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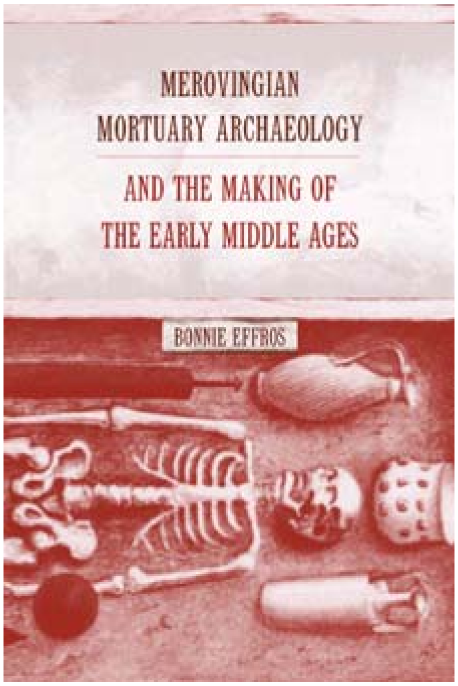

Merovingian Mortuary Archaeology and the Making of the Early Middle Ages

BONNIE EFFROS

University of California Press

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2003

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[Dedication]

To my parents,
Gail Hochman Effros and Richard Matthew Effros

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[Dedication]

To my parents,
Gail Hochman Effros and Richard Matthew Effros

— —

[Epigraph]

It is as though worldly stability had become transparent in the permanence of art so that a premonition of immortality, not the immortality of the soul or of life but of something immortal achieved by mortal hands, has become tangibly present, to shine and to be seen, to sound and to be heard, to speak and to be read.

HANNAH ARENDT, *The Human Condition*

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Acknowledgments

This monograph represents a much-revised version of the archaeological portion of a project on mortuary practice in Merovingian Gaul that I might never have begun had I realized the extent of its challenges. In the years since I undertook this assessment, my research has concentrated increasingly on historiography, causing this work to become a discussion of the ways in which changing scholarly interpretations over the past three centuries have shaped our vision of the early medieval past. While highlighting some aspects of the mortuary rites that appear more securely understood, I have also pointed to the manner in which the evidence has been misused and appropriated to support causes entirely unrelated to the populations being excavated. Many of these interpretations have overshadowed the context from which the grave remains were unearthed in the first place. Rather than providing a comprehensive account of the archaeological evidence, a task that would require multiple volumes to reveal the complexity of this, above all, local and personal rite, I wanted to compose a work focusing on the ways in which personal bias and national agendas have shaped readings of the mortuary evidence. My own outlook being no exception, I nonetheless hope that this piece will further debates on the importance of multi-disciplinarity in the interpretation of early medieval sources, such as the spirited conversations already begun in the context of undertakings such as the European Science Foundation's "Transformation of the Roman World" project (1993–97). In order to accomplish this goal, it will be necessary to overcome the national and disciplinary boundaries that currently divide the field.

The successful completion of this project rests in large part on the generosity of a great number of institutions and individuals. During my graduate

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studies at UCLA, a Deutsche Akademisches Austauschdienst Stipendium (1991–92), a History Departmental Fellowship (1992–93), and an Edward A. Dickson Fellowship (1993–94) allowed me to research and write my dissertation at the Monumenta Germaniae historica, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Bibliothèque nationale, and UC Berkeley. An Izaak Walton Killam Memorial Postdoctoral Fellowship in the Department of History and Classics at the University of Alberta (July 1994–December 1995) enabled me to continue work on the project with a reduced teaching load. I revised significant portions of the manuscript during a semester's residency at the Camargo Foundation in Cassis, France (Fall 1997), and with a Berkshire Summer Fellowship at the Mary Ingraham Bunting Institute at Radcliffe College (Summer 1998). I completed the project with a Sylvan

C. Coleman and Pamela Coleman Memorial Fund Fellowship during my year at The Metropolitan Museum of Art (2001–02), supported also by Title F leave at SUNY Binghamton. Interaction with and feedback from colleagues at these wonderful institutions were a source of inspiration for much of the rethinking of this project. A Bernadotte E. Schmitt grant from the American Historical Association (1995) provided funding for many of the photographs reproduced in this volume; Chantal Dulos, Melanie Holcomb, Patrick Périn, and Françoise Vallet helped greatly in tracking down photographs related to early archaeological excavations. Franz Siegmeth and Falko Daim likewise made possible the production of a site map for the volume.

Financial support from Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville (1996–2001) has also been pivotal to the realization of this project. Five Summer Research Fellowships, in addition to multiple

Faculty Development Fund and Graduate School Seed grants, enabled me to purchase software as well as pursue research and travel to Cambridge, Massachusetts; Paris; Munich; and Brussels at crucial stages of the project. In particular, I am grateful to Steve Hansen, Ellen Nore, Wayne Santoni, and David Steinberg for their assistance in my continued search for the funding that has made completion of this monograph possible sooner instead of later. I also wish to thank Jean-Pierre Mileur, Don Quataert, and Dick Trexler for smoothing my transition to SUNY Binghamton during the final stages of book production. Wulf Kansteiner and Sonja Wolf were incredibly generous in opening their home to me weekly in preparation for my move and making me feel like a part of their family.

My debts to colleagues, friends, and family are many, and I cannot begin

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to thank everyone by name in this short space. To start, I wish to acknowledge Richard and Mary Rouse, without whose warm encouragement and sponsorship this project would have never been pursued. The guidance and inspiration of Patrick Geary and Alain Dierkens from the early days of thesis writing were invaluable to directing my approach to the material covered. Guy Halsall and Frans Theuws both gave very generously of their time to comment on the monograph as it emerged, providing me with thoughtful critiques, friendly advice, and hospitality even when they disagreed with my interpretation of the data. Their influence may be seen in the pages that follow. Peter Brown, Cindy Fulton, Marian Rogers, and Kate Toll gave much needed guidance and editorial direction along the path to completion. Nina Caputo and Isabel Moreira read and helped me improve various chapters and were incredibly devoted confidantes and supporters. David Conradsen provided insight into the world of collecting, museums, and connoisseurship. Max Diesenberger, Dave Harden, Matthias Hardt, Heinrich Härke, Christian Lohmer, Frederick Paxton, Cécile Treffort, and Bailey Young likewise raised important questions and indicated missing bibliography along the way. To Jörg Jarnut, Patrick Périn, and Walter Pohl, who read the manuscript in its entirety, I owe deep thanks for their commitment to my project. During my revision of this monograph they opened many doors so that I might return repeatedly to Europe to meet with colleagues and benefit from contact with others working on early medieval topics.

In acknowledging the support of an incredible network of friends and family whom I have not already thanked above, I am particularly grateful to Michelle Effros, Jim Effros, Dianne Golden, Grace Benveniste, Dorothea and Roland Stevens, Roberta Shapiro, Mitch Hart, Nicole Bériou, Beth Rabin, Steve Finkel, Lori Weintrob, Martin Taylor, Rita and Ed Effros, Monika Kraft, Barbara Goldoftas, Sara Wolper, Jake Viebrock, Ron Hasson, and Falko Daim for their friendship and warm hospitality whenever I turned up yet again on one of my library quests or in search of respite. Carole Frick, Eric Ruckh, and Anne Valk at SIUE allowed me to bounce ideas off them and fed me home-cooked meals as the manuscript was coming into its final form. I also cannot neglect to mention George and Debbie Hensley, who devoted an incredible amount of energy and love to caring for my dog so that I could travel for extended periods. Shemesh, too, was good-natured and patiently endured many a delayed walk so that I might complete this book. Finally, I owe my greatest debt of gratitude to my parents, Richard and Gail Effros, who unquestioningly supported a daughter

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who possessed the inexplicable desire to become the first medieval historian of the family.

Detailed discussion of the written sources appears in Bonnie Effros, *Caring for Body and Soul: Burial and the Afterlife in the Merovingian World* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002).

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Abbreviations

AB	*Analecta bollandiana*.
AFAM	Association française d'archéologie mérovingienne.
AG	*Archaeologia geographica*.
AK	*Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt*.
AM	*Archéologie médiévale*.
Annales ESC	*Annales: Économies, sociétés, civilisations*.
BAR	British Archaeological Reports.

BSNAF	*Bulletin de la Société nationale des antiquaires de France*.
CA	*Cahiers archéologiques*.
CBA	Council for British Archaeology.
CCSL	Corpus christianorum series latina.
CNRS	Centre national de la recherche scientifique.
EME	*Early Medieval Europe*.
FS	*Frühmittelalterliche Studien*.
HJ	*Historisches Jahrbuch*.
HZ	*Historische Zeitschrift*.
JRGZM	*Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmu-seums Mainz*.
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae historica.
MIÖG	*Mitt(h) eilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung*.
MRM	Musée royal de Mariemont.

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OUCA	Oxford University Committee for Archaeology.
PZ	*Prähistorische Zeitschrift*.
RH	*Revue historique*.
RICG	*Recueil des inscriptions chrétiennes de la Gaule antérieures à la Renaissance carolingienne*.
SC	Sources chrétiennes.
SRG	Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum.
SRM	Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum.
TRHS	*Transactions of the Royal Historical S ociety*.
TRW	Transformation of the Roman World.
ZSSR, germ. Abt.	Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, germanistische Abteilung.

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Introduction

Only since the 1970s have American scholars regularly included mortuary remains in their research on Merovingian religion and society.

[1] Patrick J. Geary, *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages*(Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994); Bailey K. Young, "Paganisme, christianisation et rites funéraires mérovingiens," *AM* 7 (1977): 5–81; id., "Exemple aristocratique et mode funéraire dans la Gaule mérovingienne," *Annales ESC* 41 (1986): 379–407.

Prior to that, most medievalists neglected archaeological evidence from burial sites in favor of more familiar historical and documentary sources. From a European standpoint, this oversight was dismissed as popular distaste in the United States for studies linked to death.

[2] Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, "Chaunu, Lebrun, Vovelle: La nouvelle histoire de la mort," in his *Le territoire de l'historien* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1973), 402–3; Michel Vovelle, "Encore la mort: Un peu plus qu'une mode," *Annales ESC* 37 (1982): 277.

Of greater consequence, however, were the small number of American archaeologists occupied with the early medieval period and the inaccessibility of locally published and unpublished excavations in western Europe. Lack of attention to important studies of Merovingian mortuary rites was thus not altogether surprising. Growing interest in the application of anthropological methodology to historical discourse nonetheless stimulated new inquiries and provided both historians and archaeologists with a framework by which to reconcile inherent contradictions between written and material evidence.

[3] Roger Chartier, "Text, Symbols, and Frenchness: Historical Uses of Symbolic Anthropology," in his *Cultural History: Between Practices and Representations*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988), 96–101; Reinhard Wenskus, "Randbemerkungen zum Verhältnis von Historie und Archäologie, inbesondere mittelalterliche Geschichte und Mittelalterarchäologie," in *Geschichtswissenschaft und Archäologie: Untersuchungen zur Siedlungs-Wirtschafts- und Kirchengeschichte*, ed. Herbert Jankuhn and Reinhard Wenskus, Vorträge und Forschungen 22 (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1979), 637–57.

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European scholars, closer geographically to the relevant excavations and trained in institutions more prepared to fund projects of local and national historical significance, have long incorporated mortuary evidence in their descriptions of Merovingian society. As early as the mid-nineteenth-century, archaeologists created the framework necessary to establish a relative chronology and typology of grave goods;

[4] For an introduction, see Patrick Périn, *La datation des tombes mérovingiennes: Historique—méthodes—applications*, Hautes études médiévales et modernes 39 (Geneva: Droz, 1980); Otto Gerhard Oexle, "Die Gegenwart der Toten," in *Death in the Middle Ages*, ed. Hermann Braet and Werner Verbeke, Mediaevalia louvaniensia, Series 1, vol. 9 (Louvain: Leuven University Press, 1983), 19–77.

throughout the twentieth century, they viewed stylistic differences as reflective of the ethnic identity of those interred in early medieval cemeteries.

[5] For a sense of how much interpretations of early medieval ethnicity in Merovingian cemeteries have changed, see Joachim Werner, "Zur Entstehung der Reihengräberzivilisation: Ein Beitrag zur Methode der frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie," *AG* 1 (1950): 23–32; Edward James, "Cemeteries and the Problem of Frankish Settlement in Gaul," in *Names, Words, and Graves: Early Medieval Settlement*, ed. P. H. Sawyer (Leeds: University of Leeds, 1979), 55–89.

Since the mid-twentieth century, academics in France, Germany, England, Belgium, and the Netherlands have recognized the potential applications of cemeterial configuration and burial remains to the study of Merovingian social structure, religious beliefs, gender ideology, and ethnicity.

[6] A sample of influential analyses published from the 1960s to the 1980s includes Frauke Stein, *Adelsgräber des achten Jahrhunderts in Deutschland*, vol. 1, Germanische Denkmäler der Völkerwanderungszeit, ser. A, vol. 9 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1967); Alain Dierkens, "Cimetières mérovingiens et histoire du haut moyen âge: Chronologie—société—religion," in *Acta historica bruxellensia*, vol. 4: *Histoire et méthode* (Brussels: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1981), 15–70; Heiko Steuer, *Frühgeschichtliche Sozialstrukturen in Mitteleuropa: Eine Analyse der Auswertungsmethoden des archäologischen Quellenmaterials*, Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, philologisch-historische Klasse, 3d ser., vol. 128 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982); Donald A. Bullough, "Burial, Community, and Belief in the Early Medieval West," in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society (Studies Presented to J. M. Wallace-Hadrill)*, ed. Patrick Wormald (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), 177–201. Yvette Duval and Jean-Charles Picard, eds., *L'inhumation privilegiée du IV^e au VIII^e siècle en Occident (Actes du colloque tenu à Créteil, les 16–18 mars 1984)* (Paris: De Boccard, 1986).

They have used mortuary evidence to provide, among other things, critical insight into the impact of Christian clerics on life-cycle rites practiced by recent converts.

[7] Edward James, "Burial and Status in the Early Medieval West," *TRHS*, 5th ser., 39 (1989): esp. 23–26; J. N. Hillgarth, "Modes of Evangelization of Western Europe in the Seventh Century," in *Irland und die Christenheit: Bibelstudien und Mission*, ed. Próinséas Ní Chatháin and Michael Richter (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1987), 311–31; Heli Roosens, "Reflets de christianisation dans les cimetières mérovingiens," *Les études classiques* 53 (1985): 132–34.

Since the 1980s

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especially, historians and archaeologists have also demonstrated by this means some of the strengths and weaknesses of written sources describing early medieval social and ethnic identity.

[8] Guy Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization: The Merovingian Region of Metz* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Heinrich Härke, " 'Warrior Graves'? The Background of the Anglo-Saxon Weapon Burial Rite," *Past and Present* 126 (1990): 22–43; Patrick Périn, "À propos de publications étrangères récentes concernant le peuplement en Gaule à l'époque mérovingienne: La 'question franque,' " *Francia* 8 (1980): 537–52.

Although some resistance to multi-disciplinary scholarship remains, this research has proved definitively that we may achieve a better understanding of the complexity of Merovingian civilization if we do not limit ourselves to just the written sources.

The shape of this monograph results from the lack of a recent comprehenssive survey of Merovingian mortuary archaeology: none has been published in the half-century since Édouard Salin's pioneering study.

[9] Édouard Salin, *La civilisation mérovingienne d'après les sépultures, les textes et le laboratoire*, vol. 2 (Paris: Éditions A. et J. Picard, 1952).

As a historian, albeit one very familiar with the archaeological record, I have concentrated on providing a critical reading of the development and current state of the field. A historical account of the discipline in the first half of the book and an assessment of the assets and biases of the most recent archaeological analyses in the second are intended to guide readers unfamiliar with the field. For those already wellversed in these materials, my discussion also draws attention to the less-studied effects of historical events and scholarly ideologies on the excavation and interpretation of early medieval burial remains. At a number of opportunities, I have included discussion of contrasting French and German views of the same evidence to highlight the impact of national consciousness on archaeological theory. Although contact between those specializing in Anglo-Saxon and Merovingian archaeology has been surprisingly limited, I have ventured to make a few comparative references to developments in the former that have affected the ways in which efforts to answer similar questions on the continent have been resolved.

In embarking on this project, however, I became aware of the difficulties of treating mortuary custom across the geographical expanse of what is now France, western Germany, and southern Belgium during the late fifth through early eighth century (see map 1). To begin with, my use of the

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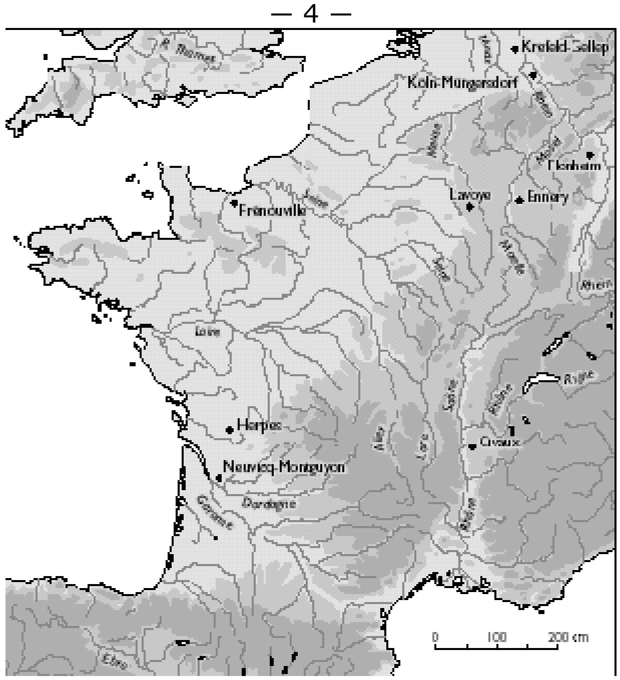

Map 1. A selection of some of the Merovingian-period cemeteries mentioned in this book.

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adjective "Merovingian" to describe the population of these regions is somewhat misleading, since the term was commonly restricted to reference to members of the Frankish royal dynasty. Despite this shortcoming, however, I have retained this terminology because it offers the benefit of not distinguishing too sharply between Germanic and indigenous inhabitants. One of the main premises of this book is that ethnicity was not biologically determined and that individuals of these populations cannot currently be discerned from one another reliably in the context of graves. A second issue stems from the fact that Merovingian Gaul was not a united political entity in the period covered. My discussion, moreover, has exceeded the borders of the Frankish kingdoms, a consequence of modern perceptions of western Europe rather than of contemporary realities.

[10] Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 1: 1–27.

I have nonetheless used such broad parameters to identify the great diversity of burial practice across Gaul and neighboring regions. Written traditions and evidence of mortuary rites preserved in the archaeological record to the north and south of the Loire reveal significant differences in attitudes and rituals. Scholars have conversely identified commonalities between funerary traditions in communities in early medieval Gaul and those of neighboring regions beyond the Rhine or Pyrenees. These similarities resulted not from ethnic identity but rather from the basic commemorative functions of mortuary rites and the available resources deemed appropriate for expressing power relationships in this world and the next.

[11] Eric Hobsbawm, Introduction to *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

A complete discussion of Merovingian mortuary remains has required me to make use of multiple methods and sources. My approach reflects a desire to maintain the integrity of the fragmentary evidence apart from the artificial divisions created by modern academic disciplines and national borders.

[12] Aaron J. Gurevich, "Medieval Culture and Mentality According to the New French Historiography," *Archives européenes de sociologie* 24 (1983): 168–69; François Furet and Jacques Le Goff, "Histoire et ethnologie," in *Mélanges en l'honneur de Fernand Braudel* (Toulouse: Privat, Éditeur, 1973), 2: 227–43.

The corresponding volume of data from this large geographical expanse over the course of three centuries has therefore meant giving comparatively little detail regarding the extent to which local and regional forces shaped the range of options for mortuary rites. I have nonetheless granted recognition wherever possible to the ways in which individual families and communities made important personal choices in deciding

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how they would bury their dead. Just as urban and rural populations were characterized by dissimilar forms of habitation, they also adopted mortuary customs best suited to their endeavors and environment.

[13] Patrick Périn, "Remarques sur la topographie funéraire en Gaule mérovingienne et à sa périphérie: Des nécropoles tardives aux nécropoles du hautmoyen âge," *CA* 35 (1987): 9–30.

From the earliest stages of research, an acknowledgment of the short-comings of the evidence at the disposal of historians and archaeologists, particularly in the case of material remains, has shaped my approach. Chapter 1 therefore constitutes a historiographical essay in which I address the manner in which contemporary events and intellectual developments affected scholarly interpretations of Merovingian mortuary remains from the Middle Ages through the early modern period. I identify the implications of the fact that prior to the late nineteenth century, antiquaries' primary interest lay in the collecting of excavated objects and stone epitaphs of great beauty or value; they frequently removed them from their original locations without regard for the role of provenance in understanding these artifacts. As a result, it is rarely possible to match either written representations of the deceased or material artifacts to specific human remains excavated before the 1950s. Orthography, vocabulary, technology, and style must instead provide the less-than-optimal basis for determining the provenance of epitaphs and burial artifacts.

The legacy of these problems has been significant. Bias in the dating and identification of grave goods and epigraphy, for instance, has enabled scholars intent on demonstrating the success of the Carolingian Renaissance to attribute less aesthetic pieces to the "barbaric" Merovingian period. In research stretching back to the mid-nineteenth century but continuing up to the present, archaeologists and historians have also sought to use human and archaeological remains to identify the ethnicity of the dead buried in early medieval row grave cemeteries *(Reihengräberfelder)*. Not only do such analyses rely upon the unproven hypothesis that the Franks represented foremost blood-based bands of warriors, but they also depend upon the anachronistic belief that they formed immutable "culture groups." On this shaky basis, many archaeologists have been led to identify graves devoid of extravagant adornment as Gallo-Roman and those replete with the same as Germanic.

In Chapter 2, I discuss the manner in which professional scholars dealt with the antiquarian legacy. Antiquaries, who were largely self-taught, worked simultaneously in a variety of fields. Their discoveries guided and,

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in turn, were divided among several disciplines by their successors engaged in academic and curatorial research employing mortuary evidence. More recent archaeological studies, the heirs of these early traditions, have demonstrated that material remains, just as textual sources, present only a partial view of the subjective construction of the deceased's identity by his or her kin group or monastic family.

[14] Lewis R. Binford, "Mortuary Practices: Their Study and Potential," in *Approaches to the Social Dimensions of Mortuary Practices*, ed. James A. Brown, Memoirs of the Society for American Archaeology 25 (Washington, D.C.: Society for American Archaeology, 1971), 17–23; Härke, "'Warrior Graves,' " 22–24.

Even the employment of a multi-disciplinary methodology, as I have presented here, does not eliminate all obstacles to gleaning desirable information from the evidence. Although anthropological analysis gives access to the rites of a broader segment of the population than the small minority described in written sources, it cannot fully reveal the thought-world or ideologies behind such ritual activities.

[15] Patrick J. Geary, "The Uses of Archaeological Sources for Religious and Cultural History," in his *Living with the Dead*, 30–45; Heinrich Härke, "The Nature of Burial Data," in *Burial and Society: The Chronological and Social Analysis of Archaeological Burial Data* (Åhrus: Åhrus University Press, 1997), 19.

Archaeological evidence is by nature biased toward the most outstanding examples of material culture from early medieval Gaul, as these are the most easily observed. Consequently, scholars cannot describe Merovingian mortuary practice among poorer or female inhabitants with nearly the same degree of accuracy possible with male members of the secular and ecclesiastical elite. Similarly, assessment of urban areas, the destruction of subsequent habitation notwithstanding, consistently proves to be easier than the study of larger, more anomalous rural regions.

[16] Périn, "Remarques sur la topographie funéraire," 9–30.

Recent studies have shown mortuary display to be a type of social ideology manifested through ritual activity; it integrates many aspects of a society's worldview and power relationships but must constantly evolve in order to do so effectively.

[17] Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 245–82.

In their privileged access to and display of the artifacts necessary for such rites, the early medieval ruling elite had plentiful opportunities to misrepresent historical realities.

[18] Georges Duby, "Ideologies in Social History," in *Constructing the Past: Essays in Historical Methodology*, ed. Jacques Le Goff and Pierre Nora (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 151–60.

A certain degree of disorder also affected the mortuary process.

[19] Lorna Campbell, "Traces of Archaeology," in *Archaeological Theory: Progress or Posture?* ed. Iain M. MacKenzie (Aldershot: Avebury, 1994), 140–51; Fredrik Barth, "Towards Greater Naturalism in

Conceptualizing Societies," in *Conceptualizing Society*, ed. Adam Kuper (London: Routledge, 1992), 17–33.

For these reasons, I have identified many of

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the obstacles to full reconstruction of early medieval social and cosmological interactions related to burial.

[20] Frans Theuws and Monica Alkemade, "A Kind of Mirror for Men: Sword Depositions in Late Antique Northern Gaul," in *Rituals of Power from Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Frans Theuws and Janet L. Nelson, TRW 8 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2000), 401–76.

In Chapter 3, I give attention to the symbolic value of mortuary objects described in contemporary written sources as well as the material worth of the burial artifacts.

[21] Roland Barthes, "Written Clothing," in *Rethinking Popular Culture: Contemporary Perspectives in Cultural Studies*, ed. Chandra Mukerji and Michael Schudson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 432–45.

Not only did corporal decoration serve as a medium of visual communication in early medieval Gaul, but competition over the commodities involved in such displays reinforced and validated the social order.

[22] Ellen-Jane Pader, *Symbolism, Social Relations, and the Interpretation of Mortuary Remains*, BAR International Series 130 (Oxford: BAR, 1982), 18 ff.

Especially in the case of luxury goods, whose primary function was rhetorical and social, their restricted availability reinforced this hierarchical ideology and influenced other forms of exchange.

[23] Arjun Appadurai, Introduction to *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 38–40.

Garments and personal possessions such as weaponry might have had their own biographies;

[24] Igor Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process," in *Social Life of Things*, ed. Arjun Appadurai, 66–67.

in the early medieval West, they fulfilled important amuletic, magical, and votive functions.

[25] Lynda L. Coon, *Sacred Fictions: Holy Women and Hagiography in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 52–70; Bonnie Effros, "Symbolic Expressions of Sanctity: Gertrude of Nivelles in the Context of Merovingian Mortuary Custom," *Viator* 27 (1996): 1–10.

As noted by Walter Pohl, clothing, armament, and personal adornment, in contrast, did not necessarily express their wearers' ethnic identity.

[26] Walter Pohl, "Telling the Difference: Signs of Ethnic Identity," in *Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–700*, ed. Walter Pohl and Helmut Reimitz, TRW 2 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1998), 27–69; Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 245–46.

As a whole, these observations contribute to a better understanding of the purpose of burial goods, since kin groups frequently utilized everyday rather than specially produced objects in outfitting graves. In the funerary context, the artifacts acquired new symbolic meanings and aided in the

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transition of the deceased to ancestral status.

[27] Cécile Barraud, Daniel de Coppet, André Iteanu, and Raymond Jamous, *Of Relations and the Dead: Four Societies Viewed from the Angle of Their Exchange*, trans. Stephen J. Suffern (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1994), 33–35, 102–4.

Mortuary goods therefore constituted former commodities, since they were removed from further circulation with this last exchange; this transformation was final except in the case of grave robbery.

[28] Krzysztof Pomian, "The Collection: Between the Visible and the Invisible," in his *Collectors and Curiosities: Paris and Venice, 1500–1800*, trans. Elizabeth Wiles-Portier (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), 11–13; Appadurai, Introduction, 22–23.

The clothing and other artifacts placed in the sepulchers of the deceased individuals nonetheless derived from and reinforced an idealized representation of some combination of religious belief, cultural traditions, and social status as constructed by the deceased's social unit.

[29] Alain Dierkens, "La tombe privilégiée (IVe –VIIIe siècles) d'après les trouvailles de la Belgique actuelle," in *L'inhumation privilégiée*, ed. Duval and Picard, 47; Young, "Paganisme, christianisation," 36–37.

They represented a conscious choice rather than a haphazard collection of objects. As such, grave goods enhanced the memory of the deceased instead of accurately rendering an image of his or her social standing, ethnic affiliation, or personal adornment. Despite revealing important aspects of ceremonial rites and belief systems, I argue, many parts of the complex and multilayered meanings of these artifacts remain inaccessible to modern scholars.

[30] Pader, *Symbolism, Social Relations*, 30–31; Härke, "'Warrior Graves,' " 42–43.

Because grave goods stayed visible to the living for only a short time, their sustained impact was contingent upon the community's ability to preserve or mythologize its memory of these artifacts after they were removed from circulation. Involving especially large expenditure in times of political disruption, such as in the case of Merovingian Metz, the small number of highly lavish burial deposits traditionally found in row grave cemeteries progressively grew less complex as social stratification became more entrenched after the early sixth century.

[31] Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 247–63.

This change did not, however, signal the end of the necessity of expression through funerary ritual. Mortuary artifacts represented only one component of these traditions. As I discuss in Chapter 4, operating concurrently with burial goods were the spatial features of sepulchers and cemeterial topography. These factors contributed to and communicated a vision of the deceased formulated by his or her kin group.

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External burial structures and cemeterial organization were arguably more effective than grave goods because of the lasting visibility of many of these features.

[32] Arthur Alan Saxe, "Social Dimensions of Mortuary Practices," (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1970), hypothesis no. 8, 119–21.

Mound or chamber graves or restricted cemeteries served as exclusive markers of status in this world and the afterlife and conveyed to their audience information about the hierarchical principles of that community.

[33] Lynne Goldstein, "One-Dimensional Archaeology and Multi-Dimensional People: Spatial Organisation and Mortuary Analysis," in *The Archaeology of Death*, ed. Robert Chapman, Ian Kinnes, and Klavs Randsborg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 57–61, 67; Binford, "Mortuary Practices," 21–23.

Despite the impossibility of reconstructing all of the rites practiced at grave sites, I have proposed that some aspects of disposal facilities especially of the religious and lay elite constituted enduring features of the visible landscape and often provided a focal point for local and regional inhabitants. Such places helped shape ethnic loyalties and religious consciousness.

[34] Peter Brown, *The Cult of Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Jacques Fontaine, "Le culte des saints et ses implications sociologiques: Reflexions sur un récent essai de Peter Brown," *AB* 100 (1982): 23–24.

Like other forms of mortuary expression, however, topographical and monumental features of burial did not necessarily accurately reflect the everyday realities of Merovingian society.

[35] David M. Schneider, "Some Muddles in the Models: Or, How the System Really Works," in *The Relevance of Models for Social Anthropology*, ed. Michael Banton, Association of Social Anthropologists,, Monographs 1 (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1965), 70–78; Pader, *Symbolism, Social Relations*, 57–65.

My discussion provides an overview of the ways in which many features of grave sites, such as their content, size, orientation, and location, fulfilled representational functions.

[36] James, "Burial and Status," 29.

They differed significantly in urban and rural contexts, as well as in response to the presence of ancient ruins and contemporary habitations. While mortuary deposits had an important role to play, markered burial *ad sanctos*, epigraphy, and decorated tombs indicated the greater effectiveness of spatial communication in large or specifically ecclesiastical communities with more fluid and influential populations. Elite burial in late Merovingian Gaul ultimately evolved from a tradition involving great expenditure on lavish grave goods to one more attentive to the visibility and location of tombs, such as in churches.

[37] Guy Halsall, "Social Change Around a.d. 600: An Austrasian Perspective," in *The Age of Sutton Hoo: The Seventh Century in North-Western Europe*, ed. Martin Carver (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1992), 269–70; id., *Settlement and Social Organization*, 266–67.

I have suggested,

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however, that for the majority of inhabitants, the increasing incoherence of Merovingian cemeterial topography in the seventh century points to the possibility that Christians performing rituals to honor the dead had begun to do so in some less conspicuous fashion, or at least in a manner that left fewer material remains than had been the case previously.

[38] Patrick Périn, "Le problème des sarcophagescénotaphes du haut moyen âge: À propos de la nécropole de Quarré-les-Tombes, site d'une bataille légendaire," in *La chanson de geste et le mythe carolingien: Mélanges René Louis* (Saint-Pèresous-Vézelay: Musée archéologique régional, 1982), 2: 824; Bailey K. Young, *Quatre cimetières mérovingiens de l'Est de la France: Lavoye, Dieuesur-Meuse, Mezières-Manchester et Mazerny*, BAR International Series 208 (Oxford: BAR, 1984), 172.

As many of the rites practiced in conjunction with funerals or anniversaries of the dead in the late seventh and eighth centuries made no permanent alteration in the physical landscape and there is no clear description of them in contemporary written sources, deciphering the nature of mortuary practices in this period is a challenging undertaking.

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1. Antiquaries, Historians, and Archaeologists

Creating a Cultural Context for Early Medieval Graves

Numerous recent studies have addressed the impact of collecting, archaeological exploration, and the foundation of museums on historical representation and national identity.

[1] The following list of works is by no means complete but has been influential in my thinking: Annie E. Coombes, *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Material Culture, and Popular Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994); Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Krzysztof Pomian, *Collectors and Curiosities: Paris and Venice, 1500–1800*, trans. Elizabeth Wiles-Portier (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990); John A. Atkinson, Iain Banks, and Jerry O'Sullivan, eds., *Nationalism and Archaeology* (Glasgow: Cruithne Press, 1996); Philip L. Kohl and Clare Fawcett, eds., *Nationalism,*

Politics, and the Practice of Archaeology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

Posing similar questions to Merovingian archaeology proves very revealing.

[2] Patrick Périn, *La datation des tombes mérovingiennes: Historique—méthodes—applications*, Hautes études médievales et modernes 39 (Geneva: Droz, 1980). Périn's main objective in this work was specifically to provide a history and critique of archaeologists' development of absolute and relative chronologies for Merovingian-period artifacts.

The motives and ideologies of French, German, and Belgian antiquaries, historians, and archaeologists who explored early medieval mortuary remains shaped the manner in which they observed, collected, and interpreted evidence.

[3] Hermann Ament, "Frühe Funde und archäologische Erforschung der Franken im Rheinland," in *Die Franken: Wegbereiter Europas* (Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1995), 1: 23–34; Heino Neumayer, "Geschichte der archäologischen Erforschung der Franken in Frankreich," in *Die Franken* 1: 35–42; Karel Sklenárˇ, *Archaeology in Central Europe: The First 500 Years*, trans. Iris Lewitová (London: Leicester University Press, 1983); Bailey K. Young, "L'historiographie traditionnelle en Grande Bretagne," in *Archéologie mérovingienne: Historiographie et méthodologie (Actes des VI*e *journées nationales de l'AFAM [Rennes 1984])*, Le moyen âge 2 (Paris: Errance, 1989), 51–57.

Modern scholars often still

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use this archaeological material uncritically in their assessments of Merovingian burial rites.

[4] Guy Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization: The Merovingian Region of Metz* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Heinrich Härke, "Archaeologists and Migrations: A Problem of Attitude?" *Current Anthropology* 39 (1998): 19–24; Stephen Shennan, Introduction to his *Archaeological Approaches to Cultural Identity*, One World Archaeology 10 (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 1–12.

Thus at the heart of this chapter is a consideration of key developments in the historical and ideological context that shaped the representation of Merovingian finds in French and German scholarly publications up to the late nineteenth century.

In the Middle Ages, the opening of tombs primarily promoted the veneration of saints and could secure the status of a particular monastic house, bishopric, or cult center.

[5] Martin Heinzelmann, *Translationsberichte und andere Quellen des Reliquienkultes*, Typologie des sources du moyen âge Occidental 33 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1979), 30ff.; Patrick J. Geary, *Furta sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages*, rev. ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990). This is not to say that material remains outside of religious contexts had no significance, since in twelfth-century England the existence of ruins such as Stonehenge were very much a part of the medieval imagination; see Stuart Piggott, "Antiquarian Thought in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in his *Ruins in a Landscape: Essays in Antiquarianism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1976), 1–5.

When clerics disturbed early medieval sepulchers of high-status laypersons in the course of church renovations and translated their remains with comparable ceremonies, however, their presence also added to the prestige of the churches in which they were located. By the early modern period, some efforts made to exhume Merovingian graves thus did not necessarily have direct relevance for the religious settings in which they occurred. While the circumstances and techniques for the excavation of early medieval burials in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries often remained identical to those during the High Middle Ages, their objectives had evolved to drawing attention to other causes, such as royal authority.

[6] Pomian, *Collectors and Curiosities*, 61ff.

The decreasing importance of grave sites in the determination of salvation also provided some impetus for the modification of excavating priorities. Popular reform doctrines proposed that the redemption of Christian souls could be accomplished without the intercession of the saints or the prayers of the living.

[7] Otto Gerhard Oexle, "Die Gegenwart der Toten," in *Death in the Middle Ages*, ed. Hermann Braet and Werner Verbeke, Mediaevalia louvaniensia, Series 1, vol. 9 (Louvain: Leuven University Press, 1983), 69–72.

Growing interest in the symbolic significance of certain secular artifacts, particularly those construed as royal insignia, influenced attitudes toward

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Merovingian sepulchers discovered in the seventeenth century. When exceptional grave goods thought to belong to Childeric I (d. 482) came to light in routine excavations in preparation for church refurbishment at Tournai in 1653, for instance, these artifacts contributed to arguments for and against the Bourbon dynasty's claims to legitimacy and continuity with the Merovingians; contingents of both sides of this debate attracted aristocratic sponsorship. Yet this singular discovery did not further antiquarian exploration on a broader scale until nearly a century later.

[8] Fritz Wagner, *Die politische Bedeutung des Childerich-Grabfundes von 1653*, Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte, Jahrgang 1973, pt. 2 (Munich: Verlag der Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1973), 9–11.

Change was slow, as nonclassical (that is, national or indigenous) archaeology up to the nineteenth century was usually pursued by "amateurs and especially provincial patriots" with predominantly local outlooks.

[9] Suzanne Marchand's response in Härke, "Archaeologists and Migrations," 32–34.

As early as the 1670s, Jacob Spon tried to defend the use of antiquarian evidence as having equal legitimacy to the employment of written documents in the historical study of antiquity.

[10] Jacob Spon, *Réponse à la critique publiée par M. Guillet sur le voyage de Grèce de Iacob Spon* (Lyons: Chez Thomas Amaulri, 1679), 30–31; Arnaldo Momigliano, "Ancient History and the Antiquarian," in his *Studies in Historiography* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966), 14–15.

Even then, religious scholars such as the Maurists were hesitant to rely on more than documentary evidence and thereby include material artifacts in their research.

[11] Nathan Edelman, *Attitudes of Seventeenth-Century France Toward the Middle Ages* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1946), 83–84.

In the German states, the rediscovery of Tacitus's *Germania* at Hersfeld in 1425 and its idealized portrayal of Germanic society dominated German scholarly investigations of the nature of Frankish society for the next three hundred years. The use of antiquarian evidence in early modern German historical studies was thus no more common than in contemporary French investigations.

[12] Ulrich Muhlack,"Die Germania im deutschen Nationalbewußtsein vor dem 19. Jahrhundert," in *Beiträge zum Verständnis der Germania des Tacitus*, ed. Herbert Jankuhn and Dieter Timpe, Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, philologisch-historische Klasse, 3d ser., vol. 175 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 1: 136ff.; Erwin Hölzle, *Die Idee einer altgermanischen Freiheit vor Montesquieu* (Munich: Verlag von R. Oldenbourg, 1925), 6. For an account of more recent events tied to this manuscript, see Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (Toronto: Random House of Canada, 1995), 75ff.

Social and national movements also directly affected the fate of numerous Merovingian antiquities. In the 1700s, Enlightenment philosophy

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contributed to significant changes in the collection and assessment of historical evidence.

[13] Arnaldo Momigliano, "Eighteenth-Century Prelude to Mr. Gibbon," in his *Sesto contributo alla storia degli studi classici e del mondo antico* 1, Storia e letteratura: Raccolta di studi e testi 149 (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1980), 249–53.

In addition, late in the century, hygienic concerns linked to the spread of contagion encouraged the perception of human remains as polluting and dangerous, and resulted in the less decorous and more scientific treatment and disposal of exhumed corpses. The devastation caused by the rapid excavation of the Parisian cemetery of Saints-Innocents in an effort to rid the city of perceived health risks, as well as rampant antiroyal (and thus anti-Frankish) sentiment during the French Revolution, led not only to widespread concern among intellectuals for the dangers of rotting corpses but also justified the destruction of medieval cemeteries.

[14] Philippe Ariès, "Les miracles des morts," in his *Essais sur l'histoire de la mort en Occident du moyen âge à nos jours* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1975), 123–25.

Some scholars thus recognized that it would be necessary to protect and preserve historically significant Merovingian monuments in state-sponsored institutions. Nineteenth-century exploration of these artifacts was also spurred by growing acknowledgment of their important role in building and reinforcing national identity. Hence, these efforts gave impetus to the creation of academies and museums devoted to the study of French history, numismatics, and archaeology.

[15] Bruce G. Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 66; Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les lieux de memoire*," *Representations* 26 (1989): 1–25.

An understanding of Merovingian antiquarianism and archaeology is therefore essential to the informed use of material evidence retrieved during these periods.

INVENTIO, ELEVATIO, AND TRANSLATIO AS MEDIEVAL EXCAVATION

Throughout the European Middle Ages, encounters with human and artifactual debris from previous eras, including those arising from burials, constituted fairly commonplace occurrences. Because of the practicality and prestige of reusing such fragments or *spolia*, medieval builders often employed architectural remains and other found materials in constructing new edifices.

[16] Jacques Le Maho, "La réutilisation funéraire des édifices antiques en Normandie au cours du haut moyen âge," in *L'environnement des églises et la topographie religieuse des campagnes médievales (Actes du III^e congrés international d'archéologie médiévale [Aixen-Provence, 28–30 septembre 1989])*, ed. Michel Fixot and Elisabeth Zadora-Rio, Documents d'archéologie française 46 (Paris: Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 1994), 14–16; Ton Derks, "La perception du panthéon romain par une élite indigène: Le cas des inscriptions votives de la Germanie Inférieure," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome*, Antiquité 104 (1992): 8–9.

Many of these buildings served religious purposes and became

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the loci of Christian rituals.

[17] Alain Dierkens, "Un aspect de la christianisation de la Gaule du Nord à l'époque mérovingienne: La 'Vita Hadelini' et les découvertes archéologiques d'Anthée et de Franchimont," *Francia* 8 (1980): 623–27.

Contemporary medieval sources do not express resistance to the reuse of older structures or the addition of found elements to the construction of new ones.

In cases when older objects were excavated, they generally represented serendipitous discoveries rather than the result of organized and sustained exploration. Items such as antique gems, cameos, coins, beads, coffins, and fragments of glass were usually retrieved from late Roman and early medieval graves or formerly occupied sites; their interment had protected them for hundreds of years.

[18] Audrey L. Meaney, *Anglo-Saxon Amulets and Curing Stones*, BAR British Series 96 (Oxford: BAR, 1981), 192–229; G. Faider-Feytmans, "Objets d'époque romaine découverts dans des tombes mérovingiennes du bassin de La Haine (Belgique)," in *Melanges d'archéologie et d'histoire offerts à André Piganiol*, ed. Raymond Chevallier (Paris: S. E. V. P. E. N., 1966), 2: 1011–18; Thomas Wright, "On Antiquarian Excavations and Researches in the Middle Ages," *Archaeologia* 30 (1844): 438–39.

Roman brooches, for instance, might have been centuries-old heirlooms or *spolia*. When found and reburied in early medieval sepulchers, they helped create an idealized image of the deceased.

[19] Roger White, "Scrap or Substitute: Roman Material in Anglo-Saxon Graves," in *Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries: A Reappraisal (Proceedings of a Conference Held at Liverpool Museum, 1986)*, ed. Edmund Southworth (Phoenix Mill: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1990), 132–35.

Because in many instances these goods had no evident monetary or aesthetic value, Audrey Meaney has also linked the attraction of Roman artifacts to their possible amuletic power.

[20] Meaney, *Anglo-Saxon Amulets*, 192–229; Wright, "Antiquarian Excavations," 47–49.

They possessed significant symbolic value to contemporaries, even if their original function had long since been forgotten.

[21] Bonnie Effros, "Monuments and Memory: Repossessing Ancient Remains in Early Medieval Gaul," in *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Mayke de Jong and Frans Theuws, TRW 6 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2001), 93–118.

These objects will receive further attention in Chapter 3, which addresses the nature and function of grave goods.

Periodic concerns must have arisen, however, regarding the orthodoxy

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of items excavated from Christian settlement, cemeterial, and farming sites. To impede any potentially negative effects that these artifacts might have upon the faithful, by at least the late eighth century some clerics in Gaul formulated blessings to be recited at the discovery of ancient objects in the ground.

[22] Antoine Dumas, ed., *Liber sacramentorum Gellonensis, CCSL* 159 (Turnhout: Typographi Brepols editores pontificii, 1981), 450; Werner Krämer, "Zur Wiederverwendung antiker Gefäße im frühen Mittelalter," *Germania* 43 (1965): 327–29.

Throughout the Middle Ages, however, Roman and early medieval *spolia* continued to make their way into even liturgical vessels and reliquaries; such artifacts were not only considered aesthetically pleasing, but they also contributed to the iconographic power of the final artistic creation.

[23] Hiltrud Westermann-Angerhausen, "Spolie und Umfeld in Egberts Trier," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 50 (1987): esp. 305–18; W. S. Heckscher, "Relics of Pagan Antiquity in Mediaeval Settings," *Journal of the Warburg Institute* 1 (1937–38): 204–20.

On some occasions, by contrast, clerics ordered the destruction of material remains discovered at ancient sites due to the apparent association of the artifacts with vaguely identified impious rites.

[24] Wright, "Antiquarian Excavations," 441–42.

Clerics evidently made their determinations in response to the local cultural and political context. Often such decisions depended upon whether the discoveries contributed to the respective bishop's or abbot's vision of his role in the Christian community.

During the High Middle Ages, clerics occasionally initiated large-scale exhumations of early medieval burial remains. Such activities occurred primarily in conjunction with ceremonies for the veneration of saints, or during excavations necessary for the construction or renovation of religious edifices. Clothing and objects buried with the dead were central to the success of medieval churchmen in properly identifying any human remains found. Garments judged to be lavish by contemporary standards thus helped confirm the status, if not the sanctity, of an exhumed corpse.

[25] For a discussion of anachronistic historical descriptions during the Middle Ages, see Hans-Werner Goetz, "Die Gegenwart der Vergangenheit im früh- und hochmittelalterlichen Geschichtsbewußtsein," *HZ* 255 (1992): 78–79.

The more impressive the adornment of the deceased, the greater the impact of the associated ritual activity on contemporaries of the translations. Considerable incentive therefore existed for the elaborate, and sometimes formulaic, description of clothing and possessions discovered in early medieval graves in northwestern Europe. To confer upon a secular grave a ceremony usually reserved for holy relics gave the occasion an additional

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degree of propriety of which the remains of visibly well-dressed person-ages were deemed worthy. Indeed, there were no other widely recognized rites marking these events outside those that clerics orchestrated; in most cases, the only others adept at opening early medieval graves were those who intended to steal from them.

Martin Meurisse, a seventeenth-century Maurist historian, preserved one such account in his transcription of an epitaph that he noted had been discovered at the monastery of Saint-Arnoul in Metz. The inscription related that during Abbot Thibauld's expansion and elevation of the choir of the basilica in 1239, workers allegedly found twenty-six graves in preparatory digs. On closer examination, the twenty-two adults exhumed were dressed in silk clothing, gloves, and sandals; their crowns, batons, and rings indicated their royal rank.

[26] "… quae omnia inventa fuerunt in sepulchris quorumdam praedictorum, demonstrant eorum dignitatem, & regiam potestam" (Martin Meurisse, *Histoire des évesques de l'église de Metz* [Metz: Jean Antoine, 1634], 29–30).

Four children found in their company were wrapped in linen shrouds. The event generated great excitement in the monastic house. Because they were unable to read the time-worn epitaphs on the tombs, however, the abbot and monks placed the human remains in a single sepulcher in the middle of the choir with an inscription relating this description of the circumstances of the discovery.

[27] Meurisse, *Histoire des évesques*, 29–30.

The honorable elevation of the bones was based in large part on the abbot's conclusion that they belonged to former members of the royal family. Alain Erlande-Brandenburg has proposed that they were part of the Carolingian dynasty.

[28] Alain Erlande-Brandenburg, *Le roi est mort: Étude sur les funérailles, les sépultures et les tombeaux des rois de France jusqu'à la fin du XIIIe siècle*, Bibliothèque de la Société française d'archéologie 7 (Geneva: Droz, 1975), 38; Alain Dierkens, "Autour de la tombe de Charlemagne: Considérations sur les sépultures et les funérailles des souverains carolingiens et des membres de leur famille," *Byzantion* 61 (1991): 169.

The steps taken under Thibauld's authority and recorded in stone imitated closely the events that would have transpired in the event of the elevation and translation of holy relics. The members of the monastic house undertook no further exploration in connection with the graves, nor did the monks record the whereabouts of the riches following the exhumation and reburial of the human remains. The rituals performed in honor of these lavishly endowed graves were heavily influenced by liturgical tradition; they also reflected concise expectations about the way in which

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a royal body was supposed to be found clothed and housed.

[29] For the discovery of the body of the Merovingian saint Aunemundus (d. 658) dressed in liturgical garments in Lyons in 1308, see C. Guigue, "Procès verbal du XIVème siècle," *BSNAF* 1876: 145–59; Peter Brown, "Relics and Social Status in the Age of Gregory of Tours," in his *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (London: Faber & Faber, 1982), 245.

The handling of the burials by thirteenth-century churchmen thus differed markedly from the antiquarian, humanist approach developed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries by the Renaissance scholars Cyriac of Ancona (d. 1455) and Giovanni Dondi (d. 1389), who studied the classical past.

[30] Neil Asher Silberman, "Promised Lands and Chosen Peoples: The Politics and Poetics of Archaeological Narrative," in *Nationalism, Politics, and the Practice of Archaeology*, ed. Kohl and Fawcett, 254–56; Paul MacKendrick, "A Renaissance Odyssey: The Life of Cyriac of Ancona," *Classica et mediaevalia: Revue danoise de philologie et d'histoire* 13 (1952): 131–45; John Howland Rowe, "The Renaissance Foundations of Anthropology," *American Anthropologist* 67 (1965): 9.

Beyond the circumstances of the inscription's preservation in a Maurist collection, other significant grounds exist for caution in accepting the Metz epitaph at face value as an accurate account of the opening of early Carolingian graves. The ceremony celebrated in honor of these high-status remains highlighted the alleged presence of royal insignia in a time when their possession connoted great authority. In France, for instance, the abbey of Saint-Denis had historically claimed the honor of housing the coronation crowns of the Carolingian and Capetian kings and queens buried there; from the 1160s, the royal monastery possessed a forged charter of 813 stating that Charlemagne had left his crown there when he departed on crusade.

[31] Colette Beaune, *The Birth of an Ideology: Myths and Symbols of Nation in Late Medieval France*, trans. Susan Ross Huston and ed. Frederick L. Cheyette (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 55–57.

Twelfth-century excavations also led to the discovery of the alleged tomb of Pepin the Short (d. 768) at Saint-Denis and resulted in the elevation of his remains in 1264.

[32] Alain Dierkens, "La mort, les funérailles et la tombe du roi Pépin le Bref (768)," *Médiévales* 31 (1996): 39–40; 49; Erlande-Brandenburg, *Le roi est mort*, 71–72.

Even southern French monasteries were eager to link themselves to royal founders in the twelfth century as a means of promoting their status and defending their liberty.

[33] Amy G. Remensnyder, *Remembering Kings Past: Monastic Foundation Legends in Medieval Southern France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 100–107, 204–11.

Although Metz was located during this era in the Holy Roman Empire, such imagery must have been familiar to contemporaries of Thibauld, since members of

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the former Salian dynasty had likewise traditionally been buried with symbolic crowns.

[34] Dierkens, "La tombe de Charlemagne," 169.

The abbot of Metz's claims to royal graves with crowns and staffs rivaled the possessions of other powerful monasteries. The ownership of such remarkable remains may well have afforded significant benefits to the Rhenish monastery.

This incident and the monument erected in commemoration of the noteworthy graves at Saint-Arnoul in Metz may have led to some amount of unconscious misinterpretation or conscious exaggeration in their descriptions. These events and others like them provoked renewed interest in the possibility that political advantages awaited those churches that engaged in such opportune excavations.

[35] Other descriptions of the contents of late antique and Merovingian graves included one written in conjunction with the discovery of a "noble" grave with armament near the alleged remains of St. Gereon of Cologne in 1121 and another for the imperial sepulcher of Valentian (d. 375) in 1174; see Ament, "Frühe Funde," 23–28.

Most famously, during his reign, Louis IX orchestrated the reorganization of sixteen tombs dating from the seventh to the thirteenth century in the royal necropolis of Saint-Denis. Each was adorned at this time with a stone likeness or *gisant* elevated above ground. The French king ordered the effigies in such a way in the church so as to reflect a monogamous model of marriage; he paired each king bearing full royal insignia with his respective queen as a symbol of the perennial nature of the kingdom. Whereas the Carolingians and Capetians were placed on the right and left aisles of the monastery church as a part of an ideological program, Louis excluded from it the remains of the only Merovingian king buried at Saint-Denis. The sarcophagus of Dagobert I (d. 638) was thereafter located in the choir. During the thirteenth century, the iconography of Saint-Denis thus promoted the aura of royal immortality in France. This ambitious presentation of the Carolingian and Capetian tombs was spurred at least in part by the challenges Louis faced from the Plantagenet dynasty.

[36] Jacques Le Goff, "Saint Louis et les corps royaux," *Le temps de la réflexion* 3 (1982): 255–84.

Some medieval excavations intended to foster the veneration of saints had unexpected consequences. Normally, these rites involved only per-functory identification of the exhumed remains, because contemporaries had historically acknowledged them as those of the saint at his or her cult site. One notable incident that deviated from the usually positive outcomes of translation ceremonies occurred during the exhumation and observation

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of the relics of Gertrude, abbess of Nivelles (d.659) and a member of the Pippinid family. The opening of her tomb on 8 July 1293 for its eventual transfer was directed by the abbess Elisabeth of Bierbais.

[37] R. Hanon de Louvet, "L'inspection des ossements de Sainte Gertrude eutelle lieu en 1292 ou en 1293?" *Annales de la Société archéologique et folklorique de Nivelles et du Brabant wallon* 17 (1952): 249–54.

Those present at this event included Sibylla de Iacea, a canoness; Willeminna de la Tour, matron of the convent *(praeposita)*; the priests Iacobus Siro, Iohannes de Balerio, and Theodoricus de Ulmis; Walterus de Pois, a scholar *(scholasticus)*; and the canons and canonesses of the chapter of Nivelles. They found the body of Gertrude intact with the exception of three teeth,

[38] Joseph-Geldolphe Van Ryckel, *Historia sanctae Gertrudis: Principis virginis primae Nivellensis abbatissae* (Brussels: Ex typographeio Godefridi Schouartis, 1637), 406–7; Baudhuin des Hayes, *Cathalogue des abbesses de Nivelle, et des choses et gestes les plus remarquables escheus en leur administration abbatiale, depuis Ste Gertrude jusqu'au commencement du 17e siècle* (1652), Bibliothèque royale (Brussels) MS 16596, ff.33r ff. On Baudhuin des Hayes, see E. Bauget, "Notice sur un manuscrit comprenant l'histoire des abbesses de Nivelles," *Compterendu des séances de la Commission royale d'histoire* 6 (1843): 179–84. Joannes Franciscus Foppens, *Bibliotheca belgica sive virorum in Belgio vitam, scriptisque illustrium* (Brussels: Per Petrum Foppens, 1739), 1: 117. Only François Lemaire notes that a finger was missing as well (*Notice historique sur la ville de Nivelles, et sur les abbesses qui l'ont successivement gouvernée depuis sa fondation jusqu'à la dissolution de son chapitre* [Nivelles: F. Cuisenaire, Imprimeur-Éditeur, 1848], 96–98).

which had probably been given away as relics, perhaps on the occasion of an earlier translation of the saint on 2 March 1059.

[39] Jean-Jacques Hoebanx, "Abbaye de Nivelles," in *Monasticon belge*, vol. 4: *Province de Brabant* (Liège: Centre national de recherches d'histoire religieuse, 1964), 1: 282.

Although the ceremonial viewing of Gertrude's relics followed the commissioning of a reliquary on 18 September 1272 by the chapter of Nivelles, it preceded their translation to the completed casket in 1298. One must conclude for this reason that the house convened the prestigious gathering of religious authorities to enhance the veneration of the saint among the members of the religious community. Witnesses to Gertrude's remains would presumably promote the status of the saint as patron of the church and community after they had verified the relics' miraculous state of preservation.

[40] Claudine Donnay-Rocmans, "La chasse de Sainte Gertrude à Nivelles," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 6th ser., 58 (1961): 186–88; Geary, *Furta sacra*, 108–18.

In this instance, however, the negative events that shortly followed the exhumation overshadowed the event for many contemporaries. Elisabeth of Bierbais died within months of the July 1293 ceremony, and some believed that close observation of Gertrude's relics had caused the abbess's

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demise. In order to avert the allegedly lethal effects of having venerated the saint in this manner, a fear denounced by various seventeenth-century scholars as ridiculous superstition,

[41] Des Hayes, *Cathalogue*, ff.33r–33v; Van Ryckel, *Historia sanctae Gertrudis*, 407; Hanon de Louvet, "L'inspection," 252–53; Jules Tarlier and Alphonse Wauters, *Géographie et histoire des communes belges: Province de Brabant, Ville de Nivelles* (Brussels, 1862), 124.

no one opened the reliquary again until 1848. And this was not because Gertrude had been forgotten. Although their reluctance to fulfill relic requests may also have been politically motivated in this instance, the chapter refused on these grounds to give a relic of Gertrude to the queen of Spain in

1662.

[42] A.-F. Stocq, *Vie critique de Sainte Gertrude de Nivelles en Brabant (631–664)* (Nivelles: Imprimerie Despret-Ferdinand, 1931), 172–74; Tarlier and Wauters, *Géographie et histoire*, 124.

Because they linked Gertrude's remains to the unfortunate fate of the abbess, the members of the monastery of Nivelles recognized and popularized the inherent dangers of excavating holy bodies. Pointing to some flaw in the character of the early modern abbess Elisabeth of Bierbais, since Gertrude was not known to be a vindictive saint, the nuns thereby publicly promoted the unflagging power of their patroness and protector.

[43] Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 50–68.

despite reaching nearly the opposite conclusion regarding the attractiveness of church excavations at Nivelles than had been the case at Metz, the ultimate result of both encounters with early medieval remains was the enhancement of the status of the monastic houses in which the interred rested.

SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY ANTIQUARIANISM AND THE LEGITIMATION OF ROYAL AUTHORITY

Attitudes toward the dead underwent significant metamorphoses during the upheavals caused by the Protestant and Catholic Reformations. Building on the efforts of Martin Luther and John Calvin to uproot what they viewed as the survival of superstitious practices in Christian communities, early Protestants condemned Catholic preoccupation with death in ritual and belief. Greater liturgical emphasis on God as Redeemer,

[44] Bernard Vogler, "La législation sur les sépultures dans l'Allemagne protestante au XVI^{e} siècle," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 22 (1975): 204–7.

and the rejection of the professed horrors of purgatory, meant that concerns for the

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afterlife no longer motivated individual and group obligations to the dying and the dead to the same degree. Otto Gerhard Oexle has described this process as the "desocialization" of death, in which the necessity of *memoria* diminished with the changed perception of death as primarily an escape from the flesh and all that was worldly.

[45] Oexle, "Die Gegenwart der Toten," 69–72; Gottfried G. Krodel, ed. and trans., *Luther's Works* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), vol. 50, letter 299, 236–38.

Protestants now construed the recitation of Masses and vigils for the dead, the founding of confraternities, and the performance of elaborate funerary services as idolatrous behavior.

[46] Jean Delumeau, "Les reformateurs et la superstition," in *Actes du colloque l'Amiral de Coligny et son temps (Paris, 24–28 octobre 1972)* (Paris: Société de l'histoire du protestantisme français, 1974), 451–56.

Contemporary anti quarian studies such as the works of Polydore Vergil (d. circa 1555) and Pierre Viret (d.1571) heightened this negative impression by linking Catholic burial practices to their classical pagan antecedents.

[47] Margaret T. Hodgen, *Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964), 327–28.

Reformers also made an effort to eliminate the pomp associated with interment ceremonies and yet at the same time to retain a burial custom communicating the dignity of Christians at death.

[48] Vogler, "La législation," 191–94.

In concert with the stamping out of perceived excesses of Christian piety, they desired burial traditions that they deemed more spiritually meaningful to replace of those of earlier centuries. Such concerns also had a notable impact on Catholic rites. Philippe Ariès has suggested that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the diminishment of personal obligations to the dead led to general disregard for the terrestrial luxuries accorded to the bodies of the deceased.

[49] Philippe Ariès, "Contribution à l'étude du culte des morts à l'époque contemporaine," in his *Essais sur l'histoire de la mort*, 145–46. For a critique of Ariès's methodology, see Michel Vovelle, "Les attitudes devant la mort: Problèmes de méthode, approches et lectures différentes," *Annales ESC* 31 (1976): 129–31.

The emphasis of reformers on the state of the soul as opposed to the body, and the suspicion under which formerly accepted ceremonies fell, brought about an abrupt transformation of funerary usages. Among these changes were the abandonment of burial goods and costume,

[50] E. Thirion and J. Willems, "Contribution à l'étude des dépôts funéraires dans les sépultures du moyen âge jusqu'à l'aube du classicisme," *Les études classiques* 53 (1985): 171–72.

and a decreased concern, in contrast to that of earlier generations, for the graves of family members.

[51] Oexle, "Die Gegenwart der Toten," 72.

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While slower to take root among the peasantry,

[52] Delumeau, "Les reformateurs," 483.

these new traditions rapidly became predominant in French noble and bourgeois society.

Sixteenth-and seventeenth-century reform leaders further encouraged these trends by exerting pressure on the clergy to educate the faithful in Christian teachings. Consequently, they transformed former burial churches and churchyards into buildings corresponding to liturgical and pastoral needs and increasingly conducted the interment of the dead at more distant rural cemeteries. The gradual breakup of the physical link between church and burial site diminished the presence of the dead in the daily existence of the living and augmented the anonymity of dying.

[53] Ariès, "Contribution," 146.

Although the impact of these changes on the excavation of Christian remains was neither immediate nor direct, these sentiments contributed to a more removed and critical attitude toward Christian graves than had previously been conceivable.

Far more discernable in France was interest among members of the royalty and nobility in artifacts chronicling their dynastic lineage, a tradition growing from widespread medieval preoccupation with royal burials.

[54] Patrick J. Geary, "Imperial Memory in Eleventh-Century Provence," in *Ethnogenese und Überlieferung: Angewandte Methoden der Frühmittelalterforschung*, ed. Karl Brunner and Brigitte Merta (Vienna: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1994), 256–63.

Whereas public collections of classical antiquities in Venice had promoted that city's glory since the late sixteenth century, and the Medicis and Hapsburgs had expressed more general curiosity about ancient remains since the early Renaissance,

[55] Pomian, *Collectors and Curiosities*, 66ff.; Sklenárˇ, *Archaeology in Central Europe*, 24–30.

French scholars concentrated upon promoting the importance of the figure of the monarch. Rather than representing an early manifestation of national identity, however, the ideology mainly glorified the king's sovereignty and the unity of his realm.

[56] Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), 91–97; 115–18.

Great attention therefore went to accidental finds outside a religious context, which, as described above, had earlier been the custom. Medieval grave goods and monuments offered opportunities to comment on historical subjects related to the French monarchy.

For the most part, this development in intellectual thought had little noticeable effect upon the accuracy of excavating methodology. It eliminated neither the performance of translation ceremonies for clerical or lay

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figures nor the use of anachronistic standards to identify remains in richly provisioned sepulchers. In fact, one might argue that increased interest in royalty offered even greater incentive for misrepresentation of the burials of the early medieval elite. The unusual example of the exhumation of a grave identified as that of a Merovingian monarch, the queen Brunhild, illustrates this point. According to the *Liber historiae Francorum*, the queen suffered torture, followed by her execution and the burning of her corpse circa 613 or 614.

[57] "… Brunchilde morte turpissima esse dignissima, tunc, iubente Chlothario rege, in camelo levata, toto hoste gyrata, deinde equorum indomitum pedibus legata, dissipatis membris, obiit. Ad extremum sepulchrum eius ignis fuit, ossa ipsius conbusta" (Bruno Krusch, ed., *Liber historiae Francorum* A.40, MGH: SRM 2, new ed. [Hanover: Impensis bibliopolii Hahniani, 1945], 310–11); Erlande-Brandenburg, *Le roi est mort*, 140–41.

In 1632, by contrast, the remains purported to be Brunhild's were translated to a new resting place in an antique marble tomb in her foundation, the monastic church of Saint-Martind'Autun. In order to silence doubts about the authenticity of her ashes, as some contemporaries believed that they had actually been scattered as the final part of her punishment, a prestigious lay and religious audience witnessed the opening of her tomb. The steps taken imitated those that would have been performed in a liturgical ceremony for a saint. The discovery of a lead coffin, ashes, and a spur within was considered sufficient proof for positive identification of the queen.

[58] Jacques-Gabriel Bulliot, *Essai historique sur l'abbaye de Saint-Martin d'Autun de l'ordre de Saint-Benoit* (Autun: Michel Dejussieu, 1849), no. 163, 292–93. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, it is ironic that the discovery of a spur in the grave did not impede the identification of this grave as belonging to Brunhild, as it would have done three hundred years later.

The contrast between the honor given to Brunhild in the seventeenth century and her ignominious execution a thousand years earlier could not be more revealing of the excavation's dual purposes of early modern royal and monastic self-promotion. The lack of continuity in tradition and the meager evidence did not create a great obstacle to verifying the authenticity of her alleged ashes.

[59] A lead coffin of seventh-century date might alone constitute cause for suspicion, since these were far more typical linings for stone tombs during the Roman period; see J. M. C. Toynbee, *Death and Burial in the Roman World* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971), 49. For a few examples of decorated lead tombs from early medieval Gaul, see Édouard Salin, *La civilisation mérovingienne d'après les sépultures, les textes et le laboratoire* (Paris: A. et J. Picard, 1952), 2: 171–72. 226. Salin insisted, however, that these tombs contained Gallo-Romans rather than Franks.

In contemporary German states, where no figure was respected by the aristocracy as playing a correspondingly central role, scholarly interest in

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early medieval Germanic origins focused primarily on written documents rather than the discovery of artifacts. The absence of a monarch did not constitute the source of differences between French and German developments. After all, noble families in Italy had long enriched their understanding of emblems and insignia through private collections.

[60] Guiseppe Olmi, "Science—Honour—Metaphor: Italian Cabinets of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities*, ed. Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 5–16.

In the Holy Roman Empire, by contrast, Tacitus's *Germania* occupied a unique place and provided the foundation of the study of Germanic society, language, and government. First cited in German regions in Rudolf von Fulda's *Translatio Sancti Alexandri* (851), the text had largely disappeared from view after this time.

[61] Franz Brunhölzl, *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1975), 1: 343–45; Bernard Bischoff, "Benedictine Monasteries and the Survival of Classical Literature," in his *Manuscripts and Libraries in the Age of Charlemagne*, trans. and ed. Michael Gorman

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 149–51; Heinrich Beck, "Tacitus' *Germania* und die deutsche Philologie," in *Beiträge zum Verständnis der Germania des Tacitus*, ed. Jankuhn and Timpe, 1: 155–56; Rudolf Till, *Handschriftliche Untersuchungen zu Tacitus Agricola und Germania (Der Codex Aesinas)* (Berlin-Dahlem: Ahnenerbe-Stiftung Verlag, 1943), 12–13.

Brought again to scholarly attention by Aenaes Silvius Piccolomini (later Pius II) in the 1450s, the *Germania* resurfaced in academic discussions from the 1490s onward regarding the distinctions between Roman and Germanic mores in antiquity.

[62] Suzanne L. Marchand, *Down from Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750–1970* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 156–57; Muhlack, "Die Germania," 137–53.

In his critique of Roman custom, Tacitus (d. 120) had addressed various aspects of Germanic life, among them features of indigenous funerary usages. Although his knowledge of the Germanic peoples was secondhand at best,

[63] Jos Bazelmans, "Conceptualising Early Germanic Political Structure: A Review of the Use of the Concept of Gefolgschaft," in *Images of the Past: Studies on Ancient Societies in Western Europe*, ed. Nico Roymans and Frans Theuws, Studies in Preen Protohistorie 7 (Amsterdam: Instituut voor Preen Protohistorische Archeologie Albert Egges van Giffen, 1991), 100–103.

he expressed great admiration for the alleged simplicity of their rites as compared to those of Romans of his day:

> There is no ostentation about [Germanic] funerals. The only special observance is that the bodies of famous men are burned with particular kinds of wood. When they have heaped up the pyre they do not throw garments or spices on it; only the dead man's arms, and sometimes

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his horse too, are cast into the flames. The tomb is a raised mound of turf. They disdain to show honor by laboriously rearing high monuments of stone, which they think would only lie heavy on the dead.

[64] Allan A. Lund, ed. and trans., *P. Cornelius Tacitus, Germania* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Carl Winter, 1988), p. 90. Translation taken from Tacitus, *The Agricola and the Germania*, trans. H. Mattingly and S. A. Handford (London: Penguin, 1970), p. 123.

The oftcited passage implied that if a reader believed Tacitus, he would assume that few physical remains of Germanic peoples existed prior to the first century, if not later. Among seventeenth-century German scholars for whom this text was of central significance, study of the Merovingian period therefore concentrated primarily upon legal and linguistic developments rather than on any surviving physical artifacts from the cremation rites described by Tacitus. For the time being, creation of a typology of symbolic insignia used by Germanic leaders did not have the immediacy in Germany that it possessed in France.

If greater enthusiasm for antiquarianism had existed in the German states, Hermann Conring (d. 1681), who taught on subjects ranging from medicine to politics at the Universität Helmstedt from the 1630s,

[65] Patricia Herberger, ed., *Hermann Conring 1606–1681: Ein Gelehrter der Universität Helmstedt*, Ausstellungskataloge der Herzog August Bibliothek 33 (Göttingen: Hubert, 1981), 24–47. See also Philipp Clüver's classification of Germanic groups in his *Germaniae antiquae libri tres* (Leiden: Apud Ludovicum Elzevirium, 1616), 49.

would have constituted a likely candidate to showcase such finds in his publications. Not only was he greatly interested in the accomplishments of the early Germans, but he also acknowledged in *De origine iuris Germanici* (1643) the deep imprint made by Roman written legislation upon Germanic legal custom. Conring believed that prior to their exposure to Roman practice, the Germanic tribes had relied upon oral traditions for the regulation of community dynamics. Indeed, he observed with pride that the Romans had actually admired the order characteristic of primitive Germanic social organization. He therefore opposed the contemporary implementation of Roman law in German principalities.

[66] Hermann Conring, *De origine iuris Germanici: Commentarius historicus* (Helmstedt: Ex officina Henningi Mulleri, 1643), 1; Marchand, *Down from Olympus*, 160.

Yet when Conring did turn to antiquarian evidence in his historical discussions, it served him only peripherally. On the basis of physical evidence, for instance, he discounted

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current claims that the Germanic population had ever included giants among its numbers.

[67] Hermann Conring, *De habitus corporum Germanicorum antiqui et novi causis*, ed. Johann Philipp Burggravius (Frankfurt: Sumptibus Johannis Adolphi Stockii, 1727), 56–57.

Contemporary with the life of Conring was the discovery on 27 May 1653 of the grave of the Merovingian monarch Childeric I (d. 481) in the Spanish Netherlands. This find marked one of the most decisive moments for the development of excavation and interpretative techniques for early medieval remains. The sequence of events began when a deafmute mason named Adrien Quinquin (or Quinqué), who was assisting in preparatory digs for a new parish hospice at Saint-Brice in Tournai, found a gold buckle and a quantity of gold coins. Although no one initially identified the sepulcher as a royal one, it rapidly became apparent to officials present that these objects had once hung from the belt of an influential potentate. despite the arrival of the dean and two church wardens, ensuing chaos at the grave site increased with the exhumation of additional priceless treasures. Spectators hovered about while officials divided the rapidly excavated goods as booty between the magistrate of Tournai and the pastor of the church.

[68] Jean-Benoît-Désiré Cochet, *Le tombeau de Childèric I^er roi des francs, restitué à l'aide de l'archéologie et des découverts récentes* (Reprint, Brionne: Gérard Monfort, 1978), 16–22; Joachim Werner, "Childerichgrab," in *Lexikon des Mittelalters* (Munich: Artemis Verlag, 1983), 2: 1819–20.

Pre-Christian finds, such as those of Childeric's burial, were not unknown in either the Middle Ages or the Renaissance, but they were rarely as lavish as these. Early descriptions of the artifacts not only contained information about the excavations but also revealed much about their author's education, aesthetic leanings, and political orientation. In 1485, for instance, the discovery of the mummified body of a young woman in a tomb at the Fondo Statuario (belonging to the monastery Santa Maria Nuova) in Rome, attracted much public interest. Rumors circulated that she was Tulliola, the daughter of Cicero, despite the fact that the tomb lacked an epitaph. The humanists' eagerness to identify the remains as those of a famous figure led to a series of unsupported hypotheses with poor statistical and historical likelihood.

[69] C. Hülsen, "Die Auffindung der römischen Leiche vom Jahre 1485," *MIÖG* 4 (1883): 441, 448; Roberto Weiss, *The Renaissance Discovery of Classical Antiquity* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969), 1–3, 102; F. Saxl, "The Classical Inscription in Renaissance Art and Politics," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 4 (1941): 26–27.

In England, the visibility of barrows

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similarly made them easily accessible, and they became the subject of numerous fantastical tales and the object of plunder by early antiquaries, thieves, and treasure seekers.

[70] Barry M. Marsden, *The Early Barrow-Diggers* (Park Ridge: Noyes Press, 1974).

Many excavations were conducted solely to recover objects that might convey wealth and prestige to local individuals and church and town representatives. Not only was there no need to retrieve artifacts systematically, but no one catalogued them, noted their context, or took measures to protect them in any way.

In the case of Childeric's sepulcher, interest focused on the most valuable items while less noteworthy objects received little or no attention. Those responsible for the excavations were not concerned with maintaining the integrity of the grave's contents. As only individual artifacts of great worth might have significance in a historical context, no attempt was made to reconstruct a more complete picture of Childeric's burial. Contemporaries viewed this discovery as an opportunity to treasure hunt; systematic excavation at the level that would later be advocated by archaeologists was not conceived of at this time. After their recovery, the artifacts came to rest in private collections typically held by rulers and churches. Such assemblages of monuments and works of art did not function as museums but rather as treasuries, due to their inaccessibility and general lack of organization and cataloguing. The control of these objects and semiophores by rulers and churches symbolically reinforced royal and clerical domination of the political hierarchy.

[71] Pomian, *Collectors and Curiosities*, 37–44.

At Tournai, the discovery of a signet ring not only allowed contemporaries to identify the grave's occupant as Childeric but also attracted the attention of higher authorities. As observed above, interest in antiquities pertaining to the origins of royal custom stemmed from the influential role that insignia played in contemporary French ceremonies in honor of the crown. By the sixteenth century, the regalia had come to possess the "divinity of the Dignity," thus the essence of kingship itself.

[72] Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 422–24.

Funerary effigies, by contrast, were associated with the "perpetual royal dignity" of a particular monarch.

[73] Peter Metcalf and Richard Huntingdon, *Celebrations of Death: The Anthropology of Mortuary Ritual*, 2d. ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 171–78.

Krzysztof Pomian has suggested that monarchs' desire to acquire such objects associated so intimately with their own legitimacy

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stemmed from the sense of exclusivity that the possession of such powerful symbols reinforced.

[74] Pomian, *Collectors and Curiosities*, 37–38.

The Bourbon search for relics of the two previous dynasties in France was thus related to their efforts to mythologize royalty.

[75] Jean Meyer, "Mythologies monarchiques d'Ancien Regime et moyen âge," in *Media in Francia … Recueil de mélanges offert à Karl Ferdinand Werner* (Paris: Hérault-Éditions, 1989), 290–92.

The use, for instance, of Charlemagne's crown, scepter, and hand of justice in the French coronation ceremony conveyed visually to French subjects and royal contemporaries in other lands the alleged continuity between the Bourbon dynasty and its predecessors.

[76] See the account of the "Sacre et couronnement de Louis XVI," in Jules J. Berthevin, *Recherches historiques sur les derniers jours des rois de France, leurs funérailles, leurs tombeaux* (Paris: Chez François Louis, Libraire, 1825), 367–83.

To be certain, the means by which the grave of Childeric was identified was far more reliable than in the case of other examples examined here. Yet the common propensity among seventeenth-century excavators to assume without hesitation that graves were royal regardless of whether enough evidence existed must have driven the events of 1653. No one thought to question whether a ring, which might have been passed to someone else, was sufficient to identify the monarch. Early modern fascination with regalia contrasted with attitudes of early medieval kings, who appear to have been relatively indifferent to the symbolism of kingship; the *signa barbarorum* varied greatly among members of the upper nobility who also used them.

[77] John Michael Wallace-Hadrill, "The Graves of Kings: An Historical Note on Some Archaeological Evidence," in his *Early Medieval History* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975), 47–48; Edward James, "Royal Burial Among the Franks," in *The Age of Sutton Hoo: The Seventh Century in North-Western Europe*, ed. Martin Carver (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1992), 243–54.

As noted in the case of queen Brunhild, arbitrary standards for the classification of artifacts and royal names gleaned from written sources sufficed to identify remains in richly provisioned sepulchers. This tendency arose from the high visibility of royalty in French culture and especially French ceremony: scholars sought to draw parallels between ancient and contemporary custom and to identify links between antiquarian discoveries and what was familiar.

[78] Nineteenth-century antiquaries thus commonly identified row grave cemeteries with multiple

weapon burials as the consequence of nearby battles: see Auguste Moutié, *Notice sur un cimetière présumé mérovingien, découvert à Auffargis (Seineet-Oise) en 1846* (Rambouillet: Imprimerie de Raynal, 1847), 12–13; René Louis, "Cimetières mérovingiens et chansons de geste," in *Études mérovingiennes (Actes des journées de Poitiers, 1er –3 mai 1952)* (Paris: Éditions A. et J. Picard, 1953), 201–2.

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With regard to the remains of Childeric I, the Hapsburgs quickly expressed their desire to possess the artifacts from the spectacular grave found under their jurisdiction. The archduke Leopold-Wilhelm, governor of the Low Countries under the auspices of Philip IV of Spain, therefore took steps to gain control of the majority of the artifacts. Yet it was not only the gold that attracted his attention: Childeric's grave also conveniently played into Hapsburg efforts to strengthen their claim to the French throne over the Bourbons. To this end, the archduke commissioned his personal physician, Jean-Jacques Chiflet, to make a detailed catalogue and description of the precious items from Childeric's grave. Chiflet, who had previously authored a number of works, including the *Vindiciae Hispanicae* (1644) demonstrating the right of the Spanish king to the French crown, proved an able candidate for this task.

[79] Wagner, *Die politische Bedeutung*, 9–11.

And, the Hapsburgs' choice of a medical expert to document the grave was not illfounded. From the late sixteenth century, physicians had shown themselves particularly adept in perfecting the type of scientific precision that was thought necessary in the writing of natural history.

[80] While such pursuits were uncommon among physicians prior to the sixteenth century, in 1584 the physician Giovanni Battista Olivi catalogued Francesco Calzolari's largely pharmaceutical collection in Verona. Contemporaries likewise considered Francesco Imperato's illustrated catalogue of his father Ferrante's museum in Naples (1599) highly innovative. The Spanish viceroy viewed it during a visit to the city. See Findlen, *Possessing Nature*, 23, 27–41; Olmi, "Science—Honour—Metaphor," 5–16; Katharine Parks, *Doctors and Medicine in Early Renaissance Florence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 220–35.

A growing number of male scholars with antiquarian and humanist interests thus attached themselves to Chiflet, turning his Belgian residence into an academy of sorts.

Chiflet's effort to catalogue and describe the treasures found in Childeric's grave lasted two years and resulted in the publication of *Anastasis Childerici I* in 1655.

[81] Jean-Jacques Chiflet, *Anastasis Childerici I: Francorum regis sive thesaurus sepulchralis* (Antwerp: Ex officina plantiniana Balthasaris Moreti, 1655); Cochet, *Le tombeau de Childèric*, 21–22.

Because he had not been present at the exhumation of the royal remains, Chiflet first had to demand the return of various pieces from the individuals who had taken them at the time of the excavation or during the confusion that followed.

[82] Cochet, *Le tombeau de Childèric*, 22–23.

Thereafter, the primary objective of his research consisted of producing lengthy descriptions, engraved reproductions, and evaluations of the surviving valuables, some of

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which were damaged. Exegesis by Chiflet incorporated lengthy classical citations regarding similar objects and their usages, as well as suggestions for their interpretation. Regarding such exegesis Pomian has remarked that it was a "recognition of the authority of the ancients in every matter concerning them; objects could only be understood if the ancients' attitude to them could be determined."

[83] Pomian, *Collectors and Curiosities*, 91.

The remarkable end product represented a highly detailed compendium of individual artifacts discovered at Tournai. Although little attention went to the human remains, Chiflet's publication followed the form of Italian encyclopedic museum catalogues more common in the field of natural history, such as Ulisse Aldrovandi's (d. 1605) *Studio Aldrovandi.*

[84] Findlen, *Possessing Nature*, 24–26, 36–44.

In the 1670s, other antiquaries, such as John Aubrey, whose unpublished *Monumenta britannica* described monuments and antiquities in Britain from prehistory to the medieval period, likewise incorporated this humanistic format.

[85] Piggot, "Antiquarian Thought," 16–17.

One must wonder whether Childeric's religious profession as a pagan, not subject to the same ceremonial requirements as a deceased Christian, contributed to the ease with which then cuttingedge scientific procedures were applied to the grave's investigation.

Because of the political importance of Childeric's grave to the Spanish king and Chiflet's Hapsburg sponsor, Chiflet concentrated to a large extent upon artifacts giving evidence of the deceased's royal status. Chiflet stated that the signet ring, long hair (portrayed in the image of the king on the ring), golden bees (also referred to elsewhere as cicadas), sword, and jewels, among other objects, were all items associated with the role of a Merovingian king and warrior.

[86] Chiflet, *Anastasis Childerici I*, 104–205.

By confirming the identification of the grave with Childeric I and suggesting that the golden bees found in the grave, and not the *fleur-de-lys*, represented the Merovingian royal insignia, he pointed to the weakness of Bourbon claims to dynastic continuity (see fig. 1).

[87] Wagner, *Die politische Bedeutung*, 13–17.

French historians, in turn, countered that the bees constituted an early form of the *fleur-de-lys.*

[88] Jacques Audigier, *L'origine des Français et de leur empire* (Paris: Chez Claude Barbin, 1676), 2: 496–502; Jacques Ribauld de la Chapelle, *Dissertations sur l'origine des Francs* (Paris: Chez Chaubert, 1748), 85–88.

As Louis XIII and Louis XIV still adhered to the theory that the Trojans were the ancestors of the Franks, the links to

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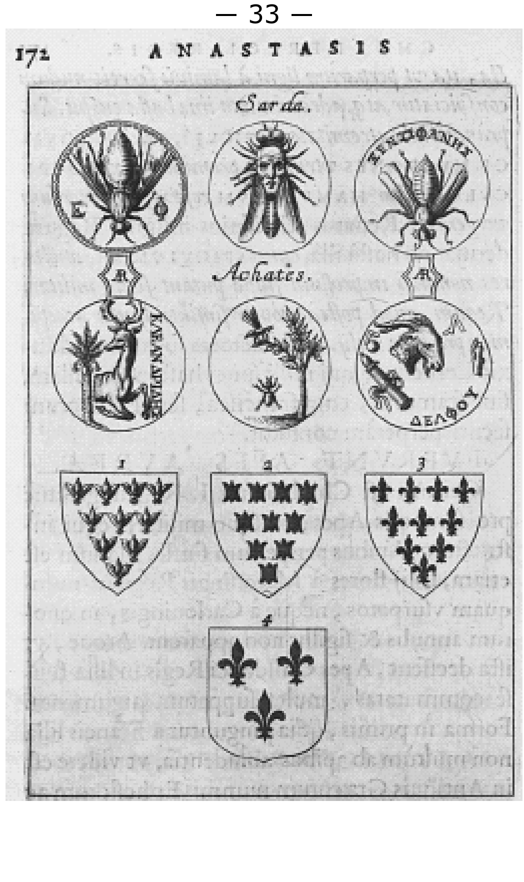

Figure 1. Illustration charting the alleged transition from the bees found in Childeric's grave to the *fleur-de-lys*, an argument refuted by Chiflet in order to discredit the Bourbons' legitimacy as heirs of the Merovingians. Chiflet, *Anastasis Childerici I*, 172. Reproduced with the permission of the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris.

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Germanic tradition provided by Childeric's grave represented unwelcome information.

[89] Jean Lemaire des Belges had proposed the alleged continuity between Priam and Francus, the ancestor of the Frankish kings in his *Illustration de Gaule et singularitez de Troye*, published between 1509 and 1513; see Meyer, "Mythologies," 295; Wagner, *Die politische Bedeutung*, 22–25.

Chiflet's labors thus heightened the Hapsburgs' and the Bourbons' interest in discovering similar items to strengthen or weaken their links to the Merovingian monarchy. For this reason, despite the quality of Chiflet's work, the *Anastasis* remained a discussion of individual objects, especially those that might fuel dynastic quarrels. As was typical of early seventeenth-century antiquarian scholarship, the close observation of striking pieces of physical evidence served to draw conclusions from narrowly directed questions.

[90] Momigliano, "Ancient History," 2–8.

Scholars consequently failed to envision Childeric's burial remains as an entity greater than a collection of royal goods and insignia.

In exhibiting a highly proprietary attitude toward Childeric's burial goods, Chiflet's patron and his heirs hindered widespread recognition of their importance. Indeed, Leopold-Wilhelm conducted himself as if he were the sole possessor of the Merovingian artifacts.

[91] For the collections of Leopold-Wilhelm at Vienna, see Rudolf Distelberg, "The Habsburg Collections in Vienna during the Seventeenth Century," in *The Origins of Museums*, ed. Impey and MacGregor, 45–46. The Childeric goods likely formed a part of the *Schatzkammer* and not the *Kunstkammer*. I was unable to locate the 1881 inventory of H. Zimmermann, entitled *Inventar der Schatzkammer des Erzherzogs Leopold Wilhelm*.

The objects traveled with him on his return to Vienna in 1656, and following his death in 1662 his nephew, the emperor Leopold I, inherited them. Three years later, in a gesture of peace, Johann Philipp of Schönborn, archbishop of Mainz and princeelect of the Holy Roman Empire, negotiated Leopold I's return of the majority of the treasure to Louis XIV, who had recently established the Cabinet des médailles at the Louvre. Nevertheless, because of the apparent embarrassment that the discovery of Childeric's grave caused for the Bourbons, the objects remained inaccessible to all outside of the king's circle of intimates. Even after their transfer to the Cabinet des éstampes in the Bibliothèque royale, they received little publicity. This factor perhaps accounted for their survival unharmed through the French Revolution.

[92] Joseph Guibert, "Inventaire des curiositez trouvées en différens endroits de la Bibliothèque du Roy (mai 1684)," *Archives de l'art français*, new series 1 (1907): 330–32.

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Napoleon's imitation of the famous bees in the design of his imperial coronation robe, which he chose instead of the more recent Bourbon *fleur-de-lys*, probably drew widespread attention to the treasures from Childeric's grave for the first time. Yet when the artifacts were stolen from the Cabinet des éstampes on the night of 5–6 November 1831, they still received far less press than would have been anticipated.

[93] Périn, *La datation*, 5–6; Wagner, *Die politische Bedeutung*, 26.

RENOVATION OF RELIGIOUS HOUSES AND THE EXHUMATION OF MEROVINGIAN REMAINS

Despite the importance of Childeric's grave to royal contemporaries, neither measurable advances in excavation procedures nor signs of the establishment of a vibrant humanist tradition of documentation in the manner of Chiflet occurred during roughly the next seventy years. The translation of holy relics and royal Christian remains in France continued as before. A more formal discipline of antiquarianism failed to develop for some time, which is not surprising in light of the exceptional wealth of the find at Tournai. With specific reference to the translation of Merovingian remains, those occurring before the events of 1653 and those afterward were virtually indistinguishable. In France until at least the mideighteenth century, liturgical ceremonies for elite remains retained their effectiveness in highlighting royal authority and monastic prestige. Moreover, the controversial nature of Chiflet's highly politicized message apparently hindered the adaptation by French scholars of his thorough humanistic methodology.

To illustrate this point, a comparison of two sets of translations of elite remains before and after 1653 demonstrates the similarity of these events. Just twenty-six years prior to the discovery of Childeric's sepulcher at Tournai, church renovations provided an excuse to open a number of Merovingian tombs at the monastery of Jouarre. Located along the Marne northeast of Paris, the once all-male house of Jouarre had been converted to a double monastery by a noblewoman, Theodechild (d. circa 667), and her stepmother, Mode, some time before 643. Theodechild, who was the sister of Agilbert, bishop of Paris (d. 680), became the first abbess and was venerated as a saint subsequent to her death.

[94] Patrick Périn, "À propos des cryptes de Jouarre," *Documenta archeologia: Paris, foyer d'art au moyen âge* 3 (1973): 116; Jean Guerot, "Les origines et le premier siècle de l'abbaye," in *L'abbaye royale Notre-Dame de Jouarre*, ed. Yves Chaussy, Bibliothèque d'histoire et d'archéologie chrétiennes (Paris: Éditions Guy Victor, 1961), 1–67.

In 1624, when elevated to the position of abbess of Jouarre, Jeanne de Lorraine, the daughter of Henri de Balafré, duke of Guise, and Catherine de Clèves, set out to reorganize the monastery thoroughly. During her tenure as abbess, Jeanne de Lorraine reformed the liturgy of the monastery and reinstituted manual labor, confessions in chapter, and the observance of silence. Moreover, out of her desire to honor the patron saints of the house and promote the status of the monastery as a cult center, she initiated the building of a new abbatial church and orchestrated the liturgical ceremonies necessary for the transfer of three holy bodies from the crypt to two new reliquaries.

[95] Yves Chaussy, "La reforme de Jeanne de Lorraine et Marie de la Tremoille," in his *L'abbaye royale Notre-Dame de Jouarre*, 187–92.

Relics of local saints were often perceived in the seventeenth century as powerful sources of miracles, especially with regard to the healing of the afflicted. In 1631, at the nearby royal abbey of Chelles, for instance, six nuns were cured from terrible convulsions after the reliquary holding the Merovingian queen Balthild's bones (d. circa 680/1) was opened.

On 13 October 1627, prior to the construction of the new church, the proceedings at Jouarre followed the customary *translatio* ceremony, for some of the bodies to be exhumed from the crypt of the monastic house were thought to be those of saints.

[96] Jean Lebeuf, *Histoire de la ville et tout le diocèse de Paris* (Paris: Librairie de Féchoz et Letouzey, 1883), 2: 489–90.

Relics included those of Theodechild and those believed on the basis of thirteenth-century monastic traditions to be of Agilberta, the second abbess, and Ebregisil, the bishop of Meaux.

[97] Toussaints du Plessis, *Histoire de l'église de Meaux* (Paris: Chez Julien-Michel Gandouin et Pierre-François Giffart, 1731), 1: 43–44; Guerot, "Les origines," 50–55.

Following a day-long fast by the nuns, Philippe de Cospean, bishop of Nantes, and his canons directed the six-hour ceremony. As described in French by a nun of the house in 1656, those in attendance included Queen Marie de Medici, the monastic *familia*, various other clergy, and high-ranking members of the laity. All individuals in the lavishly decorated church, including laypersons, held candles in their hands while the nuns chanted hymns and canticles. After their exhumation, the bodies were kissed and placed reverently into their new reliquaries.

[98] Musée Abbé Bonno (Chelles) MS Fr. 2, ff. 14v–15r, (formerly Chelles MS 303).

Toussaints du Plessis also noted the discovery of silk pontifical garments in addition to a signet ring engraved with an image of St. Jerome in the tomb believed to contain the remains of Ebregisil.

[99] Du Plessis, *Histoire de l'église*, 1: 43–44.

Nothing was particularly unusual about this contemporary account of the Jouarre translations. Just as in the Middle Ages, a well-orchestrated liturgy afforded a timely opportunity for the elite to observe, identify, and venerate holy relics. Five years later, the discovery of additional sacred remains affirmed the continued prestige of the monastery as a cult center. On 7 April 1632, during work on the chapel of St. Martin, a number of bones as well as a gold cloth fell out of the altar when a mason named Michel Doire damaged it. In conjunction with an accompanying piece of parchment or lead, a close examination of the bones, and the subsequent cure of a girl from a sore throat, monastic officials identified the previously unknown relics as those of Theodechild's brother, Agilbert, the bishop of Paris.

[100] Claude Chastelain, *Martyrologe universel contenant le texte du Martyrologe romain* (Paris: Chez Frederic Leonard, 1709), 747; Du Plessis, *Histoire de l'église*, 1: 44; Beat Brenk, "Marginalien zu sog. Sarkophag des Agilbert in Jouarre," *CA* 14 (1964): 95–99; André du Saussay, *Panoplia clericalis seu de clericorum tonsura et habitu: Eorumque recta institutione et canonica disciplina* (Paris: Sebastiani et Gabrielis Cramoisy, 1649), 522–23.

Contemporaries such as André du Saussay, a theologian and the bishop of Toul from 1649 to 1675, imagined that the precious vestments found upon Agilbert's remains resulted from a medieval custom of honoring the body of the saint with clothing that imitated the glory achieved by him in the kingdom of God.

[101] Du Saussay, *Panoplia clericalis*, 522; Ludovic Lalanne, "André du Saussay," in *Dictionnaire historique de la France* (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1872), 1637.

A comparison of the Jouarre translations in 1627 and 1632 to an eighteenth-century description of a ceremony performed during the renovation of the royal abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés in 1656 makes it evident why Chiflet's publication of *Anastasis Childerici I* had so little impact on church excavations. While the work had perhaps spurred additional antiquarian interest in prestigious Merovingian graves, particularly royal remains, the orchestration and recording of these events in a religious context were evidently still perceived as more powerful than a secular approach by the parties involved.

[102] Périn, *La datation*, 5–9; Neumayer, "Geschichte der archäologischen Erforschung," 36–37.

Saint-Germain-des-Prés had special status as the central house of the Congregation of Saint-Maur, a Benedictine reform movement directed at the revival of piety through the greater discipline and more thorough education

of clerics.

[103] Yves Chaussy, *Les bénédictines de Saint-Maur* (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1989), 1: 64–70; Blandine Barret-Kriegel, *Les académies de l'histoire: Les historiens et la monarchie* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1988), 3: 45–64; David Knowles, *Great Historical Enterprises: Problems in Monastic History* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1963), 35–38.

The Maurists also dedicated themselves to the composition of monastic history using critical methodology.

[104] Bonnie Effros, "Bollandists and Maurists," in *A Global Encyclopedia of Historical Writing*, ed. D. R. Woolf (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 1: 97–99; Rutherford Aris, "Jean Mabillon (1632–1707)," in *Medieval Scholarship: Biographical Studies on the Formation of a Discipline*, ed. Helen Damico and Joseph Zavadil (New York: Garland Publishing, 1995), 1: 15–32.

Their formal training, however, had little bearing on the handling of material remains, being seen by them as less accurate than written sources. The task of defending the reliability of archaeological sources and inscriptions thus fell to a small number of secular humanists interested in ancient and medieval antiquities, including the Lyonnais physician Jacob Spon (d. 1685). In his *Recherches des antiquités et curiosités de la ville de Lyon* (1673) Spon argued against traditionalists that monumental and archaeological remains were far more difficult to forge than documentary evidence.

[105] Annette Laming-Emperaire, *Origines de l'archéologie préhistorique en France: Des superstitions médiévales à la découverte de l'homme fossile* (Paris: Éditions A. et J. Picard, 1964), 61–64.

On 24 January 1656, the congregation of Saint-Germain-des-Prés lowered the shrines of Germanus as well as seven other saints from their stone columns and moved them with great fanfare into the sacristy for safe-keeping. This measure sought to prevent any mishap that might occur during the construction and installation of new seats in the choir.

[106] Jacques Bouillart, *Histoire de l'abbaye royale de Saint Germain des Prez* (Paris: Grégoire Dupuis, 1724), 251.

Moreover, as seen in the cases of Nivelles and Jouarre, such translations served to honor the saints, verify the authenticity of their remains, promote the status of the monastery, and attract generous benefactors.

[107] Heinzelmann, *Translationsberichte*, 81–84; Geary, *Furta sacra*, 10–15.

This undertaking differed from the usual events on such occasions, however, in that the removal of stone and plaster from the floor of the church also entailed the disturbance of the tombs of individuals other than saints. Among these were remains believed to be royal, buried in places of honor near the saints *(ad sanctos)* during the Merovingian period. The anticipated contents of the latter sepulchers upstaged the attention normally paid to saints' translations.

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As a consequence of du Breul's work *Théâtre des antiquités* (1639),

[108] Erlande-Brandenburg, *Le roi est mort*, 52–53.

and discoveries made during the renovation of the choir in 1645, the brethren of Saint-Germain had clearly expected to find lavishly outfitted royal graves when these activities began again in 1656. Witnesses of the first excavation, for instance, recalled seeing in the tomb alleged to be that of Childeric II (d. 675) a gold braid forming a crown and a golden cloth covering the king's face, as well as spurs and a belt with silver buckles and ornaments.

[109] Bouillart, *Histoire de l'abbaye*, 252.

As a result, the audience at the reopening of the sepulchers included church superiors, monastic *familia*, and unnamed members of the laity, presumably among them representatives of the aristocracy. Yet onlookers were disappointed when it became apparent that many of the contents of the graves were missing. According to Bernard de Montfaucon, who related these events in 1729, it turned out that one of the monks had stolen a great quantity of gold from the tombs in 1645 and converted the artifacts into coinage. When the monk gave his final confession, he allegedly reported his transgression to his superiors and returned over 13,000 gold livres, which they applied in 1664 to the construction of an organ for the monastery.

[110] Bernard de Montfaucon, *Les monumens de la Monarchie françoise, qui comprennent l'histoire de France* (Paris: Julien-Michel Gandouin et Pierre-François Giffart, 1729), 1: 174.

By 1656, only a large staff of hazelnut wood, a long rod, a broken sword, a golden buckle from a shoulder belt, a few carved silver plaques from a belt, a few pieces of cork and leather, and a glass vase with traces of perfume remained in the tomb purported to be that of Childeric II. These artifacts paled in comparison with those discovered eleven years before, leaving monastic leaders much embarrassed before their guests.

[111] Bouillart, *Histoire de l'abbaye*, 252. Patrick Périn notes, however, that Childeric II's grave was likely not pillaged, whereas those of his royal contemporaries were; see Périn, "Saint-Germaindes-Prés, première nécropole des rois de France," *Médiévales* 31 (1996): 29–36.

In the Saint-Germaindes-Prés excavations, just as in the Middle Ages, the monastic brethren conducted the typical sequence of translation and elevation ceremonies regularly reserved for holy relics despite the fact that these remains were considered to be those of royal Christians and not saints. Regardless of the minimal amount of evidence on site to back their claims, namely the alleged discovery of a single inscription bearing the words "Childr rex" in one sepulcher and the fragmentary grave goods, observers were certain that the tombs found in the choir belonged to

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Childeric II, his wife Bilichild (d. 675), their young son Dagobert (d. 675), Childebert (d. 558), his wife Ultrogotha, Chilperic I (d. 584), his wife Fredegund (d. 596), Chlotar II (d. 629), and his wife Berthetrude (d. 620). As at Jouarre, at the conclusion of the liturgical rites, the monks wrapped the bodies in cloth and placed them in elevated stone tombs covered with cloths decorated with the *fleur-de-lys.*

[112] Bouillart, *Histoire de l'abbaye*, 252–53.

The prestigious religious and lay audience considered the liturgical ceremonies appropriate based on long-held beliefs in the ability of kings to heal through their touch;

[113] Marc Bloch, *Les rois thaumaturges: Étude sur le caractère surnaturel attribué à la puissance royale particulièrement en France et en Angleterre* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1961); Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, 252–53.

they treated royal remains with honors similar to those reserved for saints because significant expectation existed that royal curative powers would function as saints' relics.

[114] Thomas Joseph Pettigrew, *On Superstitions Connected with the History and Practice of Medicine and Surgery* (London: John Churchill, 1844), 117–22; R. C. Finucane, "Sacred Corpse, Profane Carrion: Social Ideals and Death Rituals in the Later Middle Ages," in *Mirrors of Mortality: Studies in the Social History of Death*, ed. Joachim Whaley (London: Europa Publications, 1981), 59.

By the time of the restoration of the Bourbons to power in France following the fall of Napoleon, royal insignia had officially gained the status of holy relics.

[115] Berthevin, "Extraction des corps des rois, reines, princes et princesses, ainsi que des autres grands personnages qui étoient enterrés dans l'église de l'abbaye de Saint-Denis en France," in his *Recherches historiques*, 306.

Unlike at Tournai and Jouarre, however, the Maurists waited many years before publicizing further the physical evidence excavated from the aforementioned sepulchers during 1645 and 1656 at Saint-Germaindes-Prés. Compilers of the royal annals likewise neglected to mention the discovery of the presumed monarchs' graves.

[116] Wagner, *Die politische Bedeutung*, 24.

Only in the early eighteenth century had the repercussions of the thefts ceased to have any real meaning, and the influence of antiquarian research become strong enough to justify their publication. By this time, Enlightenment scholars had begun to recognize the importance of material evidence to ancient and medieval history, especially in the field of numismatics.

[117] Spon acknowledged eight sciences in the field of antiquarianism: numismatics, epigraphy, architectural studies, iconography, the study of engravings on precious stones, the study of reliefs, the study of scientific instruments, and Bibliography (referring to ancient manuscripts); see Spon, *Réponse à la critique*, 63–71; Ezechiel Spanheim, *Dissertationes de praestantia et usu numismatum antiquorum* (London: Impensis Richardi Smith, 1706), vol. 1, preface; Momigliano, "Eighteenth-Century Prelude," 249–53.

During an excavation

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conducted in 1685 at Cocherel, in the north of France, for example, the abbé de Cocherel discovered the remains of twenty human skeletons in a megalithic tomb and labeled them Hunnic warriors linked to the campaigns of Attila.

[118] Glyn Daniel, "Stone, Bronze, and Iron," in *To Illustrate the Monuments: Essays on Archaeology Presented to Stuart Piggott*, ed. J. V. S. Megaw (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), 38.

At Saint-Germain-des-Prés, the study of Merovingian antiquities occurred at the encouragement of a new generation of Maurists, such as Jacques Bouillart (d. 1726) and Martin Bouquet (d. 1754), who at last entered into the debate over the origins of the French monarchy.

[119] Augustin Thierry, *Récits des temps mérovingiens*, new ed. (Paris: Calmann Lévy, Éditeur, 1880), 46–49; Barret-Kriegel, *Les académies*, 76–81.

Arguments in favor of the Germanic heritage of the Frankish kings occurred elsewhere as well, such as when Henri de Boulainvilliers, count of Saint-Saire (d. 1722), dared to express his thoughts on the significance of material evidence pointing to the Germanic origins of the Franks.

[120] Henri de Boulainvilliers, *État de la France* (London: Chez T. Wood & S. Palmer, 1737), 1: 89–90, 111.

This view was nonetheless still perceived as dangerous and in his case merited the precaution of posthumous publication outside of France.

As a result of the expertise gained by the monks in their studies of medieval manuscripts and artifacts, Saint-Germain-des-Prés became a primary meeting place for historians by the close of the seventeenth century.

[121] Madeleine Laurain, "Les travaux d'érudition des Mauristes: Origine et évolution," *Revue d'histoire de l'église de France* 43 (1957): 237–61; René-Prosper Tassin, *Histoire littéraire de la Congrégation de Saint-Maur, Ordre de S. Benoît* (Paris: Chez Humblot, Libraire, 1770), 585–615.

On Sundays, scholars interested in ancient and medieval history, such as Charles Defresne du Cange (d. 1688) and Sébastien le Nain de Tillemont (d. 1698), consulted with Jean Mabillon (d. 1717) and other members of the abbey.

[122] Edelman, *Attitudes of Seventeenth-Century France*, 83–84; Bonnie Effros, "Jean Mabillon (1632–1707)," "Bernard de Montfaucon (1655–1741)," and "Louis Sébastian le Nain de Tillemont (1637–1698)," in *A Global Encyclopedia of Historical Writing*, 2: 578–79, 632–33, 889–90.

The group perpetuated this tradition by establishing a *cabinet d'antiquités* containing artifacts owned by the monastery. The collection was described by Bernard de Montfaucon (d. 1741) in *L'antiquité expliquée et représentée en figures* (1719).

[123] Henri Omont, "Le cabinet d'antiquités de Saint-Germain-des-Prés au XVIII^{e} siècle," in *Société nationale des antiquaires de France, centenaire 1804–1904: Recueil des mémoires* (Paris: C. Klincksieck, 1904), 333–37.

Inspired also by his five-volume work *Les monumens de la Monarchie françoise* (1729–33), the Maurists dedicated themselves to writing monastic history and

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editing Benedictine texts but now studied architectural monuments and other material remains to further their understanding of the history of France.

[124] J. Momméja, "Dom Bernard de Montfaucon et l'archéologie préhistorique," *Revue de Gascogne* 39 (1898): 6–14, 74–76; Neumayer, "Geschichte der archäologischen Erforschung," 37–39.

This *cabinet* also influenced Claude du Molinet's (d. 1687) establishment of a similar collection at the abbey of Sainte-Geneviève in Paris, likely in conjunction with the construction of its new library in 1675. The objective of the antiquarian collection was to serve the literary arts and especially the study of history; the catalogue, modeled after the style of Chiflet's *Anastasis*, included among many other items a few Merovingian coins owned by the abbey.

[125] Claude du Molinet, *Le cabinet de la bibliothèque de Sainte-Geneviève* (Paris: Chez Antoine Dezallier, 1692), preface; 140–41; William Schupbach, "Some Cabinets of Curiosities in European Academic Institutions," in *The Origins of Museums*, ed. Impey and MacGregor, 173–74.

On the whole, however, these developments did not generate a great deal of publicity. To be certain, Louis XIII's lack of enthusiasm for evidence pointing to the likelihood of Germanic rather than Trojan ancestry of the Franks had a chilling effect on these important discoveries. Studies such as that of de Boulainvilliers, which drew attention to Germanic origins, tended to downplay Tacitus's utopian images of Germanic equality; they thereby supported popular views about the Frankish subjection of the indigenous Gallic population.

[126] Henri de Boulainvilliers, *Histoire de l'ancien gouvernement de la France* (The Hague and Amsterdam: Aux dépends de la compagnie, 1727), 1: 1–10, 26ff.; id., *État*, 1: 129–30.

Scholars who believed in the Germanic identity of the Franks thus underlined the inherent divisions between the Frankish Bourbon monarch and his Gallic subjects, an explosive topic in a time of growing social unrest. Jean-Baptiste Dubos, secretary of the Académie française, therefore sought conversely to prove that the Roman emperors had invited the Franks into Gaul.

[127] Karl Ferdinand Werner, "La 'conquête franque' de la Gaule: Itineraires historiographiques d'une erreur," *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes* 154 (1996): 7–8.

According to Dubos's interpretation, which was later challenged by the baron Montesquieu, the Franks were not barbarians but rather long-standing allies of the Roman army, and the two peoples quickly integrated.

[128] Jean-Baptiste Dubos, *Histoire critique de l'établissement de la monarchie françoise dans les Gaules* (Amsterdam: Chez François Changuion, 1734), 1: 3–4, 12–14; Thierry, *Récits*, 53–58; Ivan Hannaford, *Race: The History of an Idea in the West* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 195–201.

To avoid the dangers associated

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with such conclusions, many French scholars chose instead to promote the close parallels between graves such as Childeric's and contemporary royal funerary ceremonies. The Maurist Bouillart, for instance, used his knowledge of Bourbon burial rites to identify various grave goods as Merovingian royal insignia. At Saint-Germain-des-Prés, as mentioned above, the reinterment of the remains presumed to be those of Childeric II and his royal kin took place in tombs covered with cloths imprinted with the *fleur- de-lys*; this tradition imitated Bourbon funeral litters bedecked with fabrics bearing the same insignia.

[129] Ralph E. Giesey, *The Royal Funeral Ceremony in Renaissance France* (Geneva: Droz, 1960), 85–87. For a comparison of the use of such a cloth in Bourbon ceremony, see Pierre d'Urfés's *Ordonnance* in Theodore Godefroy, *Le ceremonial de France, ou Description des ceremonies, rangs, & seances observées aux couronnements, entrées, & enterremens des Roys & Roynes de France, & autres actes et assemblées solemneles* (Paris: Chez Abraham Pacard, 1609), 24–25.

It is instructive to note that in the German states, where royal preoccupations did not shape antiquarian queries to the same extent, antiaristocratic sentiment prevailed in the field of *Altertumskunde.*

[130] Marchand, *Down from Olympus*, 162–65.

In *De origine Germanorum* (1750), Johann Georgius von Eckhart emphasized the importance of material evidence in the description of Germanic society. Indeed, he argued that large grave mounds demonstrated that the Germanic peoples had been physically hardy; Eckhart denied, as had Conring before him, however, that the builders of these monuments constituted a race of giants.

[131] Johann Georgius von Eckhart, *De origine Germanorum* (Göttingen: Ioh. Guil. Schmidii univers. bibliop., 1750), 60; Conring, *De habitus*, 56–57; Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, 322–32.

More significantly, Eckhart noted that burial mounds pertained to rites honoring the dead in pre-Christian Germanic society.

[132] Eckhart, *De origine*, p. 75.

On the basis of the presence of Roman artifacts in these *tumuli*, Eckhart posited that the interred represented German recruits of the imperial armies.

[133] Eckhart, *De origine*, p. 83.

He thus utilized grave goods to formulate a hypothesis identifying the ethnospecific connotations of mortuary goods. This view would gain greater popularity among nineteenth-century scholars who desired to apply such artifacts to demonstrate the existence of a single Germanic race who were ancestors of the modern German nation.

[134] Reinhard Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung: Das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen Gentes* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1961), 82–86.

From the early eighteenth century, physical evidence began to play a critical role for French and German historians working on the Merovingian

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period; unlike in contemporary classical studies, early medieval objects excavated by antiquaries contributed to an understanding of the past along with the written sources.

[135] Momigliano, "Ancient History," 6–8.

Nonetheless, because of the narrow or particularist nature of this evidence and its primarily local significance, anti-quarian research often languished in the footnotes of historical works.

[136] James Douglas, *Nenia britannica or A Sepulchral History of Great Britain from the Earliest Period to Its General Conversion to Christianity* (London: John Nichols, 1793), 110; Marchand, *Down from Olympus*, 162–65.

Confidence in the value of medieval remains had not grown to the point that scholars might identify the disparities between physical and documentary evidence and thereby contribute actively to historical discourse. The vision of the Merovingian sepulcher as an independent witness would not emerge prior to the mid-nineteenth century.

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY HYGIENE AND THE SUPPRESSION OF SAINTS-INNOCENTS

During the mid-to late eighteenth century, a number of developments affected historians', antiquaries', and other scholars' assessment of excavated remains and artifacts in their research. Cemeteries had become an arena in which the new relationships and attitudes engendered in capitalist society manifested themselves very clearly, particularly with respect to the value of such wellsituated property in cities.

[137] Thomas W. Laqueur, "Cemeteries, Religion, and the Culture of Capitalism," in *Revival and Religion Since 1700: Essays for J. Walsh*, ed. Jane Garnett and Colin Matthew (London: Hambledon Press, 1993), 183–200.

These views, in turn, lent greater weight to the calls of those who voiced hygienic concerns and advocated not only the safer burial of the dead but also the exhumation and reburial outside of the cities of those long dead. Members of intellectual circles across Europe argued that the decaying cadavers interred in city cemeteries and churches were releasing dangerous gases and thus threatened the health of urban inhabitants.

[138] Owen Hannaway and Caroline Hannaway, "La fermeture du cimetière des Innocents," *Dixhuitième siècle* 9 (1977): 181–91; John McManners, *Death and the Enlightenment: Changing Attitudes to Death Among Christians and Unbelievers in Eighteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 307–8; Ariès, "Les miracles," 123–25.

When numerous congregants of the parochial church of Notre-Dame, Montpellier, died suddenly on 17 August 1744, Félix Vicq-d'Azyr attributed the catastrophe to fumes

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from cadavers buried under the church.

[139] Félix Vicq-d'Azyr, *Essai sur les lieux et les dangers des sépultures*, trans. Scipion Piattoli, Librairie de la Société royale de médécine (Paris: Chez R. Fr. Didot, 1778), xii–xix.

From the 1760s onward, ecclesiastical condemnation of burial *intra muros*, superstitious belief originating from central Europe in corpses consuming their shrouds, and rampant epidemics led therefore to inquests into the safety of urban cemeteries across the continent.

[140] Julie Rugg, "'A few remarques on modern sepulture': Current Trends and New Directions in Cemetery Research," *Mortality* 3 (1998): 114–17; Ariés, "contribution," 148; Ariés, "Les miracles," 126–30.

In Paris in particular, inquiries provoked the *Parlement*'s proclamation of an *Ordonnance* imposing drastic limits on interment within the city. The measures of 21 May 1765 forbade burial in all cemeteries and churches in Paris. Exceptions were made, however, for the clergy, church founders, and any who could afford an exorbitant fee of 2,000 livres for a plot within the city walls *(intra muros).*

[141] Madeleine Foisil, "Les attitudes devant la mort au XVIII^e siécle: Sépultures et suppressions de sépultures dans le cimetière parisien des Saints-Innocents," *RH* 251 (1974): 322–29.

While this legislation was ineffective because of the opposition of a large portion of the population, who remained unconvinced by intellectual hygienic theories, pressure mounted in favor of the suppression of Parisian cemeteries.

[142] Michel-Augustin Thouret, *Rapport sur les exhumations du cimetière et de l'église des Saints-Innocents* (Paris: L'imprimerie de Ph.-Denys Pierres, 1789), 4–5; McManners, *Death and the Enlightenment*, 309–17.

Despite the fact that laws prohibited further use of many of these graveyards, opposition to the existing sepulchers grew. In 1785, the archbishop of Paris finally agreed to the displacement of all corpses interred in the cemetery of Saints-Innocents. During two winters from 1785 to 1787, workers laboring continuously exhumed approximately twenty thousand human cadavers and reburied them in forty to fifty communal pits outside the city.

[143] Ariès, "Contribution," 149–50.

What contributed to the historic significance of these excavations was their predominantly secular nature. Rather than a cleric, a physician, Michel-Augustin Thouret, presided over the transfer of corpses from Saints-Innocents. Workers carried out their assignments swiftly, silently, and in concert with a minimum of religious niceties.

[144] Thouret, *Rapport sur les exhumations*, 10–12; Foisil, "Les attitudes," 329.

Conducted mainly at night in the winter cold, the exhumations occurred in conditions considered optimal to hindering the spread of disease. While attempting to

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organize the unpopular activities systematically and minimize negative publicity, Thouret also implemented measures to ensure the picturesque nature of the events. Some of the more prestigious graves received brief ceremonies as a mark of honor, and, in Thouret's eyes at least, the torchlit exhumations were appropriately dignified.

[145] Thouret, *Rapport sur les exhumations*, 11.

The Romantic orchestration of the suppression of Saints-Innocents constituted a further step in the "desocialization" of exhumation, an outlook also affecting cemeteries in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Prussia in the 1780s and 1790s.

[146] Oexle, "Die Gegenwart der Toten," 72–76.

Whereas the excavation of graves had normally served the purpose of the translation of relics, a religious ceremony intimately linked to the presence of an audience, this more pragmatic attitude toward cadavers and their removal was not. Those recognized in that era to possess medical expertise performed the nonreligious procedure with minimal fanfare.

[147] Hannaway and Hannaway, "La fermeture," 189–91.

Notably, the movement of Christian remains might now occur relatively independent of Church direction and authority. The closure and transformation of Saints-Innocents established a French precedent for the emptying of cemeteries, one that would soon afterward take place in a revolutionary context. Although the politically and symbolically charged destruction of royal tombs and the disinterment of royal remains from their sepulchers in Saint-Denis in 1793 reflected none of the respect for Christian graves exhibited at Saints-Innocents, a few commonalities existed between the two episodes. Both entailed the cooperation of political authorities and medical representatives. The events also revealed the growing importance of admittedly primitive techniques in the systematic excavation, observation, and description of human remains from cemeteries.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION: ROYAL FUNERARY MONUMENTS AS MUSEUM ARTIFACTS

Just as the ceremonial translation of Merovingian monarchs' remains promoted Bourbon legitimacy, with the temporary fall of the French monarchy, the destruction of the resting places of kings reflected the revolutionaries' desire to overturn all surviving vestiges of the sovereign.

[148] Berthevin, "Profanation des tombeaux de Saint-Denis en 1793," in his *Recherches historiques*, 280–82.

In condemning what he believed to be destructive, impious acts at Saint-Denis,

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the "palace of death," the French royalist Berthevin alleged in 1825 that the revolutionaries had declared:

> We will not limit our vengeance there [to the destruction of the monarchy]; we will dig to the tombs of these usurpers of our rights; we will tarnish their memory and break their coffins. That their remains shall disappear and be swallowed up forever; and if it is possible, we will stifle everything of theirs including their last memory.

The National Convention did, in fact, perceive artifacts and monuments associated with the monarchy as potent symbols of the tyranny to which French citizens had been subjected.

[149] Daniel Hermant, "Destructions et vandalisme pendant la Révolution fran-çaise," *Annales ESC* 33 (1978): 706–7, 712.

After ordering the destruction of royal sepulchers in the basilique at Saint-Denis on 6, 7, and 8 August 1793,

[150] François Chateaubriand, "Monuments destruits dans l'abbaye de Saint-Denis, les 6, 7 et 8 août 1793," in his *Genie de Christianisme et défense du Christianisme*, new edition with critical extracts by M. de Fontanes (Paris: Garniers Frères, Éditeurs, 1867), 627ff.

the revolutionaries authorized the disentombment of all royal corpses in the abbey. They performed the excavations from 12 to 25 October 1793. Among the remains disinterred were a few members of the Merovingian dynasty, including Dagobert I (d. 638) and his wife Nanthilde (d. 642). In the *procès verbal* given by Druon, a member of the abbey of Saint-Denis, the monk testified that representatives of the National Convention and the local municipality, as well as officials of the Commission of Arts and the Commission of Lead attended the October exhumations.

[151] Max Billard, *Les tombeaux des rois sous la Terreur* (Paris: A. Bergier, 1905), 11–12; McManners, *Death and the Enlightenment*, 353–55.

Before an audience of curious onlookers, authorities unceremoniously unearthed the corpses, observed them for signs of decay, and then transported them for deposit in two communal graves in the cemetery of Valois. Fear of the possible emission of infectious gases, however, hindered any study whatsoever of the more recent sepulchers. Authorities placed the precious metals confiscated from the tombs in municipal vaults, and the city commissioners of lead received the valuable fragments left of coffins fashioned from this substance.

[152] Berthevin, "Extraction des corps," in his *Recherches historiques*,283–306.

The destruction of royal graves and the disposal of human remains in communal pits communicated the revolutionaries' deep desire to reduce the former monarchs to a fate beneath that of the poorest citizens of France. The careful synchronization of these symbolic activities with the

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annihilation of the monarchy confirmed their contempt; workers exhumed the coffin of Louis XV (d. 1774) on the same day as the revolutionaries executed Marie Antoinette (16 October 1793).

[153] Ibid., 289–90.

Their evisceration of royal *memoria* thus discouraged the customary prayers recited in honor of the king since the Merovingian period.

[154] Oexle, "Die Gegenwart der Toten," 65–72.

The wholesale quarrying of public monuments for precious metals and lead, including more than 454 pounds of gold from royal graves used to mint new coinage, spurred antiquaries to advocate measures protecting historical monuments during the political upheaval.

[155] Neumayer, "Geschichte der archäologischen Erforschung," 39.

Although the closure of monasteries (including those of the Maurists), the mass destruction of public monuments, and the pillaging of graves certainly did not aid the study of Merovingian remains, a few successful efforts to preserve surviving artifacts countered these initial losses.

[156] After the Maurist congregations were dissolved and their possessions confiscated in 1790, research in progress was either halted or entered into private hands when many of the Maurists went into exile; see Chaussy, *Les bénédictines*, 1: 240–82.

In 1791, the Assembly appointed Alexandre Lenoir (d. 1839), a former student of art, as curator of the new Musée des Petits-Augustins.

[157] Berthevin, "Tombeaux de Saint-Denis au Musée des Petits-Augustins," in his *Recherches historiques*, 307–11.

The objective of the museum was not simply to protect existing monuments from violence but also to educate the public through an unprecedented arrangement of the objects by century. In addition to displaying medieval artifacts in his exhibit, Lenoir employed sculptors to create busts from ancient marble for those figures for whom he possessed no representations. His understanding of chronology thus did not entail serious consideration of historical authenticity.

[158] Stephen Bann, "Poetics of the Museum: Lenoir and du Sommerard," in his *The Clothing of Clio: A Study of the Representation of History in Nineteenth- Century Britain and France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 82–85.

Lenoir's efforts to identify and catalogue the stone effigies in the museum were nonetheless relatively successful, owing to his knowledge of the work of Bernard de Montfaucon and his possession of a series of drawings by Roger de Gagnières.

[159] Elizabeth A. R. Brown, "The Oxford Collection of the Drawings of Roger de Gagnières and the Royal Tombs of Saint-Denis," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 78.5 (1988): 7–22.

In the former monastic building that now housed his museum, fragments

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of stone sculpture from Saint-Denis and other monasteries presented Lenoir's revolutionary reconstruction of the history of France as well as the development of the arts therein. The objects, placed in chronological order, were described years later by Berthevin as

> Admirable debris snatched from the hands of barbaric ignorance but restored with enlightened taste and arranged with ingenious experience; with other remains they [the sculptures] formed groups where the French came to pride themselves regarding our great men, foreigners came to envy France, and youth, friend of the arts, came to admire, learn, and perfect itself in the study of our chief works.

[160] Berthevin, "Tombeaux de Saint-Denis," in his *Recherches historiques*, 307–8.

Interest in education of this nature stemmed from the Revolution's promotion of the necessity of all citizens' access to national monuments, many of which, such as the Palais du Luxembourg in Paris, had been restricted since 1780 to a very small portion of the population. This same ideology therefore led to the creation of the earliest public art museum in France.

[161] Ludovic Lalanne, "Musées," in *Dictionnaire historique de la France*,2d ed. (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1877), 1334. For a comparative discussion of Germany from the 1790s to the 1820s, see James J. Sheehan, "From Princely Collections to Public Museums: Toward a History of the German Art Museum," in *Rediscovering History: Culture, Politics, and the Psyche*, ed. Michael S. Roth (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 169–82.

The publication of texts to accompany the innovative exhibition at the Musée des Petits-Augustins, called the Musée des monumens français after 1795, aided visitors with explanations of each artifact.

[162] Alexandre Lenoir, *Musée des monumens français, ou Collection chronologique de gravures des statues en marbre et en bronze, basreliefs et tombeaux des hommes et des femmes célebres, pour servir à l'histoire de France* (Paris: Au musée, 1801), 1–2; Ludovic Lalanne, "Alexandre Lenoir," in *Dictionnaire historique de la France*, 1119–20.

In this carefully delineated context, scholars and revolutionaries stripped these remnants of the monarchy of their powerful symbolism. Placed safely in the past tense, the stone fragments thereby became appropriate objects of study for a public audience who might thereby learn about France's heritage.

Conceived of as primarily a collection of remembrances or *souvenirs* of France,

[163] Berthevin, "Tombeaux de Saint-Denis," in his *Recherches historiques*, 309.

the public exhibition sparked by the Revolution promoted French historical identity by glorifying the achievements of the nation's most famous representatives. Objects that no longer had any clear practical use but nevertheless possessed artistic value or symbolic significance related

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to the former monarchy thus became powerful agents in the creation of France's patrimony.

[164] André Chastel, "La notion de patrimoine," in *Les lieux de mémoire*, ed. Pierre Nora (Paris: Gallimard, 1986), 2: 412–17; Pomian, *Collectors and Curiosities*, 42–44.

These monuments, including the twelfth-century tomb of Clovis I (d. 511) and a still later statue of Clovis II (d. 657), were tools for teaching a new French history to the general public in the after-math of the Revolution. Lenoir also envisaged the influence of the artifacts on art students, despite the admittedly unclassical nature of the pieces.

[165] Dominique Poulot, "Alexandre Lenoir et les Musées des monuments fran-çais," in *Les lieux de mémoire*, ed. Nora, 2: 502–5; Bann, "Poetics of the Museum," 84–86.

Although Merovingian art played only a small part in that past, the institution fostered pride in French antiquities. Consciousness of France as a historical entity would be critical to the formation of a national identity.

[166] Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 36–38, 73.

For some time, however, significant internal setbacks threatened the preservation of French monuments. On the night of 11–12 November 1793, the National Convention confiscated all valuables held in the treasury of Saint-Denis.

[167] Berthevin, "Extraction des corps," in his *Recherches historiques*, 305–6.

Moreover, Lenoir's creation as originally conceived enjoyed only a short existence. Following the Restoration, Louis XVIII's *Ordonnance* of 24 April 1816 decreed that all tombs and monuments be returned to the royal abbey of Saint-Denis, and that the museum be shut. The former convent of Petits-Augustins, where the museum had been housed, was given to the École des Beaux-Arts. This closure left a gap unfilled by any other institutions of this nature until the king commissioned excavations in 1819 at the former Roman baths in Paris, the future site of the Musée de Cluny, where some of the unclaimed artifacts from the Musée des monumens français finally found a home in the 1840s. Only in 1824 did the Louvre open the Galerie Angoulême, devoted to medieval, Renaissance, and modern sculpture.

[168] Louis Courajod, "L'influence du Musée des monuments français sur le développement de l'art et des études historiques pendant la première moitié du XIX^{e} siècle," *RH* 30 (1886): 114–15.

The king also orchestrated the ceremonial translation of the previously dishonored royal human remains to two tombs in the abbey church on 19 January 1817, nearly two years after the corpses of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette had been properly reinterred

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on 21 January 1815.

[169] Berthevin, "État de Saint-Denis depuis 1814, jusqu'à nos jours," in his *Recherches historiques*, 313–15, 329–30.

The Bourbons thus reasserted royal dignity through the resurrection of dynastic monuments and the reburial of skeletal remains.

It is evident, then, that an inherent conflict of interest existed between the activities of the Bourbons and the antiquaries. The innovative display of royal *souvenirs* at Lenoir's museum functioned to the detriment of the king's effort to reaffirm his contemporary legitimacy; the permanent exhibit effectively presented the French royalty not as a continuous entity but as part of the past. As a result, royal actions initiated against Lenoir's creation during the Restoration, as well as the unrelated theft on the night of 5–6 November 1831 from the Bibliothèque royale of artifacts found in the tomb of Childeric I, each constituted substantial losses for the collection and study of Merovingian remains.

[170] Périn, *La datation*, 5–6.

Once sparked, pride in a national heritage based upon monuments and treasures nonetheless continued to flourish.

[171] Trigger, *History of Archaeological Thought*, 66.

Arcisse de Caumont (d. 1873), who was distressed at the lack of catalogues identifying the artifacts in collections such as the Louvre, compiled a series of essays classifying these objects chronologically that culminated in his six-volume *Cours d'antiquités monumentales* (1831–43).

[172] Arcisse de Caumont, *Cours d'antiquités monumentales* (Rouen: Édouard Frère, Libraire, 1830), 1: 6.

In spite of its use of somewhat subjective logic to order these artifacts, this work had an enormous impact on French antiquarian studies for the remainder of the century (see fig. 2). Moreover, influenced by Alexander von Humboldt's (d. 1859) organization of antiquarian congresses such as that in Berlin in 1828, de Caumont arranged the first meeting of the Assises scientifiques in Caen, Normandy, in 1833.

[173] Françoise Bercé, "Arcisse de Caumont et les sociétés savantes," in *Les lieux de mémoire*, ed. Nora, 2: 536–43.

Besides encouraging the widespread sharing of data, the ultimate effect of such meetings was the positive transformation of perceptions of antiquarian research first in the provinces and then in Paris. Efforts to preserve and restore medieval monuments, brought to public attention in works such as Victor Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831), thus were expanded during the July monarchy of Louis-Philippe (1830–48).

[174] Kevin D. Murphy, *Memory and Modernity: Viollet-le-Duc at Vézelay* (University Park:

Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 37–53.

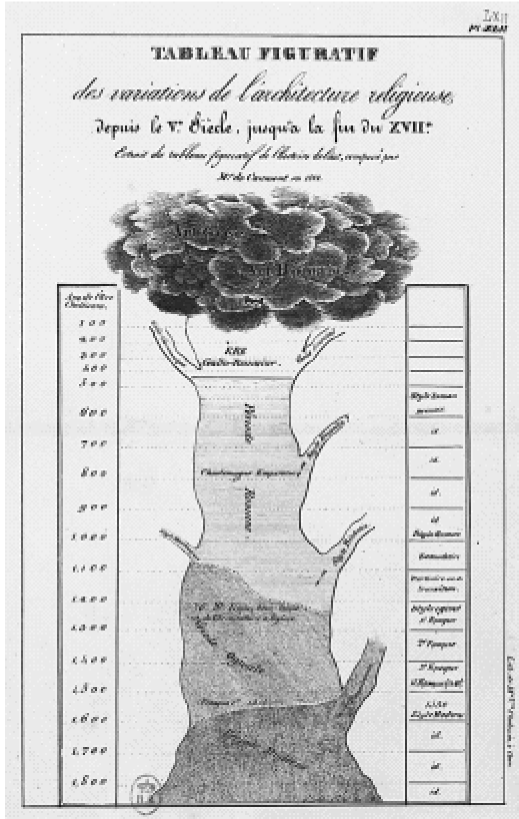

Figure 2. In this "river" model of the development of religious architecture, Arcisse de Caumont downplayed the influence of "Germanic" traditions. De Caumont, *Cours d'antiquités monumentales*, 1: pl. XLII. Reproduced with the permission of the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris.

Although these activities were focused on architectural remains, news of early medieval archaeological finds, which had been formerly restricted to elite circles, was thereby also disseminated to a wider audience.

Following the Revolution, growing recognition of France's patrimony and the rise of nationalism led to the foundation of multiple scholarly institutions in France geared to meet increased demand for the study, preservation, and protection of endangered artifacts. The French arrived at this stage relatively late in comparison with the English, who had opened the Society of Antiquaries in London nearly a century earlier in 1707. The timing was not random but in response to the devastation caused by participants in the mid-seventeenth-century Puritan Revolution. In France, by contrast, the Revolution of 1789 led to widespread damage of monuments and a corresponding reaction to protect them.

[175] Jean Hubert, "L'abbé Cochet et l'avènement d'une science de l'archéologie," in *Centenaire de l'abbé Cochet, 1975: Actes du colloque international d'archéologie, Rouen, 3–4–5 juillet 1975* (Rouen: Musée départemental des antiquités de Seine-Maritime, 1978), 13–17.

Among the institutions created with this objective were academic bodies devoted to the study of architectural remains and ancient artifacts. Although when the Académie celtique was originally created in 1804, its focus was linguistic research, the organization later became the Société royale des antiquaires de France (1814). Commissions established to catalogue the remains of castles and ancient tombs included the Institut de France's "Inventaire général" (1810), the Comité des travaux historiques (1834), and de Caumont's Congrès scientifique et archéologique de France (1834). In 1862, Napoleon III dedicated his palace at Saint-Germain-en-Laye to the formation of the Musée des antiquités nationales, which first opened its doors to the public in 1867. It housed the Gallo-Roman archaeological remains from excavations he had sponsored as well as numerous other prehistoric and medieval artifacts he had acquired by gift and purchase.

[176] Neumayer, "Geschichte der archäologischen Erforschung," 39.

One unexpected consequence of these institutions, however, was their contribution to a widening gap between professional scholars using written sources and those who specialized in archaeological research.

[177] Laming-Emperaire, *Origines de l'archéologie*, 109–17; Chastel, "La notion de patrimoine," 418; Glyn E. Daniel, *A Hundred Years of Archaeology* (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1950), 32.

In the German principalities, too, the explosive growth of local antiquarian clubs or *Vereine* during the early nineteenth century supported the creation of collections often dedicated to local history. With the backing

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of regional courts and bureaucracies, the establishment of the Sammlung Schlesischer Altertümer in Breslau (1818) and the Museum Vaterländischer Altertümer in Bonn (1820), the latter the future Rheinisches Landesmuseum Bonn, proved successful. General German preference for classical artifacts over national antiquities from the 1820s onward, however, meant that the works of preliterate peoples faced exclusion from prestigious institutions such as the Prussian Royal Museum (1830), the Bavarian Glyptothek (1829), and the Kunsthalle in Karlsruhe (1846).

[178] Harald von Petrikovits, "Geschichte und Aufgaben des Rheinischen Lan-desmuseums Bonn," in *Aus rheinischer Kunst und Kultur: Auswahlkatalog des Rheinischen Landesmuseums Bonn 1963* (Düsseldorf: Rheinland-Verlag, 1963), 9: 9–12; Marchand, *Down from Olympus*, 164–67.

A similar process occurred in Belgium following the Revolution and the establishment of an independent Belgian monarchy. In conjunction with the effort to create a stronger sense of national identity, as well as to restore structures damaged by the war, a royal decree established the Commission des monuments on 7 January 1835. Soon afterward, the Académie d'archéologie came into being in Antwerp in 1842.

[179] Fernand Vercauteren, *Cent ans d'histoire nationale en Belgique* (Brussels: La Renaissance du livre, 1959), 1: 40–43.

Just as in England and France, Belgian postwar reconstruction necessarily required the promotion and protection of public monuments. As some of these commemorated the Franks, whom many Belgians saw as their direct ancestors, preservation efforts contributed to their role in creating a unique Belgian heritage.

[180] Pierre-Auguste-Forent Gérard, *La barbarie franke et la civilisation romaine* (Brussels: Librairie polytechnique d'Aug. Degq, 1845), 128, 140ff.; id., *Histoire nationale de Belgique depuis César jusqu'à Charlemagne* (Brussels: Imp. de Ch. et A. Vanderauwera, 1868), 5.

Such remains and the works written about them became a catalyst for greater national unity following widespread civil unrest.

[181] Dutch antiquarian achievements were not included in this survey, because an identity based upon Batavian and Frisian origins overshadowed references to Merovingian or Frankish remains prior to the nineteenth century. For the history of Dutch archaeology, national identity, and the formation of national collections, see, respectively, J. A. Brongers, "Material for a History of Dutch Archaeology up to 1922," *Berichten van de Rijksdienst voor het Oudheidkundig Bodemonderzoek* 26 (1976): 7–62; Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 69–82; H. D. Schneider, ed., *Rijksmuseum von Oudheden* (Haarlem: Joh. Enschedé en Zonen grafische Inrichtung, 1981).

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THE RISE OF A DISCIPLINE: EARLY NINETEENTH-CENTURY ARCHAEOLOGY

Methodological approaches developed by archaeologists and anthropologists during the nineteenth century had a profound influence on the assessment of Merovingian burial remains. Although the word "archaeology" and its derivatives appeared long before the nineteenth century, their meaning was very broad and alluded generally to ancient history or the study of antiquity. In the 1830s, scholars first began to employ the term specifically to refer to the excavation and study of prehistoric and other physical remains. In the meantime, the field of antiquarianism suffered a loss of prestige and was increasingly used disparagingly to refer to the amateur collection and study of artifacts in a philosophical or historical context.

[182] Arnaldo Momigliano, "The Rise of Antiquarian Research," in his *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 54–79.

One of the earliest anthropological sciences applied to Merovingian graves was the now ill-reputed "science" of phrenology founded in 1825 by Joseph Gall: this technique involved the measurement of different regions of the skull in order to determine the strength or weakness of each of the supposed thirty-seven faculties of the mind. Populations and individuals were thus ranked on the basis of the shape of their skulls or weight of their brains.

[183] Marvin Harris, *The Rise of Anthropological Theory: A History of Theories of Culture* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1968), 99. For a debunking of the "scientific" element of phrenology, see Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1981), 30–112.

Far more than was the case previously, phrenology meant that scholars received training to assess human remains in a manner resembling physicians more than antiquaries. They therefore looked beyond individual artifacts for clues regarding the nature of previous societies. This development constituted part of a larger transition from antiquarianism to scientific anthropology that focused on the evolution of human culture rather than the collection and study of aesthetically pleasing or historically significant objects.

[184] Bruce G. Trigger, "Romanticism, Nationalism, and Archaeology," in *Nationalism, Politics, and the Practice of Archaeology*, ed. Kohl and Fawcett, 267–68.

In the post-Napoleonic German states, the Romantic idealization of national characteristics stimulated interest in the Teutonic past and thus Merovingian-period cemeteries. In addition, the popularity of Darwinian

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evolutionism and its explanation of the development of human populations created a profound awareness of the ramifications of Germanic prehistory. For this reason, phrenology found advocates among archaeologists who imagined the usefulness of applying these guidelines to physical remains to describe the distant past.

[185] Trigger, *History of Archaeological Thought*, 111–13; Sklenárˇ, *Archaeology in Central Europe*, 64–76.

Early anthropologists thus utilized this methodology to examine various features of the deceased exhumed from row grave cemeteries. Skulls, along with funerary goods, clothing, and the location of the graves, all provided evidence for the alleged nationality of the deceased buried at Merovingian sites.

[186] Alexandre Parat, "Le cimetière barbare de Vaux-Donjon," *Bulletin de la Société d'études d'Avallon* 50–51 (1909): 184–85, 241–46.

These discussions also rekindled earlier historical debates regarding the origins of the Franks.

[187] Glyn Daniel and Colin Renfrew, *The Idea of Prehistory* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1988), 104–6.

Fascination with the Germanic peoples and the desire to prove solidarity of national origin soon outweighed the significance of the anthropological data themselves. A sense of homogeneity and conviction in common identity, backed by belief in blood connections among all Germanic people, were critical to the formation of modern German identity.

[188] Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 92–102.

Among scholars motivated by the nationalist fervor stirred by the process of German unification were the brothers Wilhelm and Ludwig Lindenschmit (d. 1848 and 1893, respectively). While they were not unique in this respect, they achieved greater prominence in this field than any other German scholars. The racist implications of their research activities, moreover, are rarely cited.

[189] Lothar Mark, "Eine Geschichte—zwei Geschichten," in *Die Franken*,1: 7–8; Ament, "Frühe Funde," 30–34.

For the Lindenschmits, the aim of archaeological research lay in the identification of German national character as racially and culturally distinct from other Indo-European peoples:

> The great puzzle of the present time is the *ingenium* or national character of the Germans, regarding whom and whose neighbors so little is understood. The ancient inhabitants were innocent, and the unspoiled nature of their hearts still prevails today in comparison with other nations. Their mature and resourceful lifestyles always stand out strongly against our awkwardness and narrowness, and against the half-conscious slumbering brutality of the lower people with their often

> narrow-minded education and their clumsy aping of those of high rank.

[190] Wilhelm Lindenschmit, *Die Räthsel der Vorwelt, oder: Sind die Deutschen eingewandert?* (Mainz: Seiferi'sche Buchdruckerei, 1846), 7.

As the prehistoric specialist Gustaf Kossinna (d. 1931) would do fifty years later,

[191] Gustaf Kossinna, *Die deutsche Vorgeschichte: Eine hervorragend nationale Wissenschaft*, 2d ed., Mannus-Bibliothek 9 (Würzburg: Verlag von Curt Kabitzsch, 1914), 3–8; Ulrich Veit, "Ethnic Concepts in German Prehistory: A Case Study on the Relationship between Cultural Identity and Archaeological Objectivity," in *Archaeological Approaches to Cultural Identity*, ed. Shennan, 35–42; Wenskus, *Stammesbildung*, 82–86, 575.

first Wilhelm and then Ludwig Lindenschmit applied contemporary linguistic definitions of ethnicity and nationality to ancient and early medieval written sources. These anachronistic stereotypes, in turn, influenced the Lindenschmits' interpretation of archaeological and anthropological remains.

[192] Allan A. Lund, *Die ersten Germanen: Ethnizität und Ethnogenese* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Carl Winter, 1998), 16–31.

Their objective was to highlight the superior nature of the Germanic people:

> Just as the original language, to which the other European languages primarily owe their existence, may be found only among those nations that have historically remained unmixed, the same is also true of the bodily form of the white race, which exists in its originality only among unmixed people. … The true bodily form with white skin, blond hair, blue eyes, or, as one says, with blue blood, may be found only in conjunction with German countenance-, skull-and bone-formation, because only the German is the truly white man.

[193] Lindenschmit, *Die Räthsel*, 46.

With data derived from phrenological measurements, the Lindenschmit brothers emphasized the unadulterated Germanic heritage of human remains discovered in the course of archaeological exploration.

Linked closely to the Lindenschmits' desire to establish the identity of excavated skeletons were their more laudable efforts to create a chronology of nonhuman remains (see fig. 3). In order to establish both a relative and an absolute ordering of the material evidence, it was necessary for a significant amount of archaeological data to be excavated and catalogued for comparative assessment.

[194] Ludwig Lindenschmit, *Handbuch der deutschen Alterthumskunde: Übersicht der Denkmale und Gräberfunde frühgeschichtlicher und vorgeschichtlicher Zeit* (Braunschweig: Druck und Verlag von Friedrich Vieweg und Sohn, 1880), 1: 32–35.

The Lindenschmits, while incorporating

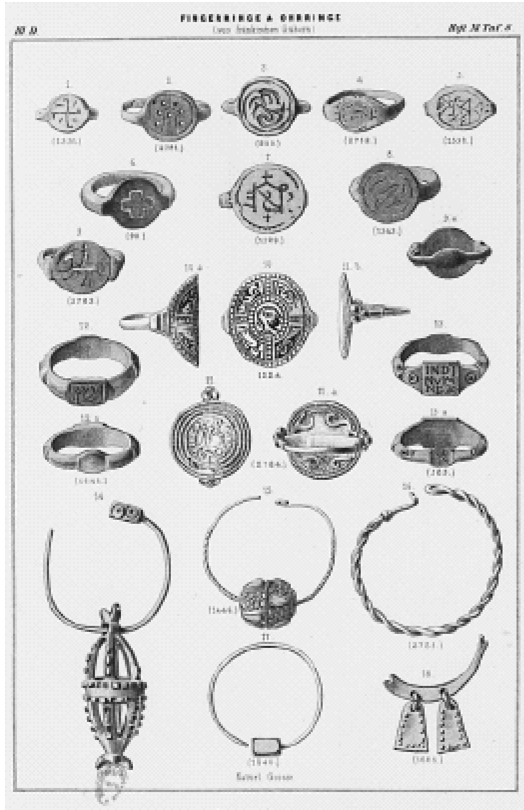

Figure 3. Essential to the ability to establish relative chronologies of artifacts was Ludwig Lindenschmit's familiarity with a multitude of similar objects of the same genre, such as the rings and earrings illustrated here. Lindenschmit, *Die Alterthümer unserer heidnischen Vorzeit*, 1.9: pl. 8. Reproduced with the permission of the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris.

contemporary and hence highly inaccurate concepts of race in their work, advanced the study of Merovingian burial remains significantly by supplementing historical documents with archaeological data arranged by chronological period.

[195] Wilhelm Lindenschmit and Ludwig Lindenschmit, *Das germanische Todtenlager bei Selzen in der Provinz Rheinhessen* (Mainz: Verlag von Victor von Zabern, 1848), 22.

Scholars such as Gustav Klemm applied such methodological advances to racist diatribes. They argued for the alleged purity and independence of the Germanic tradition from other peoples such as the Slavs.

[196] Gustav Klemm, *Handbuch der germanischen Alterthumskunde* (Dresden: Walthersche Hofbuchhandlung, 1836), v–xiv, esp. xiii–xiv.

In contrast to the majority of the antiquaries who preceded them, the Lindenschmits focused to a much greater extent on the context of burial remains. As a result, the originality of their research lay in the exposure of a number of false assumptions made by their predecessors. For instance, they argued against absolute links between grave-building materials and ethnic identity, since surely these traditions might have been transmitted from one culture to another. Their belief in the universality of Germanic custom was nonetheless highly influential and became the forerunner of the concept of migrationism popular among German archaeologists in the late nineteenth century.

[197] Lindenschmit and Lindenschmit, *Das germanische Todtenlager*, 30–33; Marchand, *Down from Olympus*, 159–60; Härke, "Archaeologists and Migrations," 19–24.

These ideas gained even greater impetus with the Prussian victory over the French in 1870–71. Although the Lindenshmits never achieved their objective of establishing a methodology that would enable them to identify particular graves as indisputably Germanic, as was attempted by Klemm via statistical means,

[198] Lindenschmit and Lindenschmit, *Das germanische Todtenlager*, 37; Klemm, *Handbuch*, 29.

their close observation of skeletal data with grave goods significantly raised the professional standard of archaeological research.

One of the most visible legacies of the Lindenschmits was their support of public education in indigenous or national archaeology. Founded in 1852, the influential Römisch-Germanische Centralmuseum in Mainz promoted the study and display of prehistoric remains for the elevation of national consciousness.

[199] Ludwig Lindenschmit, "Beiträge zur Geschichte des Römisch-Germanischen Centralmuseums in Mainz," in *Festschrift zur Feier des fünfzigjährigen Bestehens des Römisch-Germanischen Centralmuseums zu Mainz* (Mainz: Druck von Philipp v. Zabern, 1902), 2–3; id., *Das Römisch-Germanische Central-Museum in bildlichen Darstellungen aus seinen Sammlungen* (Mainz: Verlag von Victor v. Zabern, 1889).

Despite initial difficulties in gaining the

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cooperation of amateur collectors and sufficient funding for this effort, the museum found itself on much firmer footing after German unification. The "professionalization" of the discipline gave archaeological discoveries greater legitimacy in the face of criticism by German scholars.

[200] Sebastian Brather, "Ethnische Identitäten als Konstrukte der frühge-schichtlichen Archäologie," *Germania* 78 (2000): 142–43; Marchand, *Down from Olympus*, 168–72.

With the integration of the states of the former Holy Roman Empire, nationalistic interpretations of these finds gained increasingly practical applications.

As noted above, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, French scholars likewise began to recognize the value of the systematic organization of the excavation and observation of medieval artifacts, including those of the Merovingian period. To start with, strong support was voiced in favor of the standardization of the archaeological exploration of French sites. A more efficient system of description and cataloguing of the artifacts discovered was deemed necessary to achieve this goal. Scholars also backed measures ensuring that items uncovered would be displayed before the French public. Pierre-Jean-Baptiste Legrand d'Aussy (d. 1800), a member of the Institut de France and a curator at the Bibliothèque nationale,

[201] Ludovic Lalanne, "Pierre-Jean-Baptiste Legrand d'Aussy," in *Dictionnaire historique de la France*, 1115.

thus proposed the appointment of commissioners responsible for the administration of such activities.

[202] Pierre-Jean-Baptiste Legrand d'Aussy, *Des sépultures nationales, et particulièrement de celles des rois de France* (Paris: Chez J. Esneaux, Libraire, 1824), 324–40.

French measures regulating excavations and the preservation of early medieval remains were difficult to enforce, especially after numerous Merovingian cemeteries were discovered in the path of railroad construction in the second half of the nineteenth century. As the quantity of available grave goods grew, so did those who specialized in their collection. The rising monetary worth of Merovingian artifacts contributed to the desirability of trade in these objects. Individuals such as the notorious Jean-Baptiste Lelaurain became well known for their successful commercial exploits. Responsible for opening more than twenty thousand graves before his death, none of which were ever catalogued, Lelaurain lived off the

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proceeds of the sale of their contents for many years.

[203] Françoise Vallet, "The Golden Age of Merovingian Archaeology," in *From Attila to Charlemagne: Arts of the Early Medieval Period in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, ed. Katharine Reynolds Brown,

Dafydd Kidd, and Charles T. Little (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000), 12–27; Claude Seillier, "L'époque des migrations en Gaule du Nord dans les collections publiques et privées," in *Trésors archéologiques du Nord de la France* (Valenciennes: Musée des Beaux-Arts de Valenciennes, 1997), 108–14; Bonnie Effros, "Memories of the Early Medieval Past: Grave Artifacts in Nineteenth-Century France and Early Twentieth-Century America," in *Archaeologies of Remembrance: Death and Memory in Past Societies*, ed. Howard Williams (Oxford: Berg Publishers, in press).

Wilhelm Froehner (d. 1925), curator of the Musée des antiquités nationales, likened the treasure seeker Lelaurain to a magician. As a sorcerer with a wand, he merely pointed his trowel and exposed the contents of cemeteries, after which they would be pillaged and sold, in some instances that very day, to local collectors without the trouble of creating any sort of documentation.

[204] C. Boulanger, *Le cimetière francomérovingien et carolingien de Marchélepot (Somme): Étude sur l'origine de l'art barbare* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1909), v–vi; Neumayer, "Geschichte der archäologischen Erforschung," 40.

Other antiquaries at the turn of the century, like Émile Socley, were more disposed to documenting their finds but made little distinction between what they kept for themselves, sold, or donated to museums (see fig. 4). The famous late nineteenth-century collection of Philippe Delamain, a significant proportion of which is now housed in the British Museum, included the contents of cemeteries such as Herpes (Charente; see fig. 5) and Biron (Charente-Maritime), the excavation of which he had financed. However, neither of these necropoleis was documented in sufficient detail to know even the number of graves uncovered. Many of the artifacts retrieved from sites such as these lay undocumented in personal collections until they were dispersed to heirs or auctioned following their owners' deaths.

[205] For a brief review of the few catalogued remains from Delamain's excavations, see Edward James, *The Merovingian Archaeology of South-West Gaul*, BAR Supplementary Series 25(i), (Oxford: BAR, 1977), 1: 166–69. A catalogue of the British Museum's substantial collection of artifacts once owned by Delamain is in progress.

Because documentation was not usually recorded as to where grave objects were discovered in this era, and most of the knowledge associated with them was transmitted orally, the more frequently archaeological artifacts changed hands, the greater the likelihood that any information regarding their provenance would be lost.

[206] Bonnie Effros, "A Century of Remembrance and Amnesia in the Excavation, Display, and Interpretation of Early Medieval Burial Artifacts," in *Erinnerungskultur im Bestattungsritual*, ed. Jörg Jarnut and Matthias Wemhoff (forthcoming).

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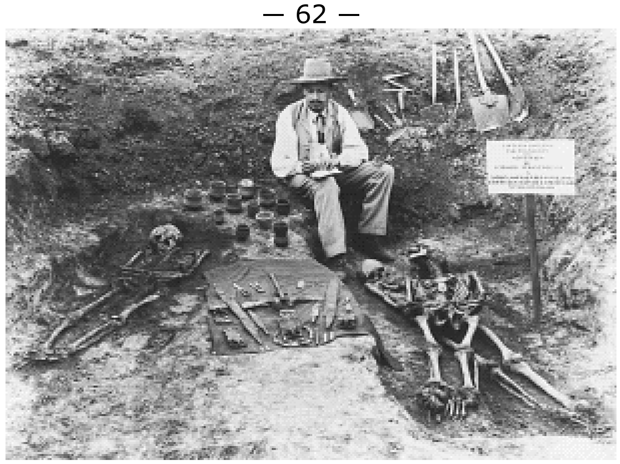

Figure 4. Émile Socley took up the excavation of Noiron-sous-Gevrey (Côte-d'Or) between 1907 and 1909 and unearthed at least four hundred graves. Although he took notes on his finds, only about a hundred of the objects exhumed from the sixth-to seventh-century cemetery are preserved at the Musée archéologique de Dijon. Many other artifacts were presumably sold, given to friends, or discarded. Socley is depicted here with his "trophy" finds in the foreground. For additional information about Socley, see Gaillard de Sémainville

and Sapin, "L'archéologie médiévale en Bourgogne," 24–25. Photograph reproduced with the permission of the Musée archéologique de Dijon.

Despite such indications of the growing market value of early medieval artifacts, a more holistic view of graves was proposed by at least some antiquaries in France in the second half of the nineteenth century. These concerns had been earlier expressed in the works of Legrand d'Aussy, and notable archaeologists of subsequent generations, such as the abbé Jean-Benoît-Désiré Cochet (d. 1875), recognized the context of Merovingian sepulchers as being as significant as the artifacts themselves. Cochet remarked:

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To tell the truth, when a beautiful object comes out of the ground, when an important piece is revealed under the spade, I am never indifferent to it; but once it is taken from the earth, it loses for me half its value, and when it has been studied, it has no more value at all. I place it with goodwill in a public collection and almost resign myself to never seeing it again.

[207] Jean-Benoît-Désiré Cochet, *La Normandie souterraine, ou Notices sur des cimetières romains et des cimetières francs explorés en Normandie*, 2d ed. (Paris: Derache, 1855), 3; Legrand d'Aussy, *Des sépultures nationales*, 357.

Cochet, in particular, sought to reconstruct the past on the basis of all of the contents of Merovingian graves rather than just those artifacts deemed desirable by collectors. In assessing the arrangement of the objects, he believed that he could derive from their disposition knowledge about ancient traditions and crafts.

[208] Cochet, *La Normandie*,3.

He therefore stated that burial goods represented physical symbols of worldly status; he suggested, too, that pagans thought that the deceased might take these items into the next life.

[209] Cochet, *Le tombeau de Childèric*, 59–61, 173–89, 294–300, 427–32.

In contemporary Germany, Karl Wilhelmi (d. 1857) also gave attention to the religious and social implications of early medieval disposal structures for the dead. He contrasted grave mounds with flat burial sites, claiming that the first practice was pagan and the latter Christian.

[210] Karl Wilhelmi, *Beschreibung der alten deutschen Todtenhügel bei Wiesenthal in dem Großherzoglich-Badischen Mittel-Rheinkreise* (Sinsheim, 1838), 31–32; id., *Beschreibung der vierzehn alten deutschen Todtenhuegel* (Heidelberg: Verlag von Joseph Engelmann, 1830), 171–74. For current thought on the significance of grave mounds, see Hermann Ament, "Merowingische Grabhügel," in *Althessen im Frankenreich*, ed. Walter Schlesinger (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1975), 63–93.

Assisted by the improved accuracy with which the Lindenschmits had dated material from the row grave cemetery of Selzen to the Merovingian period, French archaeologists and historians were able to refine the absolute chronology of their own finds.

[211] Kurt Böhner, "La chronologie des antiquités funéraires d'époque mérovingienne en Austrasie," in *Problèmes de chronologie relative et absolue concernant des cimetières mérovingiens d'entre Loire et Rhin (Actes du II^e colloque archéologique de la IV^e section de l'École pratique des hautes études [Paris, 1973])*, ed. Michel Fleury and Patrick Périn (Paris: Librarie Honoré Champion, 1978), 7–12.

Whereas Legrand d'Aussy had earlier identified six stages in the development of ancient sepulchers that allowed him to classify Merovingian goods by period,

[212] Périn, *La datation*, 14.

subsequent generations of archaeologists could be even more specific in their dating of early medieval

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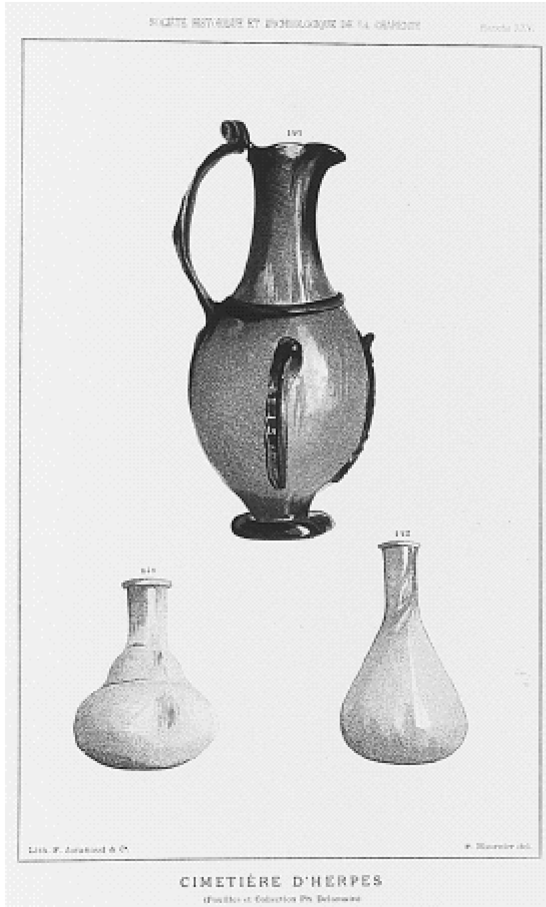

Figure 5. Exceptionally fine glass serving vessels excavated at Herpes (Charentes), which were then illustrated in one of six hand-colored plates of vessels included in Philippe Delamain's publication. Many more pieces broke in the course of excavation. Their colors varied from pale green to clear yellow; some were apparently filled with a dried red residue, perhaps that of wine, but this subject was not pursued by the author. Delamain, "Les sépultures barbares d'Herpes," 17–20, pl. 25. Reproduced with the permission of the Musée des antiquités nationales de Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

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artifacts. Cochet's methodology, aided by the Merovingian-period materials available to him in the steadily increasing number of archaeological journals published,

[213] Sklenárˇ, *Archaeology in Central Europe*, 32–34.

employed comparative techniques for the interpretation of the sites under his direction. Above all, Cochet recognized the significance of the terminus post quem provided by coins deposited in graves, since they allowed for a more precise chronological ordering of mortuary remains by indicating the earliest date at which they could have been interred.

[214] Lindenschmit, *Das germanische Todtenlager*, 35; Périn, *La datation*, 28–29.

Just as the growing sophistication of the techniques used to date archaeological materials had allowed for the acknowledgment of the existence of prehistoric societies in Europe,

[215] Bonnie Effros, "Ideas and Study of Prehistory," in *A Global Encyclopedia of Historical Writing*, 2: 735–37.

Merovingian archaeologists made important advances as a result of their increasingly reliable chronologies of Merovingian artifacts. Cochet, in particular, was able to prove that Christian as well as pagan Franks incorporated burial goods in their funerary customs, a point overlooked by many later archaeologists and historians.

[216] Laming-Emperaire, *Origines de l'archéologie*, 9–13, 100–101.

At the same time, however, he insisted that this practice continued in opposition to the canons and councils of the Merovingian period,

[217] Cochet, *Le tombeau de Childèric*, 189; Kurt Böhner, "Romanen und Franken im Trierer Land: Nach dem Zeugnis der archäologischen Quellen," in *Siedlung, Sprache und Bevölkerungsstruktur im Frankenreich*, ed. Franz Petri, Wege der Forschung 49 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1973), 382.

despite the absence of Merovingian sources affirming his hypothesis. Bowing to the contemporary tendency to explain grave objects and burial *intra muros* as the consequence of prevalent early medieval superstition, Cochet and some of his contemporaries sought to demonstrate the superficiality of the Franks' conversion to Christianity.

[218] Antoine Frédéric Ozanam, *Études germaniques pour servir à l'histoire de Francs* (Liége: Imprimerie de J.-G. Lardinois, Éditeur, 1850), 2: 72–73; Legrand d'Aussy, *Des sépultures nationales*, 326–28.

Cochet's innovative and systematic approach to archaeological research thus did not preclude his inclination to judge Merovingian remains by some of the standards of his own time. His reluctance to recognize grave goods as part of orthodox Christianity and his desire to identify the barbarism of the Franks stemmed at least in part from the distance in the

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nineteenth century between history and ethnology, the latter associated solely with "savage" peoples. This antagonism also reflected an increasingly negative attitude in France and Germany toward Merovingian as opposed to Carolingian culture.

[219] François Furet and Jacques Le Goff, "Histoire et ethnologie," in *Mélanges en l'honneur de Fernand Braudel* (Toulouse: Privat, Éditeur, 1973), 2: 227–30.

Because the custom of burying votive objects with the deceased had been abandoned in various regions of France in the eighteenth century,

[220] Thirion and Willems, "Contribution," 171–72. As noted by Arnold Van Gennep in 1946, however, the deposition of grave goods had again become popular among French peasants in the nineteenth century. Arnold Van Gennep, *Manuel de folklore français contemporain*, vol. 1.2: *De berceau à la tombe (mariagefunérailles)* (Paris: Éditions A. et J. Picard, 1976), 710–47.

scholars could ignore the fact that such practices had never before been considered antithetical to Christian custom in France.

[221] Auguste Terninck, *L'Artois souterrain: Études archéologiques* (1881; reprint, Brionne: Gérard Monfort, 1981), 4: 59, 177; Numa-Denis Fustel de Coulanges, *Histoire des institutions politiques de l'ancienne France* (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1888), 3: 507–9; Edmond-Henri-Joseph Reusens, *Éléments d'archéologie chrétienne*, 2d ed. (Louvain: Typographie de Ch. Peeters, Éditeur, 1885), 1: 220–22.

Despite unprecedented awareness of recent discoveries of early medieval artifacts in the second half of the nineteenth century, Merovingian archaeological studies initially faced increasing isolation from the rest of French academia. Many contemporary scholars preferred to study more classical or monumental types of material evidence. Although an appreciation of the merits of Merovingian grave goods continued to play an important role in their representation, art historians, for instance, did not perceive these objects as truly French in heritage until late in the century because of their association with pagan Germanic peoples. The emergence of an international antiquities trade and growing public interest in local finds, however, changed these views in significant ways. The 1889 Exposition universelle in Paris, for example, featured Alexandre Ponchon's collection of Merovingian artifacts in addition to an archaeological album and drawings in an anthropological exhibit. At the 1900 Exposition universelle, a portion of C. Boulanger's private collection of Merovingian archaeological remains formed part of an exhibition titled "Exposition rétrospective de l'art français, dès origines à 1900."

[222] Salomon Reinach, "L'exposition rétrospective de l'art français: La Gaule païenne," in *Exposition*

universelle de 1900: Les Beaux-Arts et les arts décoratifs (Paris: Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 1900), 84–87.

This prominent, while limited,

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display at the Petit-Palais indicated growing national pride in early medieval objects. It gave the artifacts recognition not only for being aesthetically pleasing but also for being historically significant. They thus soon entered the collections of local and national museums in France and Germany. In 1913, Boulanger sold his pieces to the Berliner Völkerkundemuseum, whereas many other finds from the cemetery of Marchélepot (Somme) were dispersed to the Musée d'Amiens, Saint-Germain-en-Laye, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and private collections such as that of Boulanger's colleague Ponchon (see fig. 6).

[223] Boulanger, *Le cimetière francomérovingien*, 2–10, 181–88; Neumayer, "Geschichte der archäologischen Erforschung," 40–41.

Even so, while Boulanger insisted that physical funerary evidence was more reliable than written sources (see fig. 7),

[224] C. Boulanger, *Le mobilier funéraire gallo-romain et franc en Picardie et en Artois* (Paris: Charles Foulard, Libraire, 1902–5), I.

this outlook remained a minority opinion. Others who worked with early medieval evidence, such as the epigrapher Edmond Le Blant (d. 1897), tended to overlook burial artifacts and to focus exclusively on Christian burial inscriptions and iconography. Le Blant, for instance, typically observed these monuments divorced from their physical, archaeological context and thus could not understand their broader implications.

[225] Edmond Le Blant, ed., *Inscriptions chrétiennes de la Gaule antérieures au VIII^e siècle* (Paris: À l'Imprimerie impériale, 1856–65), vols. 1–2; id., ed., *Les sarcophages chrétiens de la Gaule*, Collection de documents inédits sur l'histoire de France, 3d series, archéologie (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1886); id., ed., *Nouveau recueil des inscriptions chrétiennes de la Gaule antérieures au VIII^e siècle* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1892).

Likewise, the architect Eugène Viollet-le-Duc's (d. 1879) study and preservation of architectural remains, including medieval churches, largely ignored the associated graves.

[226] Bailey K. Young, "Text Aided or Text Misled? Reflections on the Uses of Archaeology in Medieval History," in *Text-Aided-Archaeology*, ed. B. J. Little (Ann Arbor: CKC Press, 1992), 143.

These circumstances were fostered by a derogatory opinion of both anti-quarian studies and the use of grave objects: the latter constituted for many a sign of the Franks' allegedly superficial conversion to Christianity in the Merovingian period. With these prejudices in mind, scholars typically dismissed burials containing amulets, Roman coins, weaponry, tools, and jewelry as pagan survivals. By this manner of thinking, it was logical to hold the opposite opinion regarding graves with modest goods or a complete lack of burial objects: such unpretentious sepulchers naturally belonged

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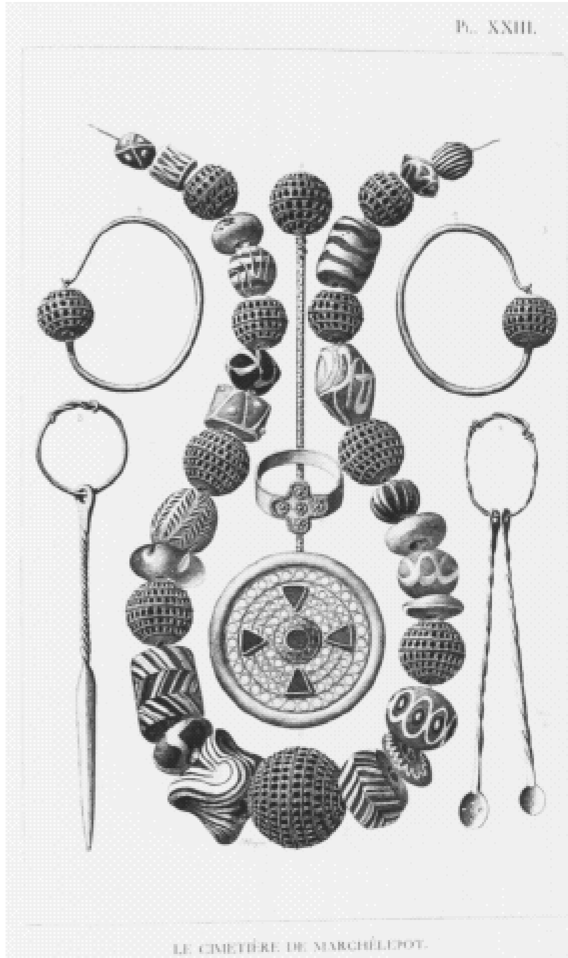

Figure 6. Drawing of beads, ring, brooch, earrings, pin, and hanging tools thought by C. Boulanger to date from the seventh or eighth century. The pieces were not excavated from the same site, nor were they held in a single collection. Although some artifacts were still owned by Boulanger at the time of publication, others had already been sold to the Musée de Péronne or to private collectors. As the Musée de Péronne was badly damaged during World War I and the collection subjected to extreme heat, few of these pieces survived the conflict. Boulanger, *Le cimetière francomérovingien et carolingien de Marchélepot (Somme)*, 144–45, 185; pl. 23. Reproduced with the permission of the Musée des antiquités nationales de Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

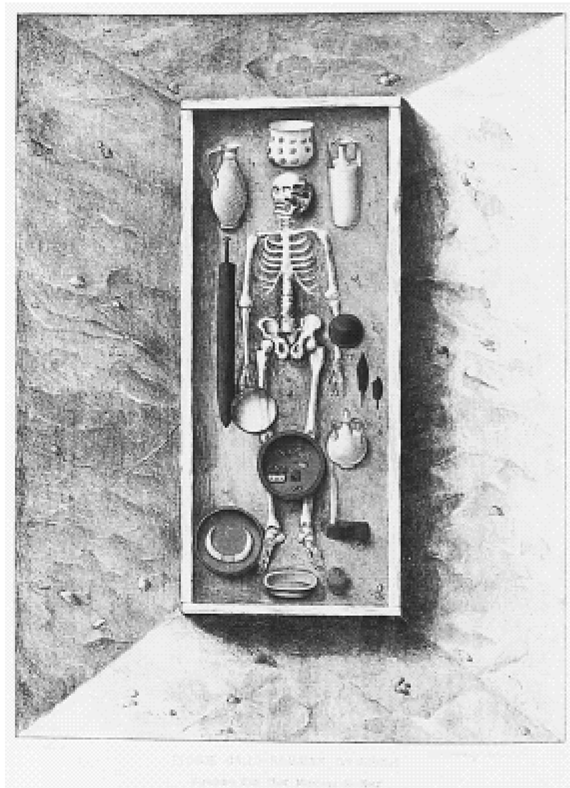

Figure 7. This plate depicts objects in their original position, as found in what Boulanger believed to be a Gallo-Roman warrior's grave at Monceau-le-Neuf. Buried 2.5 meters deep, the wood sarcophagus was painted blue and nailed shut with twenty-five iron nails. Along with Charon's obol in the form of a silver denarius of Constantine II (337–340), the deceased was laid to rest with weaponry, jewelry, and what appear to have been the remains of a funerary meal of chicken and wild boar. This grave was an important source for describing Gallo-Roman social mores. Boulanger, *Le mobilier funéraire gallo-romain et franc*, pl. 20. Reproduced with the permission of the Musée des antiquités nationales de Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

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to the poor or devout Christians.

[227] Alfred Bequet, "Les premiers monuments chrétiens," *Annales de la Société archéologique de Namur* 18 (1889): 312.

Late nineteenth-century perceptions of antiquarianism and the function of grave goods, in some cases highly negative, thus left a mixed legacy for historical and archaeological studies of Merovingian mortuary remains in France and Germany during much of the twentieth century. It is to these developments that I now turn.

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2. Modern Assessments of Merovingian Burial

The nineteenth-century antiquaries who retrieved and evaluated material remains left an indelible imprint on historical and archaeological research by suggesting that scholarly questioning might yield far more than chronologies. As Arnaldo Momigliano has established, antiquarian scholars devoted much energy to demonstrating how physical evidence might contribute to the study of religion, political institutions, law, and other customs.

[1] Arnaldo Momigliano, "The Rise of Antiquarian Research," in his *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 73–79.

In the case of the Merovingian period, the application of artifacts to the description of society was particularly successful. Consequently, some early medieval historians began to experiment with syntheses of the written and material sources, incorporating antiquarian methodology to meet historical objectives. This development, however, did not result in closer ties among historians, antiquaries, and their heirs, the early archaeologists. Indeed, the gap between those who worked with documents and amateurs who focused on artifacts grew in the late nineteenth century. This rift stemmed not only from the divide between professional scholars and self-taught enthusiasts, but from the trend by which clerics played an increasingly dominant role in French antiquarianism. Both historians and archaeologists criticized contemporary antiquaries' lack of formal training and dismissed their outlook as outmoded, unprofessional, and unlikely to produce future advances in scholarship.

[2] Annette Laming-Emperaire, *Origines de l'archéologie préhistorique en France: Des superstitions médiévales à la découverte de l'homme fossile* (Paris: Éditions A. et J. Picard, 1964), 107–22.

Yet incorporating material remains in their studies required nineteenth-century

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historians to abandon distinctions between "civilization" and "primitive society," or time and space, the work of historians and ethnologists, respectively.

[3] François Furet and Jacques Le Goff, "Histoire et ethnologie," in *Mélanges en l'honneur de Fernand Braudel* (Toulouse: Privat, Éditeur, 1973), 2: 227–43.

Archaeological artifacts also drew larger audiences than those to which most historians were accustomed: exhibitions of and works illustrating early medieval artifacts captured the public imagination and played an influential role in discussions of national identity.

[4] Karel Sklenárˇ, *Archaeology in Central Europe: The First 500 Years*, trans. Iris Lewitová (New York: Leicester University Press, 1983), 105–52; Ulrich Muhlack, "Die Germania im deutschen Nationalbewußtsein vor dem 19. Jahrhundert," in *Beiträge zum Verständnis der Germania des Tacitus*, ed. Herbert Jankuhn and Dieter Timpe, Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, philologisch-historische Klasse, 3d ser., vol. 175 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 1: 131–53; Stephen Shennan, Introductionto his *Archaeological Approaches to Cultural Identity*, One World Archaeology 10 (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 7–9.

A small number of nineteenth-century scholars thus came to recognize the potential advantages of incorporating the profusion of physical mortuary evidence in the assessment of Merovingian-period social, religious, and legal mores. The consequences of historians' and archaeologists' decisions to adopt or reject multi-disciplinary strategies in bringing together written documents and material remains constitute the subject of this chapter.

LATE NINETEENTH-AND EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY VIEWS OF PRE-CHRISTIAN MORTUARY RITES

Despite the initial appeal of antiquarian modes of questioning, most nineteenth-century scholars resisted an open approach to the sources that required crossing disciplinary boundaries, since such methodology was considered unscientific. Indeed, many members of French and German academic circles were reluctant to acknowledge or even to make note of the significance of material remains if they were not considered a normative part of the discipline. Just as some rejected scientific approaches to documents practiced by contemporary German legal historians and the French "chartistes," many questioned antiquaries' confidence in artifacts' capacity to reveal reliable information about past civilizations.

[5] William R. Keylor, *Academy and Community: The Foundation of the French Historical Profession* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975), 12, 30–31; Martin Siegel, "Science and the Historical Imagination: Patterns in French Historiographical Thought, 1866–1914," (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1965), 12–17.

This ambivalence

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toward material evidence notably characterized the views of the historian Numa-Denis Fustel de Coulanges (d. 1889), most often remembered for his contributions to research on Greek and Roman social structure.

[6] Bonnie Effros, "Numa-Denis Fustel de Coulanges," in *A Global Encyclopedia of Historical Writing*, ed. D. R. Woolf (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 1: 342–43.

Fustel de Coulanges wrote extensively on the ancient cult of the dead, a topic best documented in antiquarian research, yet he literally avoided any direct application of archaeological remains to his work. Just as his most well-known student Émile Durkheim would later argue, Fustel de Coulanges believed that in antiquity Greeks and Romans had deposited objects such as clothing, vessels, and armament in graves along with food and drink to appease the dead and prevent them from harming the living.

[7] Numa-Denis Fustel de Coulanges, *La cité antique: Étude sur le culte, le droit, les institutions de la Grèce et de Rome*, 18th ed. (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1903), 9–10.

Had he studied even a few archaeological sites, however, he would have recognized that these mortuary customs were far from universal. Instead, using a wide array of literary works and a more limited selection of legal sources in *La cité antique* (1864), he posited that these practices were considered obligatory and suggested that they stemmed from belief in the dead as gods.

[8] Fustel de Coulanges, *La cité antique*, 16.

For Fustel de Coulanges, the tomb represented a sort of temple to communal ancestors and constituted the center of family life and devotion. Proceeding from this line of thinking, he theorized the existence of a direct link between the Roman cult of the dead and inheritance law. Sons and not daughters had an allegedly inalienable right to family property, with the firstborn son receiving the land on which the family tomb was located.

[9] Fustel de Coulanges, *La cité antique*, 77–80. Arnaldo Momigliano, "The Ancient City of Fustel de Coulanges," in his *Essays in Ancient and Modern Historiography* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1977), 333–43.

In Fustel de Coulanges's throughly Romantic interpretation of the Greco-Roman cult of ancestors, women left the family through marriage and thus could not be relied upon to maintain the commemoration of ancestral graves.

[10] Fustel de Coulanges, *La cité antique*, 39. For a critique of his approach, see Émile Durkheim, *Leçons de sociologie: Physique des moeurs et du droit* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1950), 181–86.

Fustel de Coulanges also gave brief but disparaging attention to Germanic social mores. Foremost, he stated his disdain for the absence of

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literate culture among the Germanic peoples and thus justified his dependence on Roman sources in his discussion of them. As in his work on antiquity, however, he made no ascertainable effort in 1874 to incorporate alternative sorts of evidence in his assessment of the history of Gaul during the migration period.

[11] Numa-Denis Fustel de Coulanges, *Histoire des institutions politiques de l'ancienne France*, ed. Camille Jullian (Reprint, Brussels: Culture et civilisation, 1964), 2: 227.

The decision of historians not to apply physical evidence to their studies was certainly nothing new. Although Augustin Thierry's tone toward the Franks grew more conciliatory in his writings of the 1840s, he too had professed no intention of going beyond the customary application of documentary sources to historical research on the Merovingian period.

[12] Augustin Thierry, *Récits des temps mérovingiens*, new ed. (Paris: Calmann Lévy, Éditeur, 1880), 208–9.

Fustel de Coulanges's feigned ignorance, a scarcely veiled critique of German successes in the

Franco-Prussian conflict in 1870–1871, caused French scholars to portray Germanic invaders as little more than seminomadic bands of warriors cloaked in imperial legitimacy who brought with them a dislike of civilized, sedentary society.

[13] Fustel de Coulanges, *Histoire des institutions*, 2: 324–25; François Hartog, *Le XIX[e] siècle et l'histoire: Le cas Fustel de Coulanges* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1988), 58–86. Fustel de Coulanges later modified his view that the Germanic population was not nomadic by nature but due to temporary necessity. Numa-Denis Fustel de Coulanges, *Recherches sur quelques problèmes d'histoire*, 2d ed. (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1984), 191–96.

Fustel de Coulanges's *Histoire des institutions politiques de l'ancienne France* (1874), like his *Cité antique*, relied heavily upon generalization based on a limited number of primary sources rather than constituting a critical appraisal of all extant source material. Like many contemporary German historians, he depended extensively on Tacitus's *Germania* in his depiction of Germanic mores.

[14] Jos Bazelmans, "Conceptualising Early Germanic Political Structure: A Review of the Use of the Concept of *Gefolgschaft*," in *Images of the Past: Studies on Ancient Societies in Northwestern Europe*, ed. Nico Roymans and Frans Theuws (Amsterdam: Instituut voor Preen Protohistorische Archeologie Albert Egges von Giffen, 1991), 93–94, 106–15.

Fustel de Coulanges's writings, however, were widely read and sparked interest among scholars and the broader public in the close relationship between the living and the dead. He identified this bond as a defining feature of family structure and humanity as a whole. His work supported a general belief that social relationships were at the core of all changes in political, economic, and religious institutions.

[15] Eduard Fueter, *Geschichte der neueren Historiographie*, 2d ed. (Munich: Verlag von R. Oldenbourg, 1925), 560–64; Hartog, *Le XIX[e] siècle*, 33.

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Fustel de Coulanges thus bridged the gap between historians interested in the rise of the institution of property in antiquity and the Middle Ages and scholars seeking to understand pre-Christian religion.

[16] Arnaldo Momigliano, "From Mommsen to Max Weber," in his *New Paths of Classicism in the Nineteenth Century (The Georges Lurcy Lectures in the University of Chicago, 1982)*, History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of history, vol. 21, no.4 (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1982), 19–24.

Few other historians benefited as much as Fustel de Coulanges from the selective appropriation of parts of antiquarian methodology in their historical research. The tendency to limit scholarship to narrowly demarcated fields, very different from the multi-disciplinary and amateur antiquarian tradition, hindered many scholars from effectively approaching more culturally oriented topics such as Merovingian mortuary ritual. Yet whether or not it was recognized at the time, the work of antiquaries fundamentally influenced even the most conservative research of German-speaking legal historians in the late nineteenth century, although in a dissimilar manner to the example of Fustel de Coulanges. These historians did not ignore the grave goods being unearthed by archaeologists as he had done, but instead employed what they conceived of as more reliable documentary evidence to explain their function.

[17] Of course, some documentary sources were seen as more historical and thus more objective than others, such as hagiographical works, which were seen as hopelessly flawed and unreliable; see Felice Lifshitz, "Beyond Positivism and Genre: 'Hagiographical' Texts as Historical Narrative," *Viator* 25 (1994): 111–13.

Because of the lack of Germanic written law prior to the migration period, few historians had attempted to explore the origins of a legal tradition independent of that of Rome in the early Middle Ages.

[18] Hermann Conring, *De origine iuris Germanici: Commentarius historicus* (Helmstedt: Ex officina Henningi Mulleri, 1643), 1–3.

With the emergence of a school of legal scholarship in the German states and the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the early part of the nineteenth century, however, discussion of the development of

Germanic culture and traditions of law began. This school of thought, which advocated the existence of pan-Germanic social developments or more generally *Germanentum*, depended above all upon Tacitus's *Germania* for its notions of ethnicity and legal status.

[19] Karl Kroeschell, "Die Germania in der deutschen Rechts-und Verfassungsgeschichte," in *Beiträge zum Verständnis der Germania des Tacitus*, 1: 198–215; Walter Goffart, "Two Notes on Germanic Antiquity Today," *Traditio* 50 (1995): 9–13.

With the growing significance of the fruits of archaeological exploration, German-speaking legal scholars had before them an important question

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to tackle. From the 1840s, they labored to find a more satisfactory explanation than superficial conversion for the preponderance of mortuary goods in the graves of Christians on both sides of the Rhine. Indeed, based on recently developed absolute chronologies, many of the artifacts found in rural Merovingian graves dated to more than a century after written evidence pointed to the spread of Christianity to these regions. In resolving this problem, legal historians sought to dissociate grave goods from what others deemed to be pagan mortuary ritual, and antiquarian methodology from what they considered their own more reliable legal scholarship.

[20] Hans Schreuer, "Das Recht der Toten: Eine germanistische Untersuchung," *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Rechtswissenschaft* 34 (1916): 1.

To this end, they argued that the deposition of objects with the dead did not constitute a religious custom. Rather, the practice had been developed in response to a lack of a legal tradition of inheritance among the Germanic peoples prior to contact with Roman civilization. Stirred by the objects unearthed by antiquaries, legal historians accounted for their presence through a new interpretation of ancient and medieval law. These ideas gained ground in the aftermath of Prussian victories in 1870–1871, a period during which propaganda of Germanic vitality was juxtaposed to images of Roman decadence.

[21] Heinz Gollwitzer, "Zum politischen Germanismus des 19. Jahrhunderts," in *Festschrift für Hermann Heimpel zum 70. Geburtstag am 19. September 1971*, Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte 36/1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971), 282–356.

One of the first to present a convincing legal hypothesis for the function of grave goods was the Austrian legal scholar Heinrich Brunner (d. 1915).

[22] Thomas Fuchs, "Heinrich Brunner (1840–1915)," in *A Global Encyclopedia of Historical Writing*, 1: 112.

He traced the practice of *Todtentheil* or "dead man's part" to what he described as a pagan Germanic tradition of leaving one-third of the goods of the deceased for funerary and burial obligations. Brunner thus linked "dead man's part" to a timeless custom mandating that all personal objects be buried with the deceased to whom they belonged.

[23] Heinrich Brunner, "Der Todtentheil in germanischen Rechten," *ZSSR*, germ. Abt. 19 (1898): 118–37; id., *Deutsche Rechtsgeschichte*, 2d ed. (Leipzig: Verlag von Duncker & Humblot, 1906), 108–9; Siegfried Rietschel, "Heergewäte und Gerade," in *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde*, ed. Johannes Hoops (Strasbourg: Verlag von J. Trübner, 1913), 2: 467.

Interestingly enough, no mention of this practice had appeared in earlier works by nineteenth-century German-or French-speaking scholars.

[24] Karl Lamprecht, "Zur Socialgeschichte der deutschen Urzeit," in *Festgabe für Georg Hanssen zum 31. Mai 1889* (Tübingen: Verlag der H. Laupp'schen Buch-handlung, 1889), 70.

Fustel de

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Coulanges had written, for instance, that sons and daughters might inherit furniture, horses, silver, slaves, livestock, and other forms of movable property in certain circumstances. He argued that only the transmission of land was more carefully circumscribed.

[25] Fustel de Coulanges, *Recherches sur quelques problèmes*, 234–45.

In contrast to his predecessors in the German-speaking world, Brunner was innovative in placing less emphasis on the work of Tacitus; for Brunner, the *Germania* constituted a single, albeit important, source among many. He was among the first scholars to employ the Germanic law codes extensively in his research.

[26] Kroeschell, "Die Germania," 211–12.

Brunner proposed that artifacts such as jewelry and clothing, known as *Gerade*, referred to women's goods, whereas weaponry, clothing, and other objects used in battle, or *Heergewäte*, pertained to men's possessions. According to what would become a widely accepted theory, neither of these categories of property, in contrast to land, could pass to heirs. Family members therefore had to inter them in the graves of their former owners or burn them as offerings.

[27] Hermann Conrad, *Deutsche Rechtsgeschichte*, 2d ed. (Karlsruhe: Verlag C. F. Müller, 1962), 1: 40–43.

One of the few critics to question the direct connection made by Brunner between *Todtenteil* and *Heergewäte* was Siegfried Rietschel, who noted that the former was an anachronistic designation of one-third of the deceased's property. He did not, however, dispute the general validity of *Heergewäte* as a concept relevant to the Merovingian period.

[28] Siegfried Rietschel, "Der 'Todtenteil' in germanischen Rechten," *ZSSR*, germ. Abt. 32 (1911): 297–312.

Historians such as Brunner went so far as to suggest that because the next life would be similar to the present, the deceased required possessions that would accord them appropriate luxuries and status in the afterlife. deceased individuals thus survived as a legal entity, a concept developed further by Hans Schreuer, who argued that pre-Christian belief focused on the survival of the personality of the dead rather than on recognition of the existence of the soul.

[29] Karl Frölich, "Germanisches Totenrecht und Totenbrauchtum im Spiegel neuerer Forschung," *Hessische Blätter für Volkskunde* 43 (1952): 46–48.

If anyone was buried improperly or murdered and not avenged, Brunner furthermore proposed that early medieval inhabitants believed that his or her soul returned to haunt the living. By 1907, Brunner's

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views, like those of Fustel de Coulanges before him, implied that fear of the dead played a major role in Germanic deposition rites.

[30] Heinrich Brunner, "Das rechtliche Fortleben des Toten bei den Germanen," *Abhandlungen zur Rechtsgeschichte: Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1931), 2: 342–54.

These ideas were also taken up in works reaching far wider scholarly and popular audiences before World War II, such as those of Georges Dumézil.

[31] Georges Dumézil, *Mythes et dieux des Germains: Essai d'interprétation comparative* (Paris: Librairie Ernest Leroux, 1939), 141–43.

Despite the fact that no contemporary sources accounted for fear of the dead or an arduous journey to the afterlife requiring weaponry or clothing, many scholars posited that among the Germanic peoples living relatives had a legal and sacral obligation to the dead centering upon grave goods.

[32] Kurt Klatt, *Das Heergewäte*, Deutschrechtliche Beiträge, vol. 2, 2 (Heidelberg: Carl Winters Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1908), 197–98.

Schreuer's suggestion that these legal developments arose in response to belief in the surviving personality of the dead among "primitive" peoples such as the Germanic tribes was not far removed from the conclusions of contemporary anthropologists working farther afield.

[33] Hans Schreuer, "Das Recht der Toten," 339–73.

As will be discussed below, these shared features did not, however, lead to the creation of close ties between legal scholarship and anthropological research. Legal historians instead concentrated on developing theoretical concepts such as the traditions of *Heergewäte* and *Gerade* in response to the absence of an indigenous tradition of written final testaments among the Germanic peoples. They thereby accounted for continued use of grave goods long after the conversions.

[34] Clara Redlich, "Westgermanische Stammesbildungen," *Nachrichten aus Niedersachsens Urgeschichte* 36 (1967): 5–11; Albert J. Genrich, "Grabbeigaben und germanisches Recht," *Die Kunde*, new series 22 (1971): 205–17.

Rather than emphasizing the ritual aspects of burial customs, historians promoted the legal implications of the costly deposition of personal possessions in graves. They acknowledged, however, that social competition appeared to have played a part in the rite.

[35] Schultze, just as Rietschel, disputed the idea of *Todtenteil* as a specific quota of goods. Alfred Schultze, "Der Einfluß der Kirche auf die Entwicklung des germanischen Erbrechts," *ZSSR*, germ. Abt. 35 (1914): 82–83.

Traditions involving grave goods thus ceased among the faithful only when clerics began to demand this same property in exchange for church burial and the performance of Masses for the souls of the dead. Legal historians thus posited that the character of *Todtenteil* thereafter changed, becoming a donation for the salvation of the deceased.

[36] Brunner, "Das rechtliche Fortleben," 353–54; Paul Reinecke, "Reihengräber und Friedhöfe der Kirchen," *Germania* 9 (1925):103–7; Frölich, "Germanisches Totenrecht," 58–59.

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Although scholars eventually acknowledged the excesses of these hypotheses, such as the fact that high medieval Scandinavian descriptions of the Germanic afterlife such as Walhalla could not be applied to discussions of the early Middle Ages,

[37] Clara Redlich, "Erbrecht und Grabbeigaben bei den Germanen," *Forschungen und Fortschritte* 24 (1948): 177–80.

significant resistance stymied complete rejection of the explanation of the deposition of mortuary goods as the consequence of the legal traditions of *Heergewäte* and *Gerade.*

[38] Patrick Périn, "Trois tombes de 'chefs' du début de la période mérovingienne: Les sépultures nos 66, 68, et 74 de la nécropole de Mézières (Ardennes)," *Bulletin de la Société archéologique champenoise* 65.4 (1972): 55.

Reluctance to renounce these concepts even today has stemmed from the lack of a similarly satisfying interpretation with which to replace them. Early on, for instance, Hans von Voltelini's observation of the difficulties in accepting the alleged mandatory nature of *Heergewäte* and *Gerade* went largely unheard. Because of the variability of customs involving grave goods in different times and places, he could not embrace the idea that an empty grave implied that a person had owned nothing. Yet even Voltelini did not jettison the concepts altogether.

[39] Hans von Voltelini, "Nordgermanische Grabfunde und ihrer Bedeutung für die germanische Rechtsgeschichte," *ZSSR*, germ. Abt. 51 (1931): 111–31.

Despite the lack of contemporary examples of legal vocabulary or practices resembling the concept of *Todtenteil,*

[40] Jean-Paul Jacob and Jean-Régis Mirbeau-Gauvin, "Heergewäte et Gerade: 'Les mots et les choses,' " *Bulletin de liaison: AFAM* 3 (1980): 81–85; Alain Dierkens, "La tombe privilégiée (IV^{e} –VIII^{e} siècles) d'après les trouvailles de la Belgique actuelle," in *L'inhumation privilégiée du IV^{e} au VIII^{e} siècle en Occident (Actes du colloque tenu à Créteil, les 16–18 mars 1984)*, ed. Yvette Duval and Jean-Charles Picard (Paris: De Boccard, 1986), 47–56.

many historians and archaeologists continue to postulate the existence of *Heergewäte* and *Gerade.*

[41] Jean-Paul Jacob and Jean-Régis Mirbeau-Gauvin, "Du don au mort à la redemption: Évolution du dépôt funéraire du Bas-Empire à la apparition du don *pro anima*," *Revue d'histoire du droit* 48 (1980): 315–16.

Their hesitation to recognize clerical acceptance and even promotion of the ritual use of grave goods, along with the misconception of grave goods as an accurate reflection or mirror of the wealth and social status of the deceased,

[42] Heinrich Härke, "The Nature of Burial Data," in *Burial and Society: The Chronological and Social Analysis of Archaeological Burial Data* (Åhrus: Åhrus University Press, 1997), 19.

has contributed to this theory's long survival.

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MEROVINGIANS AND "PRIMITIVE" PEOPLES

Most European anthropologists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were more interested in the use of grave goods and other funerary customs among distant "primitive" peoples than in the rituals employed by their own ancestors. Yet when scholars began to classify Merovingian-period funerary customs in a more consistent manner, they cautiously acknowledged similarities between the deposition of artifacts in sepulchers and pagan or "barbaric" practices observed outside Europe. Understandably, many anthropologists were reluctant to apply such standards to their European forebears. By accepting this interpretation, however, they could still take comfort in the fact that this stage of development was allegedly achieved centuries earlier by the inhabitants of western Europe than by populations elsewhere in the world.

Although having a substantially different point of departure and employing alternative methodologies, anthropological hypotheses explaining the early medieval rite of grave goods resembled in many ways the conclusions of Fustel de Coulanges and early twentieth-century legal historians. Working in the context of the animist theories presented by Edward Burnett Tylor (d. 1917),

[43] Lewis R. Binford, "Mortuary Practices: Their Study and Potential," in *Approaches to the Social Dimensions of Mortuary Practices*, ed. James A. Brown, Memoirs of the Society for American Archaeology 25 (Washington, D.C.: Society for American Archaeology, 1971), 6–7.

James Frazer (d. 1941) noted that votive gifts such as food and the burial of the deceased in his or her best clothing constituted attempts to appease spirits of the deceased so that they would not return to disturb the living. In the "primitive" societies that he had observed, indigenous peoples commonly accused spirits of causing illnesses and death.

[44] James G. Frazer, "On Certain Burial Customs as Illustrative of the Primitive Theory of the Soul," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 15 (1886): 74–75; id., *La crainte des morts*, (Paris: Émile Nourry, Éditeur, 1934), vol. 1, esp.181–89.

Marcel Mauss (d. 1950) added another dimension to this discussion by suggesting that funerary traditions involving grave objects were representative of the magical nature of exchange in an emerging economic society. In such communities, appeasement of spirits took the form of gifts suitable to the status of the deceased. The desire to avoid antagonizing the dead, who if angered were believed to cause unfortunate events to transpire, resulted in significant funerary expenditure.

[45] Marcel Mauss, "Essai sur le don: Forme et raison de l'échange dans les sociétés archaïques," in his *Sociologie et anthropologie*, 3d ed. (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1966), 167–68, 266.

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In his sociological analysis of relations between the living and the dead, Max Weber (d. 1920) drew attention to the significant expense entailed in this obligation for societies that deemed grave goods necessary to mollify the souls of the dead. He observed: "Of the various magical practices relating to the disposal of the dead, the notion with the most enduring economic consequences is that the corpse must be accompanied to the grave by all its personal belongings."

[46] Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, trans. Ephraim Fischoff (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), 6.

In the 1950s, Kurt Ranke countered these ideas by publishing a substantial critique of the motivation of fear for rites related to the dead. He posited that the making of offerings to the dead and other related rituals represented instead the means by which the deceased continued to be a part of the community of the living for a period of thirty to forty days. He denied that these rites were related to the early modern concept of the "lebende Leichnam" or fear that corpses might come alive and consume their shrouds. Instead he argued that they constituted evidence of belief in the survival of the individuality of the dead for a period of about a month in many societies.

[47] Kurt Ranke, *Indogermanische Totenverehrung*, Folklore Fellows Communications 140 (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1951), vol. 1, esp. 20–28, 190–97, 374–76.

Scholars of early medieval society such as Georges Dumézil subsequently applied these paradigms to what they interpreted as the specifically Germanic use of grave goods. For Dumézil and others during the interwar period, these cultural features constituted an object of pride; they supported arguments for the independent development of Germanic tradition separate from the mores of classical Rome.

[48] Dumézil, *Mythes et dieux*, 141–43. On the ideological implications and background of Dumézil's work, see Carlo Ginzburg, "Mythologie germanique et nazisme: Sur un ancien livre de Georges Dumézil," *Annales ESC* 40 (1985): 695–715.

Although it was theoretically difficult to explain the link between grave goods and fear of the dead in a Christian context, this argument provided ample opportunity to point to the initially superficial nature of Christianization achieved through missionary work among the inhabitants of late antique Gaul.

[49] Criticisms of the imperfect nature of Christian conversion and emphasis on the overwhelming influence of early medieval superstition still attract support; see Ludwig Pauli, "Ungewöhnliche Grabfunde aus frühgeschichtlicher Zeit: Archölogische Analyse und anthropologischer Befund," *Homo* 29 (1978): 45; Jacob and Mirbeau-Gauvin, "Du don au mort," 316–24.

One consequence

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of such claims was widespread belief among scholars that only pagans and Germanic peoples deposited mortuary objects with the dead. From this viewpoint, no orthodox Christian in the Middle Ages would have had any need to fear the afterlife or to appease the dead with gifts. In Gaul, this interpretation neatly explained why the Franks supposedly abandoned the use of grave goods upon conversion.

Besides recognizing the significance of votive grave goods, Weber suggested that fear of the deceased resulted in the need to render the corpse harmless. In certain circumstances, he explained, a community might take significant precautions at the time of burials, such as immobilization or cremation of the body:

> A notion that the soul of the dead must be rendered innocuous developed, beyond the direct and animal-like fear of the physical corpse (a fear manifested even by animals), which direct fear often determined burial postures and procedures, e.g., the squatting and upright postures, cremation, etc. After the development of ideas of the soul, the body had to be removed or restrained in the grave, provided with a tolerable existence and prevented from becoming envious of the possession enjoyed by the living; or its good will had to be secured in other ways, if the survivors were to live in peace.

[50] Weber, *Sociology of Religion*,6.

Consequently, archaeologists have continued even today to invoke evidence of unusual inhumations, including the abnormal positioning of bodies prone or crouching, the immobilization of corpses with stones or nails, and the mutilation of the legs of skeletons, as examples of measures taken to prevent the dead from haunting the living.

[51] Édouard Salin, *La civilisation mérovingienne d'aprés les sépultures, les textes et le laboratoire* (Paris: Éditions A. et J. Picard, 1952), 2: 354; Alain Simmer, "Le prélèvement des crânes dans l'Est de la France à l'époque mérovingienne," *AM* 12 (1982): 148–49.

Yet a number of grounds exist for rejecting such Romantic interpretations of early medieval conceptions of the afterlife. Jean-Claude Schmitt, for instance, has pointed to the almost complete lack of written documentation for terror of the dead in the early Middle Ages; demons and not the deceased most frequently represented the source of negative encounters with the other world except in a few cases of those improperly buried.

[52] Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Les revenants: Les vivants et les morts dans la société médiévale* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1994), 25–49; Ranke, *Indogermanische Totenverehrung*, 1: 364–65.

In part, the absence of references to the return of the dead may stem from the fact that Christian ecclesiastical and monastic commentators rather.

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than lay individuals compiled these sources. Nonetheless, scholars must avoid reading missing evidence into early medieval mortuary rites.

[53] Otto Gerhard Oexle, "Die Gegenwart der Toten," in *Death in the Middle Ages*, ed. Hermann Braet and Werner Verbeke, Mediaevalia Louvaniensia, Series 1, vol. 9 (Louvain: Leuven University Press, 1983), 58–65; Eduard Beninger, "Die Leichenzerstückelung als vor-und frühgeschichtliche Bestattungssitte," *Anthropos: Revue internationale d'ethnologie et de linguistique* 26 (1931): 769–81.

From an archaeological perspective, many practical explanations aside from fear of the dead exist for seemingly abnormal phenomena. The authors of a handlist of Anglo-Saxon and Romano-British sites of such burials have suggested that executions may better explain at least in some cases prone interments and apparent beheadings. Deaths of relations far from home may have also motivated relations to inter partial bodies or remove certain skeletal remains long after burial.

[54] M. Harman, T. I. Molleson, and J. L. Price, "Burials, Bodies, and Beheadings in Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries," *Bulletin of the British Museum (Natural History)* Geology Series 35 (1981): 159–68.

Likewise, *rigor mortis* may have created unusual configurations of corpses in confined spaces, and the troubling appearance of nails in proximity to human remains may have been caused by the decomposition and eventual collapse of wooden coffins.

[55] Guy Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization: The Merovingian Region of Metz* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 60–162. Nor should fear be considered the only possible motive for depositing large nails that are found in some graves of Roman Gaul. André van Doorselaer, *Les nécropoles d'époque romaine en Gaule septentrionale*, trans. Marcel Amand, Dissertationes archaeologicae gandenses 10 (Bruges: De Tempel, 1967), 122.

As might be expected, however, no such consensus in explaining human motives for the deposition of grave goods was reached during the early twentieth century. Of particular importance for the development of hypotheses underlining the universal causes of such ritual practices in many societies was Robert Hertz's (d. 1915) argument that "primitive" mortuary ceremonies resulted from the unnatural role that death played in these communities.

[56] Robert Hertz, "Contribution à une étude sur la représentation collective de la mort," *L'Année sociologique* 10 (1905–6): 123–24.

Rather than placing emphasis primarily on fear, he noted that the deceased's status constituted the central factor determining the reactions of survivors and the objects they placed in graves. In his work published in the *Année sociologique* (1907) and the *Revue philosophique* (1909), Hertz theorized that only ritual had the power to reunite the dead with the living. Symbolic burial goods, representations of them, and sacrifices were all acts capable of appeasing the dead.

[57] Robert Hertz, *Death and the Right Hand*, trans. Rodney Needham and Claudia Needham (Glencoe: Free Press, 1960), 76–79; Weber, *Sociology of Religion*,7.

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Sociologists proposed that a number of forms of public display besides grave goods might serve to initiate the reintegration of the deceased into their communities. Émile Durkheim (d. 1917), who had studied with Fustel de Coulanges, identified the ways in which the ritual obligation of communal mourning aided in healing the collective loss experienced at the death of an individual member.

[58] Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, trans. Joseph Ward Swain (New York: Free Press, 1915), 443–45.

Ranke has more recently suggested that mortuary rites might also include activities once attributed by anthropologists to fear, such as dancing, singing, candles, and funerary meals. By engaging in these customs, communities expressed a sense of continuity in the face of death.

[59] Ranke, *Indogermanische Totenverehrung*, 1: 189–97, 293–97, 374–76.

These interpretations of burial ritual nonetheless were not commonly applied to archaeological material excavated in north-western European cemeteries for many years; when they finally were incorporated into such studies in the last third of the twentieth century, anthropological and sociological models would have a great impact on discussions of early medieval grave goods as symbolic of the social status and religious belief of the deceased.

[60] Heinrich Härke, "'Warrior Graves'? The Background of the Anglo-Saxon Weapon Burial Rite," *Past and Present* 126 (1990): 22–24; Binford, "Mortuary Practices," 17–23.

Despite the relevance of their artifacts to broader discussions, Merovin-gian archaeologists and historians made only minor contributions to international debates outside their disciplines. Scholarly rejection of antiquarianism as unprofessional and the attraction of more exotic societies in Africa and the Pacific heralded the increased isolation from mainstream academia of early medieval archaeological studies. The most common monographs on Merovingian-period cemeteries were instead highly technical treatises on the typology and chronology of grave goods following the precedent of the Lindenschmits. Published locally and often under-funded, these generally narrow assessments of Merovingian material evidence did not attract wide readership or influence anthropological or sociological research to any great degree. Herbert Spencer's *Descriptive Sociology* (1881) thus barely incorporated local early medieval artifacts in his analysis of French society. Even in his description of Merovingian dress, personal adornment, and religious beliefs, Spencer ignored recently published

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excavations and relied exclusively on documentary evidence, with the exception of finds from Childeric's grave at Tournai.

[61] Herbert Spencer, *Descriptive Sociology: Or, Groups of Sociological Facts* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1881), 8: 105, 122, 150.

EXPLAINING THE EVOLUTION OF MEROVINGIAN BURIAL RITES: A PROCESS OF CHRISTIANIZATION?

Over the course of the sixth and seventh centuries in Gaul, the active use of grave goods steadily declined and was eventually relinquished by the majority of inhabitants. Historians and archaeologists have therefore frequently focused on this evolution as a lense through which to interpret broader changes in Merovingian society. Since the publication of Édouard Salin's monumental four-volume work *La civilisation mérovingienne* (1952), scholars have acknowledged the complexity of the problem and the difficulties of resolving it. Indeed, early medieval clerical authorities remained for the most part silent with regard to funerary costume.

[62] For a full discussion of the written sources related to this debate, see Bonnie Effros, *Caring for Body and Soul: Burial and the Afterlife in the Merovingian World* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002).

Salin observed, moreover, that the only practices prohibited were those directly associated with pagan religious custom. The use of grave goods was not included in this category.

[63] Salin, *La civilisation mérovingienne*, 2: 233ff.

Conciliar disapproval extended only to the interment of liturgical objects and vestments.

[64] Bailey K. Young, "Merovingian Funeral Rites and the Evolution of Christianity: A Study in the Historical Interpretation of Archaeological Material" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1975), 52,

76–80; Donald A. Bullough, "Burial, Community, and Belief in the Early Medieval West," in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society (Studies Presented to J. M. Wallace-Hadrill)*, ed. Patrick Wormald (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), 189.

The paucity of legislation in the domain of funerary ritual, moreover, stemmed from a generally low level of clerical involvement in the majority of Christians' burials.

[65] Bonnie Effros, "Beyond Cemetery Walls: Early Medieval Funerary Topography and Christian Salvation," *EME* 6 (1997): 1–23; Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 247–65.

Because grave goods constituted a matter of familial concern rather than theological doctrine, religious leaders had little reason to interfere with this feature of mortuary custom. When they did become involved, they tolerated significant diversity in what must have been orally transmitted

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traditions, as long as Christian dogma was not contradicted by these rites.

[66] Peter J. Ucko, "Ethnography and Archaeological Interpretation of Funerary Remains," *World Archaeology* 1 (1969): 273–74.

Judging from the limited attention to burial in surviving collections of prayers up to the eighth century, it is probable that priests seldom participated in funerals except to perform the liturgy for members of monastic houses, ecclesiastical leaders, and lay elites buried in or near churches.

[67] But see Frederick S. Paxton, *Christianizing Death: The Creation of a Ritual Process in Early Medieval Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 47–91; Megan McLaughlin, *Consorting with Saints: Prayer for the Dead in Early Medieval France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 28–30; Yitzhak Hen, *Culture and Religion in Merovingian Gaul, A.D. 481–751* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 72–124.

Because of the lack of extant secular or religious legislation forbidding grave goods, most scholars have abandoned the idea that it was unacceptable for Christians to be buried with grave goods. Following the lead of Salin,

[68] Salin, *La civilisation mérovingienne*, 2: 235; id., "Sépultures gallo-romaines et mérovingiennes dans la basilique de Saint-Denis," *Fondation Eugène Piot: Monuments et mémoires* 49 (1957): 111.

they have instead attributed Christians' relinquishment of the deposition rite in the late seventh century to deeply rooted religious changes, a process often referred to as "spiritualization." They thereby imply that changes in perceptions in the afterlife contributed to the growing ineffectiveness of grave goods in ritual expression in the late Merovingian period. In other words, no clear change in burial practice occurred in response to Christian conversion in Gaul because a more profound level of "Christianization" was necessary before the faithful could begin to attend to the state of their souls rather than to the performance of elaborate funerary rites.

[69] Patrick Périn, "Remarques sur la topographie funéraire en Gaule mérovingienne et sa périphérie: Des nécropoles tardives aux nécropoles du hautmoyen âge," *CA* 35 (1987): 10–11; Bailey K. Young, "Paganisme, christianisation et rites funéraires mérovingiens," *AM* 7 (1977): 49–57; W. A. Van Es, "Grabsitten und Christianisierung in den Niederlanden," *Probleme der Küstenforschung im südlichen Nordseegebiet* 9 (1970): 80–81.

Yet the association between grave goods and paganism has not been relinquished by all scholars. Heli Roosens has described the Christian adoption and adaptation of grave goods as the product of a syncretic process. He identifies mortuary goods as pagan survivals and argues that orthodox Christians did not use such objects.

[70] Heli Roosens, "Reflets de christianisation dans les cimetières mérovingiens," *Les études classiques* 53 (1985): 133–34.

Categorizing individual rites as pagan or not entirely Christian on the

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basis of modern standards undermines a full understanding of the adaptability and flexibility of early medieval Christianity. During the centuries following the conversions, Christianity was not a static religion.

[71] Jean-Claude Schmitt, "'Religion populaire' et culture folklorique," *Annales ESC* 31 (1976): 942–48.

No evidence exists to suggest that abandoning grave goods was a sign of the development of a more spiritual understanding of the Christian faith. Indeed, neither Merovingian-period written nor archaeological sources support a negative reading of grave goods as pagan survivals.

[72] But Christian Pilet states: "La presence du mobilier funéraire montre une solide habitude de paganisme" (*La nécropole de Frénouville: Étude d'une population de la fin du III^e à la fin du VII^e siècle*, BAR International Series 83(i) [Oxford: BAR, 1980], 1: 155); Heiko Steuer, "Der Mensch und sein Tod: Totenkult und Bestattungsbrauch vom Paläolithikum bis ins frühe Mittelalter," *Freiburger Universitätsblätter* 139 (1998): 122–26.

Christianity was inextricably tied to other social systems operating in early medieval communities, and metamorphoses in burial ritual often resulted from factors other than changes in religiosity.

[73] Alain Dierkens, "Cimetières mérovingiens et histoire du haut moyen âge: Chronologie—société—religion," in *Acta historica bruxellensia*, vol. 4: *Histoire et méthode* (Brussels: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1981), 61; Edward James, "Burial and Status in the Early Medieval West," *TRHS*, 5th ser., 39 (1989): 25–26; Bonnie Effros, "*De partibus Saxoniae* and the Regulation of Mortuary Custom: A Carolingian Campaign of Christianization or the Suppression of Saxon Identity?" *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 75 (1997): 269–87; L. Carless Hulin, "The Diffusion of Religious Symbols within Complex Societies," in *The Meanings of Things: Material Culture and Symbolic Expression*, ed. Ian Hodder, One World Archaeology 6 (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 90–94; Guy Halsall, "La christianisation de la région de la Metz à travers les sources archéologiques (5^ème – 7^ème siècle): Problèmes et possibilités," in *L'evangélisation des régions entre Meuse et Moselle et la fondation de l'abbaye d'Echternach (V^e —IX^e siècle)*, ed. Michel Polfer, PSH 117, Publications du CLUDEM 16 (Luxembourg: CLUDEM, 2000), 125–46.

Some of the most generous displays of burial objects occurred in graves located near shrines of saints *(ad sanctos)* and in churches such as Saint-Denis

[74] Otto Doppelfeld, "Die Domgrabung XI: Das fränkische Frauengrab," *Kölner Domblatt* 16–17 (1959): 41–78; id., "Die Domgrabung XII: Totenbett und Stuhl des Knabengrabes," *Kölner Domblatt* 18–19 (1960): 85–106; Joachim Werner, "Frankish Royal Tombs in the Cathedrals of Cologne and Saint-Denis," *Antiquity* 38 (1964): 201–16; Georg Hauser, "Das fränkische Gräberfeld unter dem Kölner Dom," in *Die Franken*, 1: 438–47.

and Cologne.

[75] Patrick Périn, "À propos de la datation et de l'interprétation de la tombe n^o 49 de la basilique de Saint-Denis, attribuée à la reine Arègonde, épouse de Clotaire I^er," in *L'art des invasions en Hongrie et en Wallonie (Actes du colloque tenu au Musée royal de Mariemont du 9 au 11 avril 1979)*, Monographies du MRM 6, (Morlanwelz: MRM, 1991), 11–30; Salin, "Sépultures gallo-romaines," 93–128.

Although not as

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lavish, well-equipped interments have also been found in Gallo-Roman strongholds such as Marseilles and Geneva.

[76] Ian Wood, "Sépultures ecclésiastiques et sénatoriales dans la vallée du Rhône (400–600)," *Médiévales* 31 (1996): 18–23.

Requests for burial with holy objects such as the clothing of saints have likewise been documented; these commemorative rites paralleled the deposition of weapons, albeit with different symbolism as to the type of power they embodied.

[77] Bonnie Effros, "Symbolic Expressions of Sanctity: Gertrude of Nivelles in the Context of Merovingian Mortuary Custom," *Viator* 27 (1996): 1–10.

The argument in favor of "spritualization" as the impetus for change in mortuary rituals is unconvincing because scholars have not satisfactorily proved clerics' conscious diversion of objects formerly utilized as burial goods, or the funds and lands that supported the costly rite, to donations for the immaterial souls of the faithful.

[78] Van Es, "Grabsitten," 89–90; Schreuer, "Das Recht der Toten," 429.

The small number of surviving wills from the Merovingian period indicates a growing propensity to make church donations but does not point to clerics' direct involvement in this transformation.

[79] Frauke Stein, *Adelsgräber des achten Jahrhunderts in Deutschland*, Ger-manische Denkmäler der Völkerwanderungszeit, ser. A, vol. 9 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1967), 1: 181–83; Heiko Steuer and Martin Last, "Zur Interpretation der beigabenführenden Gräber des achten Jahrhunderts im Gebiet rechts des Rheins: Diskussionsbeiträge zu Frauke Stein, *Adelsgräber des achten Jahrhunderts in Deutschland*," *Nachrichten aus Niedersachsens Urgeschichte* 38 (1969): 55–56; Bullough, "Burial, Community, and Belief," 197.

Although bequests to churches may have contributed to a corresponding decline in other funerary expenditures, these benefactions signaled recognition of souls' need for intervention in the form of Masses and psalms, a practice increasingly common in western Europe especially from the late sixth century. The decreasing use of grave goods by inhabitants of Gaul did not, then, mean that they were more devout than their ancestors but that they were faced with a changed theological interpretation of the afterlife.

[80] Effros, *Caring for Body and Soul*, 139ff.

ECONOMIC AND LEGAL FACTORS AFFECTING MORTUARY PRACTICE

In puzzling out the complex symbolism of Christian funerary traditions in early medieval Gaul, written and physical material should be studied in combination. As in the late nineteenth century, multi-disciplinary approaches in the twentieth century have nonetheless received only mixed

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scholarly reviews. When different sorts of evidence are used uncritically, their interpretation may become significantly distorted. Guy Halsall has suggested that "borrowings" are far less helpful than indepth analyses of correlations (or the lack thereof) among different categories of evidence.

[81] Guy Halsall, "Archaeology and Historiography," in *Companion to Historiography*, ed. Michael Bentley (London: Routledge, 1997), 817–24.

Postwar German scholars in particular have thus hesitated to move readily between historical and anthropological disciplines. Their conservative approach is likely the consequence of their association of these techniques with the politically motivated tactics of scholars such as Gustaf Kossinna (d. 1931) in the first half of the twentieth century. He constitutes a powerful example of the extremes to which the evidence could be manipulated because he applied a combination of vague linguistic, cultural, anthropological, and archaeological material to his efforts to determine the alleged parameters of racial identity in the Germanic population.

[82] Ulrich Veit, "Ethnic Concepts in German Prehistory: A Case Study on the Relationship between Cultural Identity and Archaeological Objectivity," in *Archaeological Approaches to Cultural Identity*, 35–56; Sebastian Brather, "Gustaf Kossinna," in *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde*, new ed. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2000), 17: 263–67.

A wide variety of sources, however, must be taken into consideration in explaining the simplification of deposition rites in the latter part of the Merovingian period and in accounting for the ultimate abandonment of grave goods in Gaul in the late seventh century.

[83] Nicholas Rogers, "The Anthropological Turn in Social History," in *Approaching the Past: Historical*

Anthropology through Irish Case Studies, ed. Marilyn Silverman and P. H. Gulliver (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 352–70.

While it is too much to hope for sufficient evidence to arrive at a definitive solution to this puzzle, because archaeological interpretation ultimately represents an attempt to domesticate the past and impose order on it,

[84] Christopher Tilley, "Interpreting Material Culture," in *Meanings of Things*, 188–93. On the weaknesses of "disabling relativism," see Halsall, "Archaeology and Historiography," 812–17.

further progress may nonetheless be anticipated. Research on early medieval legal structure, economic trends, religious belief, ritual exchange, ethnic identity, social status, and most recently age and gender have all contributed in important ways to the analysis of mortuary practice. Important among these interpretations are those that recognize that burial practice may not primarily reflect beliefs about the afterlife. Instead the rites construct and project an idealized image of the place of the deceased in human society.

[85] Patrick J. Geary, "The Uses of Archaeological Sources for Religious and Cultural History," in his *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 30–45.

Moreover,

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traces of the symbolic significance of mortuary rites may be seen not just in individual graves but also in the distribution patterns of particular goods within cemeteries and across broader regions.

[86] Frans Theuws and Monica Alkemade, "A Kind of Mirror for Men: Sword Depositions in Late Antique Northern Gaul," in *Rituals of Power from Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Frans Theuws and Janet Nelson, TRW 8 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2000), 413–15.

A serious drawback of many analyses has been their tendency to simplify the problems implicit in Merovingian-period funerary practices by relying upon individual factors rather than their composite. The expectation that grave goods mirrored the lives of the deceased has led to great inaccuracies,

[87] See, for instance, discussion of the "singer" in Stein, *Adelsgräber*,1:111–12.

as have attempts by some authors to force their data to fit particular polemical objectives.

[88] David M. Schneider, "Some Muddles in the Models: Or, How the System Really Works," in *The Relevance of Models for Social Anthropology*, ed. Michael Banton, Association of Social Anthropologists Monographs 1 (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1965), 70–78; Härke, "Nature of Burial Data," 21–23.

Not one aspect of Merovingian culture but rather a combination of many variables contributed to the late seventh-century evolution in funerary ritual to a practice largely devoid of grave goods. Local and regional developments fundamentally affected the mix of factors, since this transition did not occur in the same manner everywhere.

[89] Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 1–7; James, "Burial and Status," 31–33; Heinrich Härke, "Final Comments: Ritual, Symbolism, and Social Inference," in *Burial and Society*, 191–95; Andy Boddington, "Models of Burial, Settlement, and Worship: The Final Phase Reviewed," in *Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries: A Reappraisal (Proceedings of a Conference Held at Liverpool Museum, 1986)*, ed. Edmund Southworth (Phoenix Mill: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1990), 196–97.

Although this discussion cannot offer more than a brief introduction to five decades of extensive scholarship on this question, in the next sections I will highlight some of the most influential hypotheses accounting for the eventual abandonment of the deposition rite in Gaul in the late seventh century.

[90] Surveys of similar developments in Britain include Leslie Webster, "Anglo-Saxon England, AD 400–1100," in *Archaeology in Britain since 1945: New Directions*, ed. Ian Longworth and John Cherry (London: British Museum Publications, 1986), 119–33; Härke, "Nature of Burial Data," 19–21.

Economic factors in combination with "Christianization" have traditionally been cited to explain the progressive relinquishment of the use of grave goods during the Merovingian period. Heiko Steuer has proposed

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that the spread of the cult of saints contributed to an atmosphere in which less stringent mores allowed greater contact with the dead. Not only did the translation of holy corpses occur more frequently, but the opening of graves became more acceptable. In the context of the large row grave cemeteries, there was also an increasingly impersonal nature to burial custom. Coupled with financial hardship in the late seventh century, these factors stimulated a high number of thefts, which foreshadowed the imminent abandonment of ritual mortuary deposits.

[91] Heiko Steuer, *Frühgeschichtliche Sozialstrukturen in Mitteleuropa: Eine Analyse der Auswertungsmethoden des archäologischen Quellenmaterials*, Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, philologisch-historische Klasse, 3d ser., vol. 128 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), 498–500.

Small trenches dug in the late seventh century in the vicinity of pillaged graves at Frénouville (Calvados), for instance, might be viewed as symptomatic of not only the unsubtle techniques of thieves, but also the dysfunction of contemporary funerary rites.

[92] Pilet, *La nécropole de Frénouville*, 1: 157–58.

Chris Arnold has likewise put forth an economic explanation for comparable burial rites in sixth-and seventh-century Anglo-Saxon England. He has acknowledged that the deposition of grave goods represented a source of significant stress on early medieval resources. Coastal regions such as Kent, with dense habitation and the greatest relative wealth because of the opportunities afforded by contact with international trade, displayed more disparity in the quality of funerary deposits than communities located elsewhere.

[93] Chris J. Arnold, "Wealth and Social Structure: A Matter of Life and Death," in *Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries 1979: The Fourth Anglo-Saxon Symposium at Oxford*, ed. Philip Rahtz, Tania Dickinson, and Lorna Watts, BAR British Series 82 (Oxford: BAR, 1980), 131–39; Heinrich Härke, "Die anglo-amerikanische Diskussion zur Gräberanalyse," *AK* 19 (1989): 188.

After these economies reached their maximum potential of expansion circa 600, the inhabitants experienced severe epidemics. Royal attempts to reorganize the social hierarchy followed a short time later. As a consequence of the growing influence of Christianity, Arnold argues, burial deposits were replaced by other belief-related practices capable of expressing power and prestige more effectively and economically.

[94] Chris J. Arnold, "Stress as a Stimulus for Socio-Economic Change: Anglo-Saxon England in the Seventh Century," in *Ranking, Resource, and Exchange: Aspects of the Archaeology of Early European Society*, ed. Colin Renfrew and Stephen Shennan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 125–28.

Despite the attractiveness of using economic factors in association with

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other trends to explain the early medieval abandonment of the deposition of grave goods in the seventh century, the hypothesis is questionable. Heinrich Härke, for instance, has challenged Arnold's proposal regarding England by demonstrating that regional differences in Anglo-Saxon weapon burials did not correspond to extant wealth in these areas. According to Härke's analysis, the decline in interred armament reflected a more general decrease in the proportion of sepulchers in which weaponry was deposited. The number of weapons per grave, by contrast, remained fairly constant. In his estimation, Anglo-Saxon burials were characterized by an increasingly uneven distribution of armament, a development not convincingly explained by overall economic recession. Symbolic weapon combinations continued to be employed,

[95] Heinrich Härke, "Early Saxon Weapon Burials: Frequencies, Distributions, and Weapon Combinations," in *Weapons and Warfare in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Sonia Chadwick Hawkes, OUCA Monograph 21 (Oxford: OUCA, 1989), 49–52, 55–59.

and Härke has instead attributed the irregular apportionment of weaponry among the population to ethnic factors, a point to which we will return below.

[96] Heinrich Härke, "Changing Symbols in a Changing Society: The Anglo-Saxon Weapon Burial Rite in the Seventh Century," in *The Age of Sutton Hoo: The Seventh Century in North-Western Europe*, ed. Martin Carver (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1992), 152–55; id., *Ängelsächsische Waffengräber des 5. bis 7. Jahrhunderts*, Zeitschrift für Archäologie des Mittelalters 6 (Cologne: Rheinland-Verlag, 1992), 195–200.

Aside from the implicit problems of arguing that the abandonment of burial goods stemmed from a process of Christianization in early medieval Gaul, the groups who occupied positions of status did not always deposit their resources in graves. Decreasing expenditures on grave goods may have resulted from a number of causes. As noted generally by Aubrey Cannon, for instance,

> although competitive display is a major factor in the elaboration of mortuary behavior, it can also lead to an eventual reduction in its intensity—initially through the reduced effectiveness of differentiating forms of expression in the context of a multiplicity of expressions both past and present and ultimately through social control—as elaboration becomes increasingly associated with lower status categories.

[97] Aubrey Cannon, "The Historical Dimension in Mortuary Expressions of Status and Sentiment," *Current Anthropology* 30 (1989): 437.

Similarly, rather than indicating the existence of economic surplus, the expenditure of great wealth on grave goods may have served a variety of purposes. In some cases, it pointed to the instability of the social hierarchy

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and competition for positions of power.

[98] Edward James, "Cemeteries and the Problem of Frankish Settlement in Gaul," in *Names, Words, and Graves: Early Medieval Settlement*, ed. P. H. Sawyer (Leeds: University of Leeds, 1979), 77–78; Lotte Hedeager, *Iron-Age Societies: From Tribe to State in Northern Europe, 500 BC to AD 700*, trans. John Hines (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), 80–81; Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 247–48.

Alternatively, the rite may have provided the opportunity for a minority population to express political independence.

[99] Helen Geake, "Burial Practice in Seventh-and Eighth-Century England," in *Age of Sutton Hoo*, 90–93; Martin Carver, "Kingship and Material Culture in Early Anglo-Saxon East Anglia," in *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms*, ed. Steven Bassett (London: Leicester University Press, 1989), 47–48; id., "Ideology and Allegiance in East Anglia," in *Sutton Hoo: Fifty Years After*, ed. Richard Farrell and Carol Neuman de Vegvar, American Early Medieval Studies 2 (Oxford: American Early Medieval Studies, 1992), 177–81; Effros, "*De partibus Saxoniae*," 269–87.

Because early medieval Gaul's economy was not dependent solely upon trade, but on war, plunder, and gift exchange, each of these interactions offered prestige to those who achieved success.

[100] Patrick J. Geary, "Sacred Commodities: The Circulation of Medieval Relics," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 172–74.

Yet the number and strength of an individual's kin or followers did not translate directly to the quantity and quality of grave goods buried with him or her.

Measuring the significance of individual burial artifacts or grave assemblages is a difficult undertaking. Some artifacts had histories that rendered them more powerful or valuable than their mere appearance might convey. These circumstances might mandate their inclusion or exclusion from a grave. In the case of swords, for example, most weapons at use in a community continued to circulate instead of being deposited in graves. As convincingly demonstrated by Frans Theuws and Monica Alkemade, fifth-century sword burials constituted exceptional cases and not the norm. For modern scholars, this practice means that statistics of the quantity of weapons retrieved have little to do with the actual number of them available to elites in a particular region.

[101] Theuws and Alkemade, "A Kind of Mirror," 435–66; Boddington, "Models of Burial," 189.

The sword deposition rite, as many other forms of ritual exchange, did not passively reflect social status but rather contributed to its creation in the context of many types of ritual exchange.

[102] Annette B. Weiner, *Inalienable Possessions: The Paradox of Keeping- While-Giving* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 3–11; Cécile Bar-raud, Daniel de Coppet, André Iteanu, and Raymond Jamous, *Relations and the Dead: Four Societies Viewed from the Angle of Their Exchange*, trans. Stephen J. Suffern (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1994), 33–35, 102–4.

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Grave goods are thus not a reliable marker of economic well-being. Early medieval inhabitants of Gaul and their neighbors also devoted significant resources to other dimensions of funerary ritual, such as processions, food offerings, earthen and wooden burial structures, and nonmetallic grave goods.

[103] John Shephard, "The Social Identity of the Individual in Isolated Barrows and Barrow Cemeteries in Anglo-Saxon England," in *Space, Hierarchy, and So- ciety: Interdisciplinary Studies in Social Area Analysis*, ed. Barry C. Burnham and John Kingsbury, BAR International Series 59 (Oxford: BAR, 1979), 47, 52. Ucko, "Ethnography," 266.

Many of these practices left few long-term physical traces.

Another trend in the past five decades has been to suggest the existence of a correlation between early medieval legal status and burial goods, particularly armament.

[104] Heinrich Dannenbauer, "Adel, Burg und Herrschaft bei den Germanen: Grundlagen der deutschen Verfassungs-Entwicklung," *HJ* 61 (1991): 10ff.; Joachim Werner, "Zur Entstehung der Reihengräberzivilisation: Ein Beitrag zur Methode der frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie," *AG* 1 (1950): 25.

Using historical descriptions of Merovingian-period warriors, Steuer has juxtaposed written accounts to armament discovered in row grave cemeteries. He has acknowledged, however, the inherent dangers of basing a reconstruction of the configuration of weapon sets too literally upon archaeological remains, since most would not have been sufficiently complete for success in a military engagement.

[105] Heiko Steuer, "Zur Bewaffnung und Sozialstruktur der Merowinger," *Nachrichten aus Niedersachsens Urgeschichte* 37 (1968): 30–74; Rolf Hachmann, "Zur Gesellschaftsordnung der Germanen in der Zeit um Christi Geburt," *AG* 5–6 (1956–57): 15.

Indeed, the limited details of actual fighting techniques preserved in contemporary sources impede formulation of precise categories of status.

[106] Patrick Périn nonetheless has retained the category of warrior leaders (*chefs*) in his discussions of the Franks ("Trois tombes de 'chefs,' " 56–58, 69; id., "Les Ardennes à l'époque mérovingienne: Étude archéologique," *Études arden- naises* 50 [1967]: 28).

Because grave goods did not always represent personal possessions of the deceased, an accurate determination of legal status from buried weaponry is difficult, if not impossible.

[107] Steuer, *Frühgeschichtliche Sozialstrukturen*, 52–53, 72–74. More recently, however, Steuer has returned to the proposal that warrior groups may have left fairly reliable traces in the archaeological record; see Steuer's "Interpretations-möglichkeiten archäologischer Quellen zum Gefolgschaftsproblem," in *Beiträge zum Verständnis der Germania des Tacitus*, ed. Günter Neuman and Henning Seemann, Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenchaften in Göttingen, philologisch-historische Klasse, 3d ser., vol. 195 (Göttingen: Vandehoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 2: 208–12, 225, 235.

Despite the impression of rigidity in the social hierarchy

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created by the law codes, significant social mobility may have in fact existed in Merovingian society.

[108] Frantisˇek Graus, *Volk, Herrscher und Heiliger im Reich der Merowinger: Studien zur*

Hagiographie der Merowingerzeit (Prague: Tschechoslawakische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1965), 62–65, 203; James, "Burial and Status," 31–37.

Early medieval governing structures themselves are currently perceived as more flexible than previously thought, being subject to some degree of negotiation and ritual exchange.

[109] Walter Pohl, "Herrschaft," in *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertums- kunde*, new ed., 14: 443–57.

Other factors, including ethnicity, regional differences, and religious beliefs, also obscured a straightforward relationship between legal status and the use of grave goods.

[110] Joachim Werner, "Bewaffnung und Waffenbeigabe in der Merowinger-zeit," *Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo* 15.1 (1968): 95–108; Stein, *Adelsgräber*, 1: 147–49; Reinhard Wenskus, *Stammesbil- dung und Verfassung: Das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen Gentes* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1961), 331–32.

Composed of consciously rather than haphazardly arranged objects, burial assemblages presented an idealized image of the deceaseds' place in the social hierarchy.

[111] Ellen-Jane Pader, *Symbolism, Social Relations, and the Interpretation of Mortuary Remains*, BAR International Series 130 (Oxford: BAR, 1982), 30–31.

The presence of weapons in a sepulcher did not necessarily indicate that the individual with whom they were buried had achieved the status of a warrior or attained a certain level of fighting ability. Instead, the choice of armament deposited in a particular grave depicted how kin wished to remember the deceased, an image tempered by local custom and the amount of wealth that family members were willing or able to devote to the funeral ceremony. To be certain, the rite did not constitute a passive reflection of the resources possessed by kin of the deceased. As Härke has shown to be the case in Anglo-Saxon England, and Theuws and Alkemade in northwestern continental Europe, the interment of weapons represented an important means but not the only one by which families (or groups whose bonds may not have been predicated solely upon blood relationships) displayed their standing in a predominantly warrior society.

[112] Härke, "'Warrior Graves,' " 42–43; Theuws and Alkemade, "A Kind of Mirror," 407–15; Effros, "Symbolic Expressions," 1–10.

Closely related to discussions of the links of legal status to mortuary custom are Martin Last's and Rainer Christlein's assessments of grave

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goods based upon the goods' estimated monetary worth. By comparing artifacts excavated from Merovingian sepulchers to the compensatory damages attached to various sorts of weaponry and animals listed in the *Lex ribuaria*, Steuer and Last have quantified the approximate worth of certain resources invested in the burial ritual to early medieval contemporaries.

[113] Steuer and Last, "Zur Interpretation," 73ff.

On this basis, Christlein has formulated categories of inhumations based on composite pictures of the quantity and quality of the goods contained in them. Establishing standardized classes of funerary expenditure allows him to compare individual graves to one another while avoiding terminology linking the interred to a particular legal status. By means of this methodology, Christlein has estimated more precisely the amount of disposable wealth available to the social units responsible for the funerary arrangements of the deceased.

[114] Rainer Christlein, "Besitzabstufungen zur Merowingerzeit im Spiegel reicher Grabfunde aus West-und Süddeutschland," *JRGZM* 20 (1973): 147–80.

Steuer has further delineated Christlein's value groups by determining the approximate cost of each group of burial goods: A—less than five solidi, B—between five and twenty solidi, C—between thirty and forty solidi, D—more than forty solidi.

[115] Steuer, *Frühgeschichtliche Sozialstrukturen*, 317–28.

The organization of the data in these categories has in turn enabled Steuer to observe important distribution variables in Merovingian cemeteries, such as the location of lavishly endowed sepulchers in relation to the rest of the community's graves and settlement. In identifying the wealthiest category of Merovingian burials, he has noted their typical isolation from other inhumations within row grave cemeteries. These burials were often found instead in exclusive graveyards and churches. Recognition of funerary groupings by financial expenditure, Steuer argues, contributes to a better understanding of the spatial distribution of graves, and therein the organizational principles of Merovingian society.

[116] Ibid., 372–77. Steuer has since acknowledged some of the shortcomings of this approach in "Archaeology and History: Proposals on the Social Structure of the Merovingian Kingdom," in *The Birth of Europe: Archaeology and Social Development in the First Millennium A.D.*, ed. Klavs Randsborg, Analecta romana instituti danici supplementum 16 (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1989), 100–106. See also Lynne Goldstein,"One-Dimensional-Archaeology and Multi-Dimensional People: Spatial Organisation and Mortuary Analysis," in *The Archaeology of Death*, ed. Robert Chapman, Ian Kinnes, and Klavs Randsborg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 57–58.

For the most part, however useful these categories are in identifying

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relative differences in funerary expenditure, the research of Last, Christlein, and Steuer has not reckoned with the inherently symbolic nature of grave goods. Nor does it account for other factors that contributed to the uneven distribution of mortuary deposits, such as chronology, regional customs, ethnicity, and gender-and age-related differences.

[117] Ross Samson, "Social Structures from Reihengräber: Mirror or Mirage?" *Scottish Archaeological Review* 4 (1987): 116–26; Pader, *Symbolism, Social Re- lations*, 30–31; James, "Burial and Status," 23–40; Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 61–74, 255–59; Heinrich Härke, "Tombes à armes anglo-saxonnes: Sépultures des guerriers ou symbolisme rituel?" in *L'armée romaine et les bar- bares du III^e^ au VII^e^ siècle*, ed. Françoise Vallet and Michel Kazanski, Mémoires de l'AFAM 5 (Paris: AFAM, 1993), 425–32.

Although assigning numeric values to individual artifacts may be helpful in giving modern readers a sense of the costs incurred by making burial deposits, these numbers reveal nothing about the immeasurable aspects of grave goods' value as understood by sixth-and seventh-century inhabitants of Gaul. Two identical objects may have had different meanings or value depending upon their origin and context, the intentions of those who deposited them, and the augmentation of their value through exchange.

[118] Jürgen Hannig, "*Ars donandi*: Zur Ökonomie des Schenkens im früheren Mittelalter," in *Armut, Liebe, Ehre: Studien zur historischen Kulturforschung*, ed. Richard van Dülmen (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1988), 11–15.

The quantification of this symbolic practice is also weakened by twentieth-century preferences for certain artifacts over others, valuations that likely have little relationship to early medieval conceptions of the same goods. An object's meaning and value could change radically depending upon the ritual in which it was used and the individual by whom it was employed.

[119] Jos Bazelmans, "Beyond Power: Ceremonial Exchanges in *Beowulf*," in *Rituals of Power*, ed. Theuws and Nelson, 314–19. Härke, "Nature of Burial Data," 21–25; Theuws and Alkemade, "A Kind of Mirror," 411–13.

A fully accurate reconstruction by modern scholars of the multifaceted significance of early medieval grave rites and artifacts is therefore unrealistic.

GENDER, AGE, AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF GRAVE GOODS

An additional field of study still in its infancy addresses the distribution of grave goods in early medieval Gaul as related to the sex and approximate age of the deceased. The age at which a person died and that person's sex affected choices made regarding his or her funeral, just as was the case with social status, ethnicity, and religious belief. The weight of the influence of these factors on mortuary rites also varied according to the period and region in which the burials occurred.

[120] Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 21–24, 61–74.

For archaeologists and historians, the situation is additionally complicated by the fact that in the context of burial (or daily life, for that matter), the expression of gender, in other words social distinctions between masculinity and femininity, cannot be assumed to have always coincided with biological sex. Nor do only the two categories of male and female necessarily suffice to describe all of the ways in which people in the early Middle Ages viewed one another, particularly in the case of preadolescent children. In locating young children in the gender schema, for instance, some archaeologists and historians have suggested that they be categorized as genderless or gender-neutral on the basis of the presence of minimal numbers of gender-specific artifacts in their graves.

[121] Roberta Gilchrist, *Gender and Material Culture: The Archaeology of Re- ligious Women* (London: Routledge, 1993), 7–8; Härke, *Ängelsächsische Waffen- gräber*, 179–82.

Although the term "neutral" with respect to goods deposited in preadolescent children's graves must be used carefully to express the artifacts' lack of "exclusive association with either males or females," there were certainly many gradations of strength with which genderidentity was displayed.

[122] Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 79–80.

The meager quantity of surviving written evidence for the perception of differences related to masculinity and femininity has not greatly helped efforts to interpret the archaeological material. As a consequence, some have questioned whether gender ever constituted a mutable or flexible component of the identity of early medieval individuals.

[123] Heinrich Härke, "Die Darstellung von Geschlechtergrenzen im frühmittelalterlichen Grabritual: Normalität oder Problem," in *Grenze und Differenz im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. Walter Pohl and Helmut Reimitz, Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000), 1: 181–96.

The stereotype of a straightforward binary division of gender that matched biological sex has been reinforced by the practice of sexing skeletal remains wholly or in part based upon the grave goods uncovered with the deceased (see figs. 8 and 9). Such studies only reaffirm the preconceptions of the dress of early medieval men and women held by those conducting the examinations.

[124] S. J. Lucy, "Housewives, Warriors, and Slaves? Sex and Gender in Anglo-Saxon Burials," in *Invisible People and Processes: Writing Gender and Sexuality into European Archaeology*, ed. Jenny Moore and Eleanor Scott (London: Leicester University Press, 1997), 150–68.

Anachronistic standards, such as the assumption that weaponry

was more highly esteemed than other sorts of grave goods, have likewise led to the devaluation of the types of objects found in female graves. This methodological flaw is especially disturbing in studies meant to achieve the opposite goal.

[125] Barbara Sasse, "*Regina mater*: Archäologische und schriftliche Quellen zu Merowinger-Königinnen," in *Königin, Klosterfrau, Bäuerin: Frauen im Früh- mittelalter*, ed. Helga Brandt and Julia K. Koch (Münster: Agenda Verlag, 1997), 94–107.

Surely the symbolic meaning of an object might differ depending upon whether it was displayed in the context of a woman's or a man's grave.

[126] Effros, "Symbolic Expressions," 1–3.

The tendency to interpret gender-related aspects of burial as objective and not ideological markers proves just as problematic as similar premises held with respect to status and ethnicity.

[127] Astrid Wenzel, "Das Individuum Frau in merowingischer Zeit: Bemerkungen zum Stand der

frühgeschichtlichen Frauenforschung," in *Königin, Klos- terfrau*, 8–28.

Even in the most thorough and scientifically grounded efforts to establish typologies of gender-linked artifacts, many of the physical anthropological reports on which these studies are based are more flawed than their authors presume.

[128] Bonnie Effros, "Skeletal Sex and Gender in Merovingian Mortuary Archaeology," *Antiquity* 74 (2000): 632–39.

In formulating a series of five categories composed of a combination of male-gender-specific objects, female-gender-specific objects, and gender-neutral objects, for instance, Halsall has noted that he used independently conducted archaeological and anthropological reports to compare the sex of the deceased with the distribution of grave goods in Merovingian cemeteries. He then tested the accuracy of these artifactual categories by applying them to skeletons and associated grave goods to predict the sex of the deceased. At the cemetery of Ennery "Les trois arbres" in the region of Metz, for instance, Halsall observed that his success rate using this model was 82.8 percent.

[129] Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 79–83. Chapter 3 below contains a more detailed discussion of this study.

His study's accuracy, however, is likely far greater in determining the gender rather than the biological sex of the deceased. Because the original archaeological study of this cemetery, excavated in 1941, was not highly reliable nor was the anthropological assessment of the skeletal data conducted independently of the grave goods, he may simply be confirming modern expectations of the gender distribution of grave goods. Once supplemented by the more widespread

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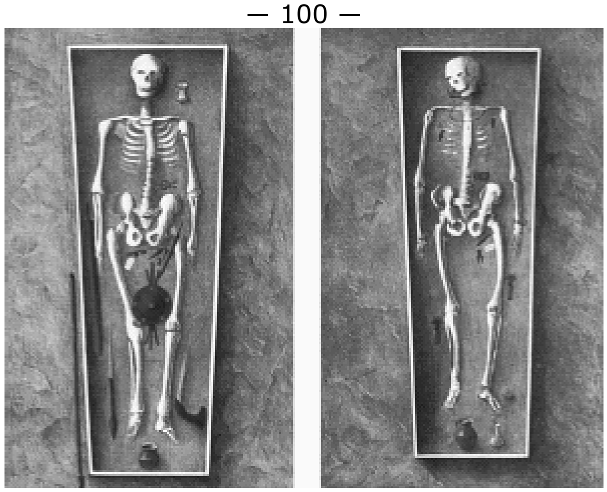

Figure 8. An illustration of Boulanger's idealization of Frankish male and female burials in the fifth and sixth centuries. Boulanger, *Le mobilier funéraire gallo-romain et franc*, pl. 36. Reproduced with the permission of the Musée des antiquités nationales de Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

application of DNA-testing and double-blind studies of skeletal remains and archaeological artifacts, research on gender will have much more to contribute to an understanding of Merovingian mortuary ritual and social custom.

MODERN ARCHAEOLOGY AND GERMANIC WARRIORS: THE STRUGGLE TO DEFINE ETHNICITY

The most common assumption regarding early medieval grave goods stems from scholars' confidence in the role of grave goods as markers of ethnic identity. This view gained ground before and during World War II, and research along similar lines, but devoid of the racist propaganda frequently found in Nazi-era scholarship, continued in the following decades. Throughout this period, the majority of studies of Merovingian burial practice focused on identifying the inhabitants of row grave cemeteries

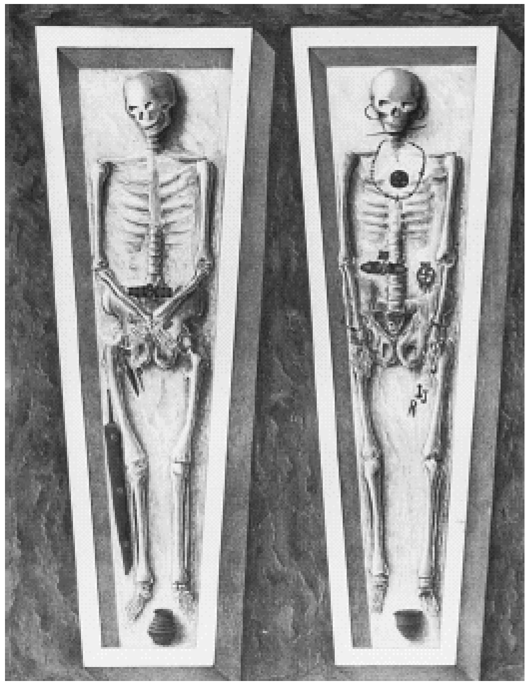

Figure 9. Boulanger's interpretation of the evolution of Frankish interment customs for men and women in the seventh and eighth centuries. Boulanger, *Le mobilier funéraire gallo-romain et franc*, pl. 37. Reproduced with the permission of the Musée des antiquités nationales de Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

(Reihengräberfelder). These constituted the earliest known burial sites in Gaul and elsewhere at which deposition with weapons and jewelry took place after inhumation became the most common means of disposing of the dead in the third century. Typically, indigenous inhabitants have been identified from the absence of most mortuary goods in their graves, whereas the presence of Germanic arrivals has been determined from the

discovery of artifacts such as weapons and brooches.

[130] Hans Zeiß, "Die germanische Grabfunde des frühen Mittelalters zwischen mittlerer Seine et Loiremündung," *Forschung und Fortschritte* 19 (1943): 50; Hermann Ament, "Francs et Romans entre Rhin et Seine au 6ème et 7ème siècle," *Bulletin de liaison: AFAM* 2 (1980): 59–62.

Armament has played an especially influential role in these discussions.

[131] Hans Zeiß, "Die germanischen Grabfunde des frühen Mittelalters zwischen mittlerer Seine et Loiremündung," in *31. Bericht der Römisch- Germanischen Kommission 1941*, pt. 1 (Berlin: Reichsverlagamt, 1942), 28–31.

Basing his analysis on the premise that Germans were legally required to be interred with personal possessions (*Heergewäte* and *Gerade)*, Joa-chim Werner set out to identify more precisely the deceased interred in the earliest row grave cemeteries. Defeated by the Romans in the third century and colonized in depopulated regions, the *laeti* were halffree subjects who served the Romans as army recruits and were logical candidates for consideration as the population occupying the *Reihengräberfelder.*

[132] Werner, "Zur Entstehung," 23–32.

Because of the great wealth of some of these depositions, however, Kurt Böhner instead advanced the theory that inhabitants who first made use of row graves were the predominantly Frankish *foederati*. These warriors formed independently allied groups, and when they entered the empire they settled under their own leadership. They thus had access to greater wealth and organizational resources than the *laeti.*

[133] Kurt Böhner, "Archäologische Beiträge zur Erforschung der Frankenzeit am Niederrhein," *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter* 15–16 (1950–51): 22–25.

Horst Wolfgang Böhme, who acknowledges the importance of the expression of social status in mortuary ritual, has modified both Werner's and Böhner's hypotheses by proposing that the cemeteries included some combination of *laeti* and *foederati.*

[134] Horst Wolfgang Böhme, *Germanische Grabfunde des 4. bis 5. Jahrhun- derts zwischen Elbe und Loire*, Münchner Beiträge zur Vor-und Frühgeschichte 19 (Munich: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1974), 1: 195–207; Steuer, "interpretationsmöglichkeiten," 251–57.

Discussion of the distinctions between Germanic and indigenous burial customs has not been limited to the row grave cemeteries but has included other contexts in which the dead were interred with a variety of grave goods. Hermann Ament has characterized the sixth-century burial site at the private church *(Eigenkirche)* of Flonheim, for instance, as unquestionably Frankish because of the presence there of weaponry and jewelry.

[135] Hermann Ament, *Fränkische Adelsgräber von Flonheim in Rheinhessen*, Germanische Denkmäler der Völkerwanderungszeit, ser. B, vol. 5 (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1970), 173–82.

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By default, sepulchers devoid of burial objects or marked by inscribed grave steles in church or rural cemeteries have usually been associated in scholarly works with the provincial Gallo-Roman population. Yet even for those advocating such straightforward differences between Franks and Romans, the line between the two groups is frequently blurred. Noting that these distinctions were not permanent, Böhner proposed that a significant number of sixth-century gravestones with Germanic names must have belonged to assimilated Romans. By the seventh century, inhabitants of Gallo-Roman origin had even begun to employ a limited number of burial goods.

[136] Kurt Böhner, "Die Frage der Kontinuität zwischen Altertum und Mittelalter im Spiegel der fränkischen Funde des Rheinlandes," *Trierer Zeitschrift* 19 (1950): 89–92. Böhner nonetheless denies that Germanic individuals could employ epigraphy in their funerary rites.

Louis Maurin thus posited the presence of a "mixed population" at the cemetery of Neuvicq-Montguyon (Charente-Maritime), where epitaphs were most unusually preserved in situ. Almost all of the sarcophagi bore inscriptions yet contained grave goods.

[137] Louis Maurin, "Le cimetière mérovingien de Neuvicq-Montguyon (Charente-Maritime)," *Gallia* 29 (1971): 151–89.

More recently, Bailey Young has refined this bipartite model of grave goods and inscriptions. Basing his conclusions on what he has characterized as clearly demarcated distinctions between Gallo-Roman and Germanic mortuary rites, he has described the Merovingian mortuary rite as a synthesis of two independent traditions. Whereas ceramics and Charon's obol, called votive deposits by Young, derived from Gallo-Roman inhumation ceremony, he proposes that burial costume or *inhumation habillée* was a tradition established by Germanic arrivals in Gaul.

[138] Bailey K. Young, "Text Aided or Text Misled? Reflections on the Uses of Archaeology in Medieval History," in *Text-Aided-Archaeology*, ed. B. J. Little (Ann Arbor: CKC Press, 1992), 135–43; id., "Pratiques funéraires et mentalités paï-ennes," in *Clovis: Histoire et mémoire; Le baptême de Clovis, l'événement*, ed. Michel Rouche (Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1997), 15–42; id., "Paganisme, christianisation," 36–57; Patrick Périn, "La tombe 10 de la nécropole d'Omont," *Études ardennaises* 51 (1967): 29–35.

Those who employed the latter were not necessarily of Frankish origin but adopted the customs as a means of identifying themselves with the ruling population.

[139] Bailey K. Young, "Le problème franc et l'apport des pratiques funéraires (III^e —V^e siècles)," *Bulletin de liaison: AFAM* 2 (1980): 4–18.

From a historical standpoint, the suggestion put forth by some anthropologists and archaeologists of neat biological or cultural divisions between ethnic groups, or *gentes* in contemporary sources, is problematic. Reinhard Wenskus has criticized the continued role played by nineteenth-century

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antiquarian conceptions of race in discussions of ethnic identity as it existed in the late imperial and early medieval periods. Ethnic distinctions did not arise naturally but were created categories that might become more strongly defined, for instance, in cases of political exigency or military conquest.

[140] Wenskus, *Stammesbildung*, 14–15, 33–34, 44–93.

Early medieval ethnic markers were highly mutable, leaving greater room for change than modern definitions of either nationality or race allow.

[141] Sandra Wallman, "Ethnicity and the Boundary Process in Context," in *Theories of Race and Ethnic Relations*, ed. John Rex and David Mason (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 228–31.

These more flexible definitions of ethnicity thus challenge archaeologically based conceptions of culture groups popularized in the last century with regard to the identity of the populations interred in row grave cemeteries.

[142] Walter Pohl, "Ethnizität des Frühmittelalters als interdisziplinäres Problem," *Das Mittelalter* 4 (1999): 69–75; Sebastian Brather, "Kulturgruppe und Kulturkreis," in *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde*, new ed., 17: 446–52.

Although most historians and archaeologists since the time of Wenskus have not denied the existence of ethnicity,

[143] An exception is Patrick Amory, who has severely downplayed the significance of ethnicity in early medieval Gaul, noting that allegiances such as family, ancestry, status, and religious identity constituted sources of group self-consciousness in competition with perceived ethnic affiliation; see his "Names, Ethnic Identity, and Community in Fifth-and Sixth-Century Burgundy," *Viator* 25 (1994): 1–30.

they have stressed the necessity of extensive rethinking of this paradigm.

[144] Walter Pohl, "Tradition, Ethnogenese und literarische Gestaltung: Eine Zwischenbilanz," in *Ethnogenese und überlieferung: Angewandte Methoden der Frühmittelalterforschung*, ed. Karl Brunner and Brigitte Merta (Vienna: R. Ol-denbourg Verlag, 1994), 9–26; Falko Daim, "Gedanken zum Ethnosbegriff," *Mit- teilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien* 112 (1982): 58–71.

Early medieval authors described ethnic identity in relation to legal, military, linguistic, historical, and social customs of the *gentes*. They also linked individuals' appearance to the expression of ethnicity. Yet all of these categories were extremely fluid and often invoked with respect to power relationships. The employment of such terminology increased in social discourse when political instability caused elite factions to compete with one another.

[145] Patrick J. Geary, "Ethnic Identity as a Situational Construct in the Early Middle Ages," *Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien* 113 (1983): 15–26; Walter Pohl, "Telling the Difference: Signs of Ethnic Identity," in *Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–700*, ed. Walter Pohl and Helmut Reimitz, TRW 2 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1998), 67; Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 9–21.

A reevaluation of the premises and legacy of twentieth-century conceptions

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of culture groups has stimulated heated debate. Walter Goffart has suggested that scholarship on the early Middle Ages would benefit by moving farther from the uncritical multi-disciplinary tradition of *german- ische Altertumskunde*, and the fairly typical references to pan-Germanism still made by advocates of this methodology.

[146] Goffart, "Two Notes," 14–19. See, for instance, the mix of sources utilized in the still regularly

employed commentary of Rudolf Much: *Die Germania des Tacitus* (Heidelberg: Carl Winters Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1937), 65–67.

The tendency to assume the unchanging nature of ethnic characteristics has remained particularly strong among archaeologists looking for clues to identify the bearers of particular types of material artifacts. Confidence in an "ethnic fingerprint" identifiable in "Germanic" archaeological finds has affected not only studies of the Merovingian period but also those of prehistoric eras in the same regions, when written evidence was nonexistent.

[147] Joseph Bergmann, "Ethnosoziologische Untersuchungen an Grab-und Hortfundgruppen der älteren Bronzezeit in Nordwestdeutschland," *Germania* 46 (1968): 233–40; id., "Ethnos und Kulturkreis: Zur Methodik der Urgeschichtswissenschaft," *PZ* 47 (1976): 105–10.

Kossinna's concept of "cultural provinces," a term that he defined imprecisely but that was based upon artifactual typology,

[148] Gustaf Kossinna, *Die Herkunft der Germanen: Zur Methode der Sied- lungsarchäologie*, Mannus-Bibliothek 6 (Würzburg: Verlag von Curt Kabitzsch, 1911), 2–6, 11, 17–18; Wolfgang Adler, "Gustaf Kossinna," in *Studien zum Kul- turbegriff in der Vor-und Frühgeschichtsforschung*, ed. Rolf Hachmann, Saarbrücker Beiträge zur Altertumskunde 58 (Bonn: Dr. Rudolf Habelt, 1987), 33–52; Sebastian Brather, "Ethnische Identitäten als Konstrukte der frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie," *Germania* 78 (2000): 154–58.

cannot be used to explain the realities of the close relationship between material culture and ethnic identity. archaeological evidence should instead be understood as remnants of a subjective though not arbitrary acculturation process; ethnic identity was not linked to a "people" but rather to a group's consciousness of its differences from others. Archaeological remains represent evidence of those social mores and not some sort of ancient identity card.

[149] Shennan, Introduction, 1–32; Veit, "Ethnic Concepts," 39–41.

A certain amount of resistance exists to revisiting discussions of the relationship between ethnicity and anthropological and historical evidence, especially but not exclusively among German scholars. This reluctance owes in large part to the above-mentioned distaste for the racist applications of this research prior to and during World War II.

[150] Wilhelm Schleiermacher, "Bericht über die Tätigkeit der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission vom 1. April 1941 bis 31. März 1942," in *31. Bericht der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission 1941*, pt. 1 (Berlin: Reichsverlagsamt, 1942), 1–4; Rudolf Stampfus, "Die Franken," in *Vorgeschichte der deutschen Stämme: Germanische Tat und Kul tur auf deutschem Boden*, ed. Hans Reinerth (Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut,1940), 1: 212–18.

Goffart, however,

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has argued that not only has the debate not been active, but the same concepts only slightly altered underlie current historical discussions.

[151] Goffart, "Two Notes, " 10–14.

His stance downplays many of the significant advances made in the field by German and Austrian scholars and overlooks French contributions, both positive and negative, to the same discourse. Goffart's critique is nonetheless apt in the sense that some scholars active in research on the early Middle Ages have ignored recent advances in the understanding of ethnic identity during this period. In some cases, they have applied anthropological techniques to assert the alleged purity of the ethnic communities buried at particular cemeterial sites. As in the work of Kossinna and Oscar Montelius (d. 1921) before him,

[152] Gustaf Kossinna, *Ursprung und Verbreitung der Germanen in vor-und frühgeschichtlicher Zeit*, Irminsul: Schriften und Blätter für deutsche Art und Kunst 1 (Berlin: Germanen-Verlag, 1926), 1: 82; Oscar Montelius, "Über die Einwanderung unserer Vorfahren in den Norden, " *Archiv für Anthropologie* 17 (1988): 151–60; Walter Pohl, *Die Germanen*, Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte 57 (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2000), 47–48.

they have conflated differences in skeletal morphology and material culture with ethnic allegiances rather than understanding them as regional distinctions. In his research on the row grave cemetery of Weingarten, for instance, Neil Huber claimed that the Alemans usually had elongated skulls, whereas the indigenous Romanized Celtic population (those found lacking weapons) had shorter ones. He concluded on this basis that the Germanic peoples remained pure of foreign influences.

[153] Neil M. Huber, *Anthropologische Untersuchungen an den Skeletten aus dem alamannischen Reihengräberfeld von Weingarten, Kr. Ravensburg*, Naturwissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zur Vor-und Frühgeschichte in Württemberg und Hohenzollern 3 (Stuttgart: Verlag Müller & Gräff, 1967), 1–31.

Luc Buchet has likewise sought by these means to prove that the Gallo-Roman population buried at Frénouville (Calvados) lived in this region for as long as four thousand years and remained isolated through-out the Merovingian period.

[154] Luc Buchet, "La nécropole gallo-romaine et mérovingienne de Frénouville (Calvados): Étude anthropologique, " *AM* 8 (1978): 6–27; J. Dastugue and S. Torre, "Le cimetière d'Hérouvillette (VI[e] —VII[e] siècles): Étude anthropologique, " *AM* 1 (1971): 127–41.

Although he has modified this view some-what more recently, Buchet still believes that skull shapes and weaponry may be used to distinguish indigenous from Germanic populations.

[155] Luc Buchet, "Die Landnahme der Franken in Gallien aus der Sicht der Anthropologen, " in *Die Franken*, 2: 662–67.

Attempts

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to identify ethnic groups on the basis of unique features such as dental remains have similarly proved unconvincing.

[156] Lars Jorgensen, Kurt W. Alt, and Werner Vach, "Families at Kirchheimam-Ries: Analysis of Merovingian Aristocratic and Warrior Families, " in *Military Aspects of Scandinavian Society in a European Perspective, AD 1–1300 (Papers from an International Research Seminar at the Danish National Museum, Co- penhagen, 2–4 May 1996)*, ed. Anne Nørgärd Jørgensen and Birthe L. Clausen (Copenhagen: National Museum, 1997), 103–12; Kurt W. Alt and Werner Vach, "Rekonstruktion biologischer und sozialer Strukturen in ur- und frühgeschichtlichen Bevölkerungen—Innovative Ansätze zur Verwandschaftsanalyse in der Archäologie, " *PZ* 69 (1994): 57–84.

In other cases of archaeological research on early medieval populations, biological indicators along with other sorts of archaeological evidence have been used to identify the alleged presence of distinct ethnic groups in cemeteries. In England, Härke has observed the existence of a two-to five-centimeter height difference between men interred with and without weapons in fifth-and sixth-century cemeteries. While he recognizes that not all of those buried with weapons were warriors, as this mortuary rite involved symbolic expression, Härke argues that all who were laid to rest in this fashion should be identified as Anglo-Saxons as opposed to Romano-British in origin. This distinction disappeared only in the seventh and early eighth centuries presumably due to intermarriage between the populations.

[157] Härke, *Ängelsächsische Waffengräber*, 195–207; Härke, "Changing symbols, " 149–65; id., "Archaeologists and Migrations, " 19, 40.

Because the differences in height cited by Härke are quite minor, however, it is questionable whether they are statistically significant. Moreover, the biological markers he notes for various cemeteries are in such small portions of the population that they might easily have resulted from familial rather than ethnic groupings. His discussion relies upon the view that communities of Anglo-Saxons and Romano-Britons lived alongside one another for centuries without allowing intermarriage, a situation undocumented in contemporary written sources.

[158] Margarita Díaz-Andre, in Härke, "Archaeologists and Migrations, " 28–29.

Anthropological assessments of cemeterial populations have important contributions to make.

These include showing regional tendencies of populations, but they do not provide sufficient evidence to make the leap from regional distinctions to identification of individuals' membership in particular ethnic groups.

[159] Jean-Pierre Urlacher, Françoise Passard, and Sophie Manfredi-Gizard, *La nécropole mérovingienne de la Grande Oye à Doubs (Départment de Doubs) VI^e –VII^e siècles après J.-C.*, Mémoires de l'AFAM 10 (Saint-Germain-en-Laye: AFAM, 1998), 35–45.

Recent studies have led to the conclusion that no

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clear anthropological distinctions between groups of individuals buried in row grave cemeteries can be easily made.

[160] Manfred Kunter and Ursula Wittwer-Backofen, "Die Franken—Anthropologische Bevölkerungsrekonstruktion in östlichen Siedlungsgebiet, " in *Die Franken*, 2: 658–59. The authors premised their study on the belief that only Franks were buried in these cemeteries.

The increased efficiency and sophistication of DNA-typing should nonetheless allow more objective evaluation of the evidence and expand archaeologists' ability to identify the sex and perhaps blood lines of the occupants of Merovingian necropoleis. Whereas DNA evidence will also permit scholars "to compare patterns of genetic relationships with patterns of similarity in material culture, " it will not enable them to determine the "ethnic" self-consciousness of a particular individual or community.

[161] Stephen J. Shennan, "Some Current Issues in the Archaeological Identification of Past Peoples, " *Archaeologia polona* 29 (1991): 32–33.

Just as in the case of social status, scholars have increasingly challenged tacit assumptions about the relationship between material culture and ethnicity. Although he does not rule out the possibility of identifying ethnic populations on the basis of grave goods, Edward James has suggested that the rapid conglomeration of various peoples into a Romano-Frankish mixed culture would make a clear distinction between their burial rites anachronistic.

[162] James, "Cemeteries, " 71–75; Alexander Bergengruen, *Adel und Grund- herrschaft im Merowingerreich*, Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial-und Wirtschaftsgeschichte, Monograph 41 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1958), 154–71.

He has pointed to the ease with which Gallo-Roman inhabitants of regions in which the Franks had established dominance adopted the majority population's funerary customs. The reverse process occurred among itinerant or subordinate Germanic residents of predominantly Gallo-Roman communities located in southwestern Gaul.

[163] Edward James, "Merovingian Cemetery Studies and Some Implications for Anglo-Saxon England, " in *Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries 1979: The Fourth Anglo- Saxon Symposium at Oxford*, ed. Philip Rahtz, Tania Dickinson, and Lorna Watts, BAR British Series 82 (Oxford: BAR, 1980), 36–45; id., "Cemeteries, " 71–85.

Along these same lines, Patrick Périn has discounted the value of grave goods in assessing the ethnic character of populations. Variations in the use of mortuary deposits likely also stemmed from chronological, political, and other historical factors. The use of "Frankish" burial artifacts thus might have often been a consequence of Germanic influence rather than their actual presence in great numbers.

[164] Patrick Périn, "À propos de publications étrangères récentes concernant le peuplement en Gaule à l'époque mérovingienne: La 'question franque,' " *Francia* 8 (1980): 537–52; id., "Quelques remarques sur la 'question franque' en Gaule du Nord, " *Bulletin de liaison: AFAM* 2 (1980): 79–85; id., "Les Ardennes, " 37–39; Brather, "Ethnische Identitäten, " 168–72.

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In studies based upon the premise that burial goods accurately reflected ethnicity, there are consequently methodological challenges to explaining why some cemeteries contained relatively varied populations. Max Martin's description of Straubing-Bajuwarenstraße as an "international" necropolis, for instance, places too much emphasis on ethnic identity and gives insufficient attention to other factors, such as trade.

[165] Max Martin, "Die Gräberfelder von Straubing-Bajuwarenstraße und Straßkirchen: Zwei erstrangige Quellen zur Geschichte der frühen Baiern im Straubinger Land, " in *Frühe Baiern im Straubinger Land: Gaudemuseum Straub- ing*, ed. Max Martin and Johannes Prammer (Straubing: Druckerei Bertsch, 1995), 18–27; Bonnie Effros, "Dressing Conservatively: A Critique of Recent archaeological Discussions of Women's Brooches as Markers of Ethnic Identity, " in *Gender and the Transformation of the Roman World: Women, Men, and Eunuchs in Late Antiquity and After, 300–900 CE*, ed. Julia Smith and Leslie Brubaker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, in press).

Because mortuary display was especially visible among elites rather than being expressed identically by all members of the population, it must have been linked above all to an ideological emphasis upon wealth and power. Height-ened attention to ethnic markers could signal a group's conscious decision to band together when required by political or economic circumstances.

[166] Lotte Hedeager, "The Creation of Germanic Identity: A European Origin-Myth, " in *Frontières d'empire: Nature et signification des frontières romaines (Actes de la table ronde internationale de Nemours, 1992)*, ed. Patrice Brun, Sander van der Leeuw, and Charles W. Whittaker, Mémoires du Musée du préhistoire d'Île-de-France 5 (Namur: A.P.R.A.I.F., 1993), 121–31.

Halsall has recently demonstrated that links between archaeological artifacts and ethnicity were even more tenuous than suggested in the above studies. He has questioned whether Merovingian mortuary custom involving grave goods was truly Germanic in origin, and argues that it represented an elaboration of fourth-century provincial Roman funerary traditions rather than evidence of Germanic migration. In the case of female graves, for instance, the only real difference between fourth-century Roman and subsequent "Germanic" graves was that the latter might contain brooches and the former did not; in some examples of the first category, contemporaries nonetheless interred females with bracelets, necklaces, earrings, and hairpins.

[167] Guy Halsall, "Archaeology and the Late Roman Frontier: The So-Called 'Föderatengräber' Reconsidered, " in *Grenze und Differenz*, 169–73; id., "The Origins of the *Reihengräberzivilisation*: Forty Years On, " in *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity*, ed. John Drinkwater and Hugh Elton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 196–204.

Even the *francisca*, described in some

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written sources as a double-edged axe, cannot be identified specifically as Frankish, nor the *sax*, a short sword with one edge, as Saxon.

[168] Pohl, "Telling the Difference, " 27–40.

The ease with which late antique men and women adapted to prevailing styles of clothing, weaponry, and burial customs thus blurs Young's above-mentioned distinctions between votive deposits as Roman in origin and burial costume as Germanic. Although Halsall originally proposed the like-lihood that lavish burial goods represented a separatist political statement within the Gallo-Roman population led by the rebellious members of the *Bacaudae*, he has now acknowledged that the Roman symbolism of the rite was a bid for political legitimacy rather than a reflection of the ethnic identity of those participating in such burials.

[169] Halsall, "Origins of *Reihengräberzivilisation*, " 205–7; id., "Archaeology and the Late Roman Frontier, " 176–80.

Changes in personal appearance and community rituals played a decisive role in determining the ideological message to be conveyed.

[170] Edward James, "The Origins of Barbarian Kingdoms: The Continental Evidence, " in *Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms*, 47–48; Carver, "Kingship and Material Culture, " 155–57; id., "Ideology and Allegiance in East Anglia, " in *Sutton Hoo: Fifty Years After*, ed. Richard Farrell and Carol Neuman de Vegvar, American Early Medieval Studies 2 (Oxford: American Early Medieval Studies, 1992), 177–81.

No mechanism prevented Franks envious of the perceived power or sophistication of late Roman mores from adopting and in the process adapting symbolic items or rites from this culture. The opposite might be true in a different geographical and political context.

Rather than particular mortuary customs being uniquely Gallo-Roman or Frankish, funerary symbolism represented a constantly evolving form of political, social, personal, and religious expression. Modern observers must recognize that it is not possible to interpret with any certainty exactly what particular collections of artifacts conveyed to the communities that witnessed such funerary displays. As will be discussed in the chapters that follow, much of the population, even in areas in which not many Franks were known to have settled, employed row grave cemeteries and mortuary deposits from the fifth through seventh century. Families of Germanic descent likewise in some cases chose to use grave inscriptions and sarcophagi. This conclusion does not deny the significance of local and regional differences in mortuary rites but rather suggests that these critical distinctions cannot be attributed uniquely to ethnic identity.

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MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO MEROVINGIAN INTERMENT RITES

To date, the most convincing analyses of grave goods in Merovingian Gaul, including costume, have sought to categorize surviving funerary objects by function. As noted previously, Young has proposed a model of two types of grave goods: Gallo-Roman votive objects and the custom of *inhumation habillée* initiated by Germanic peoples in Gaul. This hypothesis rests in part upon the legal concepts of *Heergewäte* and *Gerade*, which, as discussed earlier in this chapter, did not exist in the early Middle Ages.

[171] Young, "Paganisme, christianisation, " 36–57; id., "Text Aided or Text Misled?" 135–43.

Exceptionally well-preserved finds in predominantly Gallo-Roman regions, such as at Marseilles, Geneva, and elsewhere, also contradict this bipartite division with abundant evidence of the burial of clothing and other grave goods by local inhabitants.

[172] Raymond Boyer et al., *Vie et mort à Marseille à la fin de l'Antiquité: Inhumations habillées des Ve et VIe siècles et sarcophage reliquaire trouvés à l'abbaye de Saint-Victor* (Marseilles: Atelier du patrimoine, 1987); Wood, "Sé-pultures ecclésiastiques, " 18–20.

Recognizing the shortcomings of Young's model, Alain Dierkens has thus formulated an ethnically neutral set of criteria for grave goods; he has distinguished objects placed in graves as a consequence of religious belief and cultural traditions from items associated with the status of the deceased individual.

[173] Dierkens, "La tombe privilégiée, " 47.

This hypothesis represents a modification of an earlier proposal of the existence of three categories, the third of which he eliminated because it referred to possessions that could not be legally inherited due to the alleged inheritance customs of the Germanic peoples.

[174] Dierkens, "Cimitières mérovingiens, " 43.

Dierkens's study also differs significantly in content from the two-category system developed by Frauke Stein. She has identified both legally sanctioned items and those representing offerings for the dead, the second being in her view more typically pagan.

[175] Stein, *Adelsgräber*, 1: 119.

Stein's assessment thus does not acknowledge that grave goods constituted an integral part of Christian burial practice.

In the first of the two categories proposed by Dierkens, goods pertaining to religious and cultural practices include all amulets or objects documented in contemporary written sources as having miraculous or magical powers. The frequent placement of certain artifacts in small pouches or their careful arrangement around the body of the deceased demonstrate that their value was likely greater than their beauty or worth as perceived by modern witnesses.

[176] Audrey L. Meaney, *Anglo-Saxon Amulets and Curing Stones*, BAR British Series 96 (Oxford: BAR, 1981), 24–28.

These practices stemmed not from efforts to shield survivors from those who had suffered unnatural, accidental, or undesirable deaths, but rather from the desire of the living to protect the dead.

[177] But see Kurt Böhner, "Romanen und Franken im Trierer Land: Nach dem Zeugnis der archäologischen Quellen, " in *Siedlung, Sprache und Bevölkerungs- struktur im Frankenreich*, ed. by Franz Petri, Wege der Forschung 49 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1973), 381; Pauli, "Ungewöhnliche Grabfunde, " 45.

This category also includes objects that identified the deceased as Christian, such as rare gold-leaf crosses or *Goldblattkreuze* sewn to the clothing,

[178] *Goldblattkreuze* appear only infrequently in Frankish regions; see Rainer Christlein, "Der soziologische Hintergrund der Goldblattkreuze nördlich der Alpen, " in *Die Goldblattkreuze des frühen Mittelalters*, ed. Wolfgang Hübener, Ver-öffentlichungen des Alemannischen Instituts Freiburg 37 (Bühl: Verlag Konkordia, 1975), 73–83; Hayo Vierck, "Folienkreuze als Votivgaben, " in *Die Goldblattkreuze*, 134–42.

brooches or buckles with inscriptions,

[179] Bernhard Bischoff, "Epigraphisches Gutachten II, " in *Das alamannische Fürstengrab von Wittislingen*, ed. Joachim Werner, Münchner Beiträge zur Vor-und Frühgeschichte 2 (Munich: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1950), 68–71.

and baptismal garments for the newly converted (see figs. 10 and 11).

[180] Roosens, "Reflets de christianisation, " 126.

Food offerings and rites such as liturgical commemoration, which left few or no archaeological traces, like-wise contributed to the spiritual status of the deceased.

[181] Oexle, "Die Gegenwart der Toten, " 32, 48–58.

Church burial, interment *ad sanctos*, and the possession of a sarcophagus or grave stele decorated with Christian motifs or epitaphs all played a role in the expression of religious belief.

[182] Bailey K. Young, "Exemple aristocratique et mode funéraire dans la Gaule mérovingienne, " *Annales ESC* 41 (1986): 390; Alain Dierkens, "Pour une meilleure compréhension du phénomène de la christianisation: Quelques réflexions sur l'implantation du christianisme en pays mosan au haut moyen âge, " in *Christian- isation et déchristianisation (Actes de la neuvième rencontre d'histoire religieuse tenue à Fontevraud, les 3, 4, 5 octobre 1985)*, Publication du Centre de recherches d'histoire religieuse et d'histoire des idées 9 (Antwerp: Presses de l'Université d'Angers, 1986), 51.

The second category of burial items identified by Dierkens reflects primarily the status and rank of the deceased. In contrast to the first group, this category includes the majority of clothing,

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Figure 10. The intricate cloisonnè face of the lavish brooch found at Wittislingen along the Danube is thought to have been produced in a Frankish workshop in the seventh century. Reproduced with the permission of the Prähistorische Staatssammlung, Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte (Munich).

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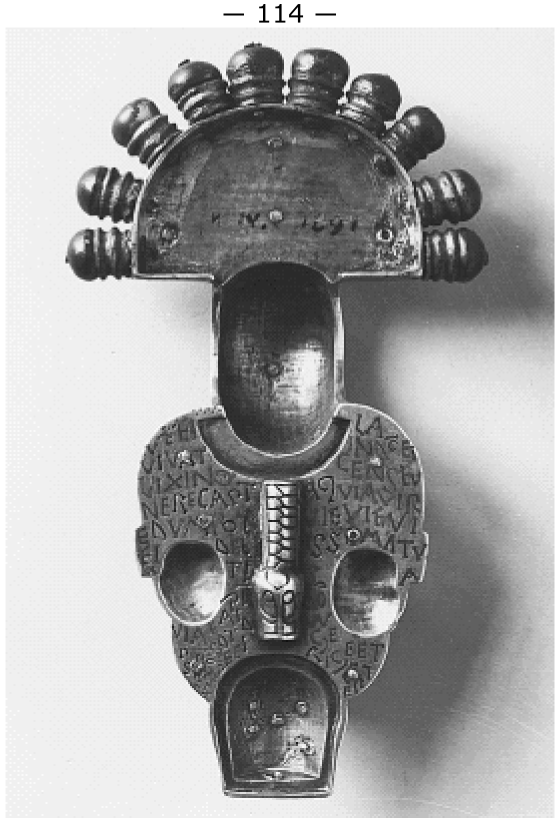

Figure 11. The underside of the seventh-century Wittislingen brooch, with its inscription

dedicated to Uffila, presumably the deceased woman with whom it was buried. The anonymous donor imparted great confidence in Uffila's destiny in the next world in a manner similar to contemporary epigraphy. The recessed areas may have served as repositories for relics. Bischoff, "Epigraphisches Gutachten II, " 68–71. Reproduced with the permission of the Prähistorische Staatssammlung, Museum für Vorund Frühgeschichte (Munich).

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weaponry, furniture, jewelry, animals,

[183] Judith Oexle, however, characterizes the Frankish burial of horses with deceased as not representing sacrificial offerings but status symbols; see her "Merowingerzeitliche Pferdebestattungen—Opfer oder Beigaben?" *FS* 18 (1984): 123–50.

and tools such as keys and scissors. While none of these objects necessarily constituted personal possessions of the interred individual, most likely came from within the circle of his or her kin group or followers.

[184] Härke, "'Warrior Graves,' " 22–24.

The collection of goods promoted the standing of the deceased before his or her relations and the larger community.

Because it is impossible to establish a single interpretation of the significance of particular mortuary goods or rites for an individual or community, Dierkens's two categories of functions require modification. Burial objects and customs were polysemic, potentially fulfilling religious ends and expressing social standing simultaneously.

[185] Cécile Barraud, Daniel de Coppet, André Iteanu, and Raymond Jamous, *Of Relations and the Dead: Four Societies Viewed from the Angle of Their Exchange*, trans. Stephen J. Suffern (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1994), 33–35; Mark P. Leone, "Time in American Archaeology, " in *Social Archaeology: Beyond Sub- sistence and Dating*, ed. Charles L. Redman, Mary Jane Berman, et. al. (New York: Academic Press, 1978), 26–27.

The same type of artifact or clothing had different significance and symbolism depending upon the individual for whom and the time and context in which they functioned.

[186] Gabriella Schubert, *Kleidung als Zeichen: Kopfbedeckungen im Donau- Balkan-Raum*, Osteuropa-Institut an der Freien Universität Berlin: Balkanologische Veröffentlichungen 20 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1993), 31–78.

Mortuary rites might augment or diminish the perceived value of such commodities and thereby have an impact on the perception of individuals involved in the exchange.

[187] Weiner, *Inalienable Possessions*, 5–7; Arjun Appadurai, Introduction to his *Social Life of Things*, 3–6.

Yet if Dierkens's strict division of the objects into separate ritual contexts is abandoned, his approach presents a solid vantage point from which to launch a holistic discussion of burial objects and customs from written and archaeological evidence. His categorization of goods by function represents a significant advance over models proposing a one-to-one correlation of objects to ethnic identity or social status.

What inferences, then, may we draw from evidence for early medieval burial rites in Gaul? In the case of written sources, early medieval religious and lay authorities suggested that the inhabitants of Gaul anticipated subterranean or enclosed burial at death. They were also concerned about the safety of the goods deposited in their graves, although no evidence survives

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indicating that they expected that such objects would accompany the dead to the next life.

[188] But see Birgit Dübner-Manthey, "Zum Amulettbrauchtum in frühmittelalterlichen Frauen-und Kindergräbern, " in *Frauen in Spätantike und Frühmit- telalter:*

Lebensbedingungen-Lebensnormen-Lebensformen, ed. Werner Affeldt (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1990), 67–84.

Following conversion, the faithful in at least urban centers and monastic communities also theoretically anticipated some sort of ritual commemoration at or subsequent to death.

[189] Luce Pietri, "Les sépultures privilégiées en Gaule d'après les sources littéraires, " in *L'inhumation privilégiée*, 133–42; Salin, *La civilisation mérovin- gienne*, 2; 262ff., 383–87.

The recitation of Masses for the dead received increased attention from the seventh and eighth centuries, likely because of increased pessimism about the challenges faced by souls in transit to the afterlife.

[190] Otto Gerhard Oexle, "Mahl und Spende im mittelalterlichen Totenkult, " *FS* 18 (1984): 401–20; id., "Memoria und Memorialüberlieferung im früheren Mittelalter, " *FS* 10 (1976): 82–94.

Even so, from surviving hagiographical and sacramental sources, it is impossible to determine to what extent psalms or Masses were available to or even desired by those outside of clerical and elite circles. For those of means, on the basis of a small number of seventh and early eighth-century extant wills, it appears that families therefore chose to donate movable and immovable property to churches so that prayers might be performed on behalf of deceased relations.

[191] Effros, *Caring for Body and Soul*, 195–97.

The archaeological features of early medieval mortuary practice are not straightforward sources for the description of Merovingian society; nonetheless they yield important information. Although burials did not accurately reflect the everyday lives of the interred,

[192] Luc Buchet and Claude Lorren, "Dans quelle mesure la nécropole du haut moyen âge offre-t-elle une image fidèle de la société des vivants?" in *La mort au moyen âge (Colloque de l'Association des historiens médiévistes français réunis à Strasbourg en juin 1975)*, Collection "Recherches et documents" 25 (Strasbourg: Librairie Istra, 1977), 37–39.

these subjective assemblages tell much about the aspirations and priorities of those responsible for outfitting graves in contemporary cemeteries. No clear divisions existed between "popular" and elite burial practice because both drew on members of the same population.

[193] Lauwers' distinction between what he has characterized as spontaneous folkloric culture and clerical written, and thus hierarchical, culture rests on Robert Hertz's conception of the "primitive" fears of the dead rather than on early medieval sources; see M. Lauwers, "'Religion populaire,' culture folklorique, mentalités: Notes pour une anthropologie culturelle du moyen âge, " *Revue d' histoire ecclésiastique* 82 (1987): 221–58.

Instead there appears to have been a wide range

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of practices, with the weak imitating the customs of the more powerful to the extent that this was possible.

[194] Urlacher, Passard, and Manfredi-Gizard, *La nécropole mérovingienne*, 246–53.

What loomed large in the eyes of those who attended Merovingian funerals, judging from the time and energy invested in preparing the dead for burial, was the effectiveness with which various social groups expressed, redefined, and reinforced their identity and worldview. Funerals represented part of a complex web of rituals by which the living might publicly remember the dead before family members and the larger community.

[195] Barraud et al., *Of Relations and the Dead*, 61–65, 103–5; Guy Halsall, "Burial, Ritual, and Merovingian Society, " in *The Community, the Family, and the Saint: Patterns of Power in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. Joyce Hill and Mary Swan (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), 330–33.

By the late seventh century in Gaul, however, the deposition of grave goods and attention to a prestigious location in a row grave cemetery seem to have become much lower priorities than an exclusive burial place in a small cemetery, church, or churchyard. The vocabulary of mortuary ritual had thus changed significantly by this time.

One way to consider this mass of evidence is by means of anthropologists' characterization of burial ritual as an ideological expression of power. Annette Weiner has termed this process one of "cosmological authentication" of the past as well as the future.

[196] Weiner, *Inalienable Possessions*, 4–5; Michael Mann, *The Sources of So- cial Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 1: 22–24; Georges Duby, "Ideologies in Social History, " in *Constructing the Past: Essays in Historical Methodology*, ed. Jacques Le Goff and Pierre Nora (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 151–65.

Just as in modern cultures, the actions and objects constituting Merovingian funerary ritual served to create, legitimate, and perpetuate social and religious mores, and their repetitive nature linked the community symbolically with the deceased.

[197] Pader, *Symbolism, Social Relations*, 37–40; Sally F. Moore and Barbara G. Myerhoff, Introduction to their *Secular Ritual* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1977), 7–17; Eric Hobsbawm, Introduction to *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1–11.

Cemeteries, as the loci of ritual activity, came to have special significance in reinforcing the identity of the communities that used them.

[198] Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 16–22.

As the social hierarchy grew more stable and clerics succeeded in pushing forward their agenda of greater involvement in Christian burial,

[199] Effros, *Caring for Body and Soul*, 151–56, 187–204.

the rites used to commemorate the dead and the locations and structures in which they

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were interred changed dramatically.

[200] Steuer, "Archaeology and History, " 106–20. This topic will receive greater attention in Chapter 4.

This evolution did not signal the rise of a more spiritualized population, since many of these options had not previously been available to inhabitants. Rather, early medieval Christians adapted the practices viewed as the most effective means of expressing membership and status in their communities.

In sum, as witnessed by the variety of finds in excavated cemeteries, early medieval mortuary rites were not uniform but rather a product of personal choices within the limits of the prevailing cultural context. They represented a negotiated balance between individual and collective concerns, ancient tradition and recent ritual developments.

[201] Polly Wiessner defines style as the way in which individuals evaluate themselves in comparison to others, and on this basis develop and project their self-image; see her "Style and Changing Relations between the Individual and Society, " in *Meanings of Things*, 56–59.

Although grave goods selected by survivors of a deceased man or woman projected a relatively individualized image, they did not necessarily accurately convey his or her actual attainments.

[202] Härke, "'Warrior Graves,' " 42–43; Härke, "Nature of Burial Data, " 19.

The collection of artifacts for placement in sepulchers and the energy required to do so instead reflected in large part the aspirations and resources of the social unit participating in and represented by the funerary ceremony.

[203] Joseph A. Tainter, "Mortuary Practices and the Study of Prehistoric Social Systems, " in

Advances in Archeological Method and Theory, ed. Michael B. Schiffer (New York: Academic Press, 1978), 1: 125; Binford, "Mortuary Practices, " 14–21; Dierkens, "La tombe privilégiée, " 47.

In the early Merovingian period, when great instability existed and the political future of many elite families was uncertain, expenditure on burial represented a means of solidifying a family's position in the community or region. By the seventh century, these needs were no longer as marked, and families' attention moved from the deposition of grave goods to what were viewed as preferable burial locations, such as churches and small cemeteries.

[204] Halsall, "La christianisation de la région de Metz, " 137–46.

In the late seventh and early eighth centuries, kin groups also vied for liturgical commemoration and honors. Masses for the dead satisfied the desire of especially elite families for recognition as well as bolstered the growing authority of clerics in Christian communities in Gaul.

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3. Grave Goods and the Ritual Expression of Identity

Many of the analytical shortcomings of mortuary studies have stemmed from the intrinsically interdisciplinary nature of the evidence. Because scholars have had to utilize materials from fields other than their own to support their findings, they have not always been aware of the limitations of the sources. Just as art historians and archaeologists have often linked their finds confidently to particular historical events or individuals, historians have frequently used what they have trusted to be straightforward archaeological examples as a means of visualizing human interactions documented in the written sources. The discussion below of some of the most common pitfalls of the collaborative use of historical descriptions and archaeological evidence will illustrate some of the consequences of borrowing uncritically across disciplines in the study of Merovingian mortuary practices. Following a general outline of the central features of the deposition of grave goods, a critique of some of the best-documented archaeological sites in early medieval Gaul will highlight not only the diversity of cemeterial practice but also the controversies associated with the interpretation of grave goods.

Early medieval grave artifacts thought to have belonged to royalty have long attracted the attention of specialists in the disciplines of early medieval history, art history, and archaeology. Not only have rich finds linked to historical figures generated great interest among academics and curators, but they have also stirred the curiosity of a more general audience. promoting the material's appeal, however, has meant focusing on lavish rather than representative examples of artifactual remains. These exceptional pieces have been the object of multiple inquiries and the subject of influential exhibitions; much of the resulting research has been highly reliable, although some has been less than methodologically sound. In many instances,

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the uncritical attribution of grave sites to Frankish kings and queens have been more optimistic than realistic.

IN SEARCH OF THE GRAVES OF MEROVINGIAN ROYALTY: THE CASES OF CHILDERIC AND AREGUND

As discussed in Chapter 1, by far the most famous discovery of a royal burial was that of Childeric I (d. 482), first documented by Jean-Jacques Chiflet in 1655. Following his close examination of the previously exhumed grave goods, Chiflet concentrated on cataloguing the significant items of adornment and armament, as well as various personal possessions, including a signet ring, gold brooches, a crystal globe, golden bees, a sword, a scabbard, a belt, a spearhead, an axe, coins, and numerous additional objects.

[1] Jean-Jacques Chiflet, *Anastasis Childerici I: Francorum regis sive thesaurus sepulchralis* (Antwerp: Ex officina plantiniana Balthasaris Moreti, 1655), 81ff.; Jean-Benoît-Desiré Cochet, *Le tombeau de Childéric I^{er} roi des francs, restitué à l'aide de l'archéologie et des découverts récentes* (Reprint, Brionne: Gérard Monfort, Éditeur, 1978), 59ff.; Françoise Dumas, *La tombe de Childéric, père de Clovis* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1982); Patrick Périn and Michel Kazanski, "Vom Kleinkönigtum zum Großreich: Das Grab Childerichs I, " in *Die Franken*, 1: 173–82.

His interpretation of these artifacts, especially the bees or cicadas, served a variety of polemical objectives, among them the promotion of the cause of the Hapsburgs, his patrons, at the expense of their Bourbon rivals.

[2] Fritz Wagner, *Die politische Bedeutung des Childerich-Grabfundes von 1653*, Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte, Jahrgang 1973, pt. 2 (Munich: Verlag der Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1973), 13–17.

Yet while these grave goods may have been representative of the type of objects circulating during the lifetime of Childeric, one may not assume that the king possessed all of them during his lifetime. Supporters likely deposited many of the objects in his grave in order to display their loyalty to him, and, more importantly, to his son and successor, Clovis. The artifacts thus constituted an expression of the nobility's powerful participation in the kingdom's governance. Consequently, modern scholars cannot distinguish between many of the riches in Childeric's grave and those of members of the aristocracy. The grave did not include a royal crown such as would later be employed by Carolingian monarchs, and the bees' significance is unclear, since contemporary texts did not document the existence

of royal insignia.

[3] Alain Erlande-Brandenburg, *Le roi est mort: Étude sur les funérailles, les sépultures et les tombeaux des rois de France jusqu' à la fin du XIII*[e] *siècle*, Bibliothèque de la Société française d'archéologie 7 (Geneva: Droz, 1975), 7; John Michael Wallace-Hadrill, "The Graves of Kings: An Historical Note on Some Archaeological Evidence, " in his *Early Medieval History* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975), 47–48.

While the discovery of Childeric's signet ring supports with the greatest likelihood his burial in this grave, and in the present discussion this identification has been taken to be secure, it cannot guarantee unconditionally that the man laid to rest with great honors at Tournai was the Merovingian king himself.

[4] Chiflet, *Anastasis Childerici I*, 128.

In the mid-1980s, Raymond Brulet excavated the site in the quarter of Saint-Brice, Tournai, where Childeric's grave is thought to have been originally located. By doing so, he conclusively demonstrated that the wealthy sepulcher was not an isolated royal burial as traditionally assumed but that it lay on the edge of a cemetery occupied since the mid-fifth century. The few sectors of the cemetery that could be excavated, as the site is now located in an urban center, revealed that new inhumations continued until at least the early seventh century. The king's burial was likely marked by a large mound or was at least separated from subsequent graves by a circular space with a diameter of roughly twenty to forty meters. Brulet could not confirm the existence of a tumulus, however, because the exact orientation of Childeric's grave remains unknown.

[5] For brief descriptions of each of the 93 Merovingian graves (containing 101 individuals) excavated at this much-disturbed site, see Raymond Brulet and Fabienne Vilvorder, "Inventaire des sépultures et du mobilier funéraire, " in *Les fouilles du quartier Saint-Brice à Tournai*, ed. Raymond Brulet, Publications d'histoire de l'art et d'archéologie de l'Université catholique de Louvain 73 (Louvain: Département d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'art, 1990–91), 1: 122–91, and "Chronologie, " in *Les fouilles du quartier Saint-Brice à Tournai*, 2: 158–77.

Since Chiflet was not present at the actual excavation, he did not include any information to this effect in his publication of the finds.

Brulet's most extraordinary discoveries at Saint-Brice were the skeletons of twenty-one horses. They were divided among three pits on the periphery of the unoccupied land presumed to have surrounded Childeric's grave. Although the horses have provided concrete evidence for the ritual significance of the location, their characterization by Joachim Werner as evidence of a cult to Woden in the time of Childeric cannot be substantiated. Werner also argued that all of the horses had been owned by Childeric, an indefensible claim considering that the remains can be dated only roughly within a span of approximately 150 years by means of C^{14} dating.

[6] Joachim Werner, "Données nouvelles sur la sépulture royale de Childéric, " in *Les fouilles du quartier Saint-Brice à Tournai*, 2: 18–22.

The archaeological evidence points more convincingly, by contrast, to the possibility that the three pits containing the remains of the horses were not dug at the same time.

[7] Étienne Gilot, "Les sépultures de chevaux: Datations au 14C, " in *Les fouilles du quartier Saint-Brice à Tournai*, 2: 47–49.

It is likely, moreover, that the horse burials did not result from the performance of a specifically pagan sacrificial rite. Rather they were symptomatic of the prolific resources expended in the commemoration of Childeric, either at the time of his funeral or in subsequent generations.

[8] Judith Oexle, "Merowingerzeitliche Pferdebestattungen—Opfer oder Beigaben?" *FS* 18 (1984): 123–50.

By the early sixth century, Childeric's grave was no longer located on the edge of an extant cemetery but had instead become its focal point. Although later inhumations clustered around Childeric's sepulcher some-what more closely than in previous generations, the inhabitants still left his grave site undisturbed.

[9] Raymond Brulet, "La sépulture de Childéric et son environnement, " in *Les fouilles du quartier Saint-Brice à Tournai*, 2: 184–92.

Whatever memory of his funeral remained decades afterward, however, it did not deter the local population, by this point presumably Christian, from using the necropolis.

[10] On some of the contemporary graves in Childeric's vicinity, including grave 6 containing a glass bowl decorated with *Chi-Rho* insignia, see Raymond Brulet, "Les sépultures privilegiées: Les sépultures 6 et 10, " in *Les fouilles du quartier Saint-Brice à Tournai*, 2: 71–75.

Inhabitants continued to bury their dead in the same cemetery well into the seventh century. Rather than evidence of the excesses of pagan "barbarian" kingship,

[11] Michael Müller-Wille, "Königtum und Adel im Spiegel der Grabfunde, " in *Die Franken*, 1: 206–11; Raymond Brulet, "Tournai und der Bestattungsplatz um Saint-Brice, " in *Die Franken*, 1: 168–70.

Childeric's grave represents a testament to the continuity of the early medieval landscape and burial customs through the conversion period.

Examination of a more controversial sepulcher attributed to the Merovingian queen Aregund, one of the many wives of Chlotar I (d. 561), reveals the dangers of reading too much into the most lavish mortuary deposits. Constituting an unusually rich find, the tomb was located in the cemetery pertaining to the church of Saint-Denis, now located in the northern suburbs of Paris. The sepulcher contained among other items precious gold jewelry such as pins, earrings, brooches, and an identifying

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name ring; a large glass vase; and her costume, including leather shoes, a linen tunic embroidered in gold, and a wool dress with a long belt.

[12] Michel Fleury and Albert France-Lanord, "La tombe d'Aregonde, " *Les Dos- siers de archéologie* 32 (1979): 27–42; id., "Das Grab der Arnegundis in Saint-Denis, " *Germania* 40 (1962): 341–59; Joachim Werner, "Frankish Royal Tombs in the Cathedrals of Cologne and Saint-Denis, " *Antiquity* 38 (1964): 201–16.

In more recent analyses of the style of the grave goods, which are now held at the Louvre, Patrick Périn has shown that the inhumation could not have occurred prior to 600. He believes it to date from possibly as late as 630 or 640. Archaeological evidence thus conflicts with what was thought on the basis of contemporary written sources to have been the end of her life circa 565–570. Even if the earlier end of Périn's proposed time frame of Aregund's burial is accurate, the queen would have been approximately eighty years old at the time of her death.

[13] Patrick Périn, "À propos de la datation et de l'interprétation de la tombe n° 49 de la basilique de Saint-Denis, attribuée à la reine Arégonde, épouse de Clotaire 1er, " in *L'art des invasions en Hongrie et en Wallonie (Actes du colloque tenu au Musée royal de Mariemont du 9 au 11 avril 1979)*, Monographies du MRM 6 (Morlanwelz: MRM, 1991), 11–30.

Because the original anthropological estimates of the age of the deceased pointed to a woman in her midforties, the grave at Saint-Denis cannot belong to Aregund.

[14] Since the skeletal remains were misplaced some time after the excavation, anthropologists cannot reexamine the bones and reassess the age of the deceased. See Périn, "À propos de la datation, " 25–28;Müller-Wille, "Königtum und Adel, " 216.

Discrepancies between the spelling of the queen's name (Aregundis) and the name inscribed on the ring (Arnegundis) make the link between the queen and the ring even more tenuous.

[15] David M. Wilson, "A Ring of Queen Arnegunde, " *Germania* 42 (1964): 265–68; Guy Halsall, *Early Medieval Cemeteries: An Introduction to Burial Ar- chaeology in the Post-Roman West* (Skelmorlie: Cruithne Press, 1995), 33–34.

The possibility that the queen gave her name ring to a younger woman at the Merovingian court is far less plausible than the proposition that the grave belonged to an altogether different woman of high status.

The tendency to identify the wealthiest Merovingian graves as royal burials represents a product of the more general propensity to understand mortuary artifacts as conveying an accurate image of early medieval life-styles.

[16] Wallace-Hadrill, "Graves of Kings, " 47–48; Heinrich Härke, "'Warrior Graves'? The Background of the Anglo-Saxon Weapon Burial Rite, " *Past and Pres- ent* 126 (1990): 22–24; Frans Theuws and Monika Alkemade, "A Kind of Mirror for Men: Sword Depositions in Late Antique Northern Gaul, " in *Rituals and Power in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Frans Theuws and Janet Nelson, TRW 8 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2000), 407–13.

One might make a similar case against the casual identification of

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the well-appointed grave of the woman buried under the cathedral of Cologne as that of Wisigarde, the second wife of Theudebert. No documentary or artifactual evidence exists for such a specific attribution.

[17] Ursula Koch, "Katalog VI.2: Eine verzweigte Familie, " in *Die Franken*, 2: 931–33.

archaeological evidence from graves does not lend itself to the discovery of historical figures, since burial represented a constructed vision of reality. Funerary display necessitated expenditure of familial resources, the terms of which were not governed by written custom. Kin or a more extended circle might therefore choose to use grave goods, among other ritual options, to commemorate the deceased in the way seen most fitting. Only the materials to which a family had access, their desire to part with some portion of their wealth, and the funerary customs prevalent in that particular community limited these activities.

[18] By contrast, Halsall argues for the existence of more clear-cut rules or customs regarding the number and types of appropriate grave goods, modified to a certain degree by social competition; see his *Settlement and Social Organization: The Merovingian Region of Metz* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 246.

GRAVE GOODS AS AN IDEALIZED IMAGE OF THE DECEASED

Material evidence from a few unusually lavish children's graves in north-eastern Gaul, Anglo-Saxon England, and southern Germany best demonstrates that the deposition of grave goods did not necessarily reflect an individual's achieved status.

[19] James A. Brown, "The Search for Rank in Prehistoric Burial, " in *The Ar- chaeology of Death*, ed.

Robert Chapman, Ian Kinnes, and Klavs Randsborg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 29.

These exceptional sixth-century burials of preadolescents of both sexes, which included neither infants nor toddlers, represented a departure from prevailing norms. Such was the case, for instance, of what have been identified as a six-or seven-year-old boy in grave 70 at Ennery, a six-year-old girl in grave 307bis at Lavoye, a five-to ten-year-old girl in grave 189 at Lavoye, and a girl in grave 84 at Dieuesur Meuse.

[20] Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 92–93, 119–20, 149; René Joffroy, *Le cimetière de Lavoye (Meuse): Nécropole mérovingienne* (Paris: A. & J. Picard, 1974), 121, 129–30.

The contents of these sepulchers paralleled the range of objects found in the most impressively outfitted adult inhumations, including weaponry, jewelry, food deposits, and even furniture, most items presumably

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never used by the deceased.

[21] On sixth-to seventh-century boys' graves with weaponry in Bavaria, see Irmingard Ottinger, "Waffenbeigabe in Knabengräbern: Ein Beitrag zur Beigabensitte der jüngeren Kaiserzeit und der Merowingerzeit, " in *Studien zur vor-und frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie (Festschrift für Joachim Werner zum 65. Ge- burtstag)*, ed. Georg Kossak and Günter Ulbert, Münchner Beiträge zur Vor-und Frühgeschichte, Supplementary vol. 1/II (Munich: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1974), 2: 392. For boys' graves in Anglo-Saxon England, see Heinrich Härke, *Ängelsächsische Waffengräber des 5. bis 7. Jahrhunderts*, Zeitschrift für Archäologie des Mittelalters 6 (Cologne: Rheinland-Verlag, 1992), 190–95.

The famous *Knabengrab* found under the Cologne cathedral contained full-size armament, including a sword, lance, battle axe, bow and arrows, and spear. With the exception of a child-sized helmet, all of the weapons were too heavy and unwieldy for the young boy ever to have carried prior to his untimely death.

[22] Otto Doppelfeld, "Die Domgrabung XII: Totenbett und Stuhl des Knabengrabes, " *Kölner Domblatt* 18–19 (1960): 85–88; id., "Die Domgrabung XIII: Der Helm aus dem fränkischen Knabengrab, " *Kölner Domblatt* 20 (1961–62): 103–26; id., "Die Domgrabung XIV: Das Inventar des fränkischen Knabengrabes, " *Kölner Domblatt* 21–22 (1963): 49–68; id., "Das fränkischen Knabengrab unter dem Chor des Kölner Domes, " *Germania* 42 (1964): 156–88.

Some pieces of armament placed in children's graves were actually constructed in miniature to meet their height and strength requirements. While a proportion of these goods may have been intended for play or practice for warfare, child-sized weapons such as axes without holes for handgrips were never fully functional.

[23] Ottinger, "Waffenbeigabe in Knabengräbern, " 387–405; Birgit Dübner-Manthey, "Zum Amulettbrauchtum in frühmittelalterlichen Frauen-und Kindergräbern, " in *Frauen in Spätantike und Frühmittelalter: Lebensbedingungen-Lebensnormen-Lebensformen*, ed. Werner Affeldt (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1990), 67–68.

Early medieval parents nonetheless rarely chose to bury their children in this fashion; perhaps they did so only with the loss of a favored child, or when an heir's death came at a particularly critical juncture in the family's bid for or defense of elite social status. Just as most who owned swords were not buried with them, neither were children of powerful families usually laid to rest with great wealth.

[24] Theuws and Alkemade, "A Kind of Mirror, " 444–70.

A highly unique grave unearthed by Fritz Fremersdorf at the church of St. Severinus in Cologne further illustrates the implicit problems of introducing modern standards into the interpretation of the significance of mortuary deposition rites. Frequently referred to as the "singer, " the deceased was found dressed in a garment of chamois covering linen undergarments and a knee-length wool tunic. Silk lozenges and gold brocade adorned the

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lavish clothing; gloves, leg wrappings (or possibly stockings) with leather straps, and leather shoes completed the outfit.

[25] Frauke Stein, *Adelsgräber des achten Jahrhunderts in Deutschland*, Ger-manische Denkmäler der Volkwanderungszeit, ser. A, vol. 9 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1967), 1: 111–12.

The deposition of a six-string lyre in the grave led to the presumption by archaeologists that the remains were of a male court entertainer, and evidently an acclaimed one, since the bottom of his sarcophagus was carpeted with dog roses *(Hecken- rosen).*

[26] Rudolf Pörtner, *Die Erben Roms: Städte und Stätten des deutschen Früh- mittelalters* (Düsseldorf: Econ-Verlag, 1964), 79.

The apparent nonchalance with which scholars have interpreted the symbolic significance of this grave belies the absence of extensive documentation on courtly custom during the Merovingian period. These assertions rest on the simple assumption that grave goods accurately mirrored the life of the deceased individual with whom they were interred. Such an unusual discovery of grave goods might have better been used to demonstrate how little is understood of the complexity of Merovingian mortuary rites. While it is not impossible that the deceased's burial attire reflected his profession in life, if that were the case, more of such detailed expressions of particular occupations would have been expected to have appeared by now in excavations of the Merovingian period. It is unknown how or why this individual merited this level of funerary expenditure.

In contrast to the great attention paid to such exceptional graves is the less glamorous exploration of the inhumations containing few or no artifacts. Burials of this sort are often categorized as those of the poor or unfree. They therefore normally receive little notice, since cemeterial reports focus primarily on the classification of prestige objects found in or near excavated graves.

[27] Joachim Werner, "Zur Entstehung der Reihengräberzivilisation: Ein Beitrag zur Methode der frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie, " *AG* 1 (1950): 25–29. Against this interpretation, see Heiko Steuer and Martin Last, "Zur Interpretation der beigabenführenden Gräber des achten Jahrhunderts im Gebiet rechts des Rheins: Diskussionsbeiträge zu Frauke Stein, *Adelsgräber des achten Jahrhunderts in Deutschland*, " *Nachrichten aus Niedersachsens Urgeschichte* 38 (1969): 59.

While many of the sparsely equipped or empty Merovingian graves must have contained the remains of members of poor free, half-free, and slave families, the lack of burial goods did not necessarily mirror the status of these individuals during their lifetimes. mortuary practice, after all, sought to influence contemporaries' understanding of the past through the creation and maintenance of power relationships. Funerary display might entail the exaggeration of norms, or conversely

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the playing down of difference, depending upon the level of tension existing between members of the relevant community.

[28] Guy Halsall, "Burial, Ritual, and Merovingian Society, " in *The Commu- nity, the Family, and the Saint: Patterns of Power in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. Joyce Hill and Mary Swan (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), 325–38.

The absence of burial artifacts from a particular grave may have resulted from a variety of factors. According to Gregory of Tours, for instance, the noble nun Disciola was interred in a linen shroud in a sepulcher located *ad sanctos.*

[29] Bruno Krusch, ed., *Gregorius episcopus Turonensis, Libri historiarum X*, 6.29, MGH: SRM 1.1, rev. ed. (Hanover: Impensis bibliopolii Hahniani, 1951), 268.

Such an inhumation would have left few archaeological traces. An unexpected death far from home might have likewise necessitated kin to devote limited resources to aspects of funerary commemoration other than grave goods.

[30] Peter J. Ucko, "Ethnography and Archaeological Interpretation of Funerary Remains, " *World Archaeology* 1 (1969): 266.

A direct reading of early medieval graves therefore oversimplifies the situation, since contemporaries did not necessarily portray everyday conditions of existence in their relatives' burials.

[31] Mark P. Leone, "Time in American Archaeology, " in *Social Archaeology: Beyond Subsistence and Dating*, ed. Charles L. Redman, Mary Jane Berman, et al. (New York: Academic Press, 1978), 25–30; Ellen-Jane Pader, *Symbolism, Social Relations, and the Interpretation of Mortuary Remains*, BAR International Series 130 (Oxford: BAR, 1982), 37–40; Arthur Alan Saxe, "Social Dimensions of mortuary Practices" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1970), 119–21.

In addition, many current scholarly interpretations of funerary tradition have overvalued the goods most favored in modern society, such as gold, precious stones, and weaponry. Concentration on elite burials with objects of the finest workmanship and most precious materials has promoted a romanticized vision of early medieval male warrior culture by playing down less "extraordinary" evidence. Subjective analyses of grave material have thus too often served to reaffirm the beliefs of their modern investigators.

[32] Christopher Tilley, "Interpreting Material Culture, " in *The Meanings of Things: Material Culture and Symbolic Expression*, ed. Ian Hodder, One World Archaeology 6 (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 188–93.

MORTUARY RITES IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES: SYNCHRONIC AND DIACHRONIC DIVERSITY

The diversity of funerary display in early medieval Gaul indicates that inhabitants were not predisposed to a single combination of mortuary artifacts as a consequence of their religion, legal rank, status, age, sex, or the

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ethnic group into which they were born.

[33] Edward James, *The Merovingian Archaeology of South-West Gaul*, BAR Supplementary Series 25(i), (Oxford: BAR, 1977), 1: 164–65.

Even neighboring settlements could differ significantly in the type of deposition rites they employed to commemorate the dead. Within communities, however, local resources and politics influenced to a great degree the type of choices made by families in burying their relations.

[34] Donald Bullough, "Burial, Community, and Belief in the Early Medieval West, " in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society (Studies Pre sented to J. M. Wallace-Hadrill)*, ed. Patrick Wormald (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), 181–89, 192–94; Edward James, "Burial and Status in the Early Medieval West, " *TRHS*, 5th ser., 39 (1989): 23–40.

Among elites, a certain degree of uniformity resulted from the limited number and thus itinerant lifestyles of those trained in the working of precious metals and stones; goldsmiths such as Eligius of Noyon, for instance, frequently traveled to work for wealthy patrons.

[35] Birgit Arrhenius, *Merovingian Garnet Jewellery: Emergence and Social Implications* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1985), 96–100.

To the extent that it was possible, kin of the deceased tried to imitate traditions promoted by local elites, even if only symbolically.

[36] Edward James, "Cemeteries and the Problem of Frankish Settlement in Gaul, " in *Names, Words, and Graves: Early Medieval Settlement*, ed. P. H. Sawyer (Leeds: University of Leeds, 1979), 81–85.

This practice resulted in notable commonalities in burial rituals within individual cemeteries. Even so, the perceived meaning of the ordinary and prestige goods placed in graves varied markedly depending upon their donors and the audience; artifacts possessed multiple definitions determined by the ritual context in which they functioned. Mortuary practice was thus not inherently arbitrary and could be used to convey messages about the deceased individual to the living.

[37] Pader, *Symbolism, Social Relations*, 19–22, 44; Ucko, "Ethnography, " 274–76.

Although these complex conditions render very difficult any effort to generalize the intricacies of burial rites across large territories, it is helpful to outline the broadest chronological and regional differences in the deposition of grave goods characteristic of Gaul in the early Middle Ages.

Scholars have long documented the existence in the late fourth century of distinct groups of lavishly furnished inhumations within the larger Roman cemeteries west of the Rhine. These graves contained a greater number of burial goods than traditionally found at such necropoleis and included artifacts such as brooches and armament. As a consequence, as noted in the previous chapter, the sepulchers have usually been attributed to the

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Frankish *foederati* who served in the Roman armies.

[38] Kurt Böhner, *Die fränkische Altertümer des Trierer Landes*, Germanische Denkmäler der Völkerwanderungszeit, ser. B, vol. 1 (Berlin: Verlag Gebr. Mann, 1958), 1: 268–69; Horst Wolfgang Böhme, *Germanische Grabfunde des 4. bis 5. Jahrhunderts zwischen unterer Elbe und Loire: Studien zur Chronologie und Bevölkerungsgeschichte*, Münchner Beiträge zur Vor-und Frühgeschichte 19 (Munich: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1974), 1: 201–7.

More recently, however, Guy Halsall has suggested the likelihood that the Roman symbolism of the grave goods might have been played up by a variety of groups seeking legitimacy.

[39] Guy Halsall, "Archaeology and the Late Roman Frontier: The So-Called 'Föderatengräber' Reconsidered, " in *Grenze und Differenz im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. Walter Pohl and Helmut Reimitz, Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 1 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000), 169–73.

Investment of resources in the rite declined after a generation or two in the mid-fifth century but resurged in the late fifth and early sixth centuries, as witnessed by an increased number of furnished burials with luxury artifacts. Between the Loire and the Rhine, changes frequently coincided with the abandonment of preexisting cemeteries in favor of large rural necropoleis near villages.

[40] Patrick Périn, "Remarques sur la topographie funéraire en Gaule mérovingienne et à sa périphérie: Des nécropoles romaines tardives aux nécropoles du haut moyen âge, " *CA* 35 (1987): 19–22.

These row grave cemeteries notably contained a higher proportion of sepulchers with burial goods than in the previous century. Most visible among them were exceptional inhumations, often identified as "founder" or "chieftain" graves by archaeologists. This label reflects the large number and quality of artifacts marking the grave of a prominent man, and sometimes also a woman, in each cemetery, dating from some time close to the start of occupation of the new burial site.

[41] Halsall, *Early Medieval Cemeteries*, 9–15; Hermann Ament, "Zur archäologische Periodisierung der Merowingerzeit, " *Germania* 55 (1977): 133–40.

The occupation of these rural cemeteries usually ceased in the late seventh century, a development that cannot be attributed to the conversions that had occurred centuries earlier.

South of the Loire, by contrast, greater continuity characterized cemeteries located near late Roman settlements and churches. One manifestation of the long occupation or reoccupation of older necropoleis was the frequent reuse of tombs and thus the consequent disturbance of skeletal remains and any goods that might have once accompanied the dead. At the Arlesian cemetery of Trinquetaille, for example, archaeologists have documented evidence of the inhabitants' employment of some of the stone

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sarcophagi as many as six times.

[42] Fernand Benoit, "Cimetières paléochrétiens de Provence, " *CA* 2 (1947): 7–15.

Characteristically, fewer grave goods accompanied the dead than was the case farther to the north of Gaul. The exceptions included objects pertaining to clothing, such as large buckles *(plaque-boucles)* used to fasten belts, votive ceramics, and occasional weapons. Because belt buckles were produced locally, and were influenced by both Germanic prototypes and the late Roman custom of including belts in military and civilian dress for men, they cannot serve as reliable indicators of ethnicity, since they are known only from the context of burial.

[43] James, *Merovingian-Archaeology*, 1:98–105;Halsall, *Early Medieval Cem- eteries*, 20–24.

As in the north of Gaul, a decline in the quantity and general diversity of mortuary goods occurred in the sixth and seventh centuries in cemeteries south of the Loire. Contemporary with these changes across Gaul was a dramatic increase in the number of burial grounds in proportion to settlements. This trend indicates that by the seventh century cemeteries appear to have belonged to single communities rather than serving a cluster of them jointly.

[44] Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 183–88, 250–52.

By the late seventh century, the inhabitants of Gaul had largely abandoned the custom of deposing grave goods. As discussed in Chapter 2, these changes resulted not from more profound "Christianization" of the population at this late date but from the decreasing necessity of social competition through this facet of mortuary ritual.

A brief assessment of the features of a few of the most well-documented Merovingian-period cemeteries will help illustrate the great diversity of mortuary customs practiced in the early Middle Ages. Rather than providing a comprehensive synopsis of each cemetery or anything approaching a complete picture of burial across early medieval Gaul, my assessment concentrates on general patterns in the employment of grave goods at these particular sites over the period during which they were occupied. Beyond this, the discussion is intended to identify how different methodological approaches have affected the interpretation of the mortuary evidence. I will concentrate here on deposition rites; in the next chapter I will examine general features of funerary topography.

On a practical note, a number of modifications to the authors' original language were necessary for the sake of clarity and accuracy in my explication of the respective archaeological reports. Excluded from the assessments, except when being critiqued, were references to the ethnicity or belief systems of the deceased. As argued in Chapter 2, grave goods, skulls,

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and skeletal measurements normally provide insufficient grounds for making these identifications.

[45] For a sample of the opposing view, see: Joël Blondiaux, "Évolutions d'une population d'immigrés en Gaule du Nord de la fin du IVe siècle à la fin du VIIe siècle: Vron (Somme), " in *Homme et milieu: Approches paléoanthropologiques (Actes des quatrièmes journées anthropologiques de Valbonne, 25–26–27 mai 1988)*, ed. Luc Buchet, Dossier de documentation archéologique 13 (Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1989), 57–71; Patrick Périn, "Les consequences ethniques de l'expansion franque: État de la question, " in *Le phénomene des Grandes'Invasions': Realité ethnique ou échanges culturels l'anthropologie au secours de l'histoire (Actes des prémiers journées anthropologiques de Valbonne [16–18 avril 1981])*, Notes et monographies techniques 12 (Valbonne: Centre de recherches archéologiques, 1983), 85–89.

In presenting these cemeterial analyses, it was also difficult to decide how to address sex and the expression of gender in Merovingian mortuary contexts. As noted earlier, the physical anthropological reports at many of these sites not only incorporated poorly preserved skeletal remains in determining the sex of the deceased, but also took into account the goods with which the deceased were buried.

[46] For example, see Luc Buchet and Christian Pilet, "Des femmes orientales en basse Normandie au Ve siècle, " in *La femme pendant de moyen âge et l'époque moderne (Actes des sixièmes journées anthropologiques de Valbonne, 9–10–11 juin 1992)*, ed. Luc Buchet, Dossier de documentation archéologique 17 (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 1994), 123.

The consequence of such methods has been the reinforcement of preconceived notions of modern archaeologists regarding the "typical" costume of early medieval men and women. The relationship between sex and gender was likely far more complex.

[47] S. J. Lucy, "Housewives, Warriors, and Slaves? Sex and Gender in Anglo-Saxon Burials, " in *Invisible People and Processes: Writing Gender and Childhood into European Archaeology*, ed. Jenny Moore and Eleanor Scott (London: Leicester University Press, 1997), 154–62; Roberta Gilchrist, "Ambivalent Bodies: Gender and Medieval Archaeology, " in *Invisible People and Processes*, 42–44.

Because the degree of error is unknown, I have thus avoided drawing broad conclusions about the expression of gender ideology in Merovingian-period communities.

Finally, a number of factors affected the selection of cemeteries discussed in the next two chapters. Because of the poor standard of publication for many cemeteries during the period in which some of the best-known Merovingian burial sites were excavated, even a basic survey proves a difficult undertaking. As was observed in Chapter 1, a variety of fates befell early medieval necropoleis. State-sponsored construction of railroads and roads in the latter half of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries had a particularly adverse effect on burial sites.

[48] Claude Seillier, "L'époque des migrations en Gaule du Nord dans les collections publiques et privées, " in *Trésors archéologiques du Nord de la France* (Valenciennes: Musée des Beaux-Arts de Valenciennes, 1997), 108–14; Françoise Vallet, "La Picardie avant 1914 à l'avant-garde de la recherche archéologique mérovingienne, " in *La Picardie, berceau de la France: 1500ème anniversaire de la bataille de Soissons 486–1986*, Catalogue de l'exposition (Amiens: Imprimerie Moulet, 1986), 9–15.

Much of the worst intentional

damage was the result of antiquarian plundering of the most visible and hence accessible cemeteries. The impact of this looting was especially marked in the south of France, where the visibility of stone sarcophagi rendered early medieval sites vulnerable to exploration and thefts. Even in the recent salvation excavation conducted at La Grande Oye at Doubs (Doubs), a site discovered in 1987, more than a hundred graves were destroyed by highway construction before archaeologists were able to intervene.

[49] Jean-Pierre Urlacher, Françoise Passard, and Sophie Manfredi-Gizard, *La nécropole mérovingienne de la Grande Oye à Doubs (Départment du Doubs) VIe –VIIe siècles après J.-C.*, Mémoires de l'AFAM 10 (Saint-Germain-en-Laye: AFAM, 1998), 22–23.

Consequently, as the selection of cemeteries presented here depended on the quality of their documentation, the sample is admittedly less representative than would have been ideal. Most of the necropoleis discussed are located north of the Loire instead of to the south.

The exceptional cemetery of Civaux (Vienne), with its thousands of stone sacrophagi, provides an example of the devastation that occurred at many southern sites. This burial ground may have originally contained as many as sixteen thousand tombs prior to the time of its pillage over the course of a three-day eighteenth-century excavation. Many of the looted sarcophagi were thereafter used as animal troughs or steps in homes by local residents. As a consequence, virtually nothing is known of their original contents or the early medieval configuration of the cemetery.

[50] François Eygun, "Le site archéologique antique et paléochrétien de Civaux (Vienne), " in *Atti del VI congresso internazionale di archeologia cristiana, Ra- venna 23–30 settembre 1962*, Studi di antichità cristiana 26 (Rome: Pontificio istituto di archeologia cristiana, 1965), 70; James, *Merovingian Archaeology*, 1:174–76.

The 230 graves excavated at Niort (Deux-Sèvres), however, give a tantalizing glimpse of the possible goods stone sarcophagi might have originally contained.

[51] G. Nicolini, "Circonscription de Poitou-Charentes, " *Gallia* 29 (1971): 265–66.

Similar misfortunes befell the apparently well-endowed cemetery of Herpes (Charente). Philippe Delamain's careless excavation of this cemetery in the late nineteenth century has made even a rough estimate of how many graves the necropolis contained difficult. Likewise, Delamain left only a ten-page report for the entire cemetery of Biron (Charente-Maritime),

and its contents were likely mixed with those of Herpes and other local cemeteries. Many of the objects unearthed at the two sites were sold at auction at the time of Delamain's death, and the whereabouts of a good portion remains unknown.

[52] James, *Merovingian Archaeology*, 1: 166–69.

In some cases all that identifies an artifact with a particular cemetery is a nineteenth-century paper label, such as the one on the back of a disk brooch from Hermes (Oise), now in the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art (see figs. 12 and 13). Unfortunately, the rear plate does not appear to be original to the brooch.

Köln-Müngersdorf

In 1926, in anticipation of the construction of a sports facility, archaeologists excavated the cemetery of Köln-Müngersdorf, about five kilometers west of the heart of the modern city of Cologne (see fig. 14). Containing the remains of at least 149 humans and one horse burial, the row grave cemetery was likely examined in its entirety, with the exception of a few areas in which there had been more recent disturbances. When inhabitants first used Köln-Müngersdorf as a burial ground in the latter part of the first half of the sixth century, the cemetery stood near a minor Roman route and about seventy meters north of a deserted Roman villa. The land was used for this purpose for just over a century before its abandonment some time early in the second half of the seventh century. The oldest part of the burial site was concentrated to the north, with at least three north-south inhumations and likely one cremation grave dated to before 550. The remaining seventeen or so sepulchers in this sector faced northeast in somewhat uneven rows. Graves in all other parts of the cemetery, by contrast, had a west-east orientation in relatively evenly spaced rows established over the course of multiple generations.

[53] Fremersdorf also argued that approximately eleven families used this cemetery to bury their dead during this period. This observation seems to have rested on his characterization of the wealth and location of the graves; see Fremersdorf's *Das fränkische Reihengräberfeld Köln-Müngersdorf*, Germanische Denkmäler der Völkerwanderungszeit 6 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1955), 1: 1–4, 16–18.

Although Fritz Fremers-dorf assumed the occupants of this cemetery to have been pagan or superficially converted Franks, no evidence exists to verify the accuracy of his hypothesis.

Excavations at Köln-Müngersdorf revealed that the majority of the burials might have once been accompanied by wooden biers or coffins. One sixth of the trenches, however, were too narrow to have ever accommodated such amenities. Stones lined the interior of a small number of graves,

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Figure 12. The face of a seventh-century filigree bossed disk brooch thought to have been discovered at the cemetery of Hermes (Oise) in 1897. Composed of gold, copper alloy, gilt silver, and glass, the piece is 2.6 centimeters in diameter and has been a part of The Metropolitan Museum of Art's early medieval collection since 1917 (17.191.21). For further information on this piece, see Françoise Vallet, "The Golden Age of Merovingian Archaeology, " 16–17; pl. 3.4. Reproduced with the permission of The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

whereas those dug most deeply, as much as two meters, provided space for larger wooden structures *(Holzkammergräber)*. As noted by Fremersdorf, the remarkable consistency of the spacing of graves for more than a century in the main part of the cemetery indicated that they must have been marked externally in some manner. They probably had nothing as permanent as stone epitaphs, however, since none survive that have been identified with this cemetery. The possibility that thieves knew in advance the sex of their victims leads to similar conclusions: broken bones and other signs of partial disturbance demonstrated that as many as 30 percent of the deceased were selectively robbed within a generation of their interment. Robbers dug in different areas of the grave according to whether

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Figure 13. The back side of the brooch pictured in figure 12, but possibly a modern pastiche. The label gives its provenance and date of discovery. Originally part of the collection of the priest and antiquary, the abbé Hamard, who excavated at the cemetery of Hermes (Oise) over the course of two decades, the brooch and its added backing were purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan through his dealer Jacques Seligmann. At one time the piece may also have been a part of the collection of Albert Jumel, an active antiquary and colleague of C. Boulanger. Vallet, "The Golden Age of Merovingian Archaeology, " 12–17; pl. 3.4. Reproduced with the permission of The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

they anticipated weaponry or jewelry, thus indicating that they had some knowledge of who had been buried there. Evidence of funerary meals held at the cemetery, as well as two double interments, also points to the inhabitants' ability to locate individual graves of importance to them.

[54] Fremersdorf, *Das fränkische Reihengräberfeld*, 1: 21–35.

Not all members of the population, however, were inhumed in this cemetery. Archaeologists were not able to identify, for instance, any infant skeletons among the remains. While their absence may be due in part to

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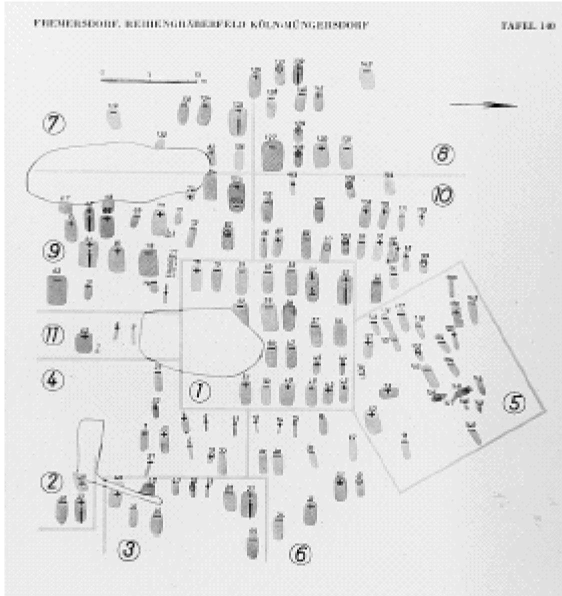

Figure 14. Map from Fremersdorf, Das *fränkische Reihengräberfeld Köln-Müngersdorf*, 2: pl. 140. The lines drawn around groups of graves were meant to identify what Fremersdorf believed were families. Map reproduced with the permission of Walter de Gruyter.

the rapid deterioration or more shallow burial of their fragile skeletal remains, the number of preadolescent children's graves was likewise quite low, comprising just over 10 percent of the finds. It is thus unclear whether the community or communities utilizing this burial ground also occupied other sites simultaneously or had a different rite for laying to rest juvenile members of the population. As for the distribution of male and female corpses in the cemetery, in all but sixty-five cases, the skeletons were too far decayed for Fremersdorf to have determined their sex on the basis of physical attributes alone. He noted that sometimes the only sign of human

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remains was darkly colored soil. To reach a judgment of whether human remains were male or female, he thus relied upon the approximate height of the skeleton as well as the type of grave goods with which the deceased was interred.

[55] Ibid., 38–42, 51–53. On some of the variables affecting the height of male and female skeletons, and the degree of differentiation between them, see Theya Molleson, "Can the Degree of Sexual Dimorphism Provide an Insight into the Position of Women in Past Populations?" in *La femme pendant le moyen âge et l'époque moderne*, 52–53.

These methods meant that his statistics regarding the numbers of men and women in the cemetery had a high likelihood of being inaccurate. Any study of gender on the basis of Fremersdorf's conclusions regarding the proportion of men to women in the cemetery would largely serve to confirm his expectations about the way in which members of both sexes were dressed and buried in the early Middle Ages.

Fremersdorf's summaries and images of the contents and state of preservation of the graves nevertheless offer an opportunity to make some general observations about the distribution of grave goods in this cemetery. To start, the sepulchers dated by Fremersdorf to the earliest period in which burials took place at this site, prior to 550, were not particularly well endowed with durable goods. In the three graves from this period that he identified as male (graves 53, 106 and 148), there was an assortment of small buckles, the remains of a *francisca*, an unidentified bronze coin, a knife, two flints, and two ceramic pots.

[56] Fremersdorf, *Das fränkische Reihengräberfeld*, 1: 141–55; 2: pls.10 and 25.

These examples did not resemble the sort of unusually rich burials often found at the new occupation of a site for a row grave cemetery. Moreover, their location did not attract many additional lavish interments during the following generation. The next fifty years, by contrast, exhibited greater diversity in the number and type of long-enduring artifacts deposited per grave, at least among the twenty-five burials that Fremersdorf believed he could confidently date to this period. In part, the larger variety of mortuary objects stemmed from the inclusion of women along with men in the cemetery from this time forward. The presence of women does not appear, however, to have been the sole factor contributing to the diversity of grave artifacts. Beads, brooches, glass vessels, rings, a wider variety of weaponry (although no swords and only one scramasax), shears, and combs were present in addition to the type of objects deposited in the graves in the previous period.

[57] Fremersdorf identified the graves dating from the period 550–600 as 18, 19, 50, 59, 70, 76, 84, 90, 94–96, 98–99, 105, 113, 116, 118–19, 122–23, 131, 142–43, and 149; see Fremersdorf, *Das fränkische Reihengräberfeld*, 1: 138–55; 2: pls.5, 6, 9, 10, 14–15, 17–21, 23–25.

Because he altogether

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omitted from his discussion graves in the cemetery that contained goods he considered too difficult to date, as well as graves that had been disturbed or that lacked any mortuary objects whatsoever, Fremersdorf's presentation of the distribution of burial artifacts was fairly one-sided.

In some of the graves that he dated to early decades of the seventh century, Fremersdorf observed the use of what he identified as amulets; among the objects he categorized as such were bits of Roman artifacts, stones and minerals, animal teeth, shells, and beads.

[58] Fremersdorf, *Das fränkische Reihengräberfeld*, 1: 98–99.

Reuse of ancient objects, including ceramics, glass, bronze brooches, and scraps of iron, was a fairly commonplace activity in the early Middle Ages, and many such objects found their way into contemporary graves.

[59] G. Faider-Feytmans, "Objets d'époque romaine découverts dans des tombes mérovingiennes du bassin de La Haine (Belgique), " in *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire offerts à André Piganiol*, ed. Raymond Chevallier (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1966), 2: 1011–18.

Because the value accorded to such objects was far greater than merited by their physical worth, they may have served to protect the health and physical well-being of their bearers.

[60] Audrey L. Meaney, *Anglo-Saxon Amulets and Curing Stones*, in BAR British Series 96 (Oxford: BAR, 1981), 10–12, 24–31.

Referred to in early medieval sources as having magical or prophylactic powers, *ligamina, phylacteria*, and *ligaturae* fell under infrequent attack by bishops such as Caesarius of Arles and Eligius of Noyon.

[61] Germain Morin, ed., *Sanctus Caesarius Arelatensis, Sermones* 50, 52, 54, rev. ed., *CCSL* 103 (Turnhout: Typographi Brepols editores pontificii, 1953), 224–27, 230–33, 235–40; Bruno Krusch, ed., *Praedicatio Eligii de supremo iudicio* 2, MGH: SRM 4 (Hanover: Impensis bibliopolii Hahniani, 1902), 751–52.

Clerics also criticized the employment of amulets as idolatrous at the Council of Orléans in 511;

[62] Charles de Clercq, ed., *Concilium Aurelianense* (511) c. 30, in *Concilia Galliae A.511-A.695*, CCSL 148A (Turnhout: Typographi Brepols editores ponti-ficii, 1963), 12.

they condemned them more definitively in the enigmatic Carolingian *Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum* in 744–45.

[63] Alfredus Boretius, ed., *Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum* 10, MGH: Leges 2, Capitularia 1.108 (Hanover: Impensis bibliopolii Hahniani, 1883), 223; Alain Dierkens, "Superstitions, christianisme et paganisme à la fin de l'époque mérovingienne: À propos de l'*Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum*, " in *Magie, Sorcellerie, Parapsychologie*, ed. Hervé Hasquin, Laicité Série Recherches 5 (Brussels: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1984), 20.

No evidence, however, supports the idea that Merovingian

Christians believed that they would wear these amulets in the next life or that they were necessary to protect the living from the dead.

[64] But see Dübner-Manthey, "Zum Amulettbrauchtum, " 67–68; Ludwig Pauli, "Ungewöhnliche Grabfunde aus frühgeschichtlicher Zeit: Archäologische Analyse und anthropologischer Befund, " *Homo* 29 (1978): 45.

Descriptions of a large assortment of burial objects as amuletic have frequently served as a catch-all explanation for the presence of artifacts in graves for which no other discernible purposes may be determined. In many cases, the identification of the alleged prophylactic functions of the artifacts in question is not likely to be accurate. Fremersdorf, for instance, applied his own definition of phylacteries to excavated objects in order to explain that women at Köln-Müngersdorf were more superstitious than men, since women's graves allegedly held more objects devoid of apparent practical uses.

[65] Fremersdorf, *Das fränkische Reihengräberfeld*, 1: 99.

The subjectivity of these assertions becomes especially clear when one notes that Fremersdorf identified beads in five men's graves as sword "tassels, " despite the absence of swords in four of these.

[66] Ibid., 75–76.

His analysis reflected twentieth-century stereotypes rather than having anything to do with the social conventions of early medieval Gaul.

In the thirty-four graves documented by Fremersdorf as dating from the second half of the seventh century, the trend toward more elaborate funerary display continued. Some of the most lavish depositions of durable mortuary goods took place in this period; among the graves were half of the eight sword and ten scramasax burials uncovered in the cemetery. Other relatively exclusive items from this period and the next included glass cups.

[67] At Köln-Müngersdorf, 21 of 149 graves excavated had drinking glasses with rounded bottoms (*Sturzbecher*); see Fremersdorf, *Das fränkisches Reihengräber- feld*, 1: 34–35, 73–75, 99.

They pertained to the more general custom in Gaul of interring with the dead eating and drinking vessels, some of which were filled with food and drink. Along with other culinary utensils, such as knives and spoons, ceramic, glass, and bronze vessels likely had cultic-symbolic significance. As will be discussed in greater detail below, the rites presumably derived from ancient *Parentalia* celebrations and the tradition of holding ritual meals at funerals as well as on anniversaries of significance.

[68] Günter Behm-Blancke, "Trankgaben und Trinkzeremonien im Totenkult der Völkerwanderungszeit, " *Alt-Thüringen* 16 (1979): 171–227; Albert J. Genrich, "Grabbeigaben und germanisches Recht, " *Die Kunde*, new series 22 (1971): 196. Günter Behm-Blancke believes, however, that the rite remained unchanged over two millennia.

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Although Caesarius of Arles and the *Indiculus superstitionum et pa- ganiarum* two centuries later denounced such commemorative rites as having negative religious connotations, this intermittent prohibition of funerary meals had little direct effect on the mortuary practices of the general population.

[69] " … hoc est, maerenti ecclesiae vivificatum reddit, cum peccator admissor crimine, antequam sepeliatur …" (Morin, ed., *Sanctus Caesarius Arelatensis, Ser- mones* 190, CCSL 104: 775–77); "De sacrilegio super defunctos, id est dadsisas" (Boretius, *Indiculus* 2, MGH: Leges 2, Capitularia 1.108, 223. *Dadsisas*— funerary meals or libations—included food inhumed with the deceased; see Dierkens, "Superstitions, " 18.

The cessation of this practice in much of Gaul by the early seventh century, and in Germany in the mid-seventh century, did not stem from a process of "Christianization."

[70] Otto Gerhard Oexle, "Mahl und Spende im mittelalterlichen Totenkult, " *FS* 18 (1984): 401–20; Behm-Blancke, "Trankgaben und Trinkzeremonien, " 198.

That funerary feasting became less common as much as one hundred years before the end of the deposition of all sorts of grave goods points to the fact that drinking mugs and most other eating implements in Merovingian interments no longer contributed effectively to the symbolic expression of the deceased's identity.

[71] Bonnie Effros, *Creating Community with Food and Drink in Merovingian Gaul* (New York: Palgrave, in press).

By contrast, there is no evidence that these artifacts of personal attire and equipment were rejected because they were believed to have constituted aids to the deceased's ability to partake of this nourishment.

[72] Bailey K. Young, "Paganisme, christianisation et rites funéraires mérovingiens, " *AM* 7 (1977): 46–49. For the opposing view, see Behm-Blancke, "Trank-gaben und Trinkzeremonien, " 214–25.

Krefeld-Gellep's sixth-century grave 1782, for instance, contained an iron roasting spit *(Bratspieß)* at least seventy-eight centimeters long. This rare type of display must have necessitated great expenditure by the deceased's kin group or noble followers, rivaling that of the most expensive types of weaponry.

[73] Renate Pirling, "Ein fränkisches Fürstengrab aus Krefeld-Gellep, " *Ger- mania* 42 (1964): 201–2.

Personal sentiments may also have influenced the rite to some extent and manifested themselves in the deposition of foodstuffs favored during the deceased's lifetime. Grave 1782 at Krefeld-Gellep thus likewise included a bronze bowl with handles holding the remains of beef ribs.

[74] Pirling, "Ein fränkisches Fürstengrab, " 205–6.

Similarly, the lavish graves of a woman and boy buried under the Cologne

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cathedral contained fragments of date pits, hazelnuts, and walnuts along-side other deposits on behalf of the deceased.

[75] Otto Doppelfeld, "Die Domgrabung XI: Das fränkische Frauengrab, " *Köl- ner Domblatt* 16–17 (1959): 68–74; id., "Die Domgrabung XII, " 89; Edward James, *The Franks* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 141.

In his report on the excavations at Köln-Müngersdorf, Fremersdorf identified the most recent groupings of graves as having been interspersed with older ones. For the most part, however, the twelve inhumations Fremersdorf dated to shortly after 650 were concentrated in the southern half of the cemetery. The sepulchers in this final phase of the cemetery's occupation included some of the most lavishly endowed weapon burials. Among these were graves 65 and 139, neither of which, however, was otherwise unambiguously marked by signs of extraordinary expenditure, such as a wood-lined chamber *(Holzkammer)* or a particularly prominent location in the cemetery. Moreover, no burials dated post-650 contained coins, and only grave 66 was noted as producing the remains of a ceramic vessel.

[76] Fremersdorf, *Das fränkische Reihengräberfeld*, 1: 73–74, 91–92, 101–4; 2: pls. 11 and 24.

A general decline in the diversity of artifacts deposited in graves thus occurred in the late seventh century. The inhumations containing goods had fewer objects on average than had been the case previously, and a small number of specifically "female" artifacts, such as beads and brooches, were found. The latter demographics likely resulted from adaptations made to the funerary rite over time rather than from an especially low representation of women in this period of the cemetery's occupation. These developments point to evolving attitudes toward the expression of identity, including gender, in the late Merovingian period.

[77] Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 150, 163; Lucy, "Housewives, Warriors, and Slaves?" 157–62.

Frénouville

Discovered by a farmer in 1970, the row grave cemetery of Frénouville in lower Normandy was excavated shortly thereafter over the course of eighteen months (see fig. 15). The burial grounds were located near a Roman road and two Roman villas and were occupied from the late third to the end of the seventh century. From an early date of the cemetery's use, humanmade features defined the borders of the graveyard on at least two sides. Along the eastern edge of the cemetery ran a ditch more than a meter deep and wide. In addition, a large gate, presumably an entrance,

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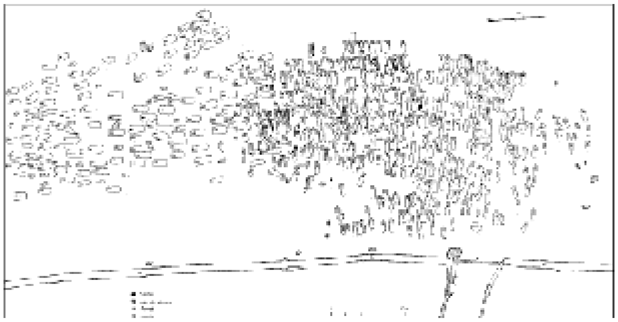

Figure 15. The row grave cemetery at Frènouville. Unnumbered map in Pilet, La nècropole de Frènouville. Map reproduced electronically with the permission and kind assistance of Christian Pilet.

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appears to have opened toward the direction of one of the villas. A series of postholes marked what was probably the northern edge of the cemetery during this period. At the time of the cemetery's excavation, archaeologists believed that they had examined in its entirety the roughly rectangular rural site of more than four thousand square meters.

Research on the necropolis revealed a total of 650 graves containing the remains of 801 individuals. Since the high chalk content of the soil led to the deterioration of much of the skeletal evidence, however, Christian Pilet has observed that nearly a quarter of the graves no longer contained any bodily remains at all. As at Köln-Müngersdorf, the proportion of children's to adults' graves was also very low. It is hence probable that there were initially more occupants of the cemetery than those who left traces in the archaeological record.

[78] Christian Pilet, *La nécropole de Frénouville: Étude d'une population de la fin du III*[e] *à la fin du VII*[e] *siècle*, BAR International Series 83(i) (Oxford: BAR, 1980), 1: 1–7.

Although the size of the community or communities using this cemetery was only somewhat larger than that at Köln-Müngersdorf, inhabitants continued to make use of the burial site for four centuries, as compared to the occupation of Köln-Müngersdorf for just over one century. Such a lengthy period of use was fairly unusual for the Merovingian period, since most fourth-century cemeteries in Gaul were abandoned in the early fifth century.

[79] James, "Cemeteries, " 76–77.

Frénouville experienced at least two distinct phases in its occupation. From the late third century in what would become the southern part of the cemetery, inhabitants laid out 152 graves facing south to north with regular spaces between them. On a few occasions, however, the sepulchers intersected one another. Most were plain earth burials, with the exception of forty-three graves that contained either wooden coffins or biers. From the mid-fifth century, by contrast, sepulchers were regularly positioned with a west-east orientation about thirty meters north of the existing burials. These 498 graves were on average shallower and located closer to one another than in the previous phase. In twenty instances, families interred their dead in chalk sarcophagi; only in a couple of known examples were wooden coffins used. An apparent shortage of land for the cemetery or possibly a desire for more modest burial contributed to narrower spacing between graves during this period. Concern for space also accounted for a much higher rate of reuse among the west-east graves by the late seventh

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century. As was the case in contemporary cemeteries in the Ardennes,

[80] Patrick Périn, "Les Ardennes à l'époque mérovingienne: Étude archéolo-gique," *Études ardennaises*50 (1967): 7–11. The rites' ethnic implications of the rites posited by Périn, however, are difficult to substantiate.

a single sepulcher might accommodate the skeletal matter of as many as four individuals; in the process, the bones of earlier occupants of the graves were pushed aside or discarded as new corpses were added. If at least some of the perpetrators of this tradition were families burying their dead to-gether, we may surmise that contemporaries must have been able to iden-tify the locations of particular individuals: confirming this supposition are a few surviving stone steles or traces of holes presumably left by wooden posts. As the cemetery became increasingly full, however, the gap between the older and newer parts of the cemetery disappeared, and kin were less selective about where they buried their dead. The west-east graves began to encroach upon the territory occupied by the northernmost inhumations of the earlier period, possibly because kin could no longer see traces of these older graves.

[81] Pilet, *La nécropole de Frénouville*, 1: 4–8, 153–57.

Over the course of its duration, however, the occupation of Frénouville was distinguished by more than changes in the direction in which graves faced. Developments in the cemetery were more gradual and subtle than suggested by Pilet's neat division of the site into two main periods. As will be discussed below, Pilet's desire to describe the site's history as occurring in two unique phases apparently resulted from his belief that early occu-pants received funerary deposits of vessels and Charon's obol, whereas later burials were accompanied by funerary dress; normally such distinc-tions are used to posit the arrival of a Germanic population, although not in the case of Frénouville.

[82] Ibid., 162–68.

This absolute division, however, misrepresents the actual finds in the cemetery, as graves in both sectors contained items of dress, coins, and eating vessels. The third-century grave 276 of the "surgeon," the mid-fourth-century grave 331 of the "blacksmith," and the early fifth-century grave 452 of the "goldsmith" demonstrate that those who used the cemetery of Frénouville made many types of deposits even at an early date.

[83] Ibid., 145–51.

Moreover, Pilet's assessment has downplayed the fact that about one-third of the graves in the cemetery contained no goods whatsoever, meaning that adaptations in mortuary custom did not at all affect the practices of some parts of the population.

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A review of the funerary evidence at Frénouville demonstrates that the earlier graves with goods possessed, among other things, a greater number of glass vessels than later sepulchers. Forty-six receptacles were located in the south-north section of the cemetery, as opposed to four among the west-east graves. By contrast, although belt buckles and decorations were found in the south-north oriented burials, the west-east graves displayed a larger quantity and variety. Burials in the west-east sector of Frénouville also included armament and brooches for the first time at this site. Additionally, of the fifty-four brooches uncovered at Frénouville, all were located in the part of the cemetery oriented west-east. Pilet dated these artifacts to the second half of the fifth to the end of the seventh century, a bit earlier than the twenty-five "armed" burials from the mid-sixth century.

[84] Ibid., 64–81, 102–9, 114–27, 165.

Despite these important distinctions, many customs were nonetheless practiced consistently throughout both periods. Albeit with modifications in style, quantity, and provenance over time, bronze and ceramic vessels, including imported black burnished ware from England, were deposited in both the south-north and the west-east sectors of the cemetery. Whereas a greater portion of the ceramics came from farther afield during the earlier period of the cemetery's use, many of the vessels subsequent to the mid-fifth century appear to have been products of local manufacture.

[85] Ibid., 110–14, 127–44.

Although the two parts of the cemetery revealed an equal number of ceramic vessels, this figure was simply coincidental. A smaller proportion of the west-east graves than the south-north provided evidence of this type of deposit.

At Frénouville, Pilet observed the use of coins in a small minority of graves in both the south-north and the west-east parts of the cemetery: fifteen in the former and sixteen in the latter. Coins are often interpreted as evidence of the custom of placing in the hand or mouth of the deceased Charon's penny or obol, a coin of small worth believed necessary for passage across the River Styx.

[86] These included graves 242, 286, 315, 323, 329, 331, 390, 393, 403, 433, 436, 438, 441, 450, and 452 in the south-north part of the cemetery and graves 14, 18, 74, 106, 110, 129, 130, 207, 446, 554, 575, 596, 598, 600, and 629 in the west-east part of the cemetery. Pilet, *La nécropole de Frénouville*, 1: 162–66. On Charon's obol, see Ian Morris, *Death-Ritual and Social Structure in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 105–6.

At Frénouville, however, significant adaptation of the rite had already occurred prior to the mid-fifth century. In the

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south-north sector of the cemetery, contemporaries deposited third-and fourth-century coins near the skulls or hands of the deceased and sometimes protected them with a pouch or vessel. Pilet also noted the presence of coins in the grave fill, meaning that they were tossed into the grave as it was being closed or that they represented random debris from earlier Roman settlement in the area. Although the sepulchers containing bronze coins usually had just one or two, grave 323 held twenty-three bronze coins, and grave 436 contained a gold solidus and a half. The latter examples may have constituted expressions of status rather than reflecting contemporaries' concerns regarding the afterlife.

[87] Pilet, *La nécropole de Frénouville*, 1: 162–66; Jacqueline Lemière, "Catalogue des monnaies, " in *La nécropole de Frénouville: Étude d'une population de la fin du III*^{e} *à la fin du VII*^{e} *siècle*, 2: 327–33.

In addition, Pilet noted that the graves in the west-east sector of Fré-nouville contained coins that, with one exception, were dated prior to the fifth century, just as in the previous sample. In other words, the coins were already of significant age at the time of their deposition and may have been acquired from hoards or sepulchers in earlier parts of the cemetery. As in the older burials, these coins were deposited with the deceased near his or her skull or hand or in a pouch worn at the waist. Some were also pierced and mounted as necklaces, demonstrating remarkable continuity of custom over a number of centuries. The varied placement of coins of different values in graves, however, demonstrates at least partial if not complete loss of understanding of the original religious function of Charon's obol.

[88] Young, "Paganisme, christianisation, " 41–42.

These factors make it difficult to determine the rite's significance. Moreover, although coins ordinarily play an important role in dating cemeterial artifacts, the presence of reused and frequently poorly preserved examples in these graves is less helpful in judging the age of the surrounding material. The presence of older coins may point to a shortage in this region of new coinage as an instrument of exchange; or, alternately, the custom may have indicated that preserved or found objects of marked age had an ascribed value different from their original material worth.

[89] J. N. L. Myres, "Amulets or Small Change?" *Antiquaries Journal* 58 (1978): 352.

Only grave 598 in the west-east sector contained a more contemporary coin. It was a Frankish imitation of a tremissis marked with the name of Justinian and dated to circa 550, which had been pierced and hung on a necklace.

[90] Lemière, "Catalogue des monnaies, " 333–39.

While this use of a relatively expensive piece was exceptional

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at Frénouville, it was more common at other contemporary cemeteries in Gaul. Gold solidi on necklaces, for instance, accompanied lavishly endowed burials under Saint-Denis and Cologne.

[91] Werner, "Frankish Royal Tombs, " 204; Doppelfeld, "Die Domgrabung XI, " 55–57.

The suspension of valuable silver and gold coins suggests that currency was widely appreciated as an effective vehicle for the display of elite identity.

The thorough and rapid publication of the archaeological finds at Fré-nouville, while highly praiseworthy, was nonetheless weakened by a significant number of observations that are difficult to substantiate from the archaeological and anthropological evidence. The most prominent of these reflect the belief of Pilet and his colleague Luc Buchet that bodily and artifactual remains could serve to identify the ethnic and religious identities of the inhabitants of the cemetery. Despite the long-acknowledged methodological difficulties of making such determinations, Pilet has attributed the early fifth-century transition in burial orientation from south-north to west-east to the local inhabitants' superficial conversion to Christianity. His unease about identifying the deceased as devout Christians must derive from his belief that contemporaries viewed the custom of grave goods as pagan.

[92] Pilet, *La nécropole de Frénouville*, 1: 153–57.

As discussed in Chapter 2, no direct correspondence between grave orientation, mortuary goods, and the reuse of sepulchers, on the one hand, and religious faith, on the other may be demonstrated to have existed in early medieval Gaul.

[93] Alain Dierkens, "Cimetières mérovingiens et histoire du haut moyen âge. Chronologie—société—religion, " in *Acta historica bruxellensia*, vol. 4: *Histoire et méthode* (Brussels: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1981), 56–59; Halsall, *Early Medieval Cemeteries*, 20–24.

In Pilet's view, the twenty-five weapon burials in twenty-two graves in the west-east sector of the cemetery, each containing at most two weapons per deceased, were central to this necropolis's development. Among the artifacts in question were two long swords, one shield, three axes, ten lances, and nine scramasaxes distributed among the twenty-five burials. Pilet therefore divided the burials into three chronological groupings: the mid-sixth century in the eastern part of the sector, the mid-seventh century in the northwestern part of the sector, and the final phase of the cemetery's occupation, which was not topographically distinct. Because of their interment in conjunction with lavish female graves, Pilet has alleged that these individuals were indigenous leaders and defenders of the small

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community at Frénouville at different points in its history.

[94] Pilet, *La nécropole de Frénouville*, 1: 102–9.

As has been cautioned by Heiko Steuer, however, a great number of the arms combinations present in early medieval graves, such as an axe without a shield, would have been unthinkable in battle.

[95] Heiko Steuer, "Zur Bewaffnung und Sozialstruktur der Merowinger, " *Nachrichten aus Niedersachsens Urgeschichte* 37 (1968): 60–61; Härke, "'Warrior Graves,' " 33.

Individual weapon burials cannot be proved to be anything more than symbolic protection for the cemetery. As in the case in Cologne cathedral of the exceptional sepulcher of a five-year-old child buried with the full range of Merovingian weaponry, deposition of armament in a grave was not indicative of the deceased's actual achievements as a warrior.

[96] Doppelfeld, "Die Domgrabung XII, " 87–88.

What is most striking about Pilet's report on Frénouville is how the cemetery's geographic location affected the interpretation of the cemeterial data. At most mortuary sites dating from the Merovingian period, archaeologists have cited evidence of armament to support the conclusion—with which this author is at odds—that Frankish combatants were buried at the cemeteries. Périn, for instance, posits the presence of such a population at necropoleis such as Lavoye (Meuse), Dieuesur-Meuse, and Nouvionen-Pointhieu (Somme), as opposed to what he believes was the case at Krefeld-Gellep and Frénouville.

[97] Périn, "Remarques sur la topographie funéraire, " 17–19.

As was noted in Chapter 2, however, so-called Germanic row grave cemeteries varied significantly with respect to the deposition of weapons and jewelry. Edward James has estimated that the proportion of weapon burials per cemetery could range from 8 to 70 percent whereas that of jewelry interments ranged from 7 to 90 percent in Merovingian Gaul.

[98] James, "Cemeteries, " 74–75.

In the case of Frénouville, the discovery of a relatively small group of weapon burials in a large cemetery in Normandy complicated matters. The geographic location of the necropolis made it politic to avoid attributing the evolution in mortuary rites to the arrival of the Franks. To demonstrate that the composition of the population did not change and that these armed burials were indigenous defenders, Pilet has supported his conclusions with Buchet's physical anthropological study of the extant skulls of the deceased. Despite the fact that ethnicity is not biologically determined and local inhabitants could have become Franks or taken on Frankish dress,

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Buchet based his study upon skull configurations. He observed that only slight variations existed in the origins of community members. In his eyes, this meant that the vast majority of the individuals buried at Frénouville were indigenous inhabitants, and, consequently, that the Germanic migrations appear to have made no noticeable impact in this region.

[99] Luc Buchet, "La nécropole gallo-romaine et mérovingienne de Frénouville (Calvados): Étude anthropologique, " *AM* 8 (1978): 6–27; id., "Die Landnahme der Franken in Gallien aus der Sicht der Anthropologen, " in *Die Franken*, 2: 664–67.

Both scholars also used the relative paucity of weapon burials in the cemetery to argue not that mortuary custom was different here but that peaceful existence characterized the non-Germanic lifestyle. Because the Frankish argument was less plausible at Frénouville, Pilet and Buchet coopted the type of burial goods ordinarily used to identify the presence of Germanic Warriors to demonstrate instead the flourishing of an indigenous population untouched by Germanic migrations.

[100] Steuer, "Zur Bewaffnung, " 18–87. For descriptions and definitions of these weapons, see Joachim Werner, "Bewaffnung und Waffenbeigabe in der Merowingerzeit, " *Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo* 15.1 (1968): 101–8; Wolfgang Hübener, "Waffennormen und Bewaffnungstypen der frühen Merowingerzeit, " in *Centenaire de l'abbé Cochet (Actes du colloque international d'archéologie, Rouen 3–4–5 juillet 1975)* (Rouen: Musée départmental des antiquités de Seine-Maritime, 1978), 3: 391–410.

This approach required the categorization of most of the armament found in graves at Frénouville as Gallo-Roman rather than Frankish.

This critique is not meant to imply that regional diversity did not exist in Gaul; indeed, excavations in Normandy have revealed fewer weapon burials than elsewhere. Rather, what I dispute are the proposed ethnic connotations of these differences. As pointed out in Chapter 2, craniological measurements of the skulls at Frénouville have no proven relevance in determining ethnicity but are better suited to describe regional differences of human populations. Skulls are not even entirely reliable for sexing skeletons if used without more reliable anthropological determinants such as pelves. The methodological flexibility of these studies reveals the subjective way in which burial evidence has been handled according to the circumstances and objectives for which it is employed. Although more than a quarter of the cemetery's skeletons were no longer extant and a considerable quantity of those remaining were poorly preserved, Buchet has alleged that he was able to ascertain the ethnic makeup of the occupants of Frénouville. Many graves therefore must have been identified as belonging to particular ethnic groups and sexed on the basis of the archaeological

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artifacts, such as brooches and armament deposited in them, rather than on the basis of skeletal remains.

[101] Buchet, "La nécropole gallo-romaine, " 18–24.

And, as was argued in the previous chapter, the suggestion that specific objects related exclusively to the military achievements or ethnicity of the deceased assumes that burial accurately reflected the lifestyle of the person with whom such goods were deposited.

[102] James, "Cemeteries, " 76–85; Härke, "'Warrior Graves,' " 35–43. Härke denies the validity of the former measure but accepts the latter.

Like other costly objects found in male and female graves in fifth-to seventh-century Gaul, such as rings, staffs, riding gear, crystal balls, and ornate drinking vessels, buried armament pointed not to the ethnicity but to the prestige and resources of any social unit that was able to contribute such gifts to the dead (and thus themselves do without them).

[103] Grave 1782 at the cemetery of Krefeld-Gellep, for instance, contained a saddle ornamented with cloisonné, an iron and gold bit with cheek bars (*Knebel- trensen*), gold-leaf harness attachments and decorations (*Riemenverteiler* and *Rie- menzungen*), and various other pieces of equipment pertaining to horse riding. Pirling, "Ein fränkisches Fürstengrab, " 192–93.

Similarly, the great variety of buckles and clasps, which were on occasion richly decorated, served the practical purpose of fastening belts upon which hung weaponry, tools, and private possessions at the hip and shoulder (see figs. 16 and 17). The gesture of placing such an object in a grave provided families the opportunity to construct an image of the deceased and hence themselves. While certain types of buckles functioned as a badge of office among the Romans and continued to do so well into the sixth century, contemporaries deposited these objects not only in the graves of those who performed their military duties successfully.

[104] James, "Cemeteries, " 78.

Women, too, were often buried with various sorts of belts on which hung knives, utensils, combs, scissors, tweezers, keys, whorls, amulet bags, and numerous other objects of practical and religious significance (see fig. 18).

[105] Birgit Dübner-Manthey, "Kleingeräte am Gürtelhänge als Bestandteil eines charakteristischen Elementes der weiblichen Tracht: Archäologische Untersuchung der Frauen in Spätantike und Frühmittelalter, " in *Frauen in der Geschi- chte*, vol. 7: *Interdisziplinäre Studien zur Geschichte der Frauen im Mittelalter*, Geschichtsdidaktikstudien Materialien 39 (Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1986), 88–89.

Smaller buckles were also employed in footwear.

[106] Fleury and France-Lanord, "Das Grab, " 345.

Even stable populations experienced changes in mortuary customs that revealed a variety of cultural undercurrents in the local communities in which they were practiced. Regional synchronicity of elite burials therefore stemmed not necessarily

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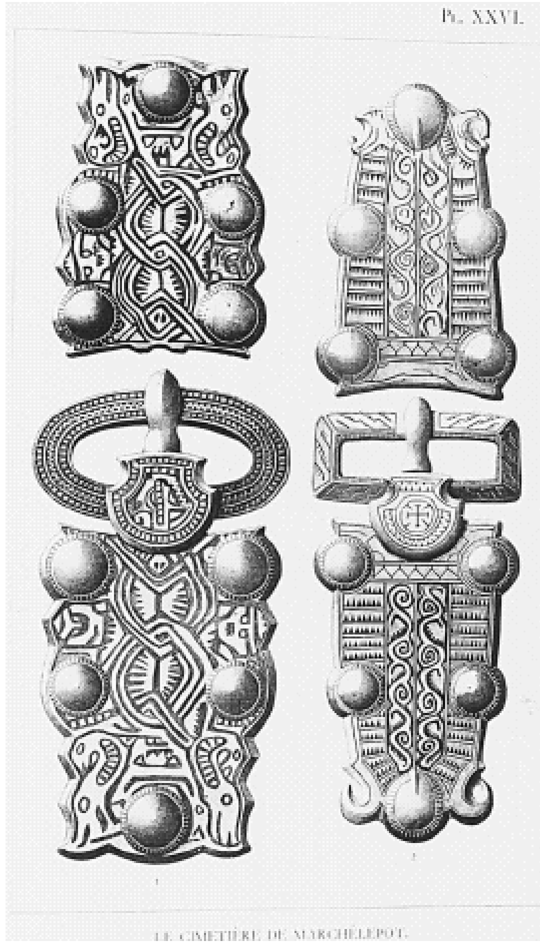

Figure 16. Illustration of two belt buckles and counter-plaques from the Merovingian-period cemetery of Marchélepot (Somme), thought by Boulanger to date from the seventh or eighth century. Both sets were made of bronze, and at the time of this publication, one belonged to Boulanger and the second to a fellow collector, Théophile Eck. The buckle on the left was decorated with open-mouthed serpents, and that on the right with a cross and serpents. Boulanger, *Le cimetière francomérovingien et carolingien de Marchélepot (Somme)*, pl. 26. Reproduced with the permission of the Musée des antiquités nationales de Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

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Figure 17. This seventh-century Merovingian bronze belt plaque-buckle, measuring 17.8 8.2 centimeters, is overlaid with silver and engraved with abstract geometric designs and

animal interlace in the shape of snakelike birds. The plate is decorated with seven bosses riveted near its edges. It was acquired on 21 April 1949 by the Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts (1949.21), at a Parke-Bernet Galleries auction of the contents of the late Joseph Brummer's New York antiquities gallery (Cat. no. 232). Through photographs taken at the turn of the century, Françoise Vallet has reestablished the lost provenance of the piece as the cemetery of Tabariane in the commune of Teilhet (Ariège). The necropolis was excavated between April 1901 and May 1903 by M. le Capitaine Maurel of the 59th regiment of the French infantry. Similar buckles from the same site are now owned by the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore (54.2350), the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (49.463), and the Musée des antiquités nationales at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, which may possess as many as four buckles from Tabariane (77.605, 77.606, 52.332.1, and 52.332.2). For more information on the Worcester brooch, see Robert G. Calkins, *A Medieval Treasury: An Exhibi- tion of Medieval Art from the Third to the Sixteenth Century* (Ithaca: Andrew Dickson White Museum of Art, Cornell University, 1968), 113, no. 22; Robert Roger, "Cimetière barbare de Tabariane, commune de Teilhet (Ariège), " *Bulletin archéologique du Comité des travaux historiques et scienti- fiques* 1908: 318–19, pl. XX, no. 3; Françoise Vallet, "Plaque-boucles de Tabariane (Ariège) au Musée des antiquités nationales, " *Antiquités nationales* 10 (1978): 65–73. Reproduced with the permission of the Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts.

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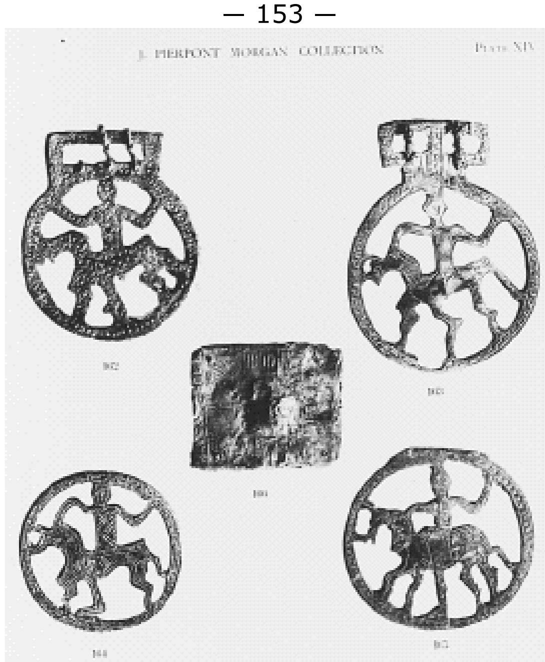

Figure 18. These four chatelaines purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan each depict a horse and rider and were intended to hang from a belt. All were designed in bronze, albeit some silvered (162 and 163) and one gilded (165). Their lengths or diameters range between 8 and 10 centimeters each. The belt buckle at the center is a rectangular iron plaque (6.3 5.8 centimeters) that was covered with silver and engraved with crosses, leaves, and an inscription that may be read as either "Va(le) at qui fecit" or "Vivat qui fecit, " thus wishing good health or long life to the maker. It was found at Hermes (Oise) during the course of the abbé Hamard's excavations on 27 June 1879 and was later purchased for the Morgan collection before being donated to The Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1917 by J. Pierpont Morgan's son (17.192.166). De Ricci, *Cata- logue of a Collection of Merovingian Antiquities*, pl. 14. Reproduced with the permission of the Musée des antiquités nationales de Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

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from ethnic ties but from the audience to which these families displayed their power. The chosen forms of mortuary commemoration reflected what rites families perceived at that time as most effective for their purposes, and they frequently exhibited a desire to imitate the prestige graves of elites in the community.

[107] James, "Cemeteries, " 81–85.

Lavoye

Following the discovery of an early medieval sepulcher three hundred meters east of the modern village of Lavoye (Meuse) in 1902, Dr. Meunier identified and excavated an entire row grave cemetery between 1905 and 1914. In all, Meunier probably examined 367 west-east sepulchers, although only 362 were documented in his final report. At the time of its occupation in the late fifth century, the cemetery was located a few hundred meters from the small Roman center of Autry, which was abandoned early in the fifth century. The grounds of the cemetery had also been occupied previously, thus accounting for the Roman structural remains and Gallo-Roman graves discovered at the site. The Merovingian population's presence at the cemetery lasted until the late seventh century.

[108] Joffroy, *Le cimetière de Lavoye*, 5–11.

Given the challenge of creating an archaeological report from Meunier's excavation notes nearly seven decades after its completion, the resulting publication naturally reflects the state of archaeological methodology during the era in which the cemetery was initially studied. René Joffroy, who in 1974 undertook the long overdue task of making findings from the necropolis public, divided the row graves into three sectors: a principal gathering of about three hundred graves to the north, sixty graves to the southeast, and an isolated group of six graves in the eastern part of the cemetery.

[109] Bailey K. Young, *Quatre cimetières mérovingiens de l'Est de la France: Lavoye, Dieuesur-Meuse, Mezières-Manchester et Mazerny*, BAR International Series 208 (Oxford: BAR, 1984), 27; Joffroy, *Le cimetière de Lavoye*, 5–11.

Guy Halsall has since used these data to document a more subtle series of developments at Lavoye that occurred in different chronological phases of the cemetery.

[110] Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 118–20.

Of the graves, about 70 percent were stonelined or in plain earth and contained grave goods. On average, these sepulchers were devoid of deposited artifacts. Children were also buried in shallower graves than their elders. From circa 600 to 675, however, a simplification of interment occurred with a relative standardization of grave

goods and signs of an increased propensity for the reuse of graves. As discussed above, this general pattern has been observed widely across Gaul.

[111] Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 130–40; Young, *Quatre ci- metières mérovingiens*, 22–44, 168–73.

Archaeologists have given significant attention to the impressive "tombe de chef, " numbered grave 319. This "founder" of the cemetery is thought to have been an approximately fifty-year-old man, whose sepulcher was laid out circa 500. The grave measured 3.5 meters long and 1.6 meters deep. Set off from the other graves at the site by at least 4.5 meters on each side, the burial contained multiple weapons, remains of a liturgical pitcher with scenes from the life of Christ on bronze plaques, a glass bowl, large glass bead, and a gold coin with an image of Zeno, among other valued objects (see fig. 19).

[112] G. Chenet, "La tombe 319 et la buire chrétienne du cimetière mérovingien de Lavoye (Meuse), " *Préhistoire* 4 (1935): 34–118.

Like the roughly contemporary grave of Childeric, a mound may have originally marked its location. The closest and earliest deposition of a member of the so-called family of grave 319 was the approximately six-year-old child buried in grave 307bis during the same phase. The sepulcher contained a significant number of artifacts, including a beaded necklace, three brooches, two bracelets, two bronze vessels, a glass cup and bowl, a coin, earrings, and a large bead.

[113] Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 118–20;Joffroy, *Le cimetière de Lavoye*, 129–31;

pls. 31–32.

It is not possible to ascertain definitively from the artifacts or the graves' dating whether either of the deceased was Christian.

Rather than focusing mainly on grave 319, Halsall has drawn attention to the way in which a few of the thirteen graves dug in the late fifth and early sixth centuries served as "founders" for various sectors of the cemetery. Meunier identified grave 110, for instance, as that of a man with a bronze buckle and a few weapons and tools. This sepulcher was located roughly twenty meters south of all the other contemporary burials. In the next phase of the cemetery, from circa 525 to circa 600, interments surrounded this grave on three sides. Likewise, the five- to ten-year-old child in grave 189, thought to be a girl with earrings, brooches, beads, and a few other small objects, was separated by a distance of about twelve meters from all other burials in the first phase. In subsequent generations, this sepulcher attracted a series of prestige inhumations. The situation was similar in the case of grave 241, separated from contemporaries by approximately

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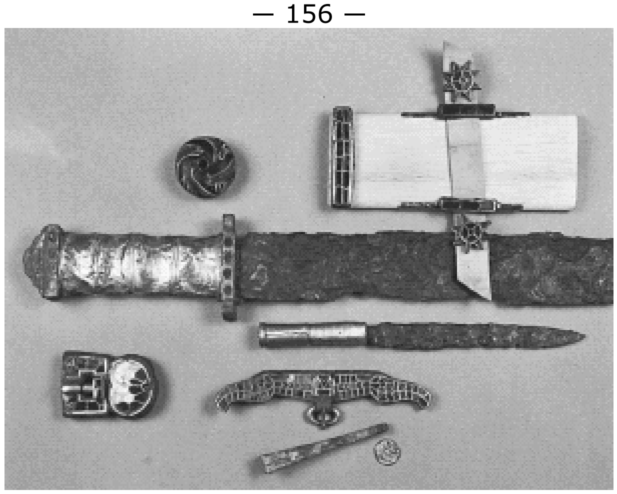

Figure 19. Assemblage of a number of restored grave goods from the sepulcher Lavoye 319. The high quality of the artifacts, including the gilded and bejeweled hilt of the sword and cloisonnè buckle and clasp, has led archaeologists to attribute these items to a Frankish chieftain. Photograph reproduced with the permission of the Musèe des antiquitès nationales de Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

five meters.

[114] Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 119–21;Joffroy, *Le cimetière de Lavoye*, 114, 121, 125; pls. 13, 21, 25.

These burials demonstrate, in particular, the methodological limitations of envisioning a strictly patriarchal hierarchy as the basis for the interpretation of the organization of row grave cemeteries. While frequently an adult male possessing numerous prestige goods constituted the focal point of all future burials at a newly established burial site,

[115] Patrick Périn, "Trois tombes de 'chefs' du début de la période mérovingienne: Les sépultures nos 66, 68, et 74 de la nécropole de Mézières (Ardennes), " *Bulletin de la Société archéologique champenoise* 65.4 (1972): 3–70.

death was unpredictable. The first member to die of a powerful kin group or more extended social network may not have always fit this particular stereotype.

In recent discussions of Lavoye, archaeologists have given significant attention to the sex of the interred as well as to the gender connotations

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of the goods with which they were buried. Based upon Meunier's brief journal entries describing 362 graves, Bailey Young has noted that over the course of the site's use, 47.5 percent of the interred were adult men, 25.5 percent adult women, and 12 percent adults of undetermined sex. A further 15 percent of the cemetery's occupants were children.

[116] Young, *Quatre cimetières mérovingiens*, 30. But see the problems of such statistical analysis in Alain Dierkens, "Chronique: Bailey K. Young, *Quatre ci- metières mérovingiens de l'Est de la France*, …" *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 66 (1988): 957–59.

By dividing the burials into more discrete intervals, Halsall has drawn attention to the increasing gap between the numbers of male and female burials in later periods of the necropolis's use. With data from Meunier's diary, Halsall found only fifty-one women among 181 graves (28.2 percent) dating from the last three-quarters of the sixth century. In comparison, he identified just eighteen women among ninety-six sepulchers dug (18.8 percent) in the first three-quarters of the seventh century. Halsall has therefore suggested that it was primarily adult men who were being brought to the cemetery for burial in the last phase of its active use.

[117] Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 141–42;Joffroy, *Le cimetière de Lavoye*, 105–32.

No explanation for the establishment of a predominantly male cemetery, however, may be gleaned from contemporary written sources. The secircumstances also raise the question of whether Meunier's sexing of the skeletons was entirely accurate. The limited nature of his journal entries unfortunately impedes a full understanding of the methods by which he arrived at his anthropological assessments. No one to date has directly questioned the means by which Meunier determined the sex of the interred, and to what degree his decisions relied on the goods discovered in these graves.

Because the skeletal remains from Lavoye were not preserved for later study, it is now impossible to reassess the cemetery's data. Halsall has sought to circumvent this lacuna in the evidence by testing the reliability of Meunier's physical anthropological reports. He has demonstrated that they correlate closely with the distributions established between sex and gender-specific artifacts in contemporary cemeteries located relatively nearby. For the region of Metz, Halsall has created the following categories of graves: those with only male gender-specific artifacts (A), those containing male gender-specific and "neutral" artifacts (AB), those containing only "neutral" artifacts (B), those containing female gender-specific and "neutral" artifacts (BC), and those containing only female gender-specific artifacts (C). Simplified immensely, since his binary artifactual model incorporates

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subtypes and attaches differing strengths of gender association to each, Halsall's analysis suggests that jewelry was traditionally female-specific, whereas weaponry ranked high among the male-specific artifacts such as in grave 11 at Saint-Denis (see fig. 20). He has also reckoned with the significance of chronology in these divisions, noting that by the seventh century, associations between artifacts and gender had become blurred to some degree.

[118] Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 78–83.

Halsall's model for the distribution of goods between the sexes derives foremost from cemeterial data collected from the Merovingian cemetery at Ennery (Moselle), twelve kilometers north of Metz. While this particular site offered the advantage of having been the subject of studies of both its artifacts and skeletal remains, Ennery also had a number of notable weaknesses as a source of the data central to a statistical study of gender. In the 1930s, M. Barbé, the owner of the land, pillaged and destroyed more than one hundred of the cemetery's sepulchers. The excavation began under less than auspicious conditions in 1941, when German occupation generated heightened interest in the formal excavation of a "Frankish" necropolis in Lorraine. Of the eighty-two remaining graves examined in 1941, more than a quarter had little left of their upper extremities as a result of Barbé's willful destruction. Only fifty-eight of these were thus suitable for Halsall's study.

[119] The initial publication of the excavation unfortunately contributes very little to this discussion, as it was focused exclusively on the merits of individual grave goods found at the site: see Wilhelm Reusch, "Fränkische Funde aus loth-ringischem Boden: Bericht über den gegenwärtigen Stand der frühgeschichtlichen Spatenforschung in Lothringen, " *Westmärkische Abhandlungen zur Landes-und Volksforschung* 5 (1941–42): 39–58.

Ennery therefore provided only a small sample of intact graves in the context of what was originally a significantly larger cemetery.

Another factor affecting the interpretation of the burial evidence at Ennery was the use of then standard methods of artifactual sexing. Although the concept was obviously not defined in modern terms, both the site's archaeologist and its anthropologist assumed that certain artifacts used in a mortuary context were sex-specific. In his publication of the site in 1947, the archaeologist Émile Delort wrote that he had studied the artifacts and body size to sex skeletons prior to any anthropological report on the graves. He identified male skeletons in the cemetery as those with weapons or more than 1.70 meters tall (not including the length of the feet), whereas the female skeletons were those between 1.35 and 1.53 meters

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Figure 20. This collection of artifacts, including weaponry as well as a golden belt buckle and associated attachments decorated in interlace, derives from grave 11 at a Merovingian cemetery discovered at Saint-Denis. The assemblage is thought to have belonged to a male of elite status. Photograph by Loïc Hamon reproduced with the permission of the Musée des antiquités nationales de Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

in length or in the sepulchers replete with jewelry.

[120] Émile Delort, "Le cimetière franc d'Ennery, " *Gallia* 5 (1947): 359–60.

These categories were fairly typical of existing practices: at best, skulls and grave goods were studied together to determine the ethnicity and sex of the occupants of Merovingian cemeteries.

[121] For example, see Abbé Schwab, *Le cimetière mérovingien de Paley (Ve au VIIIe siècle)*, Société d'archéologie de Seineet-Marne (Namur: Imprimerie E. Vaillot, 1925), 14, 19–29.

By this means, Delort reached what he believed to be definitive determinations in about half the graves, and fully anticipated that a specialist would reconfirm his results scientifically, in addition to reaching conclusions for the remainder of the skeletons.

In 1957, when he published professional anthropological observations of the skeletons unearthed at Ennery, Marcel Heuertz noted that he referred to Delort's notes as little as possible to avoid biasing his more scientific study. In describing his methodology, however, he plainly acknowledged that he took funerary objects into account when the bones alone were not sufficiently well preserved to sex the skeletons without question.

[122] Marcel Heuertz, "Étude des squelettes du cimetière franc d'Ennery, " *Bulletin et mémoire de la Société d'anthropologie de Paris* 8 (1957): 82.

Although this practice did not imply that he used only grave goods

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to reach his conclusions, archaeological artifacts seem to have played a significant role in his "anthropological" observations. There was at least one exception, however. In the case of grave 32, he identified the skeleton as male despite the presence of a necklace.

[123] I thank Guy Halsall for his personal communication to me on this topic.

His general approach was by no means unusual: as discussed above, Fremersdorf and later Buchet each applied similar methods to Köln-Müngersdorf and Frénouville, respectively.

The practical application of anthropological material from Merovingian cemeteries to the development of a better understanding of early medieval gender ideologies therefore prompts a number of observations. If the anthropologists' and archaeologists' assumptions regarding the binary division of objects typically influenced their treatment of skeletal remains, their conclusions cannot be relied upon for an accurate assessment of the distribution of sex-linked artifacts. The argument is circular. Questions of a similar nature have been asked with regard to Anglo-Saxon period graves in England in which a significant number of graves did not conform to a binary system. In her study of two Yorkshire cemeteries in which bone analysis was carried out independently of artifactual assessment, S. J. Lucy has suggested that only 10–20 percent conformed to the stereotype of male graves with weaponry and female graves with jewelry. Among the graves that could be assessed biologically, a small number of bodies with the "wrong" assemblage for their sex was identified.

[124] Lucy, "Housewives, Warriors, and Slaves?" 150–68; Janet Henderson, "Pagan Saxon Cemeteries: A Study of the Problem of Sexing Grave Goods and Bones, " in *Burial Archaeology: Current Research, Methods, and Developments*, ed. Charlotte A. Roberts, Frances Lee, and John Bintliff, BAR British Series 211 (Oxford: BAR, 1989), 77–83.

While some of the Anglo-Saxon examples in which there are similar discrepancies have been disputed,

[125] Heinrich Härke, "Early Anglo-Saxon Social Structure, " in *The Anglo- Saxons from the Migration Period to the Eighth Century: An Ethnographic Perspective*, ed. John Hines (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997), 132–34.

the methodological standards for collecting evidence at Lavoye and Ennery were low, and skeletal data were overshadowed by modern gender associations of particular grave goods.

While the prevalence and bias of the artifactual sexing of skeletal matter by anthropologists and archaeologists may be unknown, such constructions with respect to female anatomy descend from long-standing "scientific" assumptions about the diminutive appearance of the female skeletons and skulls. Promoted by eighteenth-and nineteenth-century anatomical specialists, these unsubstantiated stereotypes consistently bolstered

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belief in the inferiority of women.

[126] Londa Schiebinger, "Skeletons in the Closet: The First Illustrations of the Female Skeleton in Eighteenth-Century Anatomy, " in *The Making of the Modern Body: Sexuality and Society in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Catherine Gallagher and Thomas Laqueur (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 42–82.

In current studies this objective is no longer prevalent, but the level of accuracy of this technique of sexing skeletons is uncertain, especially in cases where bones were affected by extensive decay, and artifacts and human remains were studied together.

[127] Christian Pilet, *La nécropole de Saint-Martin de Fontenay (Calvados): Recherches sur le peuplement de la plaine de Caen du V^e^ avant J.-C. au VII^e^ siècle après J.-C.*, 54^e^ Supplément à Gallia (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 1994), 304, 478; C. Simon, R. Gerbore, F. Passard, S. Manfredi-Gizard, and J.-P. Urlacher, "La population de La Grande Oye à Doubs (Doubs), analyse anthropologique et données culturelles: Concordances et contrastes dans l'étude du peuplement romano-burgonde de la seconde moitié du VI^e^ s.à la fin du VII^e^ s. ap. J.-C., " in *L'identité des populations archéologiques (XVI^e^ rencontres internationales d'archéologie et d'histoire d'Antibes* (Sophia Antipolis: Éditions APDCA, 1996), 352 n. 2.

Although Halsall's artifactual model may be accurate in the identification of what was considered "strongly male" or "strongly female, " further testing involving DNA or other more objective methods of anthropological analysis will be necessary to determine whether the sex of the interred correlated with their gender identity.

[128] Bonnie Effros, "Skeletal Sex and Gender in Merovingian Mortuary Archaeology, " *Antiquity* 74 (2000): 632–39.

As shown by Halsall, the existence of a system of binary opposition between strongly male-and female-linked goods among men and women, respectively, simplifies too greatly the distribution of gender-linked artifacts in Merovingian mortuary ritual. Anthropological sexing of skeletons, typically performed in the above-described conditions, has fostered the survival of anachronistic standards regarding gender mores, like those for ethnicity, in the early Middle Ages.

This discussion is not meant to encourage the belief that women were never buried by their families with jewelry, nor men with weaponry, or even that large numbers of graves have been sexed incorrectly. Scholars have long acknowledged, however, that jewelry also played a role in the expression of male status; as noted above, the sepulcher of Childeric contained, among other artifacts, gold brooches, a gold armband, and a signet ring.

[129] Heiko Steuer, *Frühgeschichtliche Sozialstrukturen in Mitteleuropa: Eine Analyse der Auswertungsmethoden des archäologischen Quellenmaterials*, Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, philologisch-historische Klasse, 3d ser., vol. 128 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), 325. This acknowledgment, however, was not always the case; see Effros, "Skeletal Sex, " 632–33.

At Lavoye, by contrast, the prestige graves 189 and 308bis presumably

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held the remains of persons of the female sex.

[130] Bailey K. Young, "Exemple aristocratique et mode funéraire dans la Gaule mérovingienne, " *Annales ESC* 41 (1986): 383–89.

These statements cannot be made with absolute certainty, however, unless anthropologists have sexed bones independently of the lavish grave goods and preferably confirmed their results with DNA evidence collected from these burials. More rigorous analysis is necessary for a fuller understanding of the significance of the gender-linked aspects of funerary display.

Certain trends among objects found in female graves seem to have varied in interesting ways from those observed among objects in male graves. Regional differences, for example, affected the choice of burial goods more in less lavish women's graves than they did in the graves of female members of families of greater means and with access to long distance trade. In comparable sepulchers identified as belonging to men, this observation is not true to the same degree.

[131] Frauke Stein, "Pre-Carolingian Graves in South Germany, " *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 3d ser., 31 (1968): 1–18.

Exceptionally rich graves such as the one found six meters beneath the choir of the Cologne cathedral,

[132] The skeletal remains were found dressed in a headband of gold thread with an almond-shaped decoration in its center; gold earrings ornamented with polyhedric capsules; a solid gold armband; a gold ring with a stone in a pyramid-shaped setting; an engraved gold ring; four brooches (two *Scheibenfibeln* and two *Bügelfibeln*) of primarily gold with cloisonné and filigrane decorations; three gold necklace chains, one of which was hung with seven solidi, cloisonné beads, and other ornaments; a silver belt buckle; and various other pieces of great beauty. See Doppelfeld, "Die Domgrabung XI, " 51–64; Werner, "Frankish Royal Tombs, " 204; Carol Heitz, "La cathédrale de Cologne de l'époque paléochrétienne à l'époque carolingienne, " *CA* 39 (1991): 65–67.

or that of the late sixth or early seventh century found near Zülpich, Kreis Euskirchen, Germany,

[133] This grave contained elaborate jewelry, including a round, bejeweled, gold-leaf brooch 4.5 centimeters in diameter; a bronze hairpin with a gilded head that once held precious stones; a gold ring with a protruding pyramid-shaped setting of glass; two gold-leaf pins with filigree ornamentation; an elaborate copper belt buckle; and various beads; see Walter Janssen, "Ein reicher fränkischer Grabfund aus der Nordeifel, " *Germania* 59 (1981): 357–68.

have too long been considered the standard against which female members of the Merovingian elite have been measured. These graves have silenced discussion of other possible means by which the identity of powerful women might find expression.

The gender associations of burial objects in early medieval Gaul were more nuanced than most archaeological models currently allow. Until more objective methods of determining the sex of skeletons in Merovingian cemeteries become common, one may assume that anthropologists have

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incorrectly sexed some proportion of the graves in each cemetery, depending upon local custom, the quality of the anthropological reports, and the skills of the scholars involved. The case of grave 10 at Neuvicq-Montguyon (Charente-Maritime) provides just one such example of the consequences of relying on outmoded methodological practices for determining the sex of the deceased. In 1860, the discovery of an intact sarcophagus with an epitaph made possible the identification of specific burial goods with the name Dolena inscribed on the tomb. Inside the 2.2-meter-long sarcophagus belonging to Dolena, archaeologists found a scramasax, fibule, belt buckle, two bronze coins, and a ring. Although the linguistic construction of the name was decidedly female, scholars interpreted it as that of a man as a consequence of the weaponry discovered in the grave and the size of the tomb. They did not even consider the possibility that a woman had been buried with armament or that the grave goods resulted from a subsequent burial at this site.

[134] Louis Maurin, "Le cimetière mérovingien de Neuvicq-Montguyon (Charente-Maritime), " *Gallia* 29 (1971): 159–63, 176.

For the majority of cemeteries in which written and material evidence are rarely found together, there will never be an opportunity to rectify such long-standing errors.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE AND THE DIFFICULTY OF INTERPRETING RITUAL PRACTICES

A few ritual practices affecting the contents of early medieval graves, aside from the deposition of artifacts and clothing, deserve further attention. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, one custom for which there is much archaeological evidence early in the Merovingian period is funerary feasting. This tradition involved the deposition of a variety of dishes, drinking utensils, and food in sepulchers. Halsall has suggested that these meals represented an important form of gift-giving that heightened the status of a family in a community.

[135] Halsall, "Burial, Ritual, and Merovingian Society, " 327–32. There is a danger of reading later literary sources into these early medieval customs; see Behm-Blancke, "Trankgaben und Trinkzeremonien, " 171.

Most popular in rural areas in the fourth century, this custom left remains of primarily ceramic but also glass and bronze vessels. Sometimes the vessels contained various types of food or drink, including water. Since archaeologists have seldom studied the vessels for organic residues, however, the extent of the popularity of this

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custom is uncertain.

[136] Patrick Périn, "Les Ardennes à l'époque mérovingienne: Étude archéologique, " *Études ardennaises* 50 (1967): 21–22.

Deposited at the feet or less frequently at the head of the deceased, such donations to graves were often accompanied by a coin, thought to be Charon's obol if placed in the mouth or hand. Although accurate estimates for such incompletely excavated cemeteries are difficult, Bailey Young has proposed that roughly 75 percent of late imperial sepulchers contained ceramic vessels.

[137] Young, "Paganisme, christianisation, " 37–40; id., "Merovingian Funeral Rites and the Evolution of Christianity: A Study in the Historical Interpretation of Archaeological Material" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1975), 174–82.

By the early medieval period, the rite's usage had declined, and food and drink were less commonly placed in the vessels deposited in burials. In Young's estimation, only 16 percent of Merovingian graves revealed food or drink containers of any sort. Yet despite occasional admonitions against participation in funerary meals, many Christians evidently continued to include some form of feasting in commemorative ceremonies for the dead.

[138] Paul-Albert Fevrier, "La tombe chrétienne et l'Audelà, " in *Le temps chré- tien de la fin de l'antiquité au moyen âge III^e —XIII^e siècles*, Colloques internationaux du Centre national de la recherche scientifique no. 604 (Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1984), 171–76.

By the sixth century, however, the rite was reduced to the donation of a single ceramic vase, if any, at the foot of the corpse, and the inhabitants of Gaul had for the most part completely abandoned the deposition of food.

[139] Bailey K. Young, "Pratiques funéraires et mentalités païennes, " in *Clovis: Histoire et mémoire; Le baptême de Clovis, l'événement*, ed. Michel Rouche (Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1997), 19–23; id., *Quatre cimetières mérovingiens*, 153–54; id., " Merovingian Funeral Rites, " 180–82.

Why the incorporation of ceramics in ritual practice ceased in many Merovingian cemeteries by 600, long prior to the end of the use of grave goods, however, remains unclear. No proof exists for a direct link between these changes and Christians' evolving view of the afterlife.

Archaeological evidence also points to the survival of sacrificial practices or the deposition of animals at grave sites in the Merovingian period, despite the condemnation of activities traditionally associated with the *Parentalia.*

[140] Animal sacrifices, however, were connected with a variety of pagan rites, not all of them related to burial; see Valerie I. J. Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 119; Hilda Ellis Davidson, *The Lost Beliefs of Northern Europe* (London: Routledge, 1993), 91–93.

Judith Oexle has therefore characterized the majority of interred animal remains dating from this era as grave goods rather than as

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ritual offerings, although the latter possibility may not be ruled out entirely. Horses, dogs, deer, oxen, and falcons, most symbolic of hunting or land tenure, constituted important features of the ideal representation of the warrior elite. Contemporaries exceptionally beheaded horses, the most common animal in Merovingian graves, and interred them in close proximity to the cemetery. Even when buried without a horse, individuals might be accompanied to the grave with goods associated with riding horses. Bits, halters, and rings effectively symbolized the presence of a horse. The practice ceased in Merovingian regions fairly early: animal depositions occurred until the mid-sixth century only in conjunction with prestige graves in northern parts of Gaul; in southwest Germany and Alemannic regions, however, they continued as late as 700.

[141] Judith Oexle, "Merowingerzeitliche Pferdebestattungen—Opfer oder Beigaben?" *FS* 18 (1984): 123–50; David Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Paganism* (London: Routledge, 1992), 100–102; Young, "Paganisme, christianisation, " 57–58.

Another genre of mortuary remains, one linked in some circumstances to the above customs, was sites revealing evidence of the use of fire. The significance of fire in funerary contexts remains less satisfactorily understood in the Merovingian period, as full-body cremation was rarely practical in contrast to what had been the case in Gallo-Roman communities.

[142] Ian Morris, *Death-Ritual and Social Structure in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 48–68; Arthur Darby Nock, "Cremation and Burial in the Roman Empire, " in his *Essays on Religion and the An- cient World*, ed. Zeph Stewart (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 1: 277–307.

As a consequence, Édouard Salin advocated dividing material resulting from such conflagrations among three categories of ceremonial practice: purificatory rites preceding burial, traditions involving partial incineration of the body or grave subsequent to interment, and funerary rituals conducted near the grave and creating burnt matter that was later dispersed into the material fill.

[143] Édouard Salin, *La civilisation mérovingienne d'après les sépultures, les textes et le laboratoire* (Paris: Éditions A. et J. Picard, 1952), 2: 202–12.

The third group of remains might have resulted from the preparation of funerary meals or alimentary offerings. The functions of these rites, however, are little understood, even though they were still widely practiced following the period of the conversions.

[144] Young, "Merovingian Funeral Rites, " 124–31; Périn, "Les Ardennes, " 17–18; Fremersdorf, *Das fränkischen Reihengräberfeld*, 1: 34–35.

At the cemetery of Mazerny (Ardennes), for example, Young has identified each of these types of charred remains. Of the fifty-eight cases of charcoal or ritual fire that he has dated as belonging to the seventh century

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(26 percent of the observable graves), nine sepulchers revealed a sizable layer of burnt material beneath the skeletal remains. The majority of the inhumations, by contrast, provided evidence that fires had been lit in or near the sepulchers: charcoal traces were scattered throughout the fill of the graves.

[145] Young, *Quatre cimetières mérovingiens*, 123–25.

Alain Simmer has likewise noted that 17 percent of the sepulchers at Audun-le-Tiche (Moselle) bore traces of ritual conflagration.

[146] Alain Simmer, *Le cimetière mérovingien d'Audun-le-Tiche (Moselle)*, AFAM, Mémoire 2 (Paris: Éditions Errance, 1988), 139.

One must nevertheless exercise caution with respect to these statistics, since charcoal remains *(charbon de bois)* are easily confused with dark-colored decomposed organic material.

In some cemeteries, the likelihood of finding remains of rites leaving behind small traces of fire, such as charcoal or burnt stone, increased with the importance of the objects found in a particular grave: just as with horse sacrifices, nonextreme remains of fire rituals most often occurred in conjunction with sepulchers containing armament.

[147] Young, *Quatre cimetières mérovingiens*, 123–25; id., "Paganisme, christianisation, " 57–58.

Contemporaries therefore appear to have performed these ceremonies at least in part to display elite identity in times when grave goods still served as a form of symbolic expression in burial.

[148] In Anglo-Saxon England, David Wilson has not observed a correlation between the presence of charcoal in a sepulcher and the age or sex of the interred individual; see his *Anglo-Saxon Paganism*, 123–30.

More extensive beds of ash, in contrast, played a role primarily in sepulchers with reduced numbers of burial objects or none at all and probably dated from late in the Merovingian period.

[149] These graves are nonetheless notoriously difficult to date accurately due to the absence of mortuary objects; see Young, "Merovingian Funeral Rites, " 124–26. But see also Lotte Hedeager, *Iron Age Societies: From Tribe to State in Northern Europe, 500 BC to AD 700*, trans. John Hines (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), 32, 80–81.

Although some early medieval hagiographers associated cremation with pagan practice,

[150] In the *Vita sancti Arnulfi*, the author described an occasion upon which "more gentilium cadaver ignibus comburendum traderetur" (Bruno Krusch, ed., *Vita sancti Arnulfi*, 14, MGH: SRM 2 (Hanover: Impensis bibliopolii Hahniani, 1888), 436.

Christian families in Gaul performed a variety of other conflagration rites for their dead. No extant legislation from church councils formally condemned such rites prior to the mid-eighth century.

[151] " De igne fricato de ligno id est nodfyr" (Boretius, ed., *Indiculus* 15, MGH: Leges 2, Capitularia 1, 223; Bonnie Effros, "*De partibus Saxoniae* and the Regulation of Mortuary Custom: A Carolingian Campaign of Christianization or the Suppression of Saxon Identity?" *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 75 (1997): 278–79.

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An additional custom for which no verifiable explanation exists involved the deposition of snail shells or snail fossils in graves, a practice that scholars have long interpreted as being symbolic of belief in resurrection or a desire for fecundity. Because the rite was a very ancient one in Gaul and predated the arrival of both Christian and Germanic peoples to these regions, Salin proposed that snail shells and fire rituals ceased as soon as the population became more deeply Christianized. Yet in the late imperial, Merovingian, and Carolingian periods, the practice of depositing snail shells in graves gained popularity in both pagan and Christian communities. Some of the better-known sites at which snail shells have been found in graves include the basilique of Saint-Denis and the cemeteries of Vicq (Seineet-Oise) and Lavoye.

[152] Salin, *La civilisation mérovingienne*, 4: 69–77; id., "Sépultures gallo-romaines et mérovingiennes dans la basilique de Saint-Denis, " *Fondation Eugène Piot: Monuments et mémoires* 49 (1957): 93–128.

The ritual deposit of snail shells takes a variety of forms in the archaeological record, some of them quite striking. Since most types were more accessible to the general population than, for instance, precious metals, one feature of their deposition was their appearance in sepulchers otherwise accorded few grave goods. At Fleurheim (Eure), eight snail remains of various species surrounded a fourth-century infant's remains (grave 2), and an astonishing deposit of ninety-eight shells appeared just 0.3 meters north of the same grave. Other graves of infants at this site likewise contained assortments of snail shells.

[153] M. A. Dollfus and A. Guyot, "Sépultures de nouveau-nés dans les fouilles gallo-romaines de Fleurheim, à Lyonsla-Forêt (Eure), " *Annales de Normandie* 18 (1968): 289–97.

At the cemetery of Mazerny, graves 3 and 155, for instance, contained a significant number of snail shells arranged around each skull and along the length of the bodies, along with an unusual quantity of wood cinders.

[154] Young, *Quatre cimetières mérovingiens*, 125, 148; Périn, "Les Ardennes, " 22–23.

Salin observed that at Couvertpuis (Meuse), a skull surrounded by mollusk remains was placed on the lap of the skeleton.

[155] Salin, *La civilisation mérovingienne*, 2: 348.

Likewise, 36 of the 201 graves excavated at Audun-le-Tiche revealed traces of snail shells deposited at the time of the burial of the deceased.

[156] Simmer, *Le cimetière mérovingien*, 139–41. Audrey Meaney also discusses the deposition of shells in Anglo-Saxon graves, but primarily those pierced and worn by the deceased in the manner of amulets (*Anglo-Saxon Amulets*, 113–27).

What may have been an amuletic, commemorative, fertilityenhancing,

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or possibly decorative practice appears to have been in use at least as late as the eighth century.

[157] Henri LeClercq, "Coquillages, " in *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, 3.2 (Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1914), 2905–6; Salin, *La civi- lisation mérovingienne*, 4: 70.

The mid-eighth-century *Indiculus superstitionum*, however, may be interpreted as having banned the rite for the first time along with other undesirable mortuary practices.

[158] "De tempestatibus et cornibus et cocleis" (Boretius, ed., *Indiculus* 22, MGH: Leges 2, Capitularia 1, 223; Dierkens, "Superstitions, " 21; Simmer, *Le ci- metière mérovingien*, 139–41.

Archaeologists have characterized certain unusual Merovingian graves as abnormal burials, particularly in cases where skulls of the deceased were disturbed. Simmer has identified a number of these sorts of sepulchers at Audun-le-Tiche. The majority, which dated to the seventh century, he divided into three groups: those demonstrating a complete absence of the skull, those in which the skull rested in an unusual position, and those in which the skull was interred apart from the skeleton or in a group with similar remains.

[159] Alain Simmer, "Le prélèvement des crânes dans l'Est de la France à l'époque mérovingienne, " *AM* 12 (1982): 35–40; Simmer, *Le cimetière mérovin- gien*, 149; Salin, *La civilisation mérovingienne*, 2: 346–54.

These examples would have been notably different from the wooden coffin (grave 4) under the basilique of Saint-Denis, in which an approximately forty-five-year-old man had suffered wounds to the skull and vertebral column before his death in the migration period.

[160] Salin, "Sépultures, " 103, 111.

In his assessment of the prior cases, Simmer has determined that the removal of the skulls occurred post mortem and likely after the corpse had decomposed; in the decapitation of a still-living individual, by contrast, the two uppermost vertebrae would have presumably remained attached to the skull.

[161] Simmer, "Le prélèvement, " 41–48.

For these reasons, Simmer has proposed that most cases of the disarticulation of skeletons did not result from executions. As evidenced by their special handling,

[162] Simmer believes that this custom reflected a revival of a prehistoric usage in conjunction with Christian attitudes toward corpses (*Le cimetière mérovingien*, 152–53); see also Eduard Beninger, "Die Leichenzerstückelung als vor-und frühgeschichtliche Bestattungssitte, " *Anthropos: Revue internationale d'ethnologie et de linguistique* 26 (1931): 773–78.

these bodies appear not to have been feared but instead to have been venerated. These graves thus did not provide physical

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evidence of brutal assassination, such as that of Gundovald (d. 585) and the subsequent defilement of his unburied remains recounted by Gregory of Tours in his *Histories.*

[163] Krusch, ed., *Gregorius episcopus Turonensis, Libri historiarum X*, 7.38, MGH: SRM 1.1, 319; Luce Pietri, "Les sépultures privilégiées en Gaule d'après les sources littéraires, " in *L'inhumation privilégiée du IV^{e} au VIII^{e} siècle en Occident (Actes du colloque tenu à Créteil, les 16–18 mars 1984)*, ed. Yvette Duval and Jean-Charles Picard (Paris: De Boccard, 1986), 134.

Nor were they the product of capital punishment, as in the case of Brunhild (d. 613).

[164] Bruno Krusch, ed., *Ionas, Vitae Columbani abbatis discipulorumque eius libri II*, 1.29, MGH: SRG 37 (Hanover: Impensis bibliopolii Hahniani, 1905), 219–20.

Because in many instances the skeletons lacking skulls lay in otherwise well-furnished graves, Halsall has argued that the missing remains were disarticulated and interred else-where, possibly in a coveted or honored location.

[165] Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 160–61, 272.

After all, the dismemberment of bodies was described most commonly in written sources in relation to the remains of holy personages.

[166] Peter Brown, *The Cult of Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 78ff.

Such rites might thus be practiced on other Christians by the seventh century if there was some need to establish their presence at more than one place, such as near the relics of saints, buried *ad sanctos*. The absence of a skull was therefore not necessarily indicative of punishment of or disrespect for the deceased but was possibly reflective of the desire that he or she receive, at least in part, burial in an advantageous location.

Other unusual manifestations of burial, such as the abnormal positioning of bodies face-down or crouching, the immobilization of skeletons with stones, the mutilation of the legs of skeletons, possible live burials, and the use of nails to transfix human corpses to the earth,

[167] Simmer, "Le prélèvement, " 43–44; id., *Le cimetière mérovingien*, 148–49; Young, *Quatre cimetières mérovingiens*, 153;Salin, *La civilisation mérovingienne*, 2: 217–22. For Anglo-Saxon examples, see M. Harman, T. I. Molleson, and J. L. Price, "Burials, Bodies, and Beheadings in Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries, " *Bulletin of the British Museum (Natural History)* Geology Series 35 (1981): 145–88; Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Paganism*, 72–86.

have also been read as indicative of fear or punishment of the deceased. Halsall has questioned the willingness of archaeologists to imagine such sentiments with regard to grave evidence when they could have just as logically attributed the findings to natural shifting caused by decomposition.

[168] Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 160–62.

Seeking proof of obscure rites rather than evidence of more practical measures, scholars over the past century have proposed that violent acts were perpetrated by

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contemporaries in an effort to prevent the dead from haunting the living.

[169] Simmer, "Le prélèvement, " 148–49; Salin, *La civilisation mérovingienne*, 2: 354.

In other words, like early twentieth-century anthropologists and sociologists, they have argued that fear of the dead motivated the ritual mutilation or transfixion of human corpses.

[170] James G. Frazer, "On Certain Burial Customs as Illustrative of the Primitive Theory of the Soul, " *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 15 (1886): 74–75; id., *La crainte des morts* (Paris: Émile Nourry, Éditeur, 1934), 1: 181–89; Hans Schreuer, "Das Recht der Toten: Eine germanistische Untersuchung, " *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Rechtswissenschaft* 33 (1916): 349–73; Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 160–61.

Despite the attractiveness of such theories, archaeologists have observed that in many so-called deviant burials, corpses were laid to rest in conjunction with grave goods. Grave 7 at the seventh-century cemetery of Bettborn (Moselle), for instance, contained a prone burial equipped with artifacts.

[171] Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 97–98.

While some individuals naturally feared death, belief in the existence of negative attitudes toward human remains contradicts virtually all Merovingian-period documentation of the interaction between the living and the deceased. As has been noted by Jean-Claude Schmitt, only a few examples of the return of the dead to the presence of the living survive in early medieval texts, besides those describing the positive intervention of the saints on behalf of the faithful. Demons, by contrast, were the most frightening figures in early medieval writings until at least the ninth century.

[172] Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Les revenants: Les vivants et les morts dans la so- ciété médiévale* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1994), 43–48. For a more fanciful reading of various grave rituals in the Gallo-Roman period, see André van Doorselaer, *Les nécropoles d'époque romaine en Gaule septentrionale*, trans. Marcel Amand, Dissertationes archaeologicae gandenses 10 (Bruges: De Tempel, 1967), 120–25.

Nancy Caciola has pointed to the eleventh century as the time of the earliest extant descriptions of the "dangerous dead."

[173] Nancy Caciola, "Wraiths, Revenants, and Ritual in Medieval Culture, " *Past and Present* 152 (1996): 15–37.

In the early Middle Ages, attachment to the dead manifested itself in the obsession with corporeal relics.

[174] Brown, *The Cult of Saints*, 78ff.; id., "Relics and Social Status in the Age of Gregory of Tours, " in *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 236ff.

Corpses that became animated and returned to life were normally not viewed as uncontrollable but instead represented the consequence of Christian prayers for saints' protection or

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justice.

[175] Adalbert de Vogüé, ed., *Grégoire le Grand, Dialogues*, 1.10.18, trans. Paul Antin, SC 260 (Paris: Les Éditions du CERF, 1979), 108–09.

While clerical sources are the only surviving documentation of these phenomena in the Merovingian period, and thus do not constitute unbiased witnesses, it is difficult to say whether most Christian inhabitants of Gaul felt greater apprehension toward the dead than their spiritual leaders. At Sutton Hoo in East Anglia, by comparison, unusual burial configurations, perhaps even human sacrifice, were not used to display fear but to showcase the presence of an elite grave in the vicinity.

[176] Hilda Ellis Davidson, "Human Sacrifice in the Late Pagan Period in North-Western Europe, " in *The Age of Sutton Hoo: The Seventh Century in North- Western Europe*, ed. Martin Carver (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1992), 331–40; Helen Geake, "Burial Practice in Seventh-and Eighth-Century England, " in *Age of Sutton Hoo*, 90–91; Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Paganism*, 165–72.

Similar examples have not yet been identified conclusively in early medieval Gaul.

THE "FINAL PHASE": TRANSITION FROM A GOOD-CENTERED MORTUARY RITE

Increasing uniformity of burial goods and the prevalence of grave robbery preceded the widespread cessation of deposition rites in Gaul at the end of the seventh century.

[177] Helmut Roth, "Archäologische Beobachtungen zum Grabfrevel im Mero-wingerreich, " in *Zum Grabfrevel in vor- und frühgeschichtlicher Zeit*, ed. Herbert Jankuhn, Hermann Nehlsen, and Helmut Roth (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), 60–65; Heiko Steuer, "Archäologisches Grabraub, " in *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde*, new ed. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1998), 12: 516–23.

While the significance of the declining interest in this funerary tradition cannot be satisfactorily documented in most regions, no surviving evidence indicates that the marked evolution in customs commemorating the deceased stemmed from a more spiritual understanding of Christianity. The donation of burial goods had for centuries served to create, legitimate, and perpetuate all manner of social relationships; the rite symbolically involved families and communities in the commemoration of their dead. Every reason therefore exists to believe that mortuary rites continued to fulfill these vital functions without grave goods long after this period.

[178] Pader, *Symbolism, Social Relations*, 37–40; Sally F. Moore and Barbara G. Myerhoff, Introduction to *Secular Ritual*, ed. Sally F. Moore and Barbara G. Myerhoff (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1977), 7–17.

In response to a variety of changing circumstances,

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such as the consolidation of the manorial system

[179] Heiko Steuer, "Archaeology and History: Proposals on the Social Structure of the Merovingian Kingdom, " in *The Birth of Europe: Archaeology and Social Development in the First Millennium A.D.*, ed. Klavs Randsborg, Analecta romana instituti danici supplementum 16 (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1989), 116–20.

and the growing influence of the clergy, alternate forms of mortuary expression came to the fore in the late seventh and eighth centuries.

[180] Bonnie Effros, *Caring for Body and Soul: Burial and the Afterlife in the Merovingian World* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), 44–61.

The local adoption of new or different rites occurred when the old ones were no longer perceived as effectively communicating the values of the next generation of powerful members of Christian communities across Gaul.

[181] For Anglo-Saxon England, see Andy Boddington, "Models of Burial, Settlement, and Worship: The Final Phase Reviewed, " in *Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries: A Reappraisal (Proceedings of a Conference held at Liverpool Museum, 1986)*, ed. Edmund Southworth (Phoenix Mill: Alan Sutton Publishing,

1990), 196–97.

As noted by Halsall, in the region of Metz, for instance, the relinquishment of grave goods did not point to a more general disinterest in grave sites. Elites continued to recognize the importance of maintaining interment facilities visible to their contemporaries. Halsall thus suggests that surface-level mortuary display especially in urban contexts may have been more effective than the burial of grave goods in addressing larger audiences. These places of power lay close to human habitations rather than at their fringes.

[182] Guy Halsall, "Social Change Around A.D. 600: An Austrasian Perspective, " in *Age of Sutton Hoo*, 269–70.

This emphasis on long-term visibility in elite mortuary tradition, however, did not reflect a return to customs that were Gallo-Roman in origin.

[183] But see Young, "Paganisme, christianisation, " 36–57.

On the whole, by the late seventh century, most of the stereotypical features of Gallo-Roman tradition, such as ceramic deposits and Charon's obol, had long since disappeared. Where these did survive, consequently, it is hard to imagine that they were still recognized by inhabitants as such. Evidence of late seventh-century changes in mortuary custom in some parts of Gaul, moreover, is very elusive, due to the widespread reuse of existing graves and the inability of archaeologists to locate many eighth-century sepulchers since dating them is made difficult by the absence of identifying artifacts.

Progression from a goods-based mortuary tradition to one more dependent upon its exclusive location affected more than contemporary expressions

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of identity. Evidence of an increasing number of elite burials at or near churches instead of in row grave cemeteries indicated a changing power structure. Merovingian elites were growing more receptive to the authority of clerics in a domain in which they had formerly played a minor role.

[184] Young, "Merovingian Funeral Rites, " 208ff.; Bonnie Effros, "Beyond Cemetery Walls: Early Medieval Funerary Topography and Christian Salvation, " *EME* 6 (1997): 1–23.

The decision to adopt an alternate mortuary ritual resulted from the rising influence of the clergy in urban settings and other centers of power. Church burial, interment *ad sanctos*, and the possession of a sarcophagus or grave stele decorated with Christian motifs or epitaphs were all facets of the disposal of the dead in which clerics had now grown influential. Besides expressing religious belief, these features of mortuary ritual also had the ability to convey more precisely the identity of the family of the deceased.

[185] Young, "Exemple aristocratique, " 390; Alain Dierkens, "Pour une meilleure compréhension du phénomène de la christianisation: Quelques réflexions sur l'implantation du christianisme en pays mosan au haut moyen âge, " in *Christian- isation et déchristianisation (Actes de la neuvième rencontre d'histoire religieuse tenue à Fontevraud, les 3, 4, 5 octobre 1985)*, Publication du Centre de recherches d'histoire religieuse et d'histoire des idées 9 (Antwerp: Presses de l'Université d'Angers, 1986), 51.

Christian liturgical services drawing the attention of the faithful to the graves of privileged members of the community at regular intervals augmented their status.

[186] Frederick S. Paxton, *Christianizing Death: The Creation of a Ritual Pro- cess in Early Medieval Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 66–69.

Whether in conjunction with grave goods or not, funerary topography contributed to the ability of kin groups of the deceased to express themselves to contemporaries. These rituals helped create a holy landscape in which elites saw themselves in dominant positions in both this world and the afterlife. It is therefore now time to turn to an examination of spatial hierarchies prevailing at cemeteries in early medieval Gaul.

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4. The Visual Landscape

Cemeterial Topography and Community Hierarchy

Grave goods represented innately "temporary" components of early medieval burial ritual in that they remained visible to the living only until the conclusion of the funeral. By contrast, external aspects of inhumation such as disposal facilities and epitaphs constituted more lasting monuments to the deceased in early medieval Gaul. Through such spatial features of burial, groups attained or reaffirmed their rights to restricted or limited resources. Arthur Alan Saxe has thus observed the particular appeal for elites of establishing "a permanently specialized, bounded territorial area" reserved for "the exclusive disposal of their dead."

[1] Arthur Alan Saxe, "Social Dimensions of Mortuary Practices" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1970), 119–21.

In this sense, topographical features of burial, just as grave goods, revealed the organizational principles of its respective community or communities. These cultural markers pointed to the social relations between inhabitants and potentially their view of the ordering of the afterlife.

[2] Lynne Goldstein, "One-Dimensional Archaeology and Multi-Dimensional People: Spatial Organisation and Mortuary Analysis, " in *The Archaeology of Death*, ed. Robert Chapman, Ian Kinnes, Klavs Randsborg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 57–61, 67; Lewis R. Binford, "Mortuary Practices: Their Study and Potential, " in *Approaches to the Social Dimensions of Mortuary Prac- tices*, ed. James A. Brown, Memoirs of the Society for American Archaeology 25 (Washington, D.C.: Society for American Archaeology, 1971), 21–23.

The placement, arrangement, and appearance of burial facilities thus shaped the identity of the members of kin groups or larger communities as well as altered the landscape. Because they had greater permanence than burial goods, topographical features of cemeteries provided more long-lasting means of conveying identity, belief, and power.

As with grave goods, however, the spatial symbolism of cemeteries was

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not a direct reflection of the organizational hierarchy of early medieval society. In a manner similar to mortuary deposits, the topographical features of burial ritual were subject to repeated negotiation. They did not project everyday realities but an idealized representation of the community or communities that helped shape them.

[3] Ellen-Jane Pader, *Symbolism, Social Relations, and the Interpretation of Mortuary Remains*, BAR International Series 130 (Oxford: BAR, 1982), 44, 57–65.

Prevailing customs in particular cemeteries also framed the interpretation of the individual funerals taking place within them.

[4] Guy Halsall, "Burial, Ritual, and Merovingian Society, " in *The Community, the Family, and the Saint: Patterns of Power in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. Joyce Hill and Mary Swan (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), 327–29.

Most spatial components of mortuary practice, just as grave goods, were thus not coincidental but the product of conscious choices within existing social boundaries. Descriptive categories of the topographical aspects of burial tradition must be sufficiently complex to avoid an over simplification of the evidence.

[5] David M. Schneider, "Some Muddles in the Models: Or, How the System Really Works, " in *The Relevance of Models for Social Anthropology*, ed. Michael Banton, Association of Social Anthropologists Monographs 1 (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1965), 70–78.

This chapter therefore assesses the external features of mortuary practice that played a critical role in the expression of personal and group identity in early medieval Gaul.

[6] Goldstein, "One-Dimensional Archaeology, " 59; Edward James, "Burial and Status in the Early Medieval West, " *TRHS*, 5th ser., 39 (1989): 29.

Like grave goods, various aspects of the housing of the dead and the spatial hierarchy of cemeteries also conveyed concern with the well-being of the deceased.

Just as in the case of objects buried with the dead, the external features of sepulchers and the organization of cemeteries represented poor indicators of an individual's ethnicity. Guy Halsall has illustrated the dynamics of this process in the region of Metz by suggesting that innovation often signaled internal social and political developments rather than the arrival of a new population with different mortuary customs.

[7] Guy Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization: The Merovingian Region of Metz* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 9–14.

In the late seventh century, for instance, members of the Merovingian elite in this area shifted the focus of their funerary rites from grave goods and turned their attention more exclusively to monuments and interment facilities visible at ground level. Although from a modern perspective this form of burial expression is more reminiscent of Gallo-Roman than Germanic practice, contemporaries must have viewed above-ground funerary display differently.

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These practices resulted from the need to address more distant dependents of powerful landholders and did not represent an overt attempt to imitate Roman custom.

[8] Guy Halsall, "Social Change Around A.D. 600: An Austrasian Perspective, " in *The Age of Sutton Hoo: The Seventh Century in North-Western Europe*, ed. Martin Carver (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1992), 269–70; id., *Early Medieval Cemeteries: An Introduction to Burial Archaeology in the Post-Roman West* (Skelmorlie: Cruithne Press, 1995), 68.

Halsall's proposal thus challenges Bailey Young's hypothesis that following the arrival of Christianity in Gaul, only saints' graves and possibly the sepulchers of the highest nobility had markers that preserved the identity of the deceased.

[9] Bailey K. Young, "Paganisme, christianisation et rites funéraires mérovingiens, " *AM* 7 (1977): 29–31.

Growing attention to the soul's fate in the afterlife expressed by contemporary clerics likewise contributed to the erection of inscribed tombs and monuments addressing this concern in churches or churchyards.

[10] Bonnie Effros, "Beyond Cemetery Walls: Early Medieval Funerary Topography and Christian Salvation, " *EME* 6 (1997): 1–23; id., *Caring for Body and Soul: Burial and the Afterlife in the Merovingian World* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), 92–137.

THE PROTECTIVE AND COMMEMORATIVE FUNCTIONS OF GRAVE MARKERS

A number of difficulties arise in conjunction with any attempt to reconstruct how Merovingian cemeteries appeared to contemporaries. At the very least, the impermanent but nonetheless dominant features of burial sites, such as trees and flowers or other flora, have left little trace for modern scholars. Soil erosion, subsequent occupation, and the debris of subsequent centuries have also brought about irrevocable losses of remains testifying to the topographical features of early medieval burial sites. Even evidence of the most permanent components of Merovingian cemeteries, such as stone tombs and inscriptions, is not entirely reliable. The majority of sarcophagi and epitaphs surviving in their original form are no longer in their initial locations and drawings and transcriptions do not necessarily convey their appearance accurately. Their provenances were often either not recorded or have been since lost.

As a consequence of the dearth of information regarding many early medieval epitaphs' original location, an accurate estimate of the proportion of graves that possessed stones or other fairly permanent monuments is

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not possible. The graves that were not thus marked, with few exceptions, must have outnumbered those with inscriptions or tombs significantly even in southern Gaul during the late imperial period.

[11] Werner Eck, "Aussagefähigkeit epigraphischer Statistik und die Bestattung von Sklaven im kaiserzeitlichen Rom, " in *Alte Geschichte und Wissenschaftsge- schichte (Festschrift für Karl Christ zum 65. Geburtstag)*, ed. Peter Kneissl and Volker Losemann (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1988), 130–35.

Yet these features were not common to all cemeteries. One site that deviated from the norm was the sixth-century cemetery of Neuvicq-Montguyon, in which a significant number of the stone sarcophagi were inscribed with the names of the deceased.

[12] Louis Maurin, "Le cimetière mérovingien de Neuvicq-Montguyon (Charente-Maritime), " *Gallia* 29 (1971): 167–81.

This community chose to make extensive use of epigraphy hundreds of years after the cessation of large-scale production of grave steles and stone sarcophagi, which had reached a peak in Gaul in the second century.

[13] Charles Pietri, "Grabinschrift II (Lateinisch), " in *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1983), 12: 516.

In the sixth century just as in the second, the decision to expend resources on burial inscriptions signaled families' heightened concern about how they could differentiate their late relations' resting places from those of their contemporaries.

Not all burial inscriptions in Gaul, however, functioned as gravestones do in modern cemeteries. Some epitaphs were intended to be legible only from the inside of sarcophagi and were thus visible only at the funeral (as well as being exposed to the deceased in perpetuity). The late fourth-or early fifth-century epitaph of Maura, the wife of Bonifatius, who was an imperial official in the cemetery of St. Mathias, Trier, for instance, faced the interior of the tomb.

[14] Nancy Gauthier, ed., *RICG*, 1.37 (Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1975), 182–84; Edmond Le Blant, ed., *Inscriptions chrétiennes de la Gaule antérieures au VIII*[e] *siècle*, 1.277 (Paris: À l'Imprimerie impériale, 1856), 382.

Two Christian inscriptions dated to 501, one commemorating Arenberga and freeing her slave Manno, and the other commemorating Vilioberga, were located at the bases of their tombs at Briord.

[15] Françoise Descombes, ed., *RICG*, 15.261–62 (Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1985), 672–75.

Such epitaphs clearly did not address the survivors as much as they reflected spiritual concerns related to the identification of Christians at the Resurrection. They may have also satisfied a desire to identify familial possessions.

[16] Werner Eck, "Römische Grabinschriften: Aussageabsicht und Aussagefä-higkeit im funerären Kontext, " in *Römische Gräberstraßen: Selbstdarstellung-Status-Standard (Kolloquium in München von 28. bis 30. Oktober 1985)*, ed. Henner von Hesberg and Paul Zanker, Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse, Abhandlungen, new ser. 96 (Munich: Verlag der Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1987), 61–68.

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Although the proportion of stone epitaphs used in early medieval Gaul was small, inhabitants used a number of other means to mark their graves from the Gallo-Roman period onward. The densely populated Belgian necropolis of Blicquy, occupied from the late first to early third century, contained more than five hundred incinerations. Yet almost none of the pits overlapped or cut into one another. The only exceptions to this practice were two examples of roughly contemporary date in which one cremation was laid on top of another. The decision to reuse the pits was intentional, in contrast to all of the other cases, in which reuse was intentionally avoided. With the long duration of the active use of this necropolis and the regularity with which the disposal area was arranged, we must conclude that individual sites were marked in some manner, whether with stone monuments, wooden steles, vases, amphorae, or tumuli.

[17] S. J. de Laet, A. van Doorselaer, P. Spitaels, and H. Thoen, *La nécropole gallo-romaine de Blicquy (Hainaut-Belgique)*, pt. A, Dissertationes archaeologicae gandenses 14 (Bruges: De Tempel, 1972), 19–22.

In row grave cemeteries of the sixth and seventh centuries, such as at Lavoye (Meuse) and Köln-Müngersdorf, contemporaries presumably took similar care to prevent the same space from being used for more than one burial unless so desired.

[18] René Joffroy, *Le cimetière de Lavoye (Meuse): Nécropole mérovingienne* (Paris: Éditions A. & J. Picard, 1974), map VI; Fritz Fremersdorf, *Das fränkische Reihengräberfeld Köln-Müngersdorf*, Germanische Denkmäler der Völkerwanderungszeit 6 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1955), 1: 32–33.

In a few exceptionally preserved necropoleis, evidence for possible markers has been found. At the cemetery of Frénouville (Calvados), christian Pilet has identified postholes made by wooden stakes hammered twenty to twenty-five centimeters deep at the head or foot of certain west-east graves. He suggests that from the late sixth century, and for several generations afterward, these stakes must have marked individual sepulchers. The use of dirt mounds, wooden markers, or arrangements of stones aided in commemorating the dead and helped prevent significant over-lapping of graves in the cemetery. Because space at Frénouville was at such a premium, moreover, the integrity of individual sepulchers had to be defended from those who desired to bury their dead in the same place.

[19] Christian Pilet, *La nécropole de Frénouville: Étude d'une population de la fin du III^e^ à la fin du VII^e^ siècle* 1, BAR International Series 83(i) (Oxford: BAR, 1980), 7–8, 156–57.

Rather than pointing to the superficial nature of Christianity in this region, such practices at this densely occupied cemetery suggest the very opposite.

Sidonius Apollinaris's (d. circa 480) exceptional account of the near desecration of his grandfather Apollinaris's burial site, while predating the focus of this discussion, nonetheless illustrates the difficulties of maintaining spatial ordering in late antique and early medieval necropoleis. The bishop of Clermont wrote in a letter to Secundus, his nephew, that he had come upon grave diggers about to penetrate the surface under which the statesman's sepulcher lay. Apparently, not only had the cemetery become very full, but:

> the earth which it is customary to pile upon the buried had spread out until the surface resumed its original flatness, the various heaps having gradually sunk down owing to the weight of the snow and a long exposure to downpours of rain.

[20] "… sed tamen tellus, humatis quae superducitur, redierat in pristinam distenta planitiem pondere nivali seu diuturno imbrium fluxu sidentibus acervis …" Translation taken from W. B. Anderson, ed. and trans., *Sidonius: Poems and Letters* 3.12.1, Loeb Classical Library 445 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 40–41; Christian Luetjohann, ed., *Sidonius Apollinaris, Epistulae et carmina* 3.12.1, MGH: AA 8 (Berlin: Apud Wiedmannos, 1887), 47.

In the crowded cemetery just outside of the church of St. Justus, Lyon, space *ad sanctos* was so desirable that recent inhumations had begun to encroach upon other graves, including that of his grandfather, the former praetorian prefect of Gaul. Despite measures taken to distinguish the site, in this case a mound of earth piled over the sepulcher of the Christian convert, the likelihood of error was great. To prevent the recurrence of this dishonorable violation of the burial's integrity, Sidonius took it into his own hands to administer corporal punishment to the offending grave diggers. He also sponsored the restoration of the mound and erection of an inscribed stone there with verses he had composed; the metered epitaph noted his responsibility as commemorator and praised the deceased profusely.

[21] Luetjohann, ed., *Sidonius Apollinaris, Epistulae* 3.12.2–5, MGH: AA 8, 47–48; Martin Heinzelmann, *Bischofsherrschaft in Gallien: Zur Kontinuität römischer Fuhrungsschichten von 4. bis zum 7. Jahrhundert, Soziale, prosopographis- che und bildungsgeschichtliche Aspekte*, Beihefte der Francia 5 (Munich: Artemis Verlag, 1976), 51–53.

With the added precaution of the gravestone, he sought to avert any further misunderstandings regarding the identity and status of the illustrious individual interred there.

The ability to identify the graves of close relations, however humbly, was also important when individuals wished to be buried near or together with kin. In the case of the gravestone dedicated to Ampelius (d. 472) and Singenia (d. 495), the late fifth-century inscription recorded that Singenia had survived Ampelius by more than twenty years and praised the widow's sustained devotion to her former husband.

[22] As reconstructed by Ernst Diehl, the epitaph reads: in Xρi nomene in huc loc[u requiescunt] / in pace fedelis famu[lus dei Ampeliu] / s et Singenia, qui uixer[unt in coniu] / gali adfectu et carita[te eximia] / annis circiter LX aut an[nos … cont] / inuos in pace dominica f[idi perman] / serunt. quorum uita talis f[uit, ut lin] / quens coniux maritum XX an[nos] / excedens in castitat e perpet[ua] / perduraret. / obiet uenerabilis memoriae Ampe[lius] / subdie XVI kl. Decembris Fisto et / Marciano con[ss.]. / transiet bone recordationis Si[ngenia] / subdie II økl. Ianuarias pc. Viat[oris u. c. c.] / in Xρi / nomine (Ernst Diehl, ed., *Inscriptiones latinae christianae veteres*, 1.2454, new ed. [Dublin: Weidmann, 1970], 477). Le Blant believed that the stone was begun at the time of Ampelius's death, but this view is not supported by the composition of the epitaph; see Edmond Le Blant, ed., *Inscriptions chrétiennes de la Gaule antérieures au VIII^e^ siècle*, 2.391 (Paris: À l'Imprimerie impériale, 1865), 30–32, pl. 275.

Although the epitaph was composed only after both commemorated thereupon were deceased, it is clear that Ampelius's grave must have borne some visible marks for two decades prior to this time that enabled Singenia to visit his resting place. A no longer extant feature, perhaps a small earthen mound or a wooden marker, must have helped her locate his grave before their double inscription was erected.

Occasional examples of less costly forms of grave markers also survive from the late Merovingian period. In the late seventh-, early eighth-century cemetery of Roissard (Isère), for instance, stones protruded from the ground's surface in a shape that followed the general contour of the deceased's body. They represented a unique means of identifying the location of that interment. Michel Colardelle has also drawn attention to the accuracy with which inhabitants were able to locate and reopen existing sepulchers from the same cemetery for the subsequent addition of human remains.

[23] Michel Colardelle, *Sépulture et traditions funéraires du V^e^ au XIII^e^ siècle après J.-C. dans les campagnes des Alpes françaises du nord (Drôme, Isère, Savoie, Haute-Savoie)* (Grenoble: Publication de la Société alpine de documentation et de recherche en archéologie historique, 1983), 29–32, 39.

Most markings must have been of an informal nature, since so few extant grave inscriptions or cenotaphs have been identified. Whereas early in the Merovingian period few graves were raised above the surface of the earth except those with burial mounds, the honor of an elevated burial site, whose prayers and curses rewarded in an ornate tomb was mainly reserved for the saints for the benefit of the faithful.

[24] Patrick Périn, "Le problème des sarcophages-cénotaphes du haut moyen âge: A propos de la nécropole de Quarré-les-Tombes, site d'une bataille légendaire, " in *La chanson de geste et le mythe carolingien: Mélanges René Louis* (Saint-Pèresous-Vézelay: Musée archéologique régional, 1982), 2: 823–33.

In the seventh

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and eighth centuries, however, this latter practice expanded to include a larger group of prestige graves.

The ability of individuals to mark the burial places of their deceased, whether with earth, rocks, or the special security of an inscribed stone (a privilege the relatives of only some could afford) thus had great significance. Luce Pietri has claimed that every deceased Christian, even criminals, in early medieval Gaul had the right to a decent burial below ground *(sub fossa).*

[25] This privilege was not extended to heretics or suicides; see Luce Pietri, "Les sépultures privilégiées en Gaule d'après les sources littéraires, " in *L'inhumation privilégiée du IV^e^ au VIII^e^ siècle en Occident (Actes du colloque tenu à Créteil, les 16–18 mars 1984)*, ed. Yvette Duval and Jean-Charles Picard (Paris: De Boccard, 1986), 133–35.

A less optimistic reading of the evidence, however, suggests that burial was not a common "right" of the dead but rather an anticipated chain of events experienced by those who died under ordinary circumstances. Christians likewise expected that there would be a means of identifying that grave, even if just informally, for at least a few generations. Marking the burial place benefited the dead, as surviving relations were able to visit the grave. In the case of tombs engraved with Christian symbols or inscriptions, these signs were possibly intended to last for eternity, so that they would identify the dead at the Resurrection. Similar to votive goods, the outward appearance of Merovingian-period sepulchers thus projected an idealized image of the deceased. Although employing a different vocabulary than communicated by mortuary objects, the location, size, and marking of a burial place revealed much to contemporaries and descendants about an individual's place in the community hierarchy.

OPTIONS FOR HOUSING THE DEAD

Closely related to concern with the proper identification of graves was the choice of facility for interment of the dead. Like grave goods, most sarcophagi were not visible after burial. They varied considerably with relation to the quality of material from which they were fashioned and the energy expended in their construction. As most individuals were buried in plain earth without the benefit of a tomb or coffin, another important distinguishing factor was the size of the grave dug to house the deceased. The dimensions of the sepulchers often paralleled the quality of grave

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goods found within them. For instance, Fritz Fremersdorf observed that whereas more sparsely endowed burials at Köln-Müngersdorf averaged between 70 and 130 centimeters in depth, those with more lavish goods were dug 100 to 150 centimeters deep.

[26] Fremersdorf, *Das fränkische Reihengräberfeld*, 1: 37.

Young has remarked upon similar phenomena at Lavoye (Meuse) and has indicated that graves of children tended to be quite shallow.

[27] Bailey K. Young, *Quatre cimitières mérovingiens de l'Est de la France: Lavoye, Dieuesur-Meuse, Mezières-Manchester et Mazerny*, BAR International Series 208 (Oxford: BAR, 1984), 22–25; Frauke Stein, *Adelsgräber des achten Jahr- hunderts in Deutschland*, Germanische Denkmäler der Völkerwanderungszeit, ser. A, vol. 9 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1967), 1: 120.

Decisions about the depth and size of the pit dug to accommodate the corpse, grave goods, the coffin, and whatever else might be selected to accompany the deceased into the earth, derived from practical as well as symbolic considerations. Whereas graves lacking coffins tended to be slightly ovular in shape, those lined with stone slabs were generally narrower and more rectangular.

[28] Colardelle, *Sépulture et traditions*, 39.

The same hierarchical concerns that motivated the degree of expenditure for the outfitting of the deceased affected the attention and energy devoted to the spatial components of the interment.

[29] Goldstein, "One-Dimensional Archaeology, " 57–61. Binford, "Mortuary Practices, " 21–23.

As mentioned above, the simplest and most common type of burial found in Merovingian necropoleis was devoid of any sort of coffin. It is possible that a cloth, shroud, or clothing protected corpses from the soil; in the last case, however, undisturbed graves producing no remains of brooches suggest that any such garments must have been left unfastened. Averaging only fifty to sixty centimeters in width, the shafts dug for plain-earth burials were often just large enough to accommodate the body of the deceased and little else. Another widespread practice involved interring the deceased atop what appear to have been wooden biers or in logs or wooden coffins.

[30] The seventh-century *Vita Richarii Centulensis* described Richarius's followers preparing his burial place from a log: "Qualem studium habuit, rotundum materium invenit nec maiorem diligentiam exhibuit, nisi per medium eum divisit et in de concavo vasculo illico finis sancta evenit; in loco, ubi praeciperat, saepultus fuit" (Bruno Krusch, ed., *Vita Richarii sacerdotis Centulensis primigenia* 11, MGH: SRM 7 [Hanover: Impensis bibliopolii Hahniani, 1920], 451).

Light traces of organic debris indicate that these wooden constructions probably lay flat at the bottom of the sepulcher where they supported the weight of the corpse.

[31] Fremersdorf, *Das fränkische Reihengräberfeld*, 1: 21–22, 25–27.

Because nails did not necessarily play

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a role in the construction of such facilities, however, their precise appearance has been difficult to identify.

[32] Young, *Quatre cimetières mérovingiens*, 143–44.

Thin stones sometimes also served to stabilize wooden planks used in Merovingian graves.

[33] Colardelle, *Sépulture et traditions*, 29–32.

In northeastern Gaul, an additional practice that replaced the need for a coffin or sarcophagus involved lining graves with stones of various sizes, some of which were visible from the surface.

[34] Alain Simmer, *Le cimetière mérovingien d'Audun-le-Tiche (Moselle)*, AFAM, Mémoire 2 (Paris: Éditions Errance, 1988), 19.

In more complex and costly arrangements, a wooden burial chamber, divided in some cases into two parts, housed the deceased. One section might hold the remains of the deceased, while the other housed large numbers of grave goods, such as weapons and possibly vessels for food and drink.

[35] Patrick Périn, "Trois tombes de 'chefs' du début de la période mérovingienne: Les sépultures n[os] 66, 68, et 74 de la nécropole de Mézières (Ardennes), " *Bulletin de la Société archéologique champenoise* 65.4 (1972): 12–19; Renate Pirling, "Ein fränkisches Fürstengrab aus Krefeld-Gellep, " *Germania* 42 (1964): 188–89.

The use of burial chambers of this sort in Gaul dated from late antiquity, and archaeologists have usually proposed that they were used to bury elite males of various ethnic backgrounds. West of the Rhine, however, the rite appears to have died out in the mid-seventh century, having been abandoned in favor of stonelined graves.

[36] Frauke Stein, "Grabkammern bei Franken und Alamannen: Beobachtungen zur sozialen Gliederung und zu den Verhältnissen nach der Eingliederung der Alamannen in das merowingische Reich, " in *Herrschaft, Kirche, Kultur (Fest- schrift für Friedrich Prinz zu seinem 65. Geburtstag)*, ed. Georg Jenal and Stephanie Haarländer, Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 37 (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1993), 3–41; Stein, *Adelsgräber*, 1: 125–27.

The lack of what modern viewers would consider a formal sepulcher, such as a stone tomb, did not preclude a grave from containing extensive or lavish goods. Whereas the sixth-century grave of the woman under the choir of Cologne cathedral yielded prodigious wealth, the shape of the sepulcher itself was improvised from large stone slabs covered with a thick layer of mud. A Roman wall acted as the fourth side of the grave.

[37] Otto Doppelfeld, "Das fränkische Frauengrab unter dem Chor des Kölner Doms, " *Germania* 38 (1960): 89–91.

The material used in such burial structures ranged from smaller pebbles with or without mortar to large rock slabs often confiscated from former Gallo-Roman structures. Colardelle has thus proposed the existence of a hierarchy of materials for building sepulchers in the southeast regions of Gaul and Burgundy ranging from plain earth to wood and finally to stone slabs

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and wood-and-stone combinations in the seventh and eighth centuries.

[38] Colardelle, *Sépulture et traditions*, 36–38, 54; figs. 22 and 39.

In some cases, rows of stones in the layers of soil over a grave may have also protected the body and burial goods from robbery or the depradation of animals.

[39] Fremersdorf, *Das fränkische Reihengräberfeld*, 1: 23–24.

In the lavishly appointed sixth-century high-status grave 1782 at Krefeld-Gellep, for instance, large stones and gravel filled an area measuring four by five meters. The hole beneath it, which most likely contained a wooden chamber, measured 2.7 meters by 1.4 meters and was two meters deep.

[40] Pirling, "Ein fränkisches Fürstengrab, " 188–89.

Building materials such as roof tiles, bricks, plaster, and wooden planks, and less frequently tree trunks and lead, also found their way into burial structures with more spontaneous configurations.

[41] Colardelle, *Sépulture et traditions*, 345–60; fig. 125; Édouard Salin, *La civi- lisation mérovingienne d'après les sépultures, les textes et le laboratoire* (Paris: A. et J. Picard, 1952), 2: 101 ff.

Although far from uniform, cemeteries typically exhibited one or more dominant types of mortuary facilities and a minority of graves fashioned from an assortment of alternative materials. The form taken by these sepulchers varied by region and in some cases even on a local basis. In the north-south sector of the row grave necropolis of Frénouville, where the graves dated from the late third to late fourth century, for instance, Pilet has observed evidence of thirty coffins and twelve biers among the 152 graves excavated. The west-east portion of the cemetery dating to the late fourth to late seventh century, by contrast, revealed twenty chalk stone sarcophagi, four stone *coffrages*, two wooden coffins, and one bier among the 498 burials. Although a small part of the population changed their rites significantly over the course of several centuries, the vast majority of the dead in the cemetery were consistently buried in plain earth. Significant continuity of deposition style thus prevailed among most families utilizing the cemetery of Frénouville. The absence of commodities such as wooden coffins or stone tombs, however, did not preclude valuable objects from being added to graves.

[42] Pilet, *La nécropole de Frénouville*, 1: 165–67.

Because of the expense involved in their quarrying and transport, sarcophagi carved from a single stone infrequently appeared north of the Loire. Farther south, however, they were used in much greater numbers.

[43] Edward James, *The Merovingian Archaeology of South-West Gaul*, BAR Supplementary Series 25(i) (Oxford: BAR, 1977), 1: 29–96.

The primary regions for the production of stone sarcophagi were Aquitaine, Burgundy, Poitou, Seine-Loire, and southern Champagne; smaller

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centers were located in the Paris region and northeast Gaul as far as the Rhine.

[44] Denise Fossard, "Répartition des sarcophages mérovingiens à décor en France, " in *Études mérovingiennes (Actes des journées de Poitiers, 1er –3 mai 1952)* (Paris: Éditions A. et J. Picard, 1953), 117–26.

South of the Loire, some cemeteries, such as the necropoleis of Quarré les Tombes (Yonne) and Civaux (Vienne), originally contained hundreds, even thousands of stone tombs before they were pillaged in the modern era.

[45] René Louis and Gilbert-Robert Delehaye, "Le sarcophage mérovingien considéré sous ses aspects économiques et sociaux, " in *Actes du 105e congrès national des sociétés savantes Caen 1980, la Normandie: Études archéologiques*, Section d'archéologie et histoire de l'art (Paris: Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques, 1983), 279–84; François Eygun, "Le site archéologique antique et paléochrétien de Civaux (Vienne), " in *Atti del VI congresso internazionale di archeo- logia cristiana, Ravenna 23–30 settembre 1962*, Studi di antichità 26 (Rome: Pontificio archeologia cristiana, 1965), 769–70; Colardelle, *Sépultures et traditions*, 353.

These necropoleis exhibited great conservatism in their design: throughout the Merovingian period, workshops continued to fashion sarcophagi reminiscent of their Gallo-Roman predecessors. They were normally characterized by decreased artisanal skill, presumably because demand for them was intermittent, and on account of the absence of new stimuli from technological advances. The lack of a tradition of stone carving in Germanic funerary culture likely also contributed to stagnation of their stylistic development.

A decline in the sophistication of methods for extracting stone also ultimately led to adaptations in the general shape of Merovingian sarcophagi. Few were rectangular, as in the late Roman period.

[46] Louis and Delehaye, "Le sarcophage mérovingien, " 275–79, 282–83, 293.

More typical were the trapezoidal tombs, such as a calcite example found at Saint-Denis, that housed the woman often identified as Queen Aregund. The relatively unsophisticated sarcophagus, rustic in appearance at least to modern eyes, was distinctly incongruous with the stunning wealth of the treasures found within it.

[47] Michel Fleury and Albert France-Lanord, "La tombe d'Aregonde, " *Les dos- siers d'archéologie* 32 (1979): 28.

The quality or presence of a stone tomb was clearly not a faithful indicator of the wealth of a grave's contents.

The advantage of burial in a stone tomb lay in its relative exclusivity and permanence, as it both housed and protected the body. Affordable to only those of significant means but not necessarily used by them, this form of burial frequently occurred *ad sanctos*. For faithful Christians, the sarcophagus played the roles of both eternal home *(domus aeterna)* for the corpse and *memoria* for the living, and became a monument by which

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the living could remember the deceased. Stone tombs near relics of the saints have been identified, for instance, at Civaux, Quarré-les-Tombes, Saint-Denis, and Saint-Germain-d'Auxerre.

[48] Louis and Delehaye, "Le sarcophage mérovingien, " 287–88, 291.

For the privileged who had access to sarcophagi, the investment was in some ways similar to depositing grave goods with the deceased. Both activities, with the recognition that a stone tomb involved greater coordination of resources and planning, presented an idealized view of the deceased. If used above ground, a fairly rare occurrence, the imagery carved onto the exterior of a sarcophagus might convey a powerful message to descendants. Even if somewhat less specific than an epitaph, the display of a cross on a tomb commonly brought attention to the Christian identity of the deceased.

[49] Périn, "Le problème des sarcophages-cénotaphes, " 823–33.

Such public expression was also effective in promoting the veneration of saints. In the anonymous collection of miracle accounts dedicated to her, the marble sarcophagus of Gertrude of Nivelles (d. 659) represented the locus of the miracles attributed to her. It became a font from which holy oil flowed and healed the ill.

[50] Bruno Krusch, ed., *Virtutum sanctae Gertrudis continuatio* 2, MGH: SRM 2, new ed. (Hanover: Impensis bibliopolii Hahniani, 1956), 472; Joseph Mertens, "Recherches archéologiques dans l'abbaye mérovingienne de Nivelles, " *Archaeo- logia belgica* 61 (1962): 108–11; Bailey K. Young, "Exemple aristocratique et mode funéraire dans la Gaule mérovingienne, " *Annales ESC* 41 (1986): 379; Bonnie Effros, "Symbolic Expressions of Sanctity: Gertrude of Nivelles in the Context of Merovingian Mortuary Custom, " *Viator* 27 (1996): 9–10.

In the region of Paris, due to the increasing difficulty of importing large stones from distant areas, plaster sarcophagi grew in popularity during the sixth and seventh centuries.

[51] Patrick Périn and Laurent Renou, "Les sarcophages mérovingiens de plâtre moulé trouvés à Paris: Technologie, ornementation, chronologie, " *Bulletin de li- aison: AFAM* 5 (1981): 49–52.

Often decorated with Greek crosses and simple geometric designs executed with the aid of a compass, the tombs were manufactured with reusable wooden molds to cast the plaster. As they were produced at the site of their interment, they did not require transport and thus were considerably less costly than their quarried stone counterparts. Until their use ceased during the second half of the eighth century, roughly contemporary with a notable decline in the transport of stone sarcophagi, plaster tombs appealed to a relatively wide group of families of varied taste and status.

[52] Patrick Périn and Laurent Renou, "Les sarcophages mérovingiens de plâtre moulé trouvés à Paris: Technologie, ornementation, chronologie, " in *Catalogues d'art et d'histoire du Musée Carnavalet*, ed. Patrick Périn (Paris: Museé Carnavalet, 1985), 2: 707ff.

Whether consciously or because both incorporated

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compasses in their design, the imagery on tombs and votive objects was very similar.

[53] Denise Fossard, "Les sarcophages mérovingiens de Paris, " *Paris et Île-de- France: Mémoires* 11(1960): 230ff.; Michel Fleury, "L'origine du décor des sarco-phages de plâtre mérovingiens de la région parisienne, " in *Problèmes de chronologie relative et absolue concernant les cimetières mérovingiens d'entre Loire et Rhin (Actes du II*e *colloque archéologique de la IV*e *section de l'École pratique des hautes études [Paris, 1973])*, ed. Michel Fleury and Patrick Périn (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1978), 111.

Much as the artifacts deposited in graves, however, most molded plaster sarcophagi were visible only temporarily, that is, until they were covered with soil. Yet those marked on the inside or outside with a cross, possibly with an amuletic function, theoretically identified the physical remains of Christians for all eternity. Like stone tombs, plaster sarcophagi offered permanent sanctuaries that housed and protected corpses.

THE TOPOGRAPHY OF CEMETERIES IN GAUL FROM THE FOURTH TO SEVENTH CENTURY

Two farreaching changes dramatically transformed the appearance of cemeteries in Gaul prior to the end of Roman rule and the rise of the Merovingian kingdoms. The first widespread development was the abandonment of incineration in favor of interment. This change probably began at the close of the third century and continued into the following century. Because contemporary commentary on this significant evolution is lacking, however, determination of the impetus for these changes has not been easy. Neither Germanic nor Christian customs contributed decisively to the transition from cremation to inhumation.

[54] Arthur Darby Nock, for instance, attributed it to changes in fashion; see his "Cremation and Burial in the Roman Empire, " in *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World*, ed. Zeph Stewart (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 1: 277–307.

In Gaul, Alain Dierkens has observed that both pagans and Christians practiced inhumation, whereas no precise legal ban was leveled against incineration of corpses among Christians until the late eighth-century Saxon Capitulary (782).

[55] Alain Dierkens, "Cimetières mérovingiens et histoire du haut moyen âge. Chronologie—société—religion, " in *Acta historica bruxellensia*, vol. 4: *Histoire et méthode* (Brussels: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1981), 56–58; W. A. Van Es, "Grabsitten und Christianisierung in den Niederlanden, " *Probleme der Küstenforschung im südlichen Nordseegebiet* 9 (1970): 84–85; Bonnie Effros, "*De partibus Saxoniae* and the Regulation of Mortuary Custom: A Carolingian Campaign of Christianization or the Suppression of Saxon Identity, " *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 75 (1997): 277–79.

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Another notable change in burial custom transpired with the shift in the orientation of the graves in most cemeteries from north-south to west-east; corpses were laid out with heads in the former direction, feet in the latter. This development occurred in most regions of Gaul by the end of the fourth century. Although some scholars have proposed that this phenomenon was a direct consequence of Christianization, no clearcut evidence supports this interpretation. Arguments attributing the shift to west-east burial to conversion have rested on the erroneous identification of certain necropoleis in northwestern Europe as pagan on the basis of the material content of excavated burials.

[56] Young, "Paganisme, christianisation, " 16–24; Dierkens, "Cimetières mérovingiens, " 56–59; Van Es, "Grabsitten, " 80.

This thesis has overlooked early Christian cemeteries in the south of Gaul containing graves oriented both north-south and west-east. The early Christian cemetery of Aliscamps (Arles), for instance, had sepulchers oriented toward the southeast. Not until the late fourth century did contemporaries change the positioning of new graves to west-east. A similar situation prevailed in three Gallo-Roman cemeteries in Marseilles.

[57] Fernand Benoit, "Cimetières paleochrétiens de Provence, " *CA* 2 (1947): 9–12.

While neither the transition from incineration to interment nor the evolution from north-south to west-east facing graves stemmed from Christianity alone, Dierkens has conceded that religious influence may have been decisive in bringing uniformity to these practices.

[58] Alain Dierkens, "Superstitions, christianisme et paganisme à la fin de l'époque mérovingienne: À propos de l'*Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum*, " in *Magie, sorcellerie, parapsychologie*, ed. Hervé Hasquin, Laïcité série recherches 5 (Brussels: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1984), 10.

Even this premise remains uncertain, however, since it is frequently difficult to distinguish between pagan and Christian burials during the era of conversion. Instead of indicating religious affiliation, the configuration of cemeteries often more accurately reflected deference to the position occupied by a prominent early grave at the site, usually referred to as a "founder." In other cases, the layout represented a logical response to the topographical features of the location chosen for burial.

Beyond developments related to grave orientation, cemeteries especially to the north of the Loire underwent a number of significant changes in content and form in the late fourth century. As discussed in Chapter 3,

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Roman-era inhumations tended to include deposits of coins and ceramic and glass vessels, while inhabitants of northwestern Gaul and the Rhineland toward the end of the fourth century began to create more lavishly dressed burials replete with weaponry, buckles, brooches, and hairpins. At first these burials represented small groups of graves in the context of larger Roman necropoleis. In conjunction with widespread dislocation of settlement in northwestern Gaul in the fifth century, however, new cemeterial sites appeared in both rural and suburban contexts such as at Grenoble, Geneva, Tournai, and Lyons.

[59] Gisella Cantino Wataghin, "The Ideology of Urban Burials, " in *The Idea and Ideal of the Town Between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Gian Pietro Brogiolo and Bryan Ward-Perkins, TRW 4 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999), 151–52; Halsall, *Early Medieval Cemeteries*, 9–10.

In an effort to clarify these developments, Heiko Steuer has therefore categorized the different types of burial grounds used in fifth-to eighth-century communities on the basis of their size and appearance.

As most early medieval cemeteries in Gaul have not been excavated in their entirety, estimates of the typical number of graves per site presented here is very approximate. One of the oldest types of cemeteries of the Merovingian period, however, constituted a small grave field containing thirty to forty inhumations. Established in rural locations in relative proximity to, although not directly adjoining habitations, many necropoleis of this description were apparently abandoned abruptly, and few survived past the early Merovingian period.

[60] Heiko Steuer, *Frühgeschichtliche Sozialstrukturen in Mitteleuropa: Eine Analyse der Auswertungsmethoden des archäologischen Quellenmaterials*, Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, philologisch-historische Klasse, 3d ser., vol. 128 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), 372–77, 391–92; Colardelle, *Sépulture et traditions*, 360.

Steuer has proposed that the short tenure of such disposal sites reflected changes in settlement patterns sparked by the arrival of new overlords. Regional or local instability contributed to the deliberate and hasty desertion of richly outfitted burial grounds, as well as those more poorly furnished, when the families occupying them were replaced by new elites.

[61] Heiko Steuer, "Archaeology and History: Proposals on the Social Structure of the Merovingian Kingdom, " in *The Birth of Europe: Archaeology and Social Development in the First Millennium A.D.*, ed. Klavs Randsborg, Analecta romana instituti danici supplementum 16 (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1989), 115–16; Patrick Périn, "Remarques sur la topographie funéraire en Gaule

mérovingienne et à sa périphérie: Des nécropoles romaines tardives aux nécropoles du haut moyen âge, " *CA* 35 (1987): 10–11.

A relatively frequent characteristic of early medieval cemeteries in Gaul

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was that they arose within or in close contact with the ruins of long-abandoned structures such as prehistoric dolmens, villas, baths, civic buildings, temples, and fortresses. Some were larger cemeteries with hundreds or even thousands of graves, as in the cases of Krefeld-Gellep, Audun-le-Tiche, Hordain (Nord), and the graveyard at St. Severin in Cologne,

[62] P. Demolon, "Cimetière et chapelle mérovingiens à Hordain (Nord), " in *L'archéologie en Hainaut-Cambrésis, Avesnois*, Catalogue d'exposition (Valenciennes: Musée des Beaux-Arts, 1981), 29–30; Halsall, *Settlement and Social Or- ganization*, 96–97, 181–82; Steuer, *Frühgeschichtliche Sozialstrukturen*, 374; Colardelle, *Sépulture et traditions*, 360.

while others, such as Saint-Georges-de-Boscherville (Seine-Maritime) and Berthelming (Moselle), contained a far smaller number of burials.

[63] Jacques Le Maho, "La réutilisation funéraire des édifices antiques en Normandie au cours du haut moyen âge, " in *L'environnement des églises et la topo- graphie religieuse des campagnes médiévales (Actes du III^e congrès international d'archéologie médiévale [Aixen-Provence, 28–30 septembre 1989])*, ed. Michel Fixot and Elisabeth Zadora-Rio, Documents d'archéologie française 46 (Paris: Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 1994), 10–21; Marcel Lutz, "La 'villa' gallo-romaine et la nécropole mérovingienne de Berthelming (Moselle), " *Revue archéologique de l'Est et du Centre-Est* 1 (1950): 180–84; Emile Delort, "Berthelming (Moselle), " *Gallia* 6 (1948): 239–41.

In urban areas, this trend comprised part of a larger process by which inhabitants reshaped cities and towns from the fourth century onward.

[64] Cantino Wataghin, "Ideology of Urban Burials, " 153–54.

At rural sites, ancient ruins nonetheless also exercised attraction beyond that of ready building materials. Although the population actively employed such burial grounds throughout the Merovingian period, those in ancient ruins, as opposed to near them, surprisingly occurred first in the seventh century or later. The approximately two hundred graves found at the dolmen of Sublaines (Indreet-Lore), for instance, dated from the mid-seventh to the late eighth century.

[65] Cyrille Billard, Florence Carré, Mark Guillon, and Cécile Treffort, "L'occupation funéraire des monuments mégalithiques pendant le haut moyen âge: Modalités et essai d'interprétation, " *Bulletin de la Société préhistorique française* 93 (1996): 279–80.

For reasons that remain unclear, such sites were largely ignored as potential burial grounds in earlier centuries.

Some unique features distinguished burial grounds located at formerly occupied sites. Rather than presenting an accurate reflection of the demographics of the local population, as might be expected, cemeterial remains at sites in or over Roman ruins contained a disproportionate number of adult males and a relatively low representation of other inhabitants. As discussed in the previous chapter, these statistics may not be entirely accurate because of the general custom of sexing skeletal remains in conjunction

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with burial goods. These sites also faced a greater likelihood of disturbance, since their visibility rendered them more vulnerable to plunder. The average wealth of graves within such necropoleis nonetheless significantly surpassed that of ordinary row grave cemeteries. After all, populations in the vicinity of Roman roads had better access to trade, and funerals conducted there thus had a larger potential audience, rendering the rich outfitting of graves a more effective exercise.

[66] Stein, *Adelsgräber*, 1: 175.

Moreover, reused sites, whether or not continuously occupied, provided a ready source of building materials, such as stone slabs, bricks, and tiles useful in outfitting graves. Besides leading to higher numbers of Roman coins, glass, playing pieces, fragments of bronze, and beads being deposited in sepulchers, ruins underlying a cemetery could deeply affect the spatial arrangement of cemeteries and the choice of tomb structures.

[67] Fremersdorf, *Das fränkische Reihengräberfeld*, 1: 24–25, 43–45.

The earliest graves at such sites, for instance, were housed centrally in reused stone sarcophagi. Older ruins clearly afforded powerful and desirable locations for elite burial and attracted many generations of inhabitants to the same site.

[68] Paul van Ossel, *Établissements ruraux de l'antiquité tardive dans le Nord de la Gaule*, 51e supplément à Gallia (Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1992), 78–84; Jacques Le Maho, "Saint-Martin-de Boscherville (Seine-Maritime), " in *L'église, le terroir*, ed. Michel Fixot and Elisabeth Zadora-Rio, Monographie du Centre des recherches archéologiques 1 (Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1989), 66–68; Périn, "Remarques sur la topographie funéraire, " 20–21.

The layering of cemeteries atop ancient ruins might be loosely compared to the phenomenon of the *tel* common to the eastern Mediterranean, albeit without commanding the views characteristic of the latter.

[69] Bonnie Effros, "Monuments and Memory: Repossessing Ancient Remains in Early Medieval Gaul, " in *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Mayke de Jong and Frans Theuws, TRW 6 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2001), 93–118.

The best-documented genre of Merovingian cemeteries, some of which were likewise established on or near Roman ruins, is the row grave cemetery *(Reihengräberfeld)*. This configuration of burials arose in north-eastern Gaul by the close of the fifth century but did not reflect the presence of a military force, as envisioned by Joachim Werner on the basis of the quantity and quality of weapons found at these locations.

[70] Joachim Werner, "Zur Entstehung der Reihengräberzivilisation: Ein Beitrag zur Methode der frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie, " *AG* 1 (1950): 25. See Heinrich Härke's critique: "'Warrior Graves'? The Background of the Anglo-Saxon Weapon Burial Rite, " *Past and Present* 126 (1990): 22–43.

Although the tradition of row graves was rarely practiced south of the Loire in this period, the custom spread to Brabant and Limburg by the early sixth century,

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and to the French and Swiss Alps by the late sixth century. Composed of a series of irregular parallel rows of graves and including anywhere from twenty to two thousand sepulchers, such rural cemeteries tended to be located on hills or elevated ground rather than in valleys. Normally they were removed from settlements by a minimum of one hundred to two hundred meters.

[71] Patrick Périn, "Les Ardennes à l'époque mérovingienne: Étude archéologique, " *Études ardennaises* 50 (1967): 7–10.

Row grave cemeteries contained sepulchers of widely differing sizes, depths, and constructions. The deceased buried there included both sexes and virtually all ages other than infants; judging from the size of some row grave cemeteries, they appear to have served the inhabitants of more than one local community. Besides the most lavish burials, or those of the "founders, " a significant proportion of the sixth-century row graves contained goods of a wide range of quality and quantity. Many graves, however, were devoid of artifacts.

[72] Stein, *Adelsgräber*, 1: 119–20; Barbara Sasse, "Frauengräber im frühmittelalterlichen Alamannien, " in *Frauen in Spätantike und Frühmittelalter: Lebensbedingungen-Lebensnormen-Lebensformen*, ed. Werner Affeldt (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1990), 45.

Although often exhibiting less rigid organization and greater reuse of preexisting graves over time, the *Reihengräberfelder* continued to be favored as place of interment in Neustrian regions and in Germany until the last quarter of the seventh century. Yet, by the late seventh and early eighth century, active row grave cemeteries existed rarely even east of the Rhine. Smaller groupings of sepulchers that must have reflected the dead of individual communities rather than multiple settlements became more common than had been the case previously.

[73] James, "Cemeteries, " 84–85; Van Es, "Grabsitten, " 83; Colardelle, *Sépul- ture et traditions*, 362–64; Stein, *Adelsgräber*, 1: 119; Halsall, "Burial, Ritual, and Merovingian Society, " 334–38.

Scholars have long disputed the origins of the custom of row grave cemeteries. As early as 1950, this configuration of burials was linked by archaeologists to the arrival of Germanic populations rather than to the transformation of funerary rites within extant communities.

[74] Stephen J. Shennan, " Some Current Issues in the Archaeological Identification of Past Peoples, " *Archaeologia polona* 29 (1991): 29–37.

As noted in Chapter 2, Werner specifically identified the deceased interred in the earliest row grave necropoleis as Germanic *laeti*, who had been defeated by the Romans in the third century and who were used to colonize depopulated regions of the empire. These groups served in the Roman army and thus

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had access to Roman wealth and goods characteristic of deposits found in these cemeteries.

[75] Werner, "Zur Entstehung, " 23–32.

Soon after the publication of Werner's discussion, Édouard Salin therefore argued for the Germanic origin of row grave cemeteries followed by a fusion of mortuary customs with the Gallo-Roman population in the following centuries.

[76] Salin, *La civilisation mérovingienne*, 2: 182.

Kurt Böhner and Horst Wolfgang Böhme later challenged these hypotheses by suggesting that the emergence of the row grave cemeteries reflected the arrival in Gaul not of the *laeti* but instead of the largely Frankish *foederati*, who were members of independently allied groups that settled in the empire under their own leadership.

[77] Kurt Böhner, "Archäologische Beiträge zur Erforschung der Frankenzeit am Niederrhein, " *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter* 15–16 (1950–51): 22–25; Horst Wolfgang Böhme, *Germanische Grabfunde des 4. bis 5. Jahrhunderts zwischen Elbe und Loire*, Münchner Beiträge zur Vor-und Frühgeschichte 19 (Munich: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1974), 1: 195–207.

Both Böhner and Böhme viewed sepulchers devoid of burial objects or linked to funerary inscriptions, by contrast, as physical evidence left behind by the provincial Gallo-Roman population. Böhner has suggested that as late as the seventh century the Gallo-Romans' loyalty to ethnic traditions prevented them from adopting "Germanic" burial goods.

[78] Kurt Böhner, "Die Frage der Kontinuität zwischen Altertum und Mittelalter im Spiegel der fränkischen Funde des Rheinlandes, " *Trierer Zeitschrift* 19 (1950): 89–92.

In response, Young has argued convincingly that the archaeological remains of row grave cemeteries did not reflect political or ethnic divisions. He has instead redefined the custom as symptomatic of rising social status among those who, like Childeric, achieved success in a "mixed" environment. Although the customs of row graves and burial with brooches and weaponry were in Young's view "Germanic, " those who had sufficient resources and recognized the rhetorical power of these traditions could readily adopt them.

[79] Bailey K. Young, "Le problème franc et l'apport des pratiques funéraires (III^{e} -V^{e} siècles), " *Bulletin de liaison: AFAM* 2 (1980): 7–9, 12.

Proposing that variations in mortuary traditions may also be explained by changes that took place over the course of generations, Patrick Périn has noted that the ability of these rites to convey social status and religious identity overshadowed their ethnic connotations.

[80] Patrick Périn, "À propos de publications étrangères récentes concernant le peuplement en Gaule à l'époque mérovingienne: La 'question franque.' " *Francia* 8 (1980): 537–52; id., "Quelques remarques

sur la 'question franque' en Gaule du Nord, " *Bulletin de liaison: AFAM* 2 (1980): 79–85.

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Recent analyses have consequently pointed to changing power dynamics rather than ethnicity to explain the emergence of row grave cemeteries. Steuer has hypothesized that alterations of cemeterial topography reflected evolving patterns of landholding and political power. In his view, the emergence of row grave cemeteries was tied to the rise of the Merovingian king and his dependents. It therefore constituted a development dominated by but not necessarily limited to the Frankish population.

[81] Steuer, "Archaeology and History, " 107–13.

Halsall, following Edward James's discussion of some of the Gallic features of furnished inhumation, has further challenged the evidentiary basis for the association of lavish burial in the context of row grave cemeteries with Germanic traditions or populations. Halsall notes that this rite did not previously exist east of the Rhine, and emphasizes the probability that these cemeteries represented part of a radical bid for legitimacy on the part of emerging military factions. Elite families, regardless of ethnic identity, coopted Roman symbols and customs in their daily activities and then incorporated them in their mortuary rituals.

[82] Guy Halsall, "Archaeology and the Late Roman Frontier in Northern Gaul: The So-Called 'Föderatengräber' Reconsidered, " in *Grenze und Differenz im frü- hen Mittelalter*, ed. Walter Pohl and Helmut Reimitz, Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 1 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000), 169–73; James, *Merovingian Archaeology*, 1: 179–85.

In the south of Gaul, too, cemeteries such as Herpes (Charente) and Biron (Charente-Maritime), although poorly documented, were originally arranged in rows. These rural necropoleis did not contain numerous stone sarcophagi, as is known to have been the case at Neuvicq-Montguyon (Charente-Maritime), or stoneslab tombs, such as at Estagel (Pyrénées-Orientales) in Visigothic Septimania. Although many features of these burial sites differed from those farther north, since they contained fewer goods, their outward appearance may have been quite similar to that of the row grave cemeteries. The presence of sarcophagi did not preclude the parallel arrangement of the interred. At Estagel, for instance, tombs may have been marked on the ground level with blocks of stone.

[83] James, *Merovingian Archaeology*, 1: 164–75.

Unfortunately, however, scholars do not clearly understand how the estimated sixteen thousand stone sarcophagi and plain-earth burials were organized in the cemetery at Civaux (Vienne), thirty kilometers south of Poitiers. It is thought that they were probably stacked in rows with the head ends of the tombs facing eastward.

[84] J.-C. Papinot, *Notices sur les vestiges archéologiques de Civaux* (Poitiers: Société des amis du pays de Civaux, 1971), 3–20.

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As a result of the rapid assimilation of the various cultural groups resident in Gaul into a mixed society,

[85] Edward James, "Cemeteries and the Problem of Frankish Settlement in Gaul, " in *Names, Words, and Graves: Early Medieval Settlement*, ed. P. H. Sawyer (Leeds: University of Leeds, 1979), 71–75. See also Alexander Bergengruen, *Adel und Grundherrschaft im Merowingerreich*, Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial-und Wirtschaftsgeschichte, Monograph 41 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1958), 154–71.

Gallo-Roman and Frankish inhabitants, including pagans and Christians, readily adapted to the funerary customs prevalent among the ruling elite. Such rites represented effective vehicles for the expression of social identity. Innovation in mortuary custom was thus reflected changes in material culture, only some of which may have been inspired by the arrival of different ethnic groups.

[86] James, "Cemeteries, " 71–85; id., "Merovingian Cemetery Studies and Some Implications for Anglo-Saxon England, " in *Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries 1979: The Fourth Anglo-Saxon Symposium at Oxford*, ed. Philip Rahtz, Tania Dickinson, and Lorna Watts, BAR British Series 82 (Oxford: BAR, 1980), 36–45; Shennan, "Some Current Issues, " 32–36.

The abandonment of burial with grave goods from the seventh century thus stemmed not mainly from migration but from the weakening of royal power and the rise of a powerful hereditary nobility. The members of this elite quickly took the initiative to establish new cemeteries for themselves and their dependents, whether in rural sites or in conjunction with private churches. By the early eighth century, major lay landholders had begun to grant benefices to lesser freemen. This development, and ultimately the abandonment of the deposition rite, reflected the establishment of a more stable aristocracy that contemporary kings could not control as readily as in the sixth century.

[87] Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 49–54; id., "La christianisation de la région de la Metz à travers les sources archéologiques (5ème –7ème siècle): Problèmes et possibilités, " in *L'evangélisation des régions entre Meuse et Moselle et la fondation de l'abbaye d'Echternach (Ve —IXe siècle)*, ed. Michel Polfer, PSH 117, Publications du CLUDEM 16 (Luxembourg: CLUDEM, 2000), 137–46.

While the anthropological remains of row grave cemeteries may have mirrored the demographics of Merovingian communities more accurately than graveyards located amidst ancient ruins, their organizational structure varied from place to place. At some row grave cemeteries, such as at Sion (Merthe-et-Moselle), Premploz (Valais), and Salles-la Source (Aveyron), multiple bodies were buried in single sepulchers, separated from other interments by stones. Some elite families chose to inter their dead in individual sepulchers in these necropoleis but clustered them in a demarcated

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area apart from the rest of the *Reihengräber.*

[88] Salin, *La civilisation mérovingienne*, 2: 185–86; Steuer, *Frühgeschichtliche Sozialstrukturen*, 372–74; Bergengruen, *Adel und Grundherrschaft*, 160–71.

Their sepulchers were also distinguished by their higher quality of construction as well as the profundity of their placement. More lavish interments at Köln-Müngersdorf, for example, lay on average at a depth of 100 to 150 centimeters, whereas sparsely outfitted inhumations tended to be deposited only 70 to 130 centimeters deep. The amount of energy expended in digging the sepulchers, just as the donation of grave goods, reflected the quantity of resources dedicated to performing the funeral.

[89] Fremersdorf, *Das fränkische Reihengräberfeld*, 1: 35–37.

Maintained in exclusive interment sites within or outside of the larger burial grounds, the privileged dead were often spatially and materially distinct from the rest of the population.

[90] Saxe, "Social Dimensions, " 119–21; James, "Burial and Status, " 27.

"Founders' " graves, for instance, also received more deferential treatment: they were less frequently pillaged than other interments in the row grave cemeteries.

[91] Steuer, *Frühgeschichtliche Sozialstrukturen*, 375; Edward James, "Royal Burial Among the Franks, " in *Age of Sutton Hoo*, 246.

In the sixth and seventh centuries, moreover, the separation of elite burials from those of the rest of the population became more pronounced. Although there was a general decrease in expenditure for goods to outfit sepulchers, the most lavish burials, relatively speaking, commonly took place outside of row grave cemeteries. These exclusive interments occupied smaller, more restricted rural sites. And the topographical expression of hierarchical differences continued in row grave cemeteries despite the apparent absence of sepulchers with distinctive luxury grave goods. At Audun-le-Tiche, for example, in the second half of the seventh century, a ring of stones and pieces of Gallo-Roman sculpture surrounded certain individual interments and groups of graves.

[92] From 650 to 700, the groups of graves marked off or surrounded by stone walls included graves 17–42–43, 103–104, 109–110–116, and 93–102. See Simmer, *Le cimetière mérovingien*, 19; id., "La nécropole mérovingienne d'Audun-le-Tiche, " *CA* 35 (1978): 31–40.

Alain Simmer has attributed this practice to differences in social status, but his systematic identification of specific graves as containing members of the ruling class or serfs cannot be substantiated.

[93] Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 157–60.

In another example, the sixth-century cemetery of Chaouilley revealed one male and one female prestige grave at its edge; both individuals were buried in stonelined trenches at the extraordinary depth of 2.2 meters. They contained the most lavish assemblages of grave

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goods identified in the necropolis and thus appear to have been distinguished by their kin as different from the rest of the inhabitants of the cemetery.

[94] Ibid., 111–18.

Containing no more than twenty sepulchers, elite alternatives to row grave cemeteries enjoyed only a short life span in comparison to their predecessors, which had sometimes served several communities and were often used over the course of a few centuries. These smaller and presumably more exclusive sites, by contrast, contributed to a general growth in the number of cemeteries in existence during the seventh century. This increase thus reflected not population expansion but the fact that one-to-one relationships between individual settlements and burial grounds were increasingly the norm.

[95] Ibid., 182–88; Steuer, *Frühgeschichtliche Sozialstrukturen*, 372–74.

Although such small burial sites often included lavish interments, they did not preclude the presence of inhumations with markedly less valuable goods. These cemeteries thus took a variety of forms. To the north, in the Meuse-Demer-Scheldt region, for instance, mid-seventh-century "farmyard" burial grounds at the settlements of Geldrop and Dommelen included small numbers of graves with weaponry and artifacts of great wealth; most of their contemporaries must have been interred elsewhere. Frans Theuws posits that these graves were meant to draw attention to "protectors" of the farmstead similar to the role played by "founders' " sepulchers in the row grave cemeteries.

[96] Frans Theuws, "Changing Settlement Patterns, Burial Grounds, and the Symbolic Construction of Ancestors and Communities in the Late Merovingian Southern Netherlands, " in *Settlement and Landscape (Proceedings of a Confer- ence in Åhrus, Denmark, May 4–7, 1998)*, ed. Charlotte Fabech and Jytte Ringtved (Moesgard: Jutland Archaeological Society, 1999), 342–45.

In other cases a small structure, perhaps a funerary chapel or a building in which corpses were prepared for burial, stood on the grounds of rural elite necropoleis. At Flonheim in Rheinhessen, such a structure appears to have been constructed over preexisting graves of unknown identity, including possibly pre-Christian ancestors or Christian holy tombs in the form of *memoriae.*

[97] Hermann Ament, *Fränkische Adelsgräber von Flonheim in Rheinhessen*, Germanische Denkmäler der Völkerwanderungszeit, series B, vol. 5 (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1970), 13–133, 157–63, 173–82.

Greater continuity between pagan and Christian communities may have existed than has been traditionally posited.

[98] Patrick J. Geary, "The Uses of Archaeological Sources of Religious and Cultural History, " in his *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 37–38.

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also built new edifices of wood or stone to house sepulchers of elites. There is dispute, however, as to the significance of such structures, since it is not known whether these buildings were consecrated churches, or whether they served only more practical functions related to burial.

[99] Heli Roosens, "Reflets de christianisation dans les cimetières mérovingiens, " *Les études classiques* 53 (1985):127–32; Bernhard Kötting, "Die Tradition der Grabkirche, " in *Memoria: Der geschichtliche Zeugniswert des liturgischen Gedenkens im Mittelalter*, ed. Karl Schmid and Joachim

Wollasch, Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften 48 (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1984), 72–74; Paul Rops, "Les 'basilicae' des cimetières francs, " *Annales de la Société archéologique de Na- mur* 19(1890): 6.

By the early Carolingian period, interment of a limited part of the population in churches or churchyards replaced the tradition of elite burials at small rural cemeteries.

Burial in tumuli, mound graves, or barrows, a practice somewhat less common in Gaul during the Merovingian period than in previous eras but one that nonetheless continued in this period throughout western Europe and the British Isles, also merits attention. Although this form of inhumation occurred primarily in isolation in late sixth-and early seventh-century England and Bavaria, elsewhere in Europe tumuli appeared in cemeteries containing multiple mounds.

[100] John Shephard, "The Social Identity of the Individual in Isolated Barrows and Barrow Cemeteries in Anglo-Saxon England, " in *Space, Hierarchy, and So- ciety: Interdisciplinary Studies in Social Area Analysis*, ed. Barry C. Burnham and John Kingsbury, BAR International Series 59 (Oxford: BAR, 1979), 67–77; Stein, *Adelsgräber*, 1: 121–23.

While this type of mortuary disposal site arose first among pagan communities and dated to the pre-Roman era, it by no means represented a practice limited solely to pagans in the Merovingian period.

[101] Donald A. Bullough, "Burial, Community, and Belief in the Early Medieval West, " in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society (Studies Presented to J. M. Wallace-Hadrill)*, ed. Patrick Wormald (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), 183–85.

In the thinly settled Massif Central, mound burial existed among Christians as late as the mid-seventh century.

[102] James, *Merovingian Archaeology*, 1: 181–83.

In Alemannic regions, the Netherlands, Westfalen, and the northeastern Harz Mountains, the rite continued until circa 800.

[103] Hermann Ament, "Merowingische Grabhügel, " in *Althessen im Fran- kenreich*, ed. Walter Schlesinger, Nationes: Historische und philologische Untersuchung zur Entstehung der europaïschen Nationen im Mittelalter 2, ed. Helmut Beumann and Werner Schröder (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1975), 76–93; Jörg Kleeman, "Grabfunde des 8. und 9. Jahrhunderts im nördlichen Randgebiet des Karolingerreiches" (Ph.D. diss., Rheinische Friedrich Wilhelms Universität, 1992), 62–65. I thank Michael Schmauder for his help in gaining access to this work.

Not until the reign of

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Charlemagne was mound burial specifically identified as a pagan custom. This situation resulted from Charlemagne's politicization of tumuli in his legislative campaign against the newly conquered and recently converted Saxons. The Carolingians specifically forbade the Saxons to honor their relations with burial in raised mounds and mandated on pain of death that they inter their dead in Christian cemeteries. Charlemagne thus reinforced Saxon allegiance through decrees demanding conformity in burial custom.

[104] Effros, *"De partibus Saxoniae, "* 281–83; Geary, "Uses of Archaeological Sources, " 39–40; Stein, *Adelsgräber*, 1: 121. For similar campaigns in Anglo-Saxon regions, see Helen Geake, "Burial Practice in Seventh-and Eighth-Century england, " in *Age of Sutton Hoo*, 90–91.

His legislation suggests that it was the expression of independence or difference communicated by this rite rather than anything implicitly non-Christian that caused him to outlaw the practice.

As grave goods were selected in a less constrained manner for placement in mound interment and significant manpower and resources were necessary to fund the construction of such sizable burial facilities, the practice appears to have been limited to individuals interred by families of means.

[105] Shephard, "Social Identity, " 67–77; Steuer, *Frühgeschichtliche Sozial- strukturen*, 131–37; Heinrich Härke, "Changing Symbols in a Changing Society: The Anglo-Saxon Burial Rite in the Seventh

Century, " in *Age of Sutton Hoo*, 152.

The benefit of employing a mound grave lay at least in part in its prominence, since it was visible from great distances, especially in level terrain. Tumuli might thus serve as geographical or boundary markers. In addition, the practice may have had ritual connotations: judging from postholes and other archaeological remains, tumuli not only contained internal chambers in certain examples but sometimes also supported external structures that might have accommodated cultic rites.

[106] Stein, *Adelsgräber*, 1: 123–24; id., "Grabkammern, " 341. Hilda Ellis Davidson discusses activities linked to the Sutton Hoo mounds in "Human Sacrifice in the Late Pagan Period in North-Western Europe, " in *Age of Sutton Hoo*, 331–40.

SURFACE-LEVEL CONSTRUCTIONS IN SEVENTH-AND EIGHTH-CENTURY CEMETERIES

Pointing to relatively late cemeteries such as Audun-le-Tiche and the limited reappearance of stone inscriptions in Metz, Halsall has posited that in the seventh and eighth centuries, permanent and visible commemorative

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structures seem to have gained renewed significance for the inhabitants of this region. Interment in surface-level tombs or burial in elite churches meant that instead of expending wealth primarily on votive objects in graves, as was the case in the fifth and sixth centuries, elite families now focused more intently on the topographical features of their cemeteries.

[107] Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 9–14, 231–36; Halsall, "Social Change, " 269–70. He challenges observations by Bailey Young and Patrick Périn; see Young, "Paganisme, christianisation, " 29–31; Périn, "Le problème des sarcophages-cénotaphes, " 823–33.

Rather than suggesting that the use of stone tombs or markers among the graves of a small portion of the population represented evidence of the deeper "Christianization" of the elite of this region, as Simmer has concluded in the case of the western sector of Audun-le-Tiche,

[108] Simmer makes this observation on the basis of a few grave goods marked with Christian symbols in the western sector of the cemetery dating to the mid-seventh century; see his *Le cimetière mérovingien*, 130–32.

Halsall has proposed a more nuanced interpretation. He argues that the royal family and what had essentially become hereditary nobility by the close of the seventh century desired rites by which they might more effectively express their authority in the long term.

[109] Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 162–63, 246–47, 263–66, 271–72; Halsall, "La christianisation de la région de Metz, " 137–46.

Although the symbolism of these stone monuments may thus have had its roots in late antique Christianity, this development pointed instead to the expression of contemporary power relationships.

Excavated between 1970 and 1984, the cemetery of Audun-le-Tiche (Moselle) is located a few kilometers from the French border with Luxembourg (see fig. 21). Despite the relatively recent date of the study of this site, archaeological documentation was at first poorly kept at what began as an amateur excavation. Consequently, many of the contents and skeletal remains of the first seventy-five graves exhumed were not recorded. Perched at the summit and on the eastern face of a hill now covered by trees, the cemetery was founded circa 620–40 and occupied the site of two pagan temples *(fana)* abandoned in the second half of the third century and Gallo-Roman cremation grounds. In all, the cemetery yielded 201 graves to excavators, the majority of an estimated 250 original interments.

[110] Simmer, *Le cimetière mérovingien*, 7–13.

Yet Halsall cautiously suggests that only 54 of these graves were definitely intact and sufficiently well-documented for scholarly study.

[111] Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 151–52. To my knowledge, the anticipated anthropological report of this cemetery has not yet been published.

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Figure 21. The Merovingian-period cemetery of Audun-le-Tiche. Map reproduced from Halsall, *Settlement* and *Social Organization*, e.g. 4.39, with permission of Cambridge University Press and the kind assistance of Guy Halsall.

One of the features that made Audun-le-Tiche an unusual cemetery was the notably small proportion of excavated sepulchers—five, or 2.4 percent of the total—that lacked any sort of stone or wooden protective structures. Somewhere between sixteen and possibly eighteen graves contained stone sarcophagi, many of which were occupied by children or adolescents. The majority had partial covers, but others were missing them altogether, the result of their exposure over time at ground level to theft and reuse. Also visible from the surface were at least another 180 graves, which were lined at least on their four vertical sides with stone down to a depth of.75 meters. Some required as many as twelve hundred stones for their construction, many of these likely pillaged from the earlier Gallo-Roman structures at the site. The graves located near the *fana* thus tended to be larger and better furnished. Halsall has posited that these likely belonged to founders and other early high-status occupants from 620–40 onward. The graves in Audun-le-Tiche's second sector, east of the *fana*, were somewhat smaller on average but occasionally employed surface markers. Of the sepulchers created from the mid-seventh century, some had distinctive external features, such as a fragment of a Gallo-Roman

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sculpture on grave 72, a small stele with a face on grave 103, and nearby a stele portraying a curly-haired man's head. The well-known sculpted cross discovered in an unoccupied space between graves 33, 39, and 41 also dated from the Merovingian period. As mentioned earlier, stone walls surrounded the double burial at 103 and 104, the groupings of graves 42 and 43 and graves 109, 110, and 116, and individual sepulchers such as 113 and 31.

[112] Simmer, *Le cimetière mérovingien*, 15–20, 101–3, 130–34; Halsall, *Set- tlement and Social Organization*, 157–60.

Although the unfortunate state of the documentation of many of the graves at Audun-le-Tiche has prevented any definitive statistical conclusions from being drawn, the exceptional features of the cemetery have made scholars reluctant to dismiss the site altogether. Simmer has suggested that inhabitants reused at least ninety of the graves examined. Some left the former grave occupants where they had been found, while others removed them at least partially or pushed them to the bottom of the sepulchers. Simmer has also noted that a transition to a new zone for burial within the cemetery occurred in the mid-seventh century. This sector's graves had a number of external stone markers and a single stone cross to distinguish them, in addition to the increased use of sarcophagi as opposed to sepulchers lined with stones. The number and variety of artifact types among the grave goods in this sector of the cemetery were relatively limited, as was typical of seventh-century burial sites in the region; this distribution reflected a high level of standardization and gender "neutrality" in Halsall's model.

[113] Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 151–56.

In his interpretation of these features, by contrast, Simmer has concluded that the Christian conversion of the local population precipitated these developments. According to this hypothesis, "Christianization" eventually resulted in the abandonment of the cemetery in the first half of the eighth century in favor of a currently unidentified burial location.

[114] Simmer, *Le cimetière mérovingien*, 97–99, 130–32.

Simmer's discussion of the progressive spread of Christian belief in Audun-le-Tiche, based primarily on the external features of the cemetery, depends on modern distinctions for the identification of what constituted Christian burial. Although the presence of a cross and grave objects with Christian symbols make it highly probable that the faithful were buried in the slightly later, eastern sector of Audun-le-Tiche, no means exists by which to determine the religious identity of those buried closer to the

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abandoned *fana*. These graves cannot be assumed to have been less christian than those interred farther to the east. Audun-le-Tiche nevertheless reveals evidence of the increased presence of sepulchers at ground level, especially starting from the second phase of the cemetery's occupation in the mid-seventh century. At this time, in the cemetery's eastern sector, if Simmer was able to determine their original position accurately, surface markers apparently came into more active use. The exceptional proliferation of ground-level features at Audun-le-Tiche, however, may have not been as unique as it seems at first. The greater quantity of visible topographical markers may have owed their survival to coincidental historical developments, since this site was in later centuries covered by forest rather than being disrupted by plowing. The presence of older ruins at the site not only shaped the development of Audun-le-Tiche as a cemetery but subsequently resulted in the site's preservation, since the prevalence of stones made the land unsuited for farming.

One cemetery difficult to exclude from any survey of Merovingian burial sites is the Rhenish necropolis of Krefeld-Gellep, where excavations began in 1934 under the direction of Albert Steeger and continued until 1955. During this time, undoubtedly with a number of interludes during the war, a total of 1, 259 graves were unearthed. Steeger published the highlights of these finds in a twenty-four-page booklet alleging the historic presence of Aryans at the site.

[115] Albert Steeger, *Germanische Funde der Völkerwanderungszeit aus Kre- feld* (Krefeld: A. Fürst Nachfolger, 1937).

After 1956, the cemeterial excavation was headed by Renate Pirling, who has systematically studied and published subsequent discoveries at Krefeld-Gellep. By 1989, she had uncovered more than 5, 000 graves in the cemetery, of which she published 3, 749.

[116] Renate Pirling, *Das römischfränkische Gräberfeld von Krefeld-Gellep 1966–1974*, Germanische Denkmäler der Völkerwanderungszeit, series B, Die fränkische Altertümer des Rheinlandes 13 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden, 1989), 9–11; id., "Krefeld-Gellep in der Spätantike, " in *Die Franken*, 1: 81–84.

Despite the deteriorated state of many of the finds, the sheer enormity of the cemetery in use from the late Roman to the late Merovingian period, provides ample opportunity for the discussion of the evolution of the external features of the graves.

In Krefeld, cremation burials dating from the first to third century have been found. Following this period, inhabitants established a new site, now known as Krefeld-Gellep. It first served for inhumations from the second half of the third century, a period during which the south-north graves (or

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occasionally north-south graves) were evenly spaced and rarely cut into one another. Well into the fourth century, these burials contained glass and ceramic objects, supplemented at the end of this period with infrequent deposits of coins. In the second half of the fourth and the early fifth centuries, examples of sepulchers outfitted with weapons, brooches, belt buckles, and other similar artifacts began to appear among the graves with vessels at Krefeld-Gellep. This change as well as a general reorientation of burials facing west-east revealed that the population using this cemetery contemporaneously practiced a variety of mortuary customs.

[117] Renate Pirling, *Das römischfränkische Gräberfeld von Krefeld-Gellep 1960–1963*, Germanische Denkmäler der Völkerwanderungszeit, series B, Die fränkische Altertümer des Rheinlandes 8 (Berlin:

Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1974), 1: 195–99.

Although Pirling has suggested that modern scholars may use burial remains to distinguish Frankish from Roman inhabitants, it is more helpful to point to the high level of synthesis and flexibility between the so-called contemporary "Roman" and "Germanic" mortuary practices both in terms of the graves' contents and the cemetery's topography.

While a significant number of sixth-century burials lacked identifiable grave goods altogether, a number of very lavish inhumations occurred at Krefeld-Gellep in the early part of the century. The famous "Fürstengrab" 1782, from which no skeletal remains survive, was demonstrative of a notable revitalization in the practice of interring grave goods during the reign of Clovis; this burial contained a broad variety of goods from workshops such as those based in Cologne but also as distant as in Iran. Rather than passively mirroring some sort of model of ethnic allegiance, the kin or followers who contributed weaponry, glass vessels, and many other objects to this grave, demonstrated the spontaneity and innovative nature of this highly synthetic mortuary rite. While the occupation of the cemetery continued for another two and a half centuries after this rich burial, inhabitants eventually abandoned the site in the late seventh century. It is not at all certain to which cemeteries the local population ultimately transferred its attentions.

[118] Pirling, *Das römischfränkische Gräberfeld von Krefeld-Gellep 1960–1963*, 1: 199–205; id., "Ein fränkische Fürstengrab, " 188–216.

Although publication of this cemetery has focused to a far greater degree on the contents than on the context of the graves unearthed, one may make a number of brief observations regarding the topographical features of Krefeld-Gellep. Whereas some of the graves appear to have been plain-earth burials, many others employed wooden biers or coffins. In grave

2843, however, the deceased lay in a fourth-century stone sarcophagus oriented south-north. Burials in the cemetery rested at the bottom of rectangular trenches dug anywhere from 0.40 to 3.55 meters deep. The depth of the majority, however, fell within a range of one to slightly more than two meters. Although some sepulchers had niches for grave goods, the size of a grave, interestingly, did not always reflect its wealth; many of the largest lacked mortuary objects altogether. Moreover, whereas stone sarcophagi did not necessarily distinguish elite graves, the amount of space allotted to burials seems to have been a factor of significance. In the case of grave 1782, for instance, the trench was dug 2.8 meters deep. It measured 4 by 5 meters at ground level and 2.7 by 1.4 meters at its deepest point. While this particular inhumation did not reveal evidence of a wooden chamber such as found in the Roman-period graves 1285, 1494, 1295, 2461, 2701, 2770, and 2771 and the Merovingian-period graves 2268, 2589, 2595, 2608, 2613, 2635, and 2808, large stones found a half meter under the surface of the soil protected it. Grave 1782 also had an annex measuring 0.8 by 0.7 meters conceivably supported by wooden posts. Large pits also accommodated animal burials at the site. Archaeologists have excavated the remains of five horses at Krefeld-Gellep, in graves 2619, 2636, and 2724. The first two graves contained two horses each, and the last had one.

[119] Pirling, *Das römischfränkische Gräberfeld von Krefeld-Gellep 1960–1963*, 1: 14–19; id., "Ein fränkische Fürstengrab, " 188–89; id., *Das römisch- fränkische Gräberfeld von Krefeld-Gellep 1964–1965*, Germanische Denkmäler der Völkerwanderungszeit, series B, Die fränkische Altertümer des Rheinlandes 10 (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1979), 1:13–19; 2: 83, 50, 54, 65–66.

The layout of Krefeld-Gellep was also affected by chronological developments. The most farranging occupation of the cemetery occurred in the late Roman period, with graves scattered across a wide expanse of the area eventually occupied by the early medieval necropolis. Despite a shift in grave orientation in the second half of the fourth century, this custom continued unabated. Presumably in the early fifth century or so, however, inhabitants almost exclusively occupied just two zones of the cemetery. One zone was located in the northwest of the cemetery and was employed until the late seventh century. This sector had also previously served for burial and thus experienced considerable overlapping of the inhumations. In addition, from the sixth century (or slightly earlier), the population began to occupy a larger, prevously unused area in the southeast of the cemetery. This zone contained all of the Merovingian-period chamber graves, grave 1782, and the cemetery's five horse burials. Separated by as much as one hundred meters, the two primary zones thus had rather different characters, since the southeastern sector was initiated in the sixth century by grave 1782 and then continued with a series of lavish burials. It likely represented the more exclusive part of the cemetery, and chamber graves such as 2268, 2528, 2589, 2590, and 2613 lay undisturbed during the prolonged occupation of the site.

[120] Pirling, *Das römischfränkische Gräberfeld von Krefeld-Gellep 1964–1965*, 1: 178–95.

Despite the many important features of Krefeld-Gellep identified by archaeologists, a number of factors complicate any attempt to assess the external appearance of the cemetery. Steeger's failure to document in detail the early days of the excavation has greatly limited the potential fruits of the closer analysis of the topographical features of the site. Unlike Audun-le-Tiche's protection by forest at least in the last hundred years, moreover, the site occupied by the cemetery of Krefeld-Gellep was damaged by tilling and plowing over the course of many centuries, as is often the case with former ancient row grave cemeteries. In contrast to Pilet's discovery of late sixth-century postholes near some graves in the cemetery of Frénouville that likely indicate the presence of funerary markers,

[121] Pilet, *La nécropole de Frénouville*, 1: 7–8, 156–57.

nothing similar could be discerned at Krefeld-Gellep because the surface of the grave field was entirely disrupted. Like many cemeteries south of the Loire, such as Quarré les Tombes (Yonne), Neuvicq-Montguyon (Charente-Maritime), Estagel (Pyrénées-Orientales), and Civaux (Vienne), all of which had a distinctive topography because of their stone monuments and sarcophagi,

[122] Eygun, "Le site archéologique, " 70; James, *Merovingian Archaeology*, 1: 166–76; Papinot, *Notices*, 1–20.

contamination of Krefeld-Gellep by subsequent occupation prevents detailed study of the appearance of this necropolis in the early Middle Ages.

The external features of the sixth-century necropolis of Basel-Bernerring also deserve attention, since the cemetery was left relatively undisturbed by agriculture or habitation until the twentieth century (see fig. 22). Graves were first discovered at this location in September 1931 during road construction in the expanding suburbs of Basel south of the Rhine. In excavations carried out by R. Laur-Belart of the Historische Museum Basel in 1931 and 1932, archaeologists collected much data prior to the construction of a number of homes at the former cemetery. With continued building in this locale in 1948 and 1952–53, a few additional graves came to light. These finds helped complete the tally of graves at the

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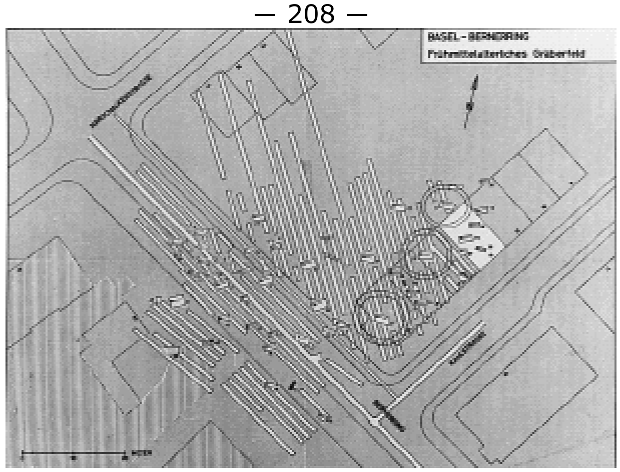

Figure 22. The necropolis of Basel-Bernerring. Martin, Das *fränkische Gräberfeld*, 3, pl. 2. Map reproduced with permission of Max Martin.

site and define the original limits of the early medieval cemetery of Basel-Bernerring. Archaeologists unearthed and documented forty-three sepulchers in all with the remains of forty-five individuals, in addition to one horse and one deer burial. Max Martin has published a full account of these on the basis of Laur-Belart's brief notes, sketches, and photographs of the excavation as well as from his study of archaeological and anthropological finds preserved from the site. As noted by Martin, Laur-Belart's notes were not as complete or consistent as they might have been with respect to individual graves, but, nonetheless, for their time they were quite comprehensive.

[123] Max Martin, *Das fränkische Gräberfeld von Basel-Bernerring*, Basler Beiträge zur Ur- und Frühgeschichte 1 (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1976), 1–8.

As Martin pointed out, Basel-Bernerring was remarkably free of early medieval and more recent disturbances. Its preservation was the unanticipated consequence of an accumulation of nearly two meters of clay that covered much of the cemetery, which was located just 450 meters west of

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the Birsig, a small waterway feeding into the Rhine. The conditions by which the contents of the graves were protected allowed a fairly advanced assessment of the cemetery despite the long delay in the completion of a full-standing publication. Unfortunately, however, the state of the human remains was far less complete. Most of the skeletal material was poorly preserved or no longer extant. The report's description of the demographics of the cemetery, notably the identification of eighteen men and an equivalent number of women, in addition to three boys and three girls, therefore relied extensively on grave goods for the sexing of the human remains. Because in no cases were the pelves of the skeletons from Basel-Bernerring extant, the site anthropologist Roland Bay-Schuller had to perform sexing on the less reliable criteria of skulls and the size and robustness of skeletal extremities. In twenty of forty-five cases, he indicated his uncertainty by labeling the remains as "unsicher" or "unbestimmbar." Even in the case of skeletons he felt more confident in sexing, Bay-Schuller's anthropological study depended to a large extent on Martin's previous determinations of the occupant's sex on the basis of archaeological remains.

[124] Roland Bay-Schuller, "Die anthropologische Bearbeitung des menschlichen Skelettmaterials des fränkischen Friedhofes am Bernerring in Basel, " in *Das fränkische Gräberfeld von Basel-Bernerring*, 317–23; Martin, *Das fränkische Grä- berfeld*, 9

Martin's discussion of the social status and occupations of the deceased and his identification of the cemetery's inhabitants as recent Frankish arrivals to the region also pose problems for reasons outlined at length in chapters 2 and 3.

[125] Martin, *Das fränkische Gräberfeld*, 146–55, 165–69.

Martin has proposed that the cemetery of Basel-Bernerring covered a space of approximately sixty-five by thirty-five meters; on the basis of grave goods found there he has dated the burial site to the second two-thirds of the sixth century. From the spacing of the graves, Martin suggests that a path may have run diagonally through the cemetery's center. Because no traces of this alleged walkway have been identified, however, this hypothesis may be only provisionally accepted. Most of the rectangular or slightly rounded sepulchers with human remains faced roughly southwest to northeast, with heads in the former direction and feet in the latter. By contrast, most of the graves in the eastern part of the cemetery, presumably the earliest, pointed west-east. Although the burials generally lay parallel to one another and did not encroach upon their neighbors, no clear system of rows is apparent in the necropolis. In every case but grave 26, which

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contained the remains of three bodies, each deposition held a single corpse.

[126] Ibid., 9–13.

Other notable topographical features of the necropolis included the depth and construction of the sepulchers. Because the original surface level of the early medieval cemetery cannot be determined, Martin believes that his figures for the depth and height of various graves may be too high or too low by as much as 30 centimeters in each case. In thirty-five of the sepulchers in which archaeologists recorded the profundity of the shaft, they determined the original depth to have been between 0.90 and 1.90 meters. Six graves, including the three circular structures, measured to a depth of 1.90 to 2.50 meters. Martin has ascertained that nineteen were chamber graves *(Kammergräber)*, containing in many instances traces of their wooden walls and covers. He has also argued that fourteen other graves employed wooden coffins, although in a number of cases, no evidence of these has been found.

For contemporaries, however, the most prominent features of the cemetery were likely graves 25, 27, and 34 in its northeastern sector. Martin has documented the latter two as commemorating women. These circular chamber graves of up to ten meters in diameter, created early in the history of the cemetery, may have once supported mounds of at least three meters in height. Each would have entailed a significant expenditure of effort for its construction, compounding the investment required by the goods already in their interiors. Martin also believes that smaller mounds must have assisted in the identification of other graves in the cemetery. Whatever evidence once existed, most has unfortunately disappeared in the intervening centuries since the site's early medieval occupation.

[127] Ibid., 12–29, 136–41.

As any once-extant surface markers at Basel-Bernerring must have washed away and the mound graves were hidden by the natural forces that deposited as much as two meters of clay at this site, Martin's study reveals some of the difficulties of finding Merovingian-period row grave cemeteries that might produce comparable evidence to that found at Audun-le-Tiche. The latter's exceptional preservation as result of forest cover, and its foundation on an abandoned Roman site, may have been in large part responsible for the unique features of this cemetery. Audun-le-Tiche thus does not constitute a typical model of rural burial from which a broader hypothesis regarding increased use of surface-level markers in the seventh century may be drawn, at least at the present time. By contrast, burials in

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or at churches represent far likelier places at which scholars might identify a series of more permanent surface-level markers in the seventh and eighth centuries.

BURIAL CHURCHES OF THE ELITE AND THE EXPRESSION OF PRIVILEGED STATUS

By the seventh century, burial in rural private churches *(Eigenkirchen)*, whether within their walls or outside of them, constituted the most rapidly growing genre of high-status deposition. Although the practice had begun in Gaul as early as the late fifth or early sixth century, it had more widespread impact in subsequent years. Indeed, the apparent disappearance of elites from row grave cemeteries was symptomatic of important changes in the political and economic landscape. Private churches provided many opportunities for elite display because of the exclusivity implied by their size and sponsorship. They thereby served to promote the status of those buried there with their dependents. Well-placed or ornamented tombs in these contexts conveyed the prestige of the deceased. Unlike the lavish grave goods in late fifth-century "founders' " graves, a sign of fierce competition for status among elites, stone markers enabled increasingly independent members of the nobility in the seventh century to express their achievements more permanently. Even more poorly outfitted graves grouped around well-endowed graves in churches could have constituted privileged interments, being located *ad potentiores.*

[128] James, "Burial and Status, " 29; id., "Cemeteries, " 79–85; Halsall, *Settle- ment and Social Organization*, 248–53, 263–65; Ian Wood, "Sépultures ecclésiastiques et sénatoriales dans la vallée du Rhône (400–600), " *Médiévales* 31 (1996): 14–15.

From the eighth century, as manorial lords grew steadily more powerful, and formerly exclusive funerary churches often took on more general functions as the foci of parishes, dependents had little choice other than to be interred in the grounds around the churches established for this purpose by the local nobility.

[129] Steuer, *Frühgeschichtliche Sozialstrukturen*, 529–31; Steuer, "archaeology and History, " 110–16; Colardelle, *Sépulture et traditions*, 84–87, 369.

The widespread merger between church and graveyard effected later in the Carolingian period, but not anywhere complete before the tenth or eleventh century, ultimately contributed to greater stability of burial grounds than previously evident in rural cemeteries.

[130] Cécile Treffort, *L'église carolingienne et la mort: Christianisme, rites fu- néraires et pratiques commémoratives*, Collection d'histoire et d'archéologie médiévales 3 (Lyons: Presses universitaires de Lyon, 1996), 139–41; Bullough, "burial, Community, and Belief, " 179–81; Andy Boddington, "Models of Burial, Settlement, and Worship: The Final Phase Reviewed, " in *Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries: A*

Reappraisal (Proceedings of a Conference held at Liverpool Museum, 1986), ed. Edmund Southworth (Phoenix Mill: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1990), 197.

It also meant

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that clerics and the nobility could more tightly constrain the "vocabulary" of mortuary expression.

Scholars have frequently attributed high-status "founder" graves *(Gründergräber)* buried within elite *Eigenkirchen* to members of the increasingly secure nobility of the late Merovingian period. Located to the right of the altar, near the doorway of the church or in close association with holy tombs and relics, interments of this nature often rested at or above ground level where their visibility earned them immediate attention. An important example of such a burial church is that of Arlon in modern-day southeastern Belgium. At this site, nineteen graves rested in a small church measuring eighteen by ten square meters, with a twentieth interment just outside the entry. Archaeologists have dated the sepulchers to the mid-sixth to late seventh century and have found no other contemporary burials in the vicinity. The earliest individuals were inhumed with lavish grave goods in a wooden chamber located in the southwest corner of the church.

[131] Ament, *Fränkische Adelsgräber*, 131–34; Périn, "Remarques sur la topographie funéraire, " 15–18.

Burials at such locations not only had the advantage of high visibility, but they presumably also enjoyed the special protections extended to churches and their environs.

[132] Treffort, *L'église carolingienne*, 147–51.

In Burgundy, depositions thought to have belonged to "founders" were often located on the south side of the nave of the church. Above-ground prestige graves therefore projected in both content and location an ideal image of the deceased to his or her respective community; therefore, one may distinguish them only with great difficulty from local saints' graves.

[133] Barbara Theune-Großkopf, "Ein frühmittelalterlicher Kirchenbau mit 'Gründergrab' in Cognin (Savoyen), " *AK* 19 (1989): 286–89; Stein, *Adelsgräber*, 1: 166–73. No evidence exists that these lavish usages were not considered fully Christian, but see Wood, "Sépultures ecclésiastiques, " 20–21.

Saint-Julien-engenevois, a rural funerary church located nine kilometers from Geneva on a Roman road, provides an example of such practices. The late fifth-century stone structure with a semicircular apse and a single nave was appended to a long, thin late antique building of stone. Colardelle has noted that contemporaries installed a single, mortared stone tomb *(coffre maçonné)* along the length of the south wall under the *arcosolium*;he

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believes that it was originally constructed in honor of the local saint or founder, since it preceded the church's approximately forty other graves of mortar, stone slabs, and wood, all dating from the late fifth to roughly the eighth century. The initial mortared tomb, and possibly some of the others, were carefully emptied prior to the abandonment of the building in the eighth or ninth century. The oldest interment thus appears to have enjoyed special status.

[134] Colardelle, *Sépulture et traditions*, 84–87, pls. 29, 38–39.

Although this small church enjoyed roughly three centuries of active use as a burial site, the number of individuals laid to rest there remained extremely small. Utilizing limited quantities of grave goods in their church sepulchers, the elite at Saint-Julien-engenevois abandoned the row grave cemeteries very early and chose instead "a permanently specialized, bounded territorial area" for burial.

[135] Saxe, "Social Dimensions, " 119–21.

Graves in churches by nature attracted larger, more diverse audiences and thus constituted an effective location for competitive display. In contrast to the fairly brief exposure of grave goods to viewers at the time of funerals, the expression of identity and religious belief through stone imagery was not restricted to local inhabitants who witnessed burials. Stone monuments might remain in place for hundreds of years.

[136] Halsall, "Social Change, " 269–70.

Royal funerary basilicas, endowed or founded by the deceased or by his or her relations, constituted an especially exclusive type of burial church. Even if one discounts the tomb at Saint-Denis attributed to Aregund, the remains of Childeric I (d. 481) at Tournai and of Balthild (d. circa 681) at Chelles provide important examples of the diversity of resting places of Merovingian monarchs. Despite the fact that they did not establish a single dynastic burial site or tradition for their dead, individual kings exhibited great interest in the sites chosen to house family members.

[137] James, "Royal Burial, " 243ff.; Alain Erlande-Brandenburg, *Le roi est mort: Étude sur les funérailles, les sépultures et les tombeaux des rois de France jusqu'à la fin du XIII*e *siècle*, Bibliothèque de la Société d'archéologie 7 (Geneva: Droz, 1975), 52ff.; Patrick Périn, "Saint-Germain-de-Prés, première nécropole des rois de France, " *Médiévales* 31 (1996): 29–36; Frauke Stein, "Pre-Carolingian Graves in South Germany, " *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 3d ser., 31 (1968): 1–18; Joachim Werner, "Frankish Royal Tombs in the Cathedrals of Cologne and Saint-Denis, " *Antiquity* 38 (1964): 201–16.

As noted by Eugen Ewig, the appropriately close connection between the royal burial places and the headquarters of the respective branches of the Merovingian dynasty showed contemporary recognition of the symbolic significance of

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interment locations.

[138] Eugen Ewig, "Residence et capitale pendant le haut moyen âge, " *RH* 230 (1963): 50–53; Guy Halsall, "Towns, Societies, and Ideas: The Not-So-Strange Case of Late Roman and Early Merovingian Metz, " in *Towns in Transition: Urban Evolution in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Neil Christie and Simon T. Loseby (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996), 253.

The care accorded to royal burials manifested itself in the wealth expended on the graves, their proximity to venerated saints, the liturgy developed for such churches, and the distances that bodies were transported for interment. In comparison to those selected by their Carolingian successors, churches chosen by the Merovingian rulers for royal burial were usually not those containing the most powerful saints. With the exception of a few depositions at Saint-Denis, the Merovingian dynasty selected places in which the king's body and not holy relics would be the focus of attention.

[139] Karl Heinrich Krüger, *Königsgrabkirchen der Franken, Angelsachsen und Langobarden bis zur Mitte des 8. Jahrhunderts*, Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften 4 (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1971), 439ff.; James, "Royal Burial, " 253.

Archaeologists have never discovered the remains of Clovis (d. 511) but presume his grave to be located in what is left of the *sacrarium* of the former basilica of Sainte-Geneviève. After constructing the church and dedicating it to the Holy Apostles, the king and his wife Clothild likely planned the placement of their sarcophagi *ad sanctos* in an annexed chamber next to the sanctuary of the basilica. They chose the local protection of Genovefa (d. 502), who was probably influential in Clovis's conversion, over that of a more established ecclesiastical saint such as Martin of Tours (d. 397) or Germanus of Auxerre (d. circa 445–48).

[140] Patrick Périn, "The Undiscovered Grave of King Clovis I (+511), " in *Age of Sutton Hoo*, 255–64; id., "La tombe de Clovis, " in *Media in Francia … Recueil de mélanges offert à Karl Ferdinand Werner* (Paris: Hérault-Éditions, 1989), 363–78; Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis, "Church Burial in Anglo-Saxon England: The Prerogative of Kings, " *FS* 29 (1995): 107–10.

Royal funerary churches were thus based upon the same principles as those employed in noble private churches, although likely on a more lavish scale: interment needed to be near one's power base and preferably *ad sanctos*. Prominent spaces in burial churches provided an optimal opportunity for public display in a context that also promoted the well-being of the souls of the deceased.

[141] Gustave Combes, ed., "De cura gerenda pro mortuis, " 6 and 7, in *Oeuvres de Saint Augustin*, 1st ser., pt. 2, Bibliothèque augustinienne (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1937), 398–403; Yvette Duval,

Auprès des saints corps et âme: L'inhumations'ad sanctos' dans la chrétienté d'Orient et d'Occident du III^e au VII^e siècle (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1988), 3ff.

The tactic must have been effective because noble families such as the Pippinids and Erchinoald (d. 658), mayor of the Neustrian palace, and his relatives, copied

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royal initiatives in the seventh century. As employed in the late seventh century by the Pippinids and others, burial churches strengthened the legitimacy of the noble kin groups that founded them.

[142] Krüger, *Königsgrabkirchen*, 454–56; Friedrich Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich: Kultur und Gesellschaft in Gallien, den Rheinlanden und Bayern am Beispiel der monastischen Entwicklung (4. bis 8. Jahrhundert)*, 2d ed. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1988), 128ff., 185ff.; David Ganz, *Corbie in the Carolingian Renaissance*, Beihefte der Francia 20 (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1991), 15–18.

The growing desirability of burial *ad sanctos* in funerary churches provoked complications in light of the late antique interdiction of interment in cities, which was enshrined in the Theodosian Code. In Rome, emperors and consuls designated by the Senate as having offered their lives for or defended the country might exceptionally be interred within urban limits; Constantine, for instance, was buried at Constantinople.

[143] Kötting, "Die Tradition, " 69–70.

The vast majority of the deceased, however, remained outside the cities in late antiquity, whether in urns or sarcophagi.

[144] 9.17.6: "Omnia quae supra terram urnis clausa vel sarcofagis corpora detinentur, extra urbem delata ponantur, ut et humanitatis instar exhibeant et relinquant incolarum domicilio sanctitatem" (Theodor Mommsen and Paul M. Meyer, eds., *Codex Theodosianus libri XVI cum Constitutionibus Simmondianis et Leges novellae ad Theodosianum pertinentes*, 1.2 [Berlin: Apud Weidmannos, 1905], 465).

As Merovingian churches and especially monastic houses for women came to be more frequently located within cities, the lasting stigma of burial *intra muros* resulted in continued interment outside of the walls even for some of the most prestigious individuals. The burial of the former queen Radegund (d. 587) therefore took place outside of her monastery in Poitiers, much to the sorrow of the cloistered nuns who could therefore never visit her grave.

[145] Bruno Krusch, ed., *Gregorius episcopus Turonensis, Liber in gloria con- fessorum*, 104, MGH: SRM 1.2, new ed. (Hanover: Impensis bibliopolii Hahniani, 1969), 364–66; Hartmut Atsma, "Les monastères urbains du Nord de la Gaule, " *Revue d'histoire de l'église de France* 62 (1975): 184–85.

Consensus for the acceptability of the transport of martyrial relics into city basilicas grew from the end of the fourth century. Historians usually identify the turning point in this movement as Ambrose's translation of the relics of Gervasius and Protasius in 385. While this act did not con-stitute the first example of *intra muros* burial, strong imperial opposition had to be overcome before the saints could be moved into the city of Milan. The bishop's liturgical celebration of the relics made them more accessible to the whole community.

[146] Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 33ff.; Neil B. McLynn, *Am- brose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 209–17; Daniel H. Williams, *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Nicene-Arian Conflicts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 219–23; Jill Harries, "Death and Burial in the Late Roman Empire, " in *Death in Towns: Urban Responses to the Dying and the Dead, 100–1600*, ed. Steven Bassett (London: Leicester University Press, 1992), 62–65; Kötting, "Die Tradition, " 74–78.

Such events contributed to the wearing down

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of resistance to burial in inhabited areas, particularly in episcopal or monastic centers. Both relics and the privilege of burial in religious communities motivated the growing presence of the dead in Roman towns and cities from the fourth century.

[147] Eligius, bishop of Noyon, was given high-status burial near the altar. See Bruno Krusch, ed., *Vita Eligii episcopi Noviomagensis*, 2.48, MGH: SRM 4 (Hanover: Impensis bibliopolii Hahniani, 1902), 727; Cantino Wataghin, "Ideology of Urban Burials, " 158–63.

This is not to say that the change in this direction went unquestioned, however, for as late as the seventh century, Jonas of Bobbio's account of the life of Vaast, bishop of Arras (d. 650), included mention of the saint's resistance to burial *intra muros* during his lifetime. The conflict between Vaast and his followers reached a resolution only when the bier carrying Vaast miraculously grew so heavy that he could be buried nowhere but in the cathedral.

[148] Bruno Krusch, ed., *Vita Vedastis episcopi Atrebatensis duplex*, 9, MGH: SRM 3 (Hanover: Impensis bibliopolii Hahniani, 1896), 412–13; Megan Mc-Laughlin, *Consorting with Saints: Prayer for the Dead in Early Medieval France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 109–10; Cécile Treffort, "Du *cimiterium christianorum* au cimetière paroissial: Évolution des espaces funéraires en Gaule du VI^{e} au X^{e} siècle, " in *Archéologie du cimetière chrétien (Actes du 2^{e} colloque ARCHEA [Orléans, 29 septembre—1er octobre 1994])*, ed. Henri Galinié and Elisabeth Zadora-Rio, 11^{e} supplément à la Revue archéologique du Centre de la France (Tours; FÉRACF, 1996), 56–57; id., *L'église carolingienne*, 134–37; Effros, "Beyond Cemetery Walls, " 15–17.

Although episcopal councils as late as the Synod of Aachen in 809 promulgated occasional legislation against interment *intra muros*, a strong distinction existed between this measure and those of the seventh century that sought merely to limit church burial to those who had received the bishop's permission.

[149] "Ut intra septa monastyrii (non) baptizetur nec missae defunc(to)rum saecularium in monastyrio (celebr)entur nec saecularium cor(pora) (ib)idem sepeliantur, forsitan (per)miso ponteficis" (Charles De Clercq, ed., "Concilium incerti loci" (post a.614) 6, in *Concilia Galliae A.511-A.695*, CCSL 148A [Turnhout: Typographi Brepols editores pontificii, 1963], 287).

The Synod of Auxerre (561–605), for instance, only forbade deposition of the dead in baptisteries.

[150] De Clercq, ed., "Synodus diocesena Autissiodorensis, " 14, in *Concilia Gal- liae*, CCSL 148A, 267.

In any case, Aachen's influence was not great, since the Synod of Mainz (813) reversed the previous

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legislation and definitively permitted bishops, abbots, and *fideles laici* to be buried in churches.

[151] Kötting, "Die Tradition, " 74–78; Christian Sapin, "Architecture and Funerary Space in the Early Middle Ages, " in *Spaces of the Living and the Dead: An Archaeological Dialogue*, ed. Catherine E. Karkov, Kelley M. Wickham-Crowley, and Bailey K. Young, American Early Medieval Studies 3 (Oxford: Ox-bow Books, 1999), 39–60.

Less prominent than "founders' " or saints' graves, burials in these churches were nonetheless located centrally or just outside the sanctuary. Although the majority of Christians were excluded from privileged sepulchers *ad sanctos*, interment of their dead was, in time, to be affected by the above developments. Once focused upon local parish churches in or near villages, burial was transformed. Clerics and local nobility gained greater influence and authority over the disposition of christian graves in church cemeteries than had likely been the case in rural row grave cemeteries.

[152] Richard Morris, *The Church in British Archaeology*, CBA Research Report 47 (London: CBA, 1983), 54–62; Périn, "Le problème des sarcophages-cénotaphes, " 824.

Archaeologists have nonetheless had relative difficulty in documenting this process in many places because of the occupation and hence widespread disturbance of late Merovingian-and Carolingian-period sites in subsequent centuries.

[153] Colardelle, *Sépulture et traditions*, 84–87, 369; Alain Dierkens, "Un aspect de la christianisation de la Gaule du Nord à l'époque mérovingienne: La 'Vita Hadelini' et les découvertes archéologiques

d'Anthée et de Franchimont, " *Francia* 8 (1980): 621–22.

Discussions of the growth of parish cemeteries are thus fairly speculative and rest in large part upon written documents rather than material remains. The establishment of graveyards next to cathedrals or parish churches and their use by the general population probably began in earnest only in the eighth and ninth centuries and would take far longer to complete. Eighth-century sacramentaries reveal the slow nature of this transition, for although they provided Masses for cemeteries, they provided no indication of rites for the consecration of Christian burial sites.

[154] Bullough, "Burial, Community, and Belief, " 189–90. Even in fourth-century Rome, no clear evidence exists for clerical regulation of Christian burial; see Éric Rebillard, "L'église de Rome et le développement des catacombes: À propos de l'origine des cimetières chrétiens, " *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome: Antiquité* 109 (1997): 741–63.

Not until the tenth century is it likely that the benediction of entire cemeteries regularly took place.

[155] Treffort, *L'église carolingienne*, 141–42.

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Epilogue

A variety of preconceptions have shaped the methodologies used in the study of Merovingian mortuary remains.

[1] Heinrich Härke, "Archaeologists and Migrations: A Problem of Attitude?" *Current Anthropology* 39 (1998):19–24; Bailey K. Young, "L'historiographie traditionnelle en Grande Bretagne, " in *Archéologie mérovingienne: Historiographie et méthodologie (Actes des VI^e journées nationales de l'A.F.A.M. [Rennes 1984])*, Le moyen âge 2 (Paris: Errance, 1989), 51–57.

Because of the inherently malleable nature of the material evidence and changing interpretive frame-works for the processing of this evidence, antiquaries, historians, and early archaeologists have had a large degree of freedom in drawing conclusions about the populations and customs of early medieval Gaul. Their objectives in initiating this research have often evoked the concerns of their era. Releasing researchers ultimately from many of the constraints of the written sources, Merovingian-period artifacts and skeletal fragments constitute a new medium through which European scholars have explored their origins. Because the circumstances in which they work have often determined what sorts of evidence they seek as well as which artifacts they discard, a thorough understanding of their environment is indispensable to any use of their research and interpretations. Besides pointing to the abundant contributions of antiquarianism and archaeology to European historiography, this survey of the archaeological study of mortuary evidence has also been intended to draw attention to some of the field's potential strengths and weaknesses.

As noted above, the political and intellectual milieu in which nineteenth-and early twentieth-century antiquaries and archaeologists excavated promoted anachronistic perceptions of ethnic identity such as racial superiority; these beliefs in the medieval roots of modern national

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identity in turn fueled research to support such claims. In nineteenth-century France, historians still characterized the Frankish arrivals as barbarian invaders, Germanic foreigners who conquered and subjugated the Gallo-Roman or Celtic population. The rise of the Carolingian dynasty from the more predominantly Germanic Austrasian kingdom thus represented the triumph of *Francia teutonica* over the Gallic population until the tide was reversed in the French Revolution.

[2] François Guizot, *Essais sur l'histoire de France*, 4th ed. (Paris: Ladrange, Libraire, 1836), 51–54, 68–77.

In Germany, too, belief in Germanic purity directly contributed to the formation of a modern national identity. What was thought to be archaeological proof of an independent and unpolluted Germanic past furthered the cause of German unification.

[3] Patrick J. Geary, "Ethnic Identity as a Situational Construct in the Early Middle Ages, " *Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien* 113 (1983): 16–17; Walter Schlesinger, "Die Entstehung

der Nationen: Gedanken zu einem Forschungsprogramm, ” in *Aspekte der Nationenbildung im Mittelalter: Er- gebnisse der Marburger Rundgespräche 1972–1975*, ed. Helmut Beumann and Werner Schröder (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1978), 1: 15–17, 35.

Academic and popular discussions of distinctions between ethnic groups on the basis of grave goods and anthropological assessments of corpses have persisted,

[4] Michel Rouche, *L'Aquitaine des Wisigoths aux Arabes 418–781: Naissance d'une région* (Paris: Éditions de l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 1979), 140–47; Heinrich Härke, "Changing Symbols in a Changing Society: The Anglo-Saxon Burial Rite in the Seventh Century, ” in *The Age of Sutton Hoo: The Seventh Century in North-Western Europe*, ed. Martin Carver (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1992), 149–65; id., "Tombes à armes anglo-saxonnes: Sépultures des guerriers ou symbolisme rituel?" in *L'armée romaine et les barbares du III^e au VII^e siècle*, ed. Françoise Vallet and Michel Kazanski, Mémoire de l'AFAM 5 (Rouen: AFAM, 1993), 425–36.

despite recent scholarship redefining Germanic ethnicity as a politically motivated construction rather than a biologically determined group of humans.

[5] Patrick Amory, "The Meaning and Purpose of Ethnic Terminology in the Burgundian Laws, ” *EME* 2 (1993): 2–5; Geary, "Ethnic Identity, ” 15–26; Reinhard Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung: Das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen Gentes* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1961), 398–400.

Central to the debates that emerged in conjunction with the study of Merovingian mortuary remains were the inevitable comparisons between barbaric and civilized customs, an approach based on the allegedly incontrovertible superiority of Christians over non-Christians. Working in concert with this Christocentric notion was the biased understanding of the superiority of classical artifacts over those of the medieval period.

[6] Rhetorical portrayals of barbarians in other contexts, however, may be traced in Western Europe to as early as Greek antiquity; see Edith Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

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of the early Middle Ages imposed similar preconceptions of barbarism on their evidence, noting that the pagan and heretical arrivals to the former glory of the Roman Empire destroyed rather than built monuments. Only the civilizing nature of Roman Christianity was presumed capable of inspiring the construction of the solid if inelegant stone structures characteristic of the early Middle Ages.

[7] Alexandre de Laborde, *Les monumens de la France classés chronologique- ment et considérés sous le rapport des faits historiques de l'étude des arts* (Paris: P. Didot l'Ainé, 1816), 1: 19–22.

By the late nineteenth century, historians and antiquaries focused their critique on the supposed gap between the mores of the barbaric Merovingian world and those of the enlightened Carolingian Renaissance. Whereas they characterized the early Franks as primitive, they viewed the Carolingians as having achieved a more refined civilization, since they at least recognized the importance of classical precedents and initiated religious reform.

[8] François Furet and Jacques Le Goff, "Histoire et ethnologie, ” in *Mélanges en l'honneur de Fernand Braudel* (Toulouse: Privat, Éditeur, 1973), 2: 227–34.

These preconceptions still inaccurately color the manner in which artifacts dating from the two dynastic periods have been classified.

[9] Genevra Kornbluth, *Engraved Gems of the Carolingian Empire* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 2–3. Nancy Gauthier, Françoise Descombes, and Françoise Prévot have likewise begun the formidable task of reformulating Edmond Le Blant's chronology of Merovingian-period epitaphs, since Le Blant believed that the Carolingian epigraphical tradition was independent of its predecessor; see Nancy Gauthier, ed., *RICG*, vol. 1 (Paris: CNRS, 1975); Fran-çoise Descombes, ed., *RICG*, vol. 15 (Paris: CNRS, 1985); Françoise Prévot, ed., *RICG*, vol. 8 (Paris: CNRS, 1996).

In light of the inconsistencies in the collection and interpretation of archaeological remains of graves dating to the Merovingian period, especially in the century prior to the advent of more sophisticated archaeological techniques and methodologies, it is not surprising that modern Archaeologists and historians have been influenced by these earlier prejudices when working with the material evidence. Because such artifacts continue to play a central role in political and national ideological debates, today influencing the development of a single European identity based upon the early medieval past, avoiding the application of anachronistic methodological frameworks and assumptions is all the more important. In the reconstruction of Merovingian mortuary ritual, archaeological discoveries should not be assessed in isolation, nor should they be relegated to antiquarian

cabinets.

[10] Ulrich Veit, "Ethnic Concepts in German Prehistory: A Case Study on the Relationship between Cultural Identity and Archaeological Objectivity, " in *Ar- chaeological Approaches to Cultural Identity*, ed. Stephen Shennan, One World Archaeology 10 (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 42–43.

Instead, as has been done more recently, modern disciplinary distinctions must be overcome and this evidence integrated with the fruits of historical, archaeological, anthropological, biological, and ethnological research. While knowledge of burial customs in Merovingian Gaul will remain imperfect at best, and no study can ever be completely free of the predilections of its author, only a balanced use of all available sources will make it possible to understand the complexity and diversity that characterized early medieval society.

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