, local community practices are equally emphatic, providing a strong base for the development and firm establishment of the parochial system across more rural areas, and highlights a growing interdependency between the Church, communities and territorial matters. When in France, and more particularly in Normandy, the attachment to the initial funerary area seems to have carried on through the centuries, burial grounds in Britain appear less durable testifying to a different relationship to the place of burial, possibly showing a stronger influence on the Church in the management and location of the dead on this side of the Channel.

IV) Conclusions

The detailed comparative analysis of the French and British samples thus highlighted the numerous variations present in otherwise very similar trends of locational influence. The diversity of elements, natural or man-made, pre-existing or contemporaneous to the funerary area, with which the dead were found in association seem to be linked on both sides of the Channel to similar matters of function and perception. Through their connection to specific features, the presence of the dead could convey the authority of their community, placing themselves in continuity with or in opposition to previous generations, the cemeteries used as emissaries to control certain areas, resources or communication axes by creating focal points in the landscape. This representative function also comes into play when considering issues of territorial divisions, particularly in the context of the development of the parochial system in Northwest France throughout the period of study, the use of the location of the dead hinting at an intricate and interdependent relationship between the Church and local realities. This ambiguity is also witnessed in the question of the perception of the dead and of their direct environment. When looking at associations with natural and pre-existing man-made features, issues of the influence exerted by the dead on the perception of these areas, against those of the attitude of populations towards said features before the establishment of the burial ground appeared, with some connections more ambiguous than others. The interpretation was also further complicated by the transient perception of various elements of the landscape through time and the changes in the relationship to the dead. This latter difficulty was probably best represented by the different paces of integrations of the dead within the settlement space on the both sides of the Channel. The spatial assimilation of funerary areas within the community of the living, reflecting the mental connection already existing through the representative function of the dead, appeared to be directly linked to the local context, with few

links to religious concerns. Regardless of their proximity to the settlement, the dead appear as major actors in the definition of communal space, the location of the cemetery conveying a universally understood meaning of place, defining the relationship between the community and the environment. In parallel to this, the location of the burial, and the movement of the dead across more or less important distances, finally highlighted the predominant role of communal practice and individual wishes in this formative period of the "*Christian burial*". The cross-Channel comparison thus revealed the plethora of perspectives on locational influences and their social implications at different scales, leading us now to consider other aspects of burial practices witnessed in these facing regions.

To complement this spatial analysis let us now take this comparative approach down to the level of the organisation of the individual grave, investigating the various choices of taken throughout the funerary process and their multiple meanings.

Chapter 8: Internal organisation of the cemetery and the grave in southwest Britain and northwest France, c.600-1050AD

The previous chapter highlighted the complex relationship existing between communities and their environment and revealed the central role of the dead in the conceptualisation and appropriation of space. The focus can now be placed on the internal organisation of the funerary areas and graves. By looking directly at the space dedicated to the dead and the inner working of the burial grounds, this chapter aims to take the analysis to the level of the individual and family, comparing management strategies and various means of expression of multiple layers of identity embodied by the grave on both sides of the Channel. This approach thereby opens a discussion at a scale rarely considered in British studies, offering a new perspective on individual associations and manifestation of beliefs in these southwest regions. As was the case for the previous chapter, this analysis adopts a thematic approach, going from the burial area to the grave and the elements found within, focusing in every section on the social and personal implications of each decision made at different stages of the funerary process. Additionally, this chapter offers an insight on differences in the practice of funerary archaeology in modern France and Britain, addressing some of the issues they can engender when undertaking such comparative analysis.

I) The funerary space

A) Optimisation of space and preservation of the body

To finish with the spatial analysis presented in the previous chapter, let us now take a closer look at the organisation of the funerary area and at the strategies

adopted to optimise its usage. If, on both sides of the Channel, the majority of the cemeteries appeared to follow overall row-and-cluster organisation, the graves more or less regularly spaced and placed on a west-east axis (*cf.* chapters 4 and 6), the detailed case studies revealed that a number of factors came to compromise this general template. First of all, proximity to a burial focus, be it a pre-existing feature or a contemporaneous one, seems to have strongly impacted the regularity of the layout and the orientation of the graves. This desire to align on structures whilst also respecting a row organisation could give rise to "fan-shaped layouts", a configuration particularly visible at Visseiche (Brit.) and Ulwell (Dor.). Conversely, the slight variations in orientation induced by this system led to the identification of potential burial foci located outside of the excavated area or otherwise not archaeologically visible, as at Barnstaple (Dev.) (*cf.* chapter 6). This alteration of the layout can also take more extreme forms, with inhumations placed on north-south axes at Exeter cemetery I (Dev.) and Portejoie (UN), as the burial respectively aligned on the Roman forum and Neolithic collective burial (figs.22 and 37, vol.2). It has often been argued that such variations are to link to religious beliefs, opposing "*pagan*" erratic planning of the funerary area, to the west-east orientation of "*Christian"* cemeteries (Bailey-Young, 1999; Scull, 2015:75-76). But such diversity of orientations also occurred in churchyards, Bréal-sous-Vitré (Brit.) and, to a lesser extent, Wells (Som.), standing as prime examples, whilst regularity in layout and consistent west-east orientations were observed at possibly non-Christian sites like Winnal II (Hants.) and Basly (LN) (fig.59, vol.2), showing little correlation between religious affiliation and the planning of the funerary area. If anything, Christian burial grounds were more affected by these variations. Coupled with the influence of the focus, and with the limited space available for burial, the inevitable accumulation of graves and crowding of the most prized zones through time often resulted in more irregular placements, characterised by intercutting, superimpositions and irregular orientations. These complications are particularly visible in the French sample, where the same funerary area could be used for

several centuries as was the case at Portejoie (UN) (fig.21, vol.2), but can also be observed on the British side, Wells (Som.) and Barnstaple (Som.) probably standing as the best examples (figs.36 and 44, vol.2). To remedy these issues of space, various strategies were implemented to optimise the organisation of the funerary area, each showing slightly different concerns in regard to the final location of the remains.

The first measure that comes to mind is that of the creation of ossuaries. These secondary burials, as defined by Duday (Duday & Guillon, 2006:147-149, Duday, 2009:89), were found on both sides of the Channel, and seem to result from a desire to create space in the burial area and/or to prevent the complete destruction of the remains during building work by relocating the deceased to larger structures or grave pits. This practice was particularly encountered at monastic sites, the expansion of the complexes at both Landevennec (Brit.) and Wells (Som.) leading to the remodelling of the funerary areas and triggering the need for such adjustments (Rodwell, 2001:74, Bardel & Perennec, 2004:137). In addition to liberating space, this careful collection of the bones, and their relocation to a new, safer place, allowed for the protection of the remains despite the destruction or re-appropriation of the original grave. The same concerns over preservation are also observed in réductions (Gleize, 2007). Contrary to ossuaries, this practice appeared predominantly in the French sample, with Uwell (Dors.), and possibly SOU13 (Hants.) standing as the only possible exceptions on the British side (*cf.* chapters 4 and 6). This difference seems, however, to be the result of divergence in terminology and in the recording of the graves (*cf.* chapter 2): what can be identified as réductions at Ulwell were, for instance, considered only as "*secondary burials*" by the excavators (Cox, 1988:42). This general term however hides the implications of réductions through which the remains are kept within the grave, as seen for example at Bréal-sous-Vitré (Brit.), or in its direct proximity, as at Basly (LN), maintaining a level of connection between the place of the primary burial and the individual, whilst liberating the inner space for a new body. This

intent is also found in multiple burials. The placement of more than one individual in the grave, either simultaneously or following the re-opening of the tomb, appeared in both the British and French samples, the most extreme examples found once again on the Continent with up to seven individuals in one grave at Honguemare-Guénouville (UN) (*cf.* chapter 4). Similarly, to réductions, the connection between the dead and the grave is preserved, the body left intact whilst allowing for another individual to get access to an already occupied burial spot.

Similar strategies were therefore adopted to answer comparable challenges on both sites of the Channel, showing clear parallels in the organisation of the burial area and the treatment of the remains. Diversity in the layout of the grave appeared at various sites, showing little correlation between the type of cemetery and the organisational patterns, linked more to issues of durability and limitation of space than to the nature of the burial focus. Likewise, the desire to preserve the physical integrity of the dead, within or outside their initial grave, was encountered at different sites, their higher visibility in churchyards caused by the extended use of these funerary areas (*cf.* chapter 7), rather than a specifically Christian concern (Effros, 2002:208, 210-21). But whilst the attitude towards the layout of the burial areas is similar in various contexts and on both sides of the Channel, these planning decisions should not be solely attributed to the pursuit of an optimised burial space and need to be considered alongside their social implications.

B) Location and identity

The organisation of the burial area needs to be understood in parallel to the social construct of the community it served, the layout of the graves and later alterations directly influenced by individual identities. One of the most representative examples of this connection is Landevennec (Brit.), where each area

of the monastic precinct seems to have been dedicated to the burial of individuals of different status (*cf.* chapter 4). Access to the most sacred spots was reserved for the higher members of the lay and coenobitic communities, going as far as invading the inner spaces of the church, whilst the rest of the population was divided between monks and lay, buried in their respective cemeteries (*cf.* chapter 4) (Bardel & Perennec, 2004:135-136, 144). This separation by status could also be taken further, with some extreme cases of cemeteries established only for the use of the highest members of society as suspected at Notre-Dame-de-Bondeville (UN), where the recurrence of horse-rider pathology pointed out the important number of individuals with lifestyle allowing for equestrian practices (Langlois & Gallien, 2009:14; Langlois, 2001:65) directly in opposition to the lack of individuals from more modest upbringing, probably buried at another location (*cf.* chapter 4). This idea of different cemeteries dedicated to different strata of the community is also visible to some extent in the use of several burial areas at poly-focal settlements, each social category buried in their respective burial ground. This distribution of individuals could, for example, explain the simultaneous use of the two cemeteries of Visseiche (Brit.) (*cf.* chapter 4 and see below II.A) or the multiple contemporaneous burial areas of Hamwic (Hants.) (*cf.* chapter 6). When the spatial division between each group was not so pronounced, it is generally the proximity to the focus, or the placement of the grave within the church that is used to determine the status of the individuals, the higher members of society holding enough power and influence to be buried in the most sacred areas (Bardel & Perennec, 2004: 140-141, 147). The best representation of this practice is once again found at Landevennec (Brit.), where an adult individual with pathologies severe enough to indicate complete dependency on others from birth obtained burial within the church (Bardel & Perennec, 1999, annexe 6.2:8) (*cf.* chapter 4), a privilege that could indicate his belonging to a wealthy or influential family. At Wells (Som.) it was the building of a funerary chapel, and the occurrence of HFI

that raised the possibility of the presence of elites within the cemetery (*cf.* chapter 6).

Yet, social status is not the only factor influencing the location of the grave. The multiple cemeteries of Hamwic need, for instance, to be considered in parallel to the size and nature of the settlement, home to different communities possibly holding different beliefs, cultural and religious aspects thus coming to complement the social criterion in the distribution of the dead between the various burial areas. The perception of certain individuals also played a major role in the organisation of the burial ground. Going back to the example of Landevennec, the location of the disabled person burial testifies, for instance, to a particular relationship between this individual, their family and the coenobitic community. Privileged burial for disabled individual is not unheard of (Paillard, Alduc-Le Bagousse, Buchet, Blondiaux, Niel, 2009:15), and could represent here a manifestation of this practice in a monastic context. It is, however, interesting to note the otherwise lack of positive or negative segregation of individuals presenting physical deformities in the rest of the sample (*cf.* chapters 4 and 6). If these examples do illustrate the ambiguity of the place of certain individuals in society, and by extension in the cemetery, another section of the population takes this debate even further. The general absence of juveniles from early medieval cemeteries is a phenomenon that has often been attributed to two factors: preservation issues of smaller and more fragile skeletons probably placed in shallow graves easily destroyed and often difficult to record (Buckberry 2000, Guillon & Portat, 2009:311, Perez, 2009:192); and/or their particular of status within society (Bonin, 1999:36; Perez, 2009:192, 199; Sayer, 2014:96-97). In the case of the latter hypothesis, juveniles could either have been placed in specific cemeteries, joining the funerary division by status evoked earlier, or might not have had access to archaeologically visible burial. In both cases, admission in the communal cemetery would thus depend on the "*personhood*" of the juveniles, a position not obtained before a certain age when a child becomes a full-fledged member of the society.

If this hypothesis is certainly likely, particularly for the early cemeteries, the detailed study highlighted some peculiar cases, which could put this general interpretation into question. At Thaon (LN), the area surrounding the choir was indeed characterised by the burial of juveniles (Chapelain de Séreville-Niel, 2013:36), an impressive concentration that stood out in both the French and British samples and indicates their special status within the community. Without being systematic, such placement of juveniles in privileged areas close to the wall of the church has been observed at other sites in northern France from the ninth century onwards (Perez 2009:199, 2015:174) and suspected in Britain (Sayer, 2014:79), testifying to a change in the relationship towards these young individuals. The reason for this new status is however difficult to determine. As it occurred at a time where churchyard burial became more common (*cf*. chapter 7), a Christian influence could be considered. Alternatively, this integration to the communal cemetery could be the result of the centralisation of the dead to the detriment of smaller more scattered burial grounds (*cf*. chapter 7). A third option, not necessarily in opposition to the other two hypotheses just offered, is that of the more personal and intimate implications of child death in terms of burial practice. The placement of juveniles close to the walls of the church could reflect concern over the protection of youngsters in a Christian context, placing the children in *ad sanctos* and/or *sub stillicido*[22] the saint buried there and/or the holiness of the building itself acting in a sheltering way (Effros, 2002:151-152, Perez, 2009:200).

By granting them these spots, the community also expressed a degree of emotional connection with these young individuals, a link that can be observed in other organisational choices. The distribution of the population over different burials areas could indeed reflect a division based on the various groups constituting communities, materialising familial or other personal links rather than solely resulting from social hierarchy. For instance, at Saint Mary's stadium cemetery I (Hants.), the use of both cremation and inhumation rites indicates at

[22] Literally: "next to the saint" and "under the gutter [of the church/religious building]"

least two groups of individuals from the same community clearly separated by their different views on the treatment of the dead body (see below II.A). The placement of graves in clusters of various sizes, probably best represented at Visseiche (Brit.) and Kenn (Dev.) (fig.64, vol.2), could also be seen as the manifestation of individuals wishing to be buried close to each other, re-creating more private relationships or kin groups within the funerary area. The same can be said for some of the réductions and multiple burials. Their presence at Basly (LN) and Mawgan Porth (Corn.), both relatively small and not intensively used cemeteries (fig.33, vol.2), appears to be linked to a real desire to place specific individuals together with the same grave rather than as a solution to a spatial issue. Tywford (Hants.) could also present a similar situation, with this time cremated remains placed within three inhumations (Egging Dinwiddy, 2011:110), thus associating both individuals and different burial rites (see below II.A). The placement of individuals in the same grave at Notre-Dame-de-Bondeville (UN), a cemetery already very selective (see above I.B), could reflect the same concern, families using the same burial container through time echoing the more extreme gathering of Honguemare-Guénouville (UN) (*cf.* chapter 4). If the analysis of non-metric traits undertaken at Bréal-sous-Vitré (Brit.) showed this grouping of family members is not systematic (*cf.* chapter 4), it is essential to remember that osteological data can only identify blood relatives, highlighting the limitation of archaeological interpretation in the study of human relationships.

The same methods of expression of identity seem therefore to have been used on both sides of the Channel, revealing common concerns of transmission and durability, permanently inscribing the place of each individual in their communities and allowing for the detection of changes in attitude towards certain categories of the population. Beyond questions of social status, the organisation of the burial area also shows the importance of more personal connections with a clear desire to keep specific individuals together either through the creation of cluster or by placing them directly within the same burial, reproducing in the

funerary context the links tying the various groups constituting early medieval communities. But if all of these observations are possible in an archaeological context, excavation offering a clear picture of the organisation of the burial area and of the graves, what was the situation at the time? For how long was the memory of the individual, and by extension the location of their grave actually preserved?

C) Guardianship of memory and social life after death

These questions bring us now to consider the social "life" of individuals after death, an issue probably best approached through the study of grave markers. Very little evidence of such structures was found in both the British and the French samples, an absence that can partially be explained by the likely use of small earth mounds, wooden posts and other elements in organic material often invisible in an archaeological context (*cf*. chapters 4 and 6). A few sites, however, offered some more tangible examples that can be divided into two broad categories: the monumental markers, found mostly in the British sample, and the surface markers, encountered on both sides of the Channel. The most striking representations of the first group are the churches, chapels and other similar structures (mausolea…) indicating the burial place of saints. Whilst they were often primarily erected to shelter these very particular remains, as in Landevennec (Brit.) (Bardel & Perennec, 2004:121), it could also be argued that these buildings acted as markers by proxy for the *ad sanctos* burials placed within them or in their immediate proximity. Individuals influential enough to obtain burial in such locations therefore displayed their status by obtaining protection from the holy grave (*cf.* chapter 7) and by securing their place in the communal memory within the built religious environment. This association method is, however, not the only way in which individuals or groups of individuals found themselves endowed with such grave markers. Wells saw, for example, in the tenth century the building of a

mortuary chapel to shelter a small group of inhumations (Rodwell, 2001:74), singling them out from the rest of the burials and marking their importance and probably high social status by the costly and ostentatious construction of a stone building.

Aside from these structures, the British sample also offered more ephemeral, but no less conspicuous, monumental markers. The post-built structure suspected at Twyford (Hants.) seems to have acted as both a container and marker for cremated remains (Egging Dinwiddy, 2011:81) can be mentioned here, echoing to a lesser extent the first shrine of Portejoie (UN) (Carré, 1996:158). But the most representative examples of these less-durable markers are the burial enclosures encountered at Kenn (Dev.), Hamwic (Hants.) and possibly Twyford (Hants.) (*cf.* chapter 6). Despite a common purpose, their shape varied, reflecting regional specificities: the east characterised by round enclosures whilst the west adopted a square shape, probably to link to a small wooden building or similar structure, as was suggested at contemporary Welsh cemeteries (fig.67, vol.2) (*cf*. chapter 6). Examples of such features are also found in Brittany, the case of Plouedern (Finistère) being particularly relevant here as both the circular enclosure and the ceramics discovered at the site seems to point towards the presence of Anglo-Saxon individuals, or, at least, of an influence coming from Anglo-Saxon England in the seventh-eighth centuries (Blanchet, 2013:307). This late dating and strong cross-Channel parallel also led the excavators to consider the possibility of an early medieval date for the square enclosures discovered at Chateauneuf-du-Faou (Finisitère), and Saint-Marcel (Morbihan) (*ibid*), both thought to belong to the fourth- to early sixth-century (Le Boulanger, 2008:144; Roy, 2010:24, 74-76). Variations in shape would therefore possibly point at different traditions between the north and south of the Armorican peninsula, echoing the west-east dichotomy of the British Isles. If confirmed, this alternative chronology could be applied by extension to British sites like Poundbury (Dors.), the practice carrying on in use

throughout the Roman period to early medieval times in facing regions of the Channel.

In parallel to these built-features, other sites offered examples of surface grave markers, remaining close to the ground without losing any of the ostentatious character of their more monumental counterparts. The coloured floors and massive recumbent stones possibly bearing names of the deceased (fig.25, vol.2) at Notre-Dame-de-Bondeville stand as the best instances of these markers, clearly manifesting the grave on the surface ground and offering more precise information on the identity of the dead. No other example of such features were found on either sides of the Channel, but their presence could be considered in similar contexts, the stones later reused or destroyed in the same manner as Roman building material and sarcophagi were reused in the early centuries of the Middle-Ages (Carré, 2011:109; Adrian *et al.,* 2011:88). Plomeur (Brit.) offers a good example of this phenomenon, as the new graves often took advantage of the stones (pebbles, larger blocks and white quartz) already marking their predecessors (fig.27, vol.2) in their construction and marking (Giot & Monnier, 1977:153). These pebbles and large granites were, however, not the only elements in use at Plomeur: a number of headstones are also recorded (*ibid*), the re-use of the stone linings thus not completely destroying the marker of the previous inhumations. A very similar marking system seems to have been adopted at Mawgan Porth (Corn.), the pebbles this time left in place probably due to the lesser number of graves at this cemetery. Only one potential headstone survived there - a white quartz (Bruce-Mitford, 1997:69-70), the other graves either devoid of such marking or deprived from it by reuse, dune movement or time. This cross-Channel parallel can be explained by the very similar context of these cemeteries, both placed on the shore, the stones readily available (see below II.B). This similarity can be taken further, as white quartz was also encountered at Barnstaple (Dev.) (Miles 1986:66), in Wales (Ludlow, 2011:191; Edwards, 2013:177-1778), and on the Isle of Man (Hemer et al., 2014:242) where it was considered to be a uniquely local

practice (*ibid*). The examples given here put this interpretation into question and potentially highlight a funerary rite linked to maritime settings (see below II.B).

At other sites, the layout of the cemetery can suffice to infer the use of grave markers: clusters and neat row organisation indicating a knowledge of the location of the graves, an awareness even more likely when considering the re-opening of some burials. Yet Plomeur shows the limitation of this method: the pebbles and the inhumations they were supposed to indicate were indeed not systematically aligned, the stones often straddling two graves (Giot & Monnier, 1977:153). The reason for this staggering is not known but could signal a period of time between the burial and the marking of the graves, the precise location of the body not fully remembered leading to this overlapping effect. Alternatively, this could indicate a lack of real importance given to the marking of the burial, a hypothesis retained by the excavators (*ibid*). Why then were graves markers used in the first place? Whilst we have seen that these features were means to convey the status and identity of the deceased, complementing in some cases the information already given by the location of the burial, they also need to be understood as essential actors in the social life of the dead (Williams, 2006:147). Surviving relatives and other members of the community could, for example, come to visit the grave, adding to it kindred individuals in due time (see above), effectively keeping the dead as active members of their groups. The marker thus offered a place for commemoration and functioned as an interface between the world of the living and that of the dead. That it lay precisely above the body could therefore have mattered little. Its presence was, in some instances, more symbolic than accurate from a locational perspective.

When accurately placed, a grave marker also played a crucial role in the preservation of the body, indicating its location and allowing for the collection of the remains and their transportation to a new grave, as suspected at Barnstaple (Miles, 1986:68), or to liberate space in the burial area (see above). This function could, however, also depend on the survival of related individuals:

superimposition, intercutting and the layer of charnel disarticulated bones observed at Rezé (LA) and Twyford (Hants.) (*cf.* chapters 4 and 6) testifying to the ephemeral nature of the respect given to the dead and their memory. This question of the relationship between grave markers, preservation of the physical remains and "*length of the memory*" is further complicated from the tenth to eleventh centuries onwards, when commemorative practices seem to have become less concrete and physical, masses and other prayers becoming important elements of funerary traditions on both sides of the Channel (Treffort, 1996a:94; Gilchrist & Sloane, 2005:26-27; Foot, 2006:316). This oral commemoration thus came to complement the long-lasting – but ultimately dependent upon space and management strategies – imprint left by grave markers.

In addition to spatial and managerial concerns, the organisation of the burial area and the deliberate association of individuals within the same grave thus appeared to play a central role in the transmission of information on both the biological and social identity of the deceased. In some cases, commemorative structures came to reinforce this imprint, helping to keep the dead integrated within their community groups and perpetuating on a more literal level their memory. Personal wishes seemed to once again stand at the heart of funerary practices: concerns over the placement and preservation of the body and conveyance of memory visible throughout the period in various contexts, were indeed only noticeably influenced by Christianity in the later centuries. The location of the grave in the cemetery and the eventual marking features associated with it thus granted durability to individual and collective identities, providing a reflection of the complex and changing social context of early medieval communities in southwest Britain and northwest France. However, this display only occurred at the very end of the funerary process, leading us now to consider earlier stages of the burial practices and their role in this expression of multiple layered identity.

II) The grave and its meanings

A) What type of grave for whom?

The first aspect to consider is the choice of burial rite, and more specifically, the possible reasons motivating the use of cremation at both Twyford (Hants.) and Saint Mary's stadium cemetery I (Hamwic, Hants.). The first possible explanation is directly linked to the regional context of these burial grounds. Hampshire is indeed situated between two cultural spheres, the Anglo-Saxon influence from the east vying with the traditions of the west, creating the perfect context for composite communities, individuals expressing their diverse heritage through different burial rites and assemblages (see below II.B). However, if mixed rite cemeteries are not uncommon in this area, with sites such as Apple Down (Ssx), Worthy Park (Hants.) or Alton (Hants.), their occurrence is mainly known for the early centuries, placing Saint Mary's stadium cemetery I as an exception and raising the question of the durability of the practice at the site. The port activity of the emporium implies regular movement of individuals, with merchants coming and going but also probably settling in the emporium, bringing with them their own culture and traditions whilst also adopting local practices to fit within their new community (Scull, 2011). In the funerary world, this phenomenon could be visible through the use of cremation, immigrants manifesting their heritage and separating themselves from the rest of the population but remaining integrated into the communal graveyard. This hypothesis of cultural differentiation could even be taken further, the higher proportion of juveniles in cremation burials possibly indicating an age-related practice (*cf.* chapter 6), newly settled families keeping homeland burial rites for their children whilst the rest of the population adapted to local practices. This interpretation **must** however remain a hypothesis as statistical analysis offered non-significant results when considering the known inhumed and cremated juvenile groups (*cf.* chapter 6), and studies of various

cremation cemeteries in Britain and on the Continental failed to reveal any correlation between age and this burial rite (Squires, 2012). Furthermore, this difference could be explained by another factor, the difficulties linked to the cremation of young individuals (Shepherd, 2007:94) possibly implying the special status of this particular group, echoing the situation described earlier at Thaon (LN) (see above I), and showing once more the ambiguous place of juveniles in early medieval society.

Such distinctions between individuals and communities are also visible in the architecture of graves chosen for or by the deceased. Keeping in mind the issues linked to the detection of wooden containers and the common lack of archaeothanatology studies in Britain (*cf.* chapter 2), both sides of the Channel showed a similar distribution of containers by material, the west being characterised by stone whilst wood was predominant in eastern regions (*cf.* chapters 4 and 6). In some cases, deviation from these general patterns can be simply explained by convenience, communities using local resources for the production of burial containers. At Corseul (Brit.), this opportunism transpired through the use of tegulae from the nearby Roman ruins to form cist graves (Fichet de Clairefontaine, 1985:46), whilst in Lower Normandy, sites close to Caen (*i.e* Thaon, Giberville, Vieux) took advantage of the availability of limestone along the River Orne and of the proximity of the *pierre de Caen* quarries for the production of cist and mixed coffrages. The best example of this recourse to local material is however represented by the whalebone cists of Plomeur (Brit.) (Giot & Monnier, 1974:5-6). If consumption and crafting of the remains of whales and other large sea creatures found on the shores are a known phenomenon of medieval Brittany (Cassard, 1998:87-88), the use of whalebone in the architecture of these graves testifies to the full optimisation of this rare resource in a funerary context. Yet, this desire to avoid waste can also be hiding another motivation: only very few graves were equipped with this material, indicating, if not higher status, the special treatment and place of these individuals in their community. This manifestation of

social hierarchy through grave type is also observed at Landevennec (Brit.). Leading figures of the monastery were buried in ostentatious structures and/or containers, the mortared stone-built tombs and monoxyle sarcophagi standing as prime examples against the more modest burials of the "Monks' cemetery" (*cf.* chapter 4). Whether conforming or not to the regional patterns, the detailed study also revealed usage of imported materials, or already carved sarcophagi, at both Notre-Dame-de-Bondeville (UN) and Visseiche cemetery 2 (Brit) (*cf.* chapter 4), the stone coming respectively from the Parisian Basin and the Angevin region (Le Boulanger, 2003:19; Langlois & Gallien, 2009:12-13), a phenomenon also observed at other major French sites such as Saint-Denis (Ile-de-France) (Gély & Wyss, 2004). The transportation costs of such heavy material thus added to the already prestigious nature of the burial container, allowing individuals to display their wealth and status long before interment.

The financial and human resources invested in the conception and conveyance of these funerary vessels also testify to the importance given to the internal organisation of the grave, leading us now to consider the "*true*" identity of the individuals against the personality they or their relatives wanted to portray in death. Indeed, the expenses dedicated to funerary elements could very well represent a lifetime investment, a hypothesis raised for example at Visseiche (Guigon & Bardel, 1989:346). However, even if these individuals were of higher status within their community, the burial containers they were found in could be more conspicuous than would be expected from their lifestyle in these rural settings. This concern with funerary representation is particularly well represented at Romilly-sur-Andelle (UN) and Wells (Som.), where some individuals seem to have been buried in plaster-lined graves (*cf.* chapter 4), the coating of the sides of the pits emulating other more prestigious stone containers (Jouneau, 2015:370,372). The possibility of standardised containers exported to various areas of northern France (Guigon & Bardel, 1989:344) would also follows this idea of '*low-cost*' containers, mass-produced rather than tailored to the individual.

Equally, the addition of individuals to existing sarcophagi or other similar structures (see above I.B) could be considered as another strategy to access these better burials despite a lack of financial resources. But more practical aspects also need to be taken into account here. Indeed, burial in these containers presupposes their availability upon the death of the individual they were designed for. When considering the time required for the transportation of stone sarcophagi or for the production of similar ostentatious vessels and the probability of unexpected death in this early period (illness, fighting, accident…), the possibility of an individual being upgraded or downgraded to a specific grave type seems reasonable. In this case, the "emulations" could actually represent attempts to remedy a lack of time to acquire the desired container, whilst the placement of modest individuals in costly ones could be linked to an opportunistic use of their immediate availability, echoing the reuse of privileged locations in the cemetery (see above I.A) (Gleize, 2010; Gleize & Castex, 2012). Unfortunately, this hypothesis depends on the time elapsed between death and burial, a duration that is so far impossible to determine through archaeology, but which directly impacts on our perception of these funerary choices.

The hypothesis of a connection between status and grave type also appears to have its limits when reaching later periods. Following the logic of ostentatious containers for important individuals, depositions in *pleine terre* would appear as a reflection of the low social standing of the deceased, unable to afford any container or substitute to shelter their remains. If this interpretation certainly applies to part of the population, it is met by the issue of the influence of the Church on the perception of funerary space. Indeed, the increasing number of pleine terre burials observed in France from the late eighth- ninth century has been interpreted as the manifestation of a search for Christian humility, rejecting the conspicuous and vain use of expensive containers or elaborate graves in favour of a more simple and pure burial (Treffort, 1996a:74-75). The change does not appear to have occurred on the British side, the proportion of pleine terre actually

dropping from the tenth century onwards (*cf.* chapter 6). However, both of these observations need to be considered in their own context. On the French side, dating is often carried out through typo-chronology of the grave types, increasing the risk of a circular reasoning that can only be calibrated by application of radiocarbon dating. On the British side, the presence of most of the cemeteries established in the tenth century on consecrated land often prevents their excavation (Loveluck, *pers. com.*), creating a gap in the data and impacting our vision of the changes in funerary practices from this period onwards. To this bias can also be added the lesser interest shown towards the architecture and organisation of the grave in Britain, and differences in recording strategies adopted by French and British archaeologists (*cf.* chapter 2). Therefore, even if a change in the architecture of the grave does exist and can be confirmed at sites where carbon dates were obtained, like Romilly-sur-Andelle (UN), Bréal-sous-Vitré (Brit.) and Portejoie (UN) in the French sample (Colleter *et al.,* 2014:155-159; Le Boulanger, 2005:32; Carré & Guillon, 1993:20, Carré 1996:158), and Exeter in the British sample (Henderson & Bidwell, 1982:150, 154-155), these general transformations need to be considered extremely carefully at smaller scales. Confirmation of these patterns is only achievable after refining the chronology and resolving the differences in practice and access to early medieval burial sites.

Beyond its function of receptacle for the dead body, the grave appeared as an essential vehicle of information on the cultural and social identity of individuals, sometimes buried far away from home. Through a coded and universally understood language of materials and shapes, the diversity of grave types observed in both the British and French samples revealed the complex hierarchy, aspirations and belief systems of these early medieval societies. The use of local resources comes to add to this message, placing the dead in their direct environment and manifesting a geographical identity proper to their community. If this study is sometimes confronted with and limited by various issues directly connected to the disciplines of funerary archaeology as it is practised in Britain and

France, the comparative approach undertaken in this thesis highlighted the wealth of information carried by the grave and it emphasises the major importance of the analysis of its architecture and organisation for funerary archaeology. To complete this study, we must now turn to the additional arrangements and items deposited with the body, complementing the individual and more global profiles observed so far and adding another layer to the changing relationship between the living and the dead in this transition period.

B) Necessities for the after-life

Before reviewing the symbolic value of these arrangements and depositions, let us focus on their more practical role, an aspect often overlooked in the study of the internal organisation of the grave. This idea of functionality of the burial is particularly visible at Landevennec (Brit.), where the use of wattle-based coffins (*cercueil-à-clairevoie*) and of pierced planks laid at the bottom of the grave has been linked to the impermeability of the substrate and/or to the evacuation of decomposition fluids (Bardel & Perennec, 2012:198-202)(*cf*. chapter 4). In the case of reopening of the grave, this system would also prevent the burial party from witnessing to their full extent the more gruesome phases of the decomposition process of the first individual(s). Additionally, this method could be seen as linked to the time elapsed between the placement of the body in the container and its burial, the liquids being drained prior to interment. However, this hypothesis does rely on the mobility of the container, possible in the case of the wattle-coffins but more complicated when considering the pierced-planks, and is confronted once again with the issue of time in the funerary proceedings from death to burial. But the most likely function of these structures is probably one of hygiene. Indeed, this conception allows the inside of the container to remain 'clean' after the decay of the soft tissues, a concern that can find a parallel in the charcoal burials of Britain (Holloway, 2010:88-90), observed mainly at Exeter (Dev.)

in this sample (*cf.* chapter 6). This similarity is also particularly relevant when considering the contemporaneity of these grave types, both appearing in the course of the tenth century and carrying on into the later medieval period (Henderson & Bidwell, 1982:154-155; Holloway, 2010:86-87; Bardel & Perennec, 2012:198-202). This sanitation of the inside of the grave conveys a simultaneous change in the relationship between the dead and the living, possibly reflecting the influence of the Church. The idea of the preservation of the body in a clean state does indeed remind testimonies from documentary sources describing the lack of alteration of saints' corpses (Treffort, 1996a:29-30; Holloway, 2010:88), the body remaining pure after death. By neutralising the odours linked to decay with a relatively 'dry' decomposition space, common individuals could therefore get closer to this untainted and holy ideal.

This influence of Christianity also appears when considering aspects more directly related to the treatment of the body. From the seventh century onwards, the practice of clothed burial slowly decreases, replaced to a certain extent by the use of shrouds, more difficult to identify due to the lack of clothing items, but still noticeable through post-decomposition bone movement (*cf.* chapter 2). In France, this change comes in parallel with the increase of pleine terre burials and has therefore been identified with the same desire for humility, marking a rejection of the ostentatious clothed burials (Treffort, 1996a:74-76) (see above II.A). This interpretation does, however, appear to depend on the status of the individual. The possible abbot of Landevennec (Brit.) was inhumed in the *sarcophage monoxyle 1* fully clothed and wearing shoes upon burial (Bardel, 1985:9, Bardel & Perennec, 2004:140). Furthermore, the question of the more practical function of these wrappings also needs to be considered. Indeed, the detailed analysis of the French case studies revealed a correlation between the use of shrouds and other soft wrappings, and the placement of the dead in unmoveable burial containers (*i.e* coffrage, cist, sarcophagus, pleine terre) (*cf.* chapter 4). Therefore, if the change from clothed to shrouded burial can be attributed to the pursuit of a Christian

ideal, it must also be considered as a practical solution for the transportation of the body from the place of death or ritual to the place of burial where it would be laid either in pleine terre or in an in-built container. But what is the situation in Britain where this change towards pleine terre does not seem to have occurred (see above)? Unfortunately, the lack of human remains and the limited archaeothanatology studies deprive us of any comparative material on this aspect, a gap that could probably be filled by the enlargement of the study area. Equally, it would be interesting to see if and how the increasing use of coffins (*i.e* moveable containers) beyond the eleventh century (*cf.* chapter 6) affected the use of shrouds at different levels of the society.

Several aspects of the organisation of the grave and the treatment of the body thus appear as directly linked to the functionality of the burial space, facilitating the funerary process on the side of the living. Let us now consider the interest of such structures from the point of view of the dead. The cleanliness of the container, and, by extension, of the body was already mentioned (see above). The use of clothes or shrouds could similarly be linked to the decency of the corpse, preventing it from being transported and buried bare. In some cases, this concern over the experience of the deceased is taken even further. The possible whalebone crib of Plomeur (Brit.) (fig.31, vol.2) is probably the most representative example, the infant placed within a functional but also familiar container, cradled in death as they were in life. A more common arrangement is the addition of pillows under the head of the deceased. This practice has been observed on both sides of the Channel (*cf.* chapters 4 and 6), with slightly more examples in France due to their better identification and, for pillows in organic materials, to the study of the movement of the skull after decomposition of the soft tissues (*cf.* chapters 2 and 4). The identification of stone placed within the grave at Barnstaple as '*grave furniture'* (Miles, 1986:66) is however debatable. If some of them were indeed pillows, the majority were probably *pierres de calage*, holding the sides of the containers and possible lids, placed there for their structural function rather than

for the use of the deceased. In addition to serving the needs of the living, the internal organisation of the grave and, in some cases, the alterations brought to the container seem therefore to have participated in the comfort of the deceased, revealing a concern for the salubrity of the burial space and a desire to accommodate and tailor this final resting place to local imperatives and individual needs.

This adaptation of the organisation of the grave also reflects a propensity to emulate life in the funerary context, a practice complemented by the deposition of artefacts with the body. Similarly to the choice of grave type, the selection and placement of items with the deceased appeared as a major tool for the transmission of the cultural, social and religious identity of the individual they accompanied. This time, it is on the British side that the best examples can be found, the French sample offering a more limited number of furnished graves (*cf.* chapters 4 and 6). Despite this difference in quantity, the distribution of cemeteries exhibiting this practice is similar on both sides of the Channel, a parallel already noticed in more eastern areas of Britain and of the Continent (Soulat, 2009). This correspondence is further reinforced at Hamwic Saint Mary's stadium cemetery I (Hants.), where the gold pendant from grave 4202 (fig.79, vol.2) found its closest comparison at Wijnaldum in contemporary Frisia (fig.80, vol.2) (Birbeck, 2005:64) and the Weiuwerd hoard (fig.81, vol.2), adding to the already peculiar profile of this burial area and supporting the hypothesis of an immigrant population from the Continent settling in the emporium (see above). This influence of maritime connection could also find an echo in the display of a maritime material culture. The potential connotation of the whalebones and white quartz discovered in Brittany and Cornwall mentioned above could indeed be complemented by the presence of shells in the graves of La Plaine-sur-Mer. If the voluntary character of their depositions is difficult to ascertain, the dye production activity known in this area (map 6 vol.2) (Dupont & Doyen, 2017:58) (*cf.* chapter 4), and the few

examples of the use of shells in funerary context from Wales (Murphy, Shiner, Wilson & Hemer, 2016; Beatrice Wallbank, *pers. com.*) could testify to the maritime character of these burials, coastal communities placing specific items gathered on the shores to mark their connection to the sea.

In addition to these wide cultural patterns and local variations, grave-goods also appeared as a means to convey more personal information, characterising the individual and the society they lived in. If these messages were probably straightforward at the time, the connotations of specific items or practices can however be difficult to determine today. This ambiguity is probably best represented by the issue of religious affiliation, the deposition of artefacts within the grave generally being identified in Britain as a pagan practice, contrasting with the unfurnished Christian graves (Meaney & Chadwick Hawkes, 1970:50; Young, 1999). If it is true that the development of Christianity led to the decrease and ultimate disappearance of furnished burial, the early Middle Ages represent a period of transition during which such clear distinction is often difficult to make (Effors, 2002:36). The clothed burial of Landevennec (Brit.) testifies, for instance, to the use of furnished burials in a monastic context. This example is not isolated, with parallels found in other parts of France (Effros, 2002:21-23), with the grave of queen Aregonde at Saint Denis (fig.82, vol.2) perhaps standing as the most representative example (Périn & Calligaro, 2007). If such lavish graves were not encountered on the British side, the deposition of a knife in grave 80 of SOU13 (Morton, 1992:133), a supposed churchyard burial, and the traces of textiles in the mortared-tomb of Wells (Rodwell, 2001:63) could indicate a similar situation. The characterisation of the '*Christian'* graves on the sole basis of presence or absence of grave-goods thus appears insufficient, the few examples offered here highlighting the level of syncretism dominating a time when the Church had yet to show any interest in funerary practices (Effros, 2002: 36, 44, 48). The influence of tradition probably led some individuals to keep certain practices active despite

new precepts, whilst other of the same community adopted new funerary rites. The choice remains purely personal and is, therefore, difficult to characterise.

Beyond this question of religion, the funerary assemblages also provide information on the place of the individual in their community, complementing our study of the social construct of these societies. This aspect is probably best approached through the study of weapon and jewellery, two major types of grave-goods encountered on both sides of the Channel, and which have been for a long time identified as sex- and/or gender-related (Williams, 2010:21). Härke already noted a correlation between the size of the blade and the age of the individual it was buried with (1989:145), pointing out the more symbolic aspects of these depositions, going beyond a sole manifestation of warfare or masculinity (Härke, 1989:147). These observations can be taken further here by a lack of correlation between the sex of the individual and the presence of weapon and/or jewellery in their graves (*cf*. chapters 4 and 6), offering new evidence for the complex nature of these depositions. The offensive weapons (spearheads and scramasaxes) placed in four females graves at Romilly-sur-Andelle (UN) seem, for instance, to convey a notion of power and authority (Colleter *et al*., 2014:161), probably indicating the special status of these individuals rather than a more military function, no-one in the cemetery population showing any signs of violent death or non-lethal fighting wounds (*cf.* chapter 4). The nature of the grave-good assemblages, therefore, directly related to the place occupied by the individual within their own community, revealing social dynamics that might otherwise not be archaeologically visible. The personal connotation of some grave-goods comes to complement this communal and individual picture. For example, at Twyford, two worn disc-brooches dated to the fifth to mid-sixth century were discovered in the grave of a juvenile (fig.74, vol.2) (Egging Dinwiddy, 2011:113) and seem to indicate a difference between the production date and the burial of these items, the brooches thus probably obtained through gift-giving or simply inherited (Egging Dinwiddy, 2011:114, Gilchrist, 2012:237-238, 2013). The intimate character of this

deposition illustrates well the importance of considering the life of the object, possibly affecting the dating of the site, but more importantly reveals the personal relationships existing between the different members of a same community. Through the selection of specific items, individuals could mark their belonging to defined groups whilst also showing a strong emotional connection towards a deceased, in this case through the legacy and ultimate burial of a probable family heirloom.

Throughout the different stages of the burial process, the internal organisation of the grave seems therefore to have answered various challenges, staying functional whilst participating in the display of individual identities. In addition to wide cultural and religious patterns, the detailed study also revealed the importance of personal choices in the selection and deposition of items with the body, offering a snapshot of individual lives in their most intimate aspects. This variety of expression reflects the social complexity of this transition period, old traditions and new ideals meeting and merging, offering a picture of diversity more or less difficult to interpret in our modern settings. In addition to bringing together and completing the information obtained so far from the grave type, these assemblages and structural choices also highlighted a common practical approach to the more prosaic issues of transportation and decomposition of the deceased, answering similar challenges through different means and adaptation of past practices, testifying to the close links existing between the living and the dead.

III) Conclusions

In addition to offering a glimpse of individual lives, the study of the placement of the dead within their funerary space, and the analysis of the various choices made in the internal organisation of the grave thus provide a reflection of the complex and changing social realities of early medieval communities in

southwest Britain and northwest France. Whilst answering issues of space and more practical problems linked to the transportation and preservation of the body after death, the management of the burial space and the selection and adaptation of grave types participated, on both sides of the Channel, in the conveyance of different layers of identity, from general biological and social characteristics to the more intimate relationships existing between individuals of the same community or kin. Furthermore, this reproduction of the social construct allowed for the detection of the changing perception and special treatment of certain parts of the population, reflecting the adaptability of funerary practices when confronted with individual needs. This flexibility is also clearly visible in the addition of specific artefacts and other adjustments made to the burial space, assuring the comfort of the deceased by providing a familiar space filled with more or less personal items. The memory of the dead also appeared to have been kept through various means, more or less durable depending on the identity of the individual, protecting and maintaining the links existing between the living and the dead. Despite the difficulties of interpretation linked to the transitional nature of this period and to the differences in the practice of archaeology in modern France and Britain, this analysis revealed the importance of a detailed recording of every aspect related to burial practices, each complementing the other to convey the maximum of information about the biological, cultural, social and, to a certain extent, religious identity of the deceased throughout the entirety of the funerary process. This comparative approach highlighted the strong parallels existing between these facing regions, without, however, showing a direct transposition of practices, similar aims being met through different means and vice-versa. Ultimately, the different scales of analysis undertaken here emphasised the preservation of local and personal traditions despite regular and intensive contacts, whilst simultaneously revealing wider patterns shared on both sides of the Channel, offering a new understanding of the social construction of early medieval communities.

The results obtained through this meticulous comparative analysis lead us now to the final conclusions of this thesis, offering new narratives of connection and possible future prospects in the study of early medieval burial practices in facing regions of the Channel.

Chapter 9: Final conclusions and future prospects

I) Past: inherited theories and issues and their consequences

The nature of the connections tying Britain and the Continent in post-Roman Europe has long been a major subject of both historical and archaeological publications. But if the nationalistic approaches of the nineteenth/twentieth centuries are now considered obsolete (Young & Périn, 1991:94), our understanding of cross-Channel dynamics in the early Middle Ages remains strongly influenced by the great narratives of the migration and conversion periods (Périn, 1998; Cunliffe, 2001:460-465; Lucy & Reynolds, 2002; Fleming, 2011:61-63; Robb & Harris, 2013:130; Scull, 2015). Chronicles and lives of saints still provide the basis for the study of movements of individuals, and, on a larger scale, populations, but these testimonies only offer a truncated, often biased and sometimes dramatic view of the social, economic and religious transformations taking place in these facing regions throughout the period. Focusing on the elites and/or serving political aspirations and relating, on occasion, to events that occurred several centuries earlier, these texts need therefore to be considered carefully and supported by complementary evidence as offered by archaeology. Yet, the same degree of subjectivity seems to be found in the interpretations of these data. The heavy reliance on historical sources led to assumptions of similarities between areas of emigration and immigration, defining marked cultural boundaries and contrasting religious heritages. The opposition made between paganism and Christianity remains indeed one the foundations of both historical and archaeological studies of the early Middle Ages, the change of belief system seen in most publications as accompanied by the growth of the Church as an institution and landowner, directly impacting the organisation of the landscape and leading to alterations in settlement layouts. The funerary world was of course not left out from this

perceived all-encompassing influence, graves and cemeteries rapidly categorised as either pagan or Christian, offering – particularly in Britain - a strictly binary vision of individual religious affiliations and their manifestations after death.

Recent studies of the development of parochial systems in France, seen as symptomatic of this expansion, have however started to nuance this picture of supremacy (Zadora-Rio, 2003; Treffort, 2010:217); and excavations of major sites have questioned the rapidity of the transition to Christianity in various aspects of individual lives and death, providing a more syncretic perspective of this large-scale conversion (Effros, 2002:5, 36, 209; Meaney, 2003:241; Foot, 2006:312; Robb & Harris, 2013:130; Scull, 2015). Similarly, the radiocarbon dating campaigns undertaken in the last few decades in Britain – and on a smaller scale in France - highlighted the need to reconsider the general chronological frame of the social changes affecting early medieval communities, calling for a re-assessment of information offered by historical sources and for a recalibration of dates obtained through typochronology and subsequent PCA seriation (Stutz, 1998; Hines, Bayliss & Scull, 2013, Treffort, 2010:218, Gerrard, 2015). This issue was particularly visible following the excavation of emporia and other trading centres, the material culture observed at these sites revealing the high mobility of goods and consequent difficulty to determine their precise dates of circulation. The imported artefacts could, for instance, be passed down as heirlooms, ante-dating the context in which they were discovered (Gilchrist, 2012:37-238). Beyond these dating difficulties, the study of these objects and of the individuals carrying them quickly revealed ports of trade as places of exchange and cohabitation characterised by composite communities drawing from diverse cultural heritages, emphasising the complexity of the links existing across northwest Europe and through the Atlantic routes. Paradoxically, direct comparisons of data obtained in these connected regions remain rare, and have been focused mainly on the North Sea and eastern half of the Channel, whilst the particular situation of the kingdom of Dumnonia in the west gave rise to assumptions of cultural relatedness between the British Isles and the

Armorican peninsula throughout the early middle ages (Cassard, 1998:19, 31; Cunliffe, 2001; Merdrignac, 2010:83-84; Charles-Edwards, 2013:73,74).

In addition to putting the focus on these facing regions of the Western Channel, this project aimed to offer a new perspective on cross-Channel dynamics and the potential impact of population movements on the treatment of the dead whilst re-assessing the migration and conversion period theories still largely dominating research in funerary archaeology. The majority of studies remain focused on the grave-goods and other artefacts deposited with the body, their provenance and character taken as evidence for the ethnic affiliation of the dead and only recently considered as a proof of other entangled identities and of trade and exchange (Young & Périn, 1991:97; Scull, 2001; Härke, 2006; Richard, 2006; Soulat, 2009, 2015; Treffort 2010:216, Miller, 2010; Harris *et al.*, 2017). This grave-good-led approach is however limited both in time and space, the practice being mainly observed in the eastern regions of the Channel between c. AD400 and 650 and having a shorter lifespan in northwest France, the few examples found after the late sixth- early seventh century constituting exceptional cases linked to high status individuals. The heavy influence of Leeds' Final Phase theory and the generally accepted binary vision of the conversion period come to further compromise the interpretation, offering a partial understanding of the information carried by the grave and perpetuating the longevity of myths of parallels and differences without taking new data and methods into account. Through a detailed and comparative analysis, this thesis revealed the unexpected variability of burial practices coexisting simultaneously at different scales across the Channel between c.600 and 1050AD, highlighting their personal nature and the importance of the local context in the study of the treatment of the dead. By considering each archaeologically visible aspect of the funerary process and through a multi-scale approach, this thesis offers a new perspective on the information transmitted by the dead, their graves and place of burial; every element participating in the

conveyance of different layers of identity and reflecting the complex and changing social realities of early medieval southwest Britain and northwest France.

II) Present: new findings and perspectives

Overall, the facing regions were characterised by similar practices, be it in terms of the choice for location of the cemetery, in the internal organisation of the grave or in the treatment of the body. Expected strong parallels were confirmed between Hampshire and Normandy, the appearing 'Anglo-Saxon' and 'Frankish' heritage respectively standing against the 'British' and 'Breton' identities of the west (Davies, 2000; Petts, 2009:207-208 Soulat, 2009; Charles-Edwards, 2013:73,74). But the detailed analysis of each burial site revealed a much more complex picture of communal traditions and individual expression, putting into question the impermeability of these assumed ethnic affiliations at smaller scales and emphasising the concept of 'locality'. Funerary areas rapidly appeared to actively participate in the definition of space, marking the limits of different zones of influence and physically anchoring the community in their landscape long before the definite implementation of parishes on either side of the Channel. The materials used in the production of burial containers often came to reinforce this connection; the presence of cist graves in Normandy for instance potentially linked to the population taking advantage of the nearby stone quarries, technically diverging from the regional norm of wooden containers and *pleine terre* burials and drawing closer to the traditions of the west coast (*cf*. chapters 4 and 8). Beyond convenience, this use of local resources can also be considered as the expression of a deep and more personal relationship to the landscape. This link is particularly visible at coastal sites, where both the containers and elements deposited within the grave conveyed the maritime orientation, if not culture, of the deceased and their communities. In addition to emphasising the profound nature of the bond

existing between the dead and their immediate environment, this connection also comes to challenge the traditional attribution that parallels between facing regions solely reflected migration. Brittany, Loire-Atlantique, Cornwall and other regions of the British Isles were found to display through near identical means a similar attachment to the sea (*cf.* chapters 4, 6, 7 and 8). The individuality of communities thus shines through regional and cross-Channel trends, highlighting the very meaningful role of the dead in the appropriation of the landscape and in the creation and manifestation of a local identity.

This territory-defining role of the cemetery also highlights the active place of the dead in the life of the community regardless of their proximity to the settlement space, a connection particularly important to keep in mind when considering the change of spatial relationship between funerary and living area characterising the early Middle Ages on both sides of the Channel. Traditionally attributed to the influence of the Church (James, 1982:98, 107; Boissavit-Camus & Zadora-Rio, 1996; Zadora-Rio, 2003; Blair, 2005: 149-150, 427; Treffort, 2010:217), the relocation of graves to within the settlement space actually appeared to have occurred gradually, the pace varying from one community to the next. Excavation of major sites in France highlighted fluctuations in the position of the church and its associated cemetery in relation to the settlement, in turns integrated within its layout and later left on the outskirts and vice-versa (*cf*. chapters 4 and 8). Comparison with Britain revealed similar variations, rarely considered in the linear perception of the transitions into new practices. To this situation can be added the issue of settlement endowed with multiple cemeteries. In those cases, contemporary funerary areas associated or not with a church could be found both within and outside of the living spaces, potentially highlighting the different groups constituting these communities, each with a different relationship to death. The weight of personal choices manifested in *ad-sanctos* burials, revealed the only definite evidence of an influence of the Church on funerary practices before the late ninth century, the attraction exerted by the grave of the saint pushing

individuals to travel to be laid to rest at major centres (Sapin, 1999; Effros, 2002:151-152; Loveluck, 2007:205). Even in those hubs, "*Christian*" burials remain however difficult to identify when only abiding by 'conversion-period' theories. Graves were laid out following various orientations, looking to optimise the often very restricted available space rather than strictly applying a west-east alignment, and could be more or less extensively furnished, including at monastic sites and other similar religious contexts (*cf*. chapters 4 and 6) (Young & Périn, 1991:98; Effros, 2002:21, 65; Gilchrist & Sloane, 2005:221: Gilchrist, 2012:210). Furthermore, the deposition of artefacts, particularly in high status graves, carried on well into the eighth century despite the general switch in France to more humble unfurnished *pleine terre* burial by the majority of the population, demonstrating once again the diversity of practices existing alongside general trends.

Ultimately, every aspect of the funerary process aimed to convey and perpetuate the memory of the deceased as an individual defined by multiple and interlocking layers of identity. The treatment of the body, internal organisation and location of the grave and the type of commemorative structure(s) marking it on the surface all provided more or less subtle information about the social status, religious affiliation, cultural heritage and lineage of the dead, each element complementing the other to form a whole bearing the identity and, to some extent, personality of the individual. Some manifestations were of course more obvious than others, the cremations of Hamwic standing out from the rest of the corpus, clearly marking out a specific group within the composite community occupying the emporium, but the interpretation of these messages was not always without ambiguity. To the religious aspect mentioned earlier can, for instance, be added the issue of social status. The opportunistic use of certain containers or elements and/or desire to emulate practices of the elites could affect our perception of the deceased and of the social construct of their community. Conversely, the rise of *pleine terre* burials in France hid wealthier individuals, then

only detected through their location in the cemetery and/or pathologies characteristic of a certain lifestyle. Similarly, and following recent re-assessments of the meaning of weapon depositions in a funerary context, the identification of the biological sex of an individual solely based on their associated grave-goods was revealed as obsolete. The items often played a symbolic role representative of the function of the deceased in their community rather than being a male/female indicator. This relationship with the artefacts, containers and other objects used within the grave appear to fall under the "entanglement" theory of Miller (2010) and Hodder (2012, 2014). Amongst other things, these authors emphasised the dependence of people on stuff, a primordial link clearly observed in this study through the identity-defining role of each component of the grave.

Despite the difficulty to establish definite hypotheses on the significance of these various elements in our modern context, the general similarities of the means of expression on both sides of the western Channel do point towards a common funerary grammar, a *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990), clearly understood by early medieval individuals, revealing the grave as an interface between the world of the living and that of the dead, effectively maintaining the deceased as a full-fledged member of the community and wider society. However, the diversity of practices at a local level brought out by this work highlighted the importance of considering every aspect of the burial. The description of Jenkins of ethnic identity as a *"Russian doll set"* (1997:96) seems particularly fitting here, each element participating in the conveyance of multiple layers of identity characterising the complex dynamics of early medieval communities. Rather than drastic changes brought by religion or resulting from an immediate acculturation upon contact with other communities, this work revealed the slow transformation occurring in burial practices throughout the early Middle Ages, putting the individual back at the centre of the narrative, and highlighting the extremely intimate, and therefore changeable, nature of funerary practices. The cross-Channel maritime connectivity known from the Iron Age and maintained throughout this period (Lebecq, 1997;

Cunliffe, 2001; Loveluck, 2013), and the location of most cemeteries considered in this thesis on major inland communication axes, then linked these individual and local traditions to the wider practices observed in facing regions, contacts and exchange gradually building up the appearance of general similarities in behaviour in burial practices.

III) Future: methodology, applications and prospects

This influence of connectivity and the preservation of specific practices could only appear through a multi-scale analysis. Robb and Harris already pointed out, albeit on a much bigger scale, the need of a constructed approach considering simultaneously the individuals and their wider context (2013:26-27, 33, 222), each level of study providing a new insight on particular and general patterns, on changes and permanencies. Within the scope of this work, such considerations required the creation of a new methodology taking into account the differences in the practices of archaeology in modern Britain and France, and of a vocabulary mindful of the subtleties of translation versus conceptualisation of specialist terminology allowing for the direct comparison of the data. The multi-scale approach taken here thus drew from both the very detailed recording and analysis of each element of the grave characteristic of French studies and the more synthetic and theoretical considerations of British publications, allowing for the detection of communal to cross-Channel patterns and offering a new perspective on the data in their own geographical context. The use of archaeothanatology on the entirety of the corpus provided in Britain a new understanding of the internal organisation of the grave and, on a wider scale, of the treatment of the body. Keeping in mind the high level of subjectivity of the practices (Duday *et al.,* 1990, Duday, 2009) and the difficulties linked to recording and interpreting bone position from photographs and drawings, the application of this technique indeed revealed

a significant correlation between the use of shrouds or other soft-wrappings and the nature of the burial container in both samples, the practicality of these envelopes potentially prevailing over their religious meaning (*cf*. chapter 8). These results could only be obtained after the careful establishment of a common vocabulary normalising the data and allowing for quantitative and qualitative analysis. Beyond literal translation, the terminology used throughout this thesis endeavours to reflect the concept behind the words, providing clear definitions by emphasising the nuances differentiating each funerary structure and offering the basis for more extensive cross-Channel, multilingual research.

Both the methodology and vocabulary adopted here could of course be taken further. On a geographical point of view, the area of study could be extended to include the whole of the Atlantic fringe, investigating both the trading routes linking Spain, France and the British Isles together alongside the expression of a maritime identity in death already highlighted in this study. This extension could also go east, re-assessing the work done on the connections between northern France and the Benelux to Britain (Verhulst, 2002; Loveluck & Tys, 2006; Verslype, 2007; Soulat, 2009, 2015), once again taking more of a comparative stride and potentially adapting the methodology and vocabulary proposed here to encompass other techniques and concepts in use in these regions. The focus could also be placed on specific zones or sites, the particular situation of Loire-Atlantique coming to mind, exploring the surprising little amount of cemeteries in a very economically active area of salt production and further investigating the role of Rezé as an operative and funerary centre. Further research could also be undertaken on some of the specific themes considered here to better understand and compare particular aspects of the burial practices and enhance our comprehension of the expression of identity through death in the early Middle Ages. The question of practicality and symbolism could, for instance, be addressed in more details, looking not only at the commemorative structures but also at the choices taken earlier in the funerary process, taking a more prosaic approach in

the study of diverse ‘religious’ or ‘social’ practices. On a more technical level, this thesis emphasised the need for more radiocarbon dating campaigns, if not on a wide scale then on sites considered as characteristic of a period, re-evaluating the chronological frame and potentially changing our perception of the permanencies and ruptures in funerary traditions through time.

This comparative analysis highlighted the high potential and various benefits of a European approach, borrowing from different archaeological traditions to offer a new perspective on the study of burial practices in facing regions of the Channel. Through the establishment of a new methodology and with a multi-lingual terminology, this thesis endeavours to provide bases for the development of a more inclusive dialogue between European researchers, and to emphasise the need of further collaborations, enhancing our understanding of the past and improving the discipline as a whole.

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Abbreviations

AFAM	Association Française d'Archéologie Mérovingienne
CBA	Council for British Archaeology
CRAHM	Centre de Recherches Archéologique et Historiques anciennes et Médiévales
FERACF	Fédération pour l'Edition de la Revue Archéologique du Centre de la France
GAAF	Groupe d'Anthropologie et d'Archéologie Funéraire
INRAP	Institut National de Recherches Archéologiques Préventives
PUR	Presses Universitaires de Rennes
PURH	Presses Universitaires de Rouen et du Havre
SHAB	Société d'Histoire et d'Archéologie de Bretagne
SRA	Service Régional de l'Archéologie

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