# Durham E-Theses

## *Burial practices in iron age Britain*

### Whimster, Rowan Pirrie

Burial Practices in Iron Age Britain

Rowan Pirrie Whimster

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the University of Durham

April 1979

# Contents

## Appendices

## Figures

Summary

Although earlier research had defined the existence and character
of two continentally-inspired Middle and Late La Tène burial rites in
restricted zones of eastern Yorkshire and south-eastern England and had
suggested the presence of a third alien tradition of warrior inhumation,
little attention has previously been given to the methods of burial used
in all other parts of Britain during the pre-Roman Iron Age.  In order to
rectify this situation an exhaustive classified catalogue listing all
known formal deposits of Iron Age human remains from insular sites has
now been compiled and forms the basis for a broader discussion of
conventional funerary customs and more complex sacrificial and votive
practices involving human subjects than has hitherto been possible.  A
principal result of the work has been the identification of three distinct
native inhumation traditions from central southern England, southern
Dorset and Cornwall, and the recognition that these share a set of
distinctive ritual characteristics that confirm their common insular
origin.  The same ritual preferences can also be identified in the context
of Arras Culture burials in Yorkshire and demonstrate that the latter rite
was the product of a more complex fusion of native and continental practices
than has hitherto been envisaged.  The method of burial used in all
remaining areas from the Late Bronze Age until the Roman Conquest remains
archaeologically invisible, but it is now suggested that this also took the
form of inhumation and was the cultural progenitor of the four regional
traditions that eventually replaced or augmented it.

## Introduction and Acknowledgements

The archaeologist, like Alice, inhabits a world of muddling perspectives. Not only has he to learn to look backwards at what were once forward-moving processes, but he must also content himself with forms and sources of evidence that would induce despair and frustration in other students of historical society. As anthropologists, or alternatively historians, working in an extended time-dimension it is our business to reconstruct the organisation and development of past societies not from contemporary documents and ethnographic descriptions, but through the laborious examination of the fragmentary remains of material culture created by people who have left behind no other record of themselves or their activity. It is therefore especially ironic, as the melancholy Sir Thomas Browne was so fully aware over three hundred years ago, that some of the most significant archaeological material and the closest glimpse of the men and women who made it for their own benefit, should come not from the farms and towns of the living, but from the graves of the dead. In the necessarily objective and sometimes cold account of Iron Age funerary rituals that follows we must remind ourselves constantly that we are dealing with activities that will have been of profound emotional and social significance to those who performed them. In particular we should recall with gratitude that 'time which antiquates antiquities and hath an art to make dust of all things, hath yet spared these minor monuments' (Browne, 1658, 41).

Although two previous studies have sought to define the character of better known Middle and Late La Tène inhumation and cremation rites in restricted areas of eastern Yorkshire (Stead, 1965) and south-eastern England (Birchall, 1965), few attempts have been made to isolate and

compare the methods of burial employed in other areas of Iron Age
Britain between the closing of the insular Bronze Age and the Claudian
conquest of these islands in A.D. 43. Bearing in mind that funerary
customs might be expected to provide some of the most valuable and
reliable indices of cultural continuity or change, this lack of
attention is remarkable in a half century in which prehistorians have
sought energetically to explain the development of British Iron Age
society in terms of opposed theories of continentally-derived migration
and self-contained insular evolution (Hawkes, 1931, 1958;  Hodson, 1964;
Clark, 1966). Indeed, it would only seem possible to assume that the
wealth of information provided by a profusion of hillfort, settlement,
ceramic and metalwork forms had consistently distracted the majority of
scholars from the sobering realisation that the greater part of the
country was quite unable to provide funerary evidence to match that of
the long-recognised, and seemingly intrusive, Arras and Aylesford
Cultures, and that its communities could thus be neither compared nor
contrasted with their contemporary continental counterparts in terms of
burial practices. Although this striking paucity of insular evidence was
already becoming apparent when C.F.C. Hawkes and G.C. Dunning drew
attention to the novel, and archaeologically visible, cremation practices
of their Belgic colonists, its significance was not afforded proper
recognition until F.R. Hodson defined an absence of burial sites as a
specific feature of an insular 'Woodbury Culture' (Hawkes and Dunning,
1930;  Cunnington, 1932, 31;  Hodson, 1964, 205).

Because no subsequent attempts had been made to test the validity
of Hodson's assumption, or to explore its broader cultural implications,

this present study was initiated with the purpose of providing a

thorough re-appraisal of all the documented insular funerary evidence.

As a preliminary to any analytical discussion, however, it was

essential that efforts should first be directed towards the provision

of an exhaustive, or near-exhaustive, catalogue of all formal deposits

of human remains recovered from confirmed or probable Iron Age contexts

in mainland Britain.

Using a brief and incomplete list of burial and cemetery sites

compiled by the Ordnance Survey (1962, 53-5) as a starting point, an

intensive search was conducted through all available published reports

contained in monographs and local and national archaeological journals.

This survey, which was augmented with additional unpublished information

generously provided by museum authorities and the directors of more recent

excavations, eventually resulted in the accumulation of considerably more

material than had been anticipated initially, and it has thus been felt

necessary to present the summarised data in the form of a series of

classified appendices (A-L) that reflect broadly the ritual and regional

groupings defined in the accompanying chapters of the text. Within each

catalogue section sites are arranged by county and civil parish,

individual entries comprising a six-or four-figure grid-reference and

brief descriptions of the burial or burials concerned, together with

references to the primary and more important secondary published sources.

Although this arrangement suits the purposes of this present study, it

must nevertheless be emphasised that it cannot yet be regarded as anything

other than a flexible interim classification designed to reflect the some-

what crude thematic variations and consistencies that can so far be observed.

In the section that precedes the catalogue the available evidence
is discussed within the framework of a series of chapters which again
reflect principal ritual or geographical themes. The first seven of
these sections are all concerned with conventional burial techniques,
but an eighth steps aside from orthodox funerary procedures and turns
its attention to the problems presented by a more complicated and esoteric
range of activities that appear to have made use of human subjects for
purposes that may include head-hunting, votive burial and human
sacrifice.

Although some efforts have been made to consider the broader
chronological and cultural implications of objects provided as formal
grave-goods with burials from particular zones, it must be emphasised
that limitations of time have in most cases prevented detailed first-hand
examination of such material and that the essential concern of this study
has, in any case, been comparison of burial performances in the more
restricted terms of their ritual and social characteristics. In the pages
that follow it will thus be found that material objects are considered
principally from the point of view of their selection as appropriate
funerary accompaniments, rather than for their independent typological
value. In this respect they have been treated, along with such features
as the shape and size of graves, the posture and orientation of bodies
and the size and location of burial grounds, as socially-derived component
funerary elements that can assist in the definition of the various burial
traditions under discussion.

The study whose results are presented here was carried out during a
period of full-time research in the Department of Archaeology at the

University of Durham between 1971-1974 and on a part-time basis while
I was later employed by the Committee for Aerial Photography at the
University of Cambridge.  Early in 1973 a three month period was spent
working on published material in the libraries of the Institute of
Archaeology and the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford at the kind invitation
of Professor B.W. Cunliffe.

In addition to the numerous individuals and institutions who were
generous enough to provide detailed information regarding unpublished
material in their care and whose assistance is acknowledged where appropriate
in the catalogue that forms the second part of this work, I owe specific
thanks to the following people whose observations and comments received
in correspondence and informal discussion have been of especial value:
Mr P. Ashbee;  Professor B.W. Cunliffe;  Dr T. Champion;  Mr J.S. Dent;
Professor P-R. Giot;  Professor C.F.C. Hawkes;  Professor E.M. Jope;
Dr J.G.M. Ritchie and Dr M.G. Spratling.  More important still has been
the continuing encouragement of my former research supervisor, Professor
D.W. Harding, and the stimulating support provided by Dr I.M. Stead, whose
special knowledge of La Tène burials in Britain and France has been a
consistent and freely given source of inspiration.  Finally, to my wife
Susan I owe thanks of a very particular kind for living so patiently
through the long gestation of this thesis and for providing much-needed
assistance in the preparation and editing of the draft text and final
typescript.

Chapter 1

Inhumation in central southern England; a theme and variations

For both historical and geographical reasons any comparative study

of Iron Age cultural traditions in southern Britain must inevitably

begin with the central lowland zone whose profusion of visible defensive

and open settlement sites has inspired such intensive archaeological

activity since the closing decades of the 19th century and has led to the

recognition of the area as something of a heartland for the development

of Iron Age society during the later 1st millennium B.C. Despite growing

awareness of the extent and cultural importance of contemporary settlement

elsewhere in the country, the over-riding wealth of material from

excavations conducted south of a line drawn between Gloucestershire in

the West and Cambridgeshire in the East has continued to dominate modern

accounts of the British pre-Roman Iron Age, regardless of whether these

have favoured theories of continental invasion and diffusion, or insular

evolution (Hawkes, 1959; Hodson, 1964; Cunliffe, 1974; Harding, 1974).

In looking at funerary rites, moreover, there are sound geographical

reasons for considering the area before any other, since the southern zone

will subsequently be found to provide an essential territorial bridge when

comparing related traditions from Cornwall in the south-west and Yorkshire

to the north.

As we have already seen, an apparent absence of pre-La Tène III Iron

Age burials in the region was first recognised nearly 50 years ago

(Cunnington, 1932, 31). This embarrassing lacuna in the material assemblage

was then largely ignored until Hodson formally established it as a specific

'negative type-fossil' of his insular and otherwise materially prolific

Woodbury Culture (Hodson, 1964, 205). Subsequently both Cunliffe and

Harding have unwillingly acceded to Hodson's conclusion that no major

burial traditions could be identified in the area before the introduction

of cremation in the latter part of the 1st century B.C., although both

were able to draw attention to a handful of discoveries that suggested the

occasional use of inhumation in the earlier centuries, albeit in an

apparently haphazard and ritually ill-defined manner (Cunliffe, 1974, 292;

Harding, 1974, 113). Our essential purpose in this chapter, therefore, will

be a more careful examination of the examples of burial that have been

found in the region in order to determine whether the absence of formal

disposal rituals is real, or is merely the result of earlier failures to

assemble and collate the existing, but scattered, evidence.

A detailed search through the literature shows that human remains

have been found in Iron Age contexts in the region on numerous occasions,

although until recently the isolated and relatively unspectacular nature

of the majority of these burials has resulted in their summary dismissal

by excavators as casual interments of minimal comparative interest. More

detailed consideration of this older material, together with the rapidly

increasing evidence derived from modern, large-scale area excavation of

settlement and hillfort sites shows that certain common themes can be

identified, and may allow the isolation of one or more related disposal

traditions used over a wide area during the later centuries of the pre-

Roman Iron Age.

The majority of these burials take the form of inhumations and one

of the principal reasons for their having been ignored previously is that

only a handful are associated with any form of grave goods. Many,

moreover, have been found as isolated burials within settlement areas

rather than as members of formal cemeteries. In dealing with these

examples it will be necessary, therefore, to work solely in terms of

the funerary performance as represented in the form of the grave and

the disposition of the body it contains. Although such a procedure

may permit the identification of several recurrent ritual themes, the

absence of accompanying objects will prohibit the definition of anything

more than a crude relative chronology at this stage.

Before attempting any assessment of the inhumation tradition as a

whole it will be useful to examine the burials in turn, according to the

four basic contexts in which they are found. About half the total number

of inhumations have been located within the fillings of ditches, in, or

beneath, hillfort ramparts and in a variety of simple earthen graves.

The remainder, which form the most coherent group, all derive from storage

pits and provide the basis for any interpretation of the combined sequence.

## Pit-burial

### The sites and their distribution

Between the middle of the 19th century and 1976 at least 174

individual inhumations have been recorded from the fillings of storage

and similar pits within the confines of hillforts and open farming settle-

ments. One of the earliest coherent descriptions of such burials emerges

from C.W. Dymond and H.G. Tomkin's work at Worlebury, Avon, where groups

of battle-wounded skeletons were found in at least four of the pits

excavated between 1851 and 1852 (A.1.4). Within a few years of this

first discovery another Somerset antiquary, William Long, recovered a
single skeleton from a pit on Walton Common, near Clevedon (A.1.3),
while in other parts of the country similar burials were revealed in the
course of quarrying work at Hod Hill, Dorset (A.1.14) and at the
Northamptonshire hillfort of Hunsbury (A.1.26). None of these very early
descriptions is backed up by supporting illustrations, however, and the
credit for providing the first drawing of a pit section with a burial _in situ_
must go to E.Y. Poole, a Weston-super-Mare tileworks foreman whose
delightfully imaginative sketch of an inhumation found in 1885 at
Stafford Place, Weston (A.1.5) is reproduced in Fig. 1.

Although further accidental finds have since been made, the majority
of the remaining pit-burials have come to light in the course of formal
excavation. The rate of discovery has been variable, however, and seems
to be related directly to changing attitudes and approaches to the
excavation of settlement and defensive sites. Until a few years ago the
excavation of open farming sites tended, with some exceptions, to be
limited in scale, while work on the numerous major hillforts of the region
concentrated on investigation of the defences, often at the expense of the
occupied interior areas. As a result, only very small samples of storage
pits within such sites were examined and discoveries of associated burials
were inevitably intermittent, few sites ever revealing more than one or two
isolated examples. The examination of more representative groups of pits
however, can lead to the discovery of burials in larger numbers. This was
first demonstrated by Pitt-River's extensive and methodical work within
the Cranborne Chase settlements at Rotherley (A.1.35), Woodcutts (A.1.11)
and Woodyates (A.1.12), but was not reinforced until large scale excavations

were carried out with similar results at both Maiden Castle (A.1.15)

and Hod Hill (A.1.14) in Dorset. In recent years the trend towards

extensive area excavation has led to the examination of increasingly

large groups of pits which in turn have begun to yield further evidence

that pit-burial may have been a regular, rather than an exceptional,

practice. At Maiden Castle at least seven adult skeletons were found

in the fillings of conventional storage pits and a similar number were

recorded at Danebury, Hants, between 1971 and 1973 (A.1.20). Increasing

numbers of groups of two or more burials have also been reported from

open settlements throughout the region, although none of these has yet

compared with Christon, Avon, where no less than 11 of a total of 65 pits

yielded adult skeletons (A.1.2), or Gussage-all-Saints with 11 adult and

33 infant pit-burials (A.1.10).

Evidence obtained before the Second World War tended to indicate that

the majority of pit-burials were concentrated on the chalklands of central

Wessex, with only the thinnest scatter of examples extending to the north-

west and north-east. While subsequent work has confirmed that northern

Dorset, Wiltshire and Hampshire still have the major share of the known

examples, an increasing number of new discoveries demonstrates that the

overall distribution covers a much wider area, extending from Dorset in a

north-easterly direction as far as Northamptonshire and possibly Norfolk

(Fig. 2 ). No conventional pit-burials have ever been recorded to the

west of the River Parrott, however, and a similar dearth in south-eastern

England is broken only by examples from a single site at Broadstairs,

Kent (A.1.22). Although the burials from Hardingstone (A.1.27), Twywell

(A.28) and Hunsbury (A.1.26), Northants, and Roudham, Norfolk (A.1.23)

show a strong northerly extension in the eastern part of the region, there

is no parallel series of burials to carry the distribution into the West Midlands. The absence of pit-burials further to the North is indeed so striking that the recent discovery of crouched skeletons within pits at Ledston, West Yorkshire (A.1.34) may require quite separate interpretation purely on the grounds of geographical isolation.

Although this distribution of pit-inhumations may initially have been distorted by the intensity of archaeological activity in the Wessex region, the balance has now been at least partially restored as a result of more intensive work elsewhere. It would nevertheless seem that pit-burials are never encountered amongst the extensive Iron Age settlements on the river gravels of the East and West Midlands or southern Essex but are instead restricted to those areas of higher ground where the construction of storage pits is an integral aspect of the local economic system. The degree of this coincidence can be clearly seen when the distribution of the burials is compared with that of storage pits in general. Although Piggott's well-known map of sites with pits could now be augmented with numerous further examples, the overall restriction of his distribution to the chalklands of southern Wessex, the Jurassic Ridge and the southern Cotswolds still holds good, and demonstrates effectively that pit-burials extend throughout, but not beyond this area (Piggott, 1958, 10). Furthermore, it would seem that the relative density of burials within this area also accords with that of the pit sites, again suggesting that the discovery of further burials will probably continue in direct proportion to the number of pits excavated.

Ritual characteristics

1.  Pits and graves

The basic criterion used to distinguish burials of this group is
that the body should have been found within a pit originally excavated
for a purpose other than the disposal of the dead. Although it is now
generally accepted that the majority of larger pits, both within
hillforts and on open or lightly defended settlements of the type long-
characterised by Little Woodbury (Bersu, 1940), were used for the
storage of parched cereal grain intended for consumption, there is evidence
that similar features may also have served a wider range of economic
functions (Harding, 1974, 78-79; Ellison and Drewett, 1971).

For our present purposes the precise original function of a pit is
of less importance than the fact that when defunct it becomes a convenient
receptacle for the disposal of general occupational refuse and has, more
specifically, the potential to serve as a ready-made grave. Leaving aside
for the present the question of why it should have been felt appropriate to
bury certain individuals not only within the confines of an occupied area,
but in pits normally associated with distinctly secular domestic garbage,
it has to be admitted that re-use of an existing hole would have saved
considerable effort otherwise needed to dig a formal grave in the solid
chalk or limestone on which most of the sites lie.

Careful consideration of excavators' descriptions indicates that
burial was not only performed on the floors of empty pits, as at Marnhull,
Casterley or Broadstairs (A.1.13; A.1.44; A.1.22 and Fig. 3), but
frequently took place in examples that were already half-filled with general

occupational debris (A.1.3; A.1.19; A.1.20.1). In other instances secondary excavations, perhaps more correctly considered as graves, were dug into the loosely packed and less resistant contents of pits already filled to their brims. Examples of recut pits are specifically recorded from Twywell, Hod Hill and Maiden Castle, Winterbourne Stoke and Beckford (A.1.28.2; A.1.14.4; A.1.15.2; A.1.45), but such pits seem to have been exceptional, perhaps used when none of the preferred empty or half-filled pits were available. It is also important to note a number of additional chalk cut pits that may have been dug specifically for the purpose of burial, even though they superficially, and perhaps intentionally, resemble conventional storage pits. A uniquely shaped feature from Worthy Down (A.1.19.2), for instance, comprised a small circular pit, containing a tightly contracted skeleton, appended to a trapezoidal extension of uncertain purpose. Similarly specialised are at least two pits from Danebury (A.1.20.3 and 8) in which the floors had been allowed to develop natural layers of silt before burial was allowed to take place. Both these examples were of an exceptional elongated shape and in one instance contained a single dismembered skeleton and in the other an extended skeleton, a second dismembered individual and an infant. In view of their clearly abnormal nature, however, these two pits probably represent a modification of the basic and essentially simpler pit-inhumation theme and will require more detailed consideration at a later stage.

2. Body position

The first significant feature to emerge from a comparison of the recorded pit-inhumations is that with the exception of a single specialised burial from Danebury (A.1.20.3), no skeleton has ever been

found in a fully extended position. Instead, all the examples lie with the legs bent at the knees and hips or at the knees alone (Figs. 3-4). The degree of this contraction varies considerably, however, with some bodies exhibiting little more than light flexing of the knees and others lying so tightly crouched that it would appear that they had been bound into position prior to burial. In the great majority of instances skeletons are found lying on their sides, although at least six individuals have been found lying on their backs with the legs drawn up above the body. While there can be little doubt that the limbs of the crouched or fully contracted individuals had been carefully arranged, there must be a certain amount of doubt regarding those skeletons whose lightly flexed legs and occasionally outstretched arms could equally well result from genuinely casual and informal deposition. Some or all of the individuals bearing lethal sword injuries from pits at Worlebury (A.1.4), for instance, may simply have been buried as battle dead, while a similar explanation may be called for in the case of a 6 year old child, again with severe sword cuts to the skull, who had been thrown head-first into Pit 62 at Woodcutts (A.1.11.1). It would be unwise, however, to relegate all lightly flexed or sprawled skeletons to the category of non-ritual disposal, as many earlier excavators were tempted to do, for a number of these burials, including an example from Longbridge Deverill, Wilts (A.1.40.1) still contrive to show other ritual characteristics which allow their inclusion amongst the sequence of properly crouched inhumations. Existing evidence provides no indication that any particular factors governed the degree of contraction used, nor is there any indication that parallel regulations affected the positioning of the arms. Although the hands of some skeletons are placed neatly together close to the chest or face, the arms of most show little sign of careful positioning, lying flexed or extended alongside or outstretched from the body.

In addition to 15 examples of bodies placed on the back it is

possible to determine that rather more than half (62%) of the remaining

77 skeletons for which details are available were placed on their left

sides rather than on their right (Fig. 5). Although the sample is too

small to have great statistical reliability, this preference is

particularly well-defined in Wiltshire north of the River Nadder, where

9 out of 13 inhumations from a total of 8 sites lay on their left

rather than right sides (Fig. 6).

Evidence from hillforts and settlements such as Maiden Castle,

Salmonsbury, Gussage-all-Saints and Rotherley (A.1.15; A.1.16; A.1.10;

A.1.35) on the other hand indicates that there need not always be

conformity of body side within any particular community; nor does there

appear to be any marked sexual distinction between right and left. It

should nevertheless be borne in mind that the majority of these skeletons

were sexed at the time of their excavation or shortly afterwards and in

view of recently expressed misgivings regarding earlier procedures for

the determination of sex it would therefore be unwise to place too much

faith on this aspect of the available data (Brothwell, 1963, 51-57).

3. Orientation

It is unfortunate that many excavators failed to record the direction

in which bodies had been placed in their pits, as this information is

capable of revealing a second socially defined element of the burial

procedure. Although some individual field-workers may have been less

meticulous than others in defining either verbally or diagrammatically the

precise orientation of their crouched skeletons, as defined by the line

drawn from the centre of the pelvis to the crown of the skull, it is still

possible to assemble a group of some 83 burials whose orientations are reasonably well-recorded in terms of 16 basic compass points.

A superficial examination of the orientational data for all the available pit-burials (Fig. 5) shows that skeletons have been found with their heads pointing in almost every direction but it is none the less apparent that there is a relatively strong concentration within the sector of the arc between N and E and a correspondingly thin scatter between S and NW. This prescription becomes more obvious still in terms of the 13 burials from central and northern Wiltshire, whose left-sided preference has already been noted. The orientations of 8 of these are recorded and yield six individuals with their heads to N and two others directed respectively NW and NE (Fig. 6).

Although the homogeneity of the Wiltshire group cannot be matched elsewhere, certain orientations can be shown to have been favoured within specific settlements. At Salmonsbury (A.1.16), for instance, all four crouched adult inhumations had their heads to the E, while at Rotherley (A.1.35) 7 out of 8 skeletons from pits lay directed between NNE and NE. It would seem, therefore, that although there may still be a tendency towards burial between N and E in all areas, the strength of the prescription may wane, or be replaced by regional variants, in areas away from central Wessex. Until larger samples are available from these other regions it will remain impossible to plot the distribution of any subsidiary regulations with precision.

With the exception of the restricted group of burials from Wiltshire there appears to be no close correlation between orientation and body position, nor is there any convincing evidence to suggest that the sex of

the individual played an important role in determining the direction of
the head.


4.   Sex, age and pathology

The danger of relying heavily on individual determinations of sex
made by earlier excavators has already been emphasised, although there may
still be some value in considering the overall evidence relating to 68 sexed
adult skeletons (Fig. 5).  In basic terms this shows that the numbers of
males (32) is almost the same as the number of females (36), thus
suggesting a completely random selection of individuals from the point of
view of sex.  Although particular sites may show an apparent preponderance
of males (as at Rotherley) or females (at Maiden Castle and Salmonsbury),
the small size of the samples suggest that the imbalances probably derive
from chance rather than from factors of social selection.

Assessments of the age of adult individuals given by excavators
suggest a random cross-section of the population, with no particular con-
centration on either younger individuals or the very old.  It is important
to note, however, that formal pit-burial was not reserved for adults alone
and that skeletons of children aged between 6 and 10 years have been found
on at least eight occasions.  In two of these cases the skeletons showed
marks of severe physical injury and may therefore have been casual
interments (A.1.9.1 and A.1.11.1), but the remaining examples from Twywell,
Casterley, Roudham, Grendon and Winterbourne Stoke appear to have
received formal burial (A.1.24;  A.1.25;  A.1.28.2-3;  A.1.44;  A.1.45).
Whether the 54 foetal or new-born infant skeletons, including 33 from
Gussage-all-Saints, which have been found in pit-fillings all belong to the

tradition is more doubtful. Two examples from Hod Hill (A.1.14.2 and 3) and a third from Rotherley (A.1.35.3) were found in close association with adult skeletons and presumably represent the burial of infants with their mothers. Isolated infants from pits, however, seem to belong to a larger class of similar burials found in widely varying contexts and perhaps suggest the more haphazard disposal of individuals too young to merit or qualify for proper ceremonial burial.

Evidence derived from limited pathological examination of pit-burial skeletons shows that a number of individuals had sustained major cranial and post-cranial injuries which fall into at least three separate categories. Injuries that could have been directly responsible for death are only rarely encountered, as in the case of the child from Woodcutts (A.1.9.1) or the battle victims from Worlebury (A.1.4.1 and 4). Of the post mortem injuries the most bizarre are those inflicted on individuals whose bodies seem to have been extensively mutilated or even dismembered prior to burial. Extreme examples of this practice (which in all probability falls outside the field of conventional burial and will be considered in more detail at a later stage) have been recorded on two occasions at Danebury (A.1.20.3 and 8), at Wandlebury, Cambs (A.1.9.2), and at Stanton Harcourt, Oxon (A.1.32). A second category of post-mortem injury tends to be less violent and usually involves disturbance or damage to the skull. At Worthy Down, Hants (A.1.19.2) the head of one skeleton was entirely missing and the displacement of the skull at Hanborough, Oxon (A.1.31) again raises the possibility of deliberate beheading. In other burials the head remains in its correct position but has instead suffered from massive fracturing. Examples of this sort of damage from Fifield Bavant, Wilts (A.1.37) and Rotherley (A.1.35.5) may have been caused by

heavy blocks of flint thrown onto the corpse, but could equally well have resulted from the gradual subsidence of more carefully placed pieces of stone.

5.  Grave goods and associated material

The failure of pit-inhumations to receive proper recognition in the past is in large measure due to the fact that they are rarely accompanied by formal grave-goods.  Indeed this absence of associated objects, which contrasts strongly with the traditionally accepted pattern amongst other prehistoric and pagan funerary traditions from Britain, can be regarded as a distinctive feature of the rite.

Leaving aside fragmentary ceramic and metalwork items and collections of animal bone clearly associated with the general composition of pit fillings, there are no more than half a dozen burials with which material objects or animal carcasses were deliberately placed.  With the exception of a pottery bowl, an iron armlet and an iron ring that are reported to have been buried with skeletons at Christon, Somerset (A.1.2), all the examples of associated objects come from the Cranborne Chase area.  At Tollard Royal (A.1.43) the skeleton of an adult male wore a Kimmeridge shale armlet on its left wrist, while at Woodyates and Rotherley two further skeletons were directly associated with brooches of Collingwood's post-Conquest Class K (A.1.12;  A.1.35.2).  The position of these brooches at either the shoulder or waist strongly suggests that they fastened the clothing in which the deceased were buried, and for this reason they should perhaps be regarded as incidental burial elements rather than grave-goods in the stricter sense of the term.  It is nevertheless of some interest to note that brooches, or

any other form of fastening device, are so rarely encountered amongst

burials of this class, that it would appear likely that the majority

of individuals were buried either naked or wrapped in cloaks or shrouds.

Evidence of more obviously ritual or sentimental funerary offerings

are provided by at least three burials in which human skeletons have

been found associated with those of dogs. Two of the inhumations from

Christon (A.1.2) were thus accompanied and at Broadstairs, Kent (A.1.22.1),

the head of a human skeleton lay on a stone placed over the body of a dog.

The head of the dog had in turn been allowed to rest on a second stone,

indicating that the whole burial had been performed with considerable care

and attention to detail.

Grave burial and other related forms of inhumation

Before attempting any interpretation of the pit-burial series it is

important to consider a second sequence of inhumations from the same area

of southern England which make use of more orthodox graves. Although as

many as 96 skeletons may have been buried in this manner at a total of 40

sites (Appendix A.2), the series shows greater variation in terms of grave

construction, body position, orientation and choice of grave-goods than

the relatively homogeneous group of pit-burials. While it is possible to

associate some of these with the ritual tradition of the pit-burials, others

are more difficult to place and may represent separately developed minor

local rites or eccentric individual interments reflecting nothing more than

the short-lived preferences of individual family groups.

The distribution of the examples conforms in its essential features

to that of the pit-series, although there is not the same concentration

within central and western Wessex (Fig. 7). The burials tend instead

to be scattered fairly loosely between Kent in the east and Somerset

in the west, but with significant concentrations in the Gloucestershire-

Worcestershire area and the south-eastern part of the Isle of Wight.

An important distinction between the grave and pit burials concerns

the relationship to settlement sites. With the exception of conventional

grave inhumations found within five hillforts and in the close vicinity of

four open settlements, all but one of the remaining adult burials has been

found in isolation, although many of the discoveries were made in the

course of quarrying, agricultural or building activity which may in some

cases have prevented the recognition of associated settlement activity.

There is also an important burial from Frilford, Oxon (A.2.34.1) which

falls into neither of the above categories. This particular grave contained

the tightly contracted skeleton of an adolescent female and was located

in the northern part of a circular stake-built enclosure subsequently

overlain by a Romano-British shrine (Fig. 8). If the pre-Roman structure

also served a ritual function, as the excavator has suggested, the main

grave and a subsidiary infant inhumation from the southern side of the

circle are the only British burials to have been found in an overtly sacred

context (Harding, 1972, 61-69; Pls. 33 and 34b).

A further important feature is that graves located outside the

context of settlements have on a number of occasions been found in small

groups, suggesting distinct family or community burial areas. Often, as

at Birdlip (A.2.14) and Hailes (A.2.15) in Gloucestershire, or Fordham,

Cambs (A.2.6), the groups comprise no more than two or three individual

graves. At Highstead, Kent (A.2.33), however, 6 inhumations, some or all

of them containing La Tène III pottery vessels, seem to have been found

in a distinct cluster, while at Horndean, Hants (A.2.18), Barnwood, Gloucs

(A.2.16), and St Albans, Herts (A.2.23), pre-Roman inhumations appear to

have been component members of larger cemeteries containing later Iron

Age cremations or early Romano-British burials.


## 1.   The graves

Documentation of most burials within this class is poor and in few

cases are there adequate descriptions of the graves themselves.  It is

possible however to distinguish between a majority of simple and often

shallow earth graves, dug either into gravel, or more rarely chalk or

limestone, and a distinct group of carefully constructed cist graves

lined and covered with prepared slabs of stone.  With the exception of a

single grave found at Freshwater in the Isle of Wight (A.2.24) and con-

structed of Colwell Bay limestone, the remaining examples of cists have

all been encountered in the counties of Avon and Gloucestershire and

include the important Birdlip group of cists, a pair of graves from Hailes

and a single cist from Clevedon (A.2.14;  A.2.15;  A.1.2).


## 2.  Body position

Comparison of the 26 available body positions clearly shows that the

preference for a crouched or contracted posture again predominates,

although there is inadequate data to determine whether there was any

general or sexually defined tendency towards the right or left sides

(Fig. 9).  A more important aspect of the grave series, however, is the

presence of a significant minority of extended skeletons which cannot be

related so easily to the pit-burial sequence. Among isolated examples are a skeleton from a chalk-cut grave at Battery Hill, Winchester (A.2.20) and the burial of a female from Deal in Kent (A.2.32). Extended skeletons have also been recorded from all five cists examined at Birdlip and Hailes (A.2.14 and 15) and suggest that this particular body position may have been formally adopted by some Cotswold communities during the early 1st century A.D.

### 3. Orientation

The intrusion into the series of burials which may belong to variant traditions makes any useful assessment of orientational regularity difficult. An overall compass distribution (Fig. 9) shows no very significant trend amongst the 25 burials for which information is available, although one or two individual burials show strong compatibility with the dominant themes of the pit-burial tradition. For example, the skeleton from the Frilford timber circle (A.2.34) and that of a male from the exceptionally furnished Newnham Croft grave at Cambridge (A.2.4) were both contracted on their left sides and lay with their heads directed respectively NNE and N. Although burials from other sites cannot show such overall conformity, the use of standard orientations amongst groups of inhumations at Beckford, Birdlip and Horndean (A.2.21; A.2.14; A.2.18) indicates the existence of at least some local rules.

### 4. Sex, age and pathology

With the exception of four infant skeletons from Maiden Castle, Beckford and Frilford (A.2.10.2 and 3; A.2.21.3; A.2.34.2), all the

occupants of single graves are either adults, or, very rarely, older

children. No example of multiple adult burial has been recorded, but

at least two of the five isolated discoveries of inhumations in the

Ventnor area of the Isle of Wight comprised the skeletons of adult females

accompanied respectively by the bodies of one and two children (A.2.26;

A.2.28). The proportions of male (11) and female (12) burials in the whole

grave series is more or less equal and there are no reported cases of

major pathological abnormalities, although a single skeleton from

Eggington, Beds (A.2.3) showed a partially healed, but infected, sword

injury to the right tibia.


5.    Grave goods and associated objects

Unlike their storage pit counterparts, nearly half the individuals

buried in graves were accompanied by objects which can be legitimately

defined as formal grave goods. The range of material forms is extremely

wide, however, and it is difficult to identify any specific items that

were considered particularly appropriate as funerary offerings. It would

thus seem, from the limited sample available, that objects were chosen very

much at random, and reflect little more than the status and tastes of the

deceased or, more appropriately, those of the members of his family

participating in the funerary procedure. Because there is so little

other evidence that can provide the basis for an absolute or relative

chronology for the Iron Age inhumation sequence in central southern

England, it is important that these recorded grave-goods be considered in

some detail.

Pottery vessels form the largest single class of objects buried, but belong to more than one cultural phase. The earliest examples are four vessels associated with the flexed skeleton of an adult male from Eggington, Beds (A.2.3). All of these had been badly damaged by the intrusion of a Romano-British rubbish pit cut through the earlier grave, but two squat, ovoid hand-made bowls with decorated rims and slashed body ornament were subsequently reconstructed. These have since been equated with wares from Group 4 of the ceramic sequence established at the nearby Puddlehill settlement site and may thus belong to the early 3rd century B.C. (C.F.C. Hawkes, in Mathews, 1976, xii, Note 10).

With the exception of isolated sherds reported from grave-fillings at Fordham, Cambs (A.2.6), Battery Hill, Hants (A.2.20), and Henstridge, Somerset (A.2.35), the only other pre-La Tène III vessel comes from the slab-lined cist excavated with due ceremony in the presence of royalty at Freshwater (A.2.24) in the Isle of Wight in 1898 (Crawford, 1913, 189 and Fig. 1). This small hand-made burnished jar with its two applied strip handles cannot be closely paralleled in Britain, but may, on the basis of its bead-rim mouth, owe something to the later Iron Age ceramic horizons of Dorset.

La Tène III pottery vessels, which are generally more familiar within the context of 'belgicised' Aylesford Culture cremation burials, have been found with inhumations on at least four occasions and appear to carry the grave burial sequence well into the 1st century A.D. At Ventnor on the Isle of Wight the body of a woman, accompanied by two children, was associated with carinated sherds that suggest a La Tène III bowl of tazza-like form (A.2.28). In view of the number of similar inhumations within this

restricted area of the island there can now be little doubt that this

family group was indeed the subject of formal burial, although it has

previously been suggested that the mother and her children had been

overwhelmed by a sudden landslide.

With the exception of the isolated discovery of the extended skeleton

of a young adult female with a wheel-turned butt-beaker from a chalk-cut

grave at Eastbourne (A.2.39), the remaining pottery vessels come from

burials within the areas of strongest La Tène III influence. Excavation

of the extensive cremation cemetery at King Harry Lane, St Albans,

revealed 18 inhumations which were probably contemporary with the main

cremation sequence, although only two were actually associated with grave-

goods (A.2.23). In one instance these comprised no more than a bronze

ring and five glass beads, but in the other the body had been buried with

4 complete La Tène III pots. The importance of this discovery in demon-

strating the occasional co-existence of inhumation and the newly-adopted

cremation rite is very considerable. It is thus particularly unfortunate

that the finds from a burial ground excavated at Highstead in Kent in

1955 disappeared from public view before analysis and publication of the

material could take place (A.2.33); the site itself was revealed during

quarrying operations and apparently yielded six graves containing inhumed

skeletons, each, or most of which, were accompanied by La Tène III pottery

vessels never subsequently illustrated.

Metalwork from grave burials can be divided between strictly functional

and overtly decorative and non-utilitarian pieces. Within the former

category can be included a short iron knife and a flange-socketed sickle

blade from Battery Hill (A.2.20). Although these pieces cannot be closely

dated on their own, fragments of bead-rim pottery from the grave-filling suggest a later Iron Age horizon. An iron chisel and an adze head with a burial at Ham Hill may belong to a similar period (A.2.36), although in this instance the functional implements were augmented with an iron ring alleged to have been found around the neck of the skeleton.

Weapons are almost entirely absent from this series of graves, although a possible exception may be provided by the exceptionally well preserved iron spearhead reported to have been found with the skeleton of a man and a dog at Soham, Cambs (A.2.8). This particular weapon, which was initially classed as belonging to the pre-Roman Iron Age by Fox (1923, 81) has recently become ambiguous as a result of its affinity with Class B.2 examples of Swanton's typological sequence of Anglo-Saxon spearheads, there being a morphologically similar specimen from the 6th century pagan Saxon cemetery at Guildown, Surrey (Swanton, 1973, Fig. 58a). Other close parallels from excavated Iron Age or Saxon sites are hard to find, but a number of un-published spearheads belonging to the same class have been recovered from riverine contexts in southern England and are preserved in the British Museum.

A group of three iron objects said to have been found in one or more of three graves discovered during early 19th century railway construction work within the interior of a small hillfort at Witham in Essex are also hard to parallel (A.2.11). The pieces, each nearly a metre in length, have recently been described as La Tène II or III 'pokers', but it seems uncertain whether they represent entirely functional implements or should be equated instead with the wider family of iron tokens generally classed as currency bars (Rodwell, 1977).

The significance and purpose of a pair of shallow bronze spoons or scoops found on either side of the head of the female skeleton from Deal (A.2.32) are no clearer, although the objects themselves belong to a recognised class of pieces whose distinctive characteristics and remarkable distribution have been largely ignored since they were last discussed in detail over fifty years ago (Craw, 1924). For our present purposes it is important to note that these objects, which are normally encountered as carefully matched pairs, have been found in the context of burials on at least two other occasions in very widely separated areas, thus indicating that they were considered particularly appropriate as burial pieces. One pair, of relatively poor provincial design, accompanied the skeleton of a man from a cist grave at Burnmouth, Berwickshire (I.2.6), and a second pair had been deposited in a small bronze bowl placed with the extended skeleton of a woman from the La Tène II inhumation cemetery at Pogny in the Marne (Craw, 1924, 146; Déchelette, 1914, 1275 and Fig. 552). The precise date of the Deal scoops is not easily determined, although the comparable examples from other parts of Britain are unlikely to have been manufactured before the mid-1st century B.C., the type then perhaps surviving into the early decades of the following century.

Single items of personal ornament have been found in graves on only two or three occasions and include a ribbed bronze bracelet from Icklingham, Suffolk (A.2.37) and a string of eighteen decorated and plain glass beads from a cist at Clevedon in Avon (A.2.2). More important from the point of view of chronology, however, are the well known and exceptionally rich grave-groups from Newnham Croft, on the outskirts of Cambridge (A.2.4), and Birdlip (A.2.14) in Gloucestershire. Although the outstanding wealth of these graves, one of which is attributed to a man and the other to a woman,

is hard to parallel elsewhere in central southern England, equally well-furnished burials are familiar from both Cornwall and eastern Yorkshire and suggest that there is no fundamental reason why these two examples should be distinguished from the main sequence of southern graves.

Leaving aside two small plain penannular brooches, a set of four bronze rings and a cast bronze object of obscure, but possibly equestrian function, the most significant pieces at Newnham Croft are a hinged bronze bracelet bearing inscribed curvilinear decoration, and an elaborate brooch, almost baroque in the exuberance of its decoration. Although it has been suggested that the armlet may be an imported item from a continental workshop, there can be little doubt that the swivel mechanism employed in place of the conventional wound spring on the coral decorated brooch is insular both in design and manufacture and ought to place the piece alongside, if not a little earlier than the series of British flat-bowed and involuted brooches normally attributed to the late 3rd or early 2nd centuries B.C. (Fox, 1958, 10-11; Megaw, 1970, 98-9; Harding, 1974, 116, 180).

Perhaps some 200 years later in date, but more elaborate still is the collection of objects from the grave at the centre of a line of three cists from Birdlip which suggests the burial of a Dobunnic woman of quite exceptional status during the years immediately preceding the Claudian conquest. In addition to the much-discussed decorated bronze mirror, the surviving grave group comprises two beaten and lathe-finished sheet bronze bowls of a type now well-recognised in western Britain, an elaborate silver-gilt brooch of La Tène III derivation, a bronze knife handle terminating in the head of an ox with knobbed horns, 4 solid bronze rings of uncertain function, a tubular bronze bracelet, 2 bronze handle-like

objects and a massive necklace composed of 17 crudely formed amber

beads, two Kimmeridge shale beads and a single central bead carved from

a hardstone known as pyrophyllite. A small strip of flattened bronze

was originally illustrated alongside the main objects (Bellows, 1881,

Pl. XIII, Fig. 12) but is no longer preserved with these. It would also

seem that two perforated bronze plaques illustrated by Harding (1974, Pl.

XXXVII) may not have come from this grave, but from a fourth and otherwise

obscure burial unknown to Bellows, but alluded to by Green in his re-

publication of the Birdlip material (Green, 1949, 189).

In recent years the precise date of this burial has been the subject

of lengthy debate in which it has been shown that the bronze bowls, the

mirror and the Aylesford-derived brooch can hardly have been manufactured

before the second or third decades of the 1st century A.D. (Fox, C., 1949;

Green, 1949; Fox, A., 1961, 194-5; Spratling, 1970, 13-14). For our

present purposes, however, it is the composition of the grave group that

is of especial interest. Bronze mirrors have now been found in the context

of burials on no less than six occasions in southern Britain and were

clearly considered to be appropriate accompaniments for individuals,

presumably women, of high rank or wealth in widely scattered communities.

Examples from cist graves at Trelan Bahow (C.7) on the Lizard Peninsula

in Cornwall and from Mountbatten (C.15), near Plymouth, are matched by

mirrors from a Durotrigian inhumation at Bridport in Dorset (B.1) and from

the 'Lady's Barrow' at Arras in eastern Yorkshire (D.1.18.29), while at

least two further examples from Colchester, Essex (F.48) and Dorton, Bucks

(F.17) were associated with wealthy La Tène III cremations.

The presence of a pair of small bronze bowls in a burial is more unusual and it is notable that all three of the closely comparable pieces, from Youlton in Cornwall, Keshcarrigan, Co. Leitrim and Rose Ash, Devon, had been placed as seemingly votive deposits in peat bogs or streams. Lady Fox has pointed out that their extremely thin walls, unstable rounded bases and everted rims would have rendered such vessels unsuitable for normal domestic purposes or for ceremonial wine-mixing or drinking (Fox, A., 1961, 196). In view of the well-recognised and exceptionally widespread Celtic tradition that seems to have imbued cauldrons and similar vessels with a sacred significance and demanded their deposition in marshes, springs and wells, it would seem reasonable to infer that the western group of bronze bowls performed a similar ritual function and may have been used to contain water or more esoteric liquid libations before being consigned to water, or more rarely graves.

La Tène III brooches, though rarely found with inhumations, are more obviously appropriate as items of grave furniture, as are bracelets and beaded necklaces. Although the Birdlip string is unlike those from Clevedon, Cowlam or the 'Queen's Barrow' at Arras (A.2.2; D.1.8.1; D.1.18.3) in being composed of amber and natural stone, rather than glass beads, the principle behind their burial as items of personal adornment remains essentially the same. Why this particular woman should have been singled out for burial with such an array of possessions can never be clearly determined, although it is perhaps possible to suggest that dramatic changes in attitudes towards the display of personal rank and wealth that can be seen in the Welwyn series of La Tène III cremations in the Catuvellaunian or Trinovantian territory to the east may also have begun to spread across to the Dobunnic people of Gloucestershire by the early 1st century A.D.

## Inhumations from ditches

Burials found on the floors or within the fillings of Iron Age
hillfort or settlement enclosure ditches form a smaller and generally
less rewarding category than those from pits or graves. Although a
number of more formal examples probably represent an extension of the
basic pit and grave burial sequence, others can perhaps be regarded as
casual interments performed during the late Iron Age or in the early years
of the Roman occupation. In most cases the bodies are those of adults,
although the presence of at least 13 infant skeletons in ditches at
Rotherley (A.3.17.6-18) and similar numbers from sites such as Gussage-all-
Saints (A.3.7.1-7) and Yarnbury (A.3.18.2-10) shows that the primary silting
of enclosure ditches provided an appropriate or convenient burial place for
children dying in the first weeks or months of life.

Leaving aside the rather doubtful inhumations that may well belong to
Romano-British occupation phases at sites such as Milborne St Andrew
(A.3.8) and Irchester, Northants (A.3.13), it is possible to isolate 22
non-infant burials whose body positions or stratigraphical associations
suggest deliberate and usually fairly formal burial. As with the pit-
burials a number of skeletons come from floors and primary silting layers
of ditches, while others had been buried in graves cut through primary and
secondary layers within earlier features. The distribution of ditch burials
is widespread and shows less concentration in Wessex than either the pit
or grave series (Fig. 10). Indeed examples have been found as far apart
as Llanmelin in Gwent (J.3) and Dragonby (H.2.7), near Scunthorpe, while
further inhumations bearing many of the characteristic southern positional
regularities are known from Girton, Cambs (A.3.5), the Buckinghamshire
hillfort of Maiden Bower (A.3.3), Ham Hill, Somerset (A.3.15), Cassington

Mill, Oxon (A.3.14) and elsewhere. Groups of ditch burials from single

sites are rare, although at Rotherley (A.3.17.1-5) the practice of

digging graves into the fillings of ditches seems to have become well-

established in the years immediately before and after the Claudian

conquest.


1. Body position and orientation

Comparison of limited surviving positional data indicates that the

general preferences of the other southern inhumation sequences are

reflected in the case of many ditch burials (Fig. 11). With the exception

of an extended skeleton from a mid-1st century A.D. feature at Longthorpe,

Cambs (A.3.6) and bodies buried face downwards at Wilbury Hill, Herts

(A.3.12) and Irchester, Northants (A.3.13.2) in respectively pre-Roman

and probably post-Conquest contexts, the remaining recorded skeletons lay

crouched in almost equal numbers on their left and right sides. The twelve

known orientations also show that the preference for burial with the head

between N and E is as well-developed in this series of burials as in any

other. The evidence from Rotherley, where three of the five ditch

skeletons were directed N (A.3.17.1, 2 and 4) and a fourth to the NE

(A.3.17.5), is particularly striking and argues strongly that the ditch

burials and pit inhumations from the site belong to the same tradition.


2. Associated objects

With the exception of an adult male from Rotherley wearing a simple

folded bronze finger ring (A.3.17.5), no ditch inhumation has been found

with any deliberately placed accompanying object, although the skeletons

from Maiden Bower (A.3.3) and Wilbury Hill (A.3.12) had apparently been

covered with large blocks of chalk or flint in the manner of a number
of pit-burials.

Close dating of this group of inhumations is therefore difficult,
relying on fragmentary material associated with pre- and post-burial
ditch silting. It would seem, however, that with the possible exception
of the Maiden Bower skeleton, the majority of adequately recorded examples
belong within the latest pre-Roman Iron Age phases, having been placed
within features yielding La Tène III pottery fragments, or their contemporary
regional counterparts. Samian sherds found in the grave filling of one of
the Rotherley burials (A.3.17.1) also confirm that ditch inhumation may
have continued through the Claudian period, although there is little
evidence to indicate that the practice survived very much longer than this,
either in the Cranborne Chase or elsewhere.

## Inhumations from ramparts and banks

A small group of skeletons recovered from under or within the actual
fabric of hillfort ramparts bears certain resemblances to the main
inhumation sequence, but may nevertheless represent a more specialised
kind of ritual performance with broader social, rather than purely funerary,
implications (Fig. 12).

While investigating the rampart sequence at Maiden Castle, Wheeler
encountered a pit containing the skeleton of a muscular youth lying on
its back with the legs crouched awkwardly to the right (A.4.4). The
stratigraphic location of this burial at the junction of the Phase I and
Phase II ramparts strongly suggested deliberate positioning of the grave,
a supposition that was subsequently borne out by the discovery of very

similar interments from two other major hillforts within the Durotrigian

zone of south-western Wessex. At Hod Hill (A.4.3) the body of an adult

female had been tightly contracted in a small pit dug into the natural

chalk on the site chosen for the construction of a counterscarp mound in

period IIB of the hillfort's occupation. In the course of burial the pit

was backfilled with blocks of chalk and limestone and capped with a low

mound of pure chalk. This was in turn immediately covered by the counter-

scarp mound itself and allowed Richmond to conclude that the burial had

been intentionally performed to coincide with the rampart's construction.

In view of the Maiden Castle and Hod Hill deposits there can be little

doubt that the burial of an adult male from South Cadbury represents a

third example of the same practice. In this instance the tightly contracted,

and probably bound, body had been placed in a pit dug into the existing

Late PRIA rampart immediately before this was reconstructed during Alcock's

Ultimate PRIA phase (A.4.7).

While the best recorded examples of this form of burial have come from

a relatively restricted area, a number of similar deposits appear to have

been encountered elsewhere in western England. Excavation carried out in 1906

at the large univallate hillfort on Solsbury Hill, Batheaston, Avon (A.4.1),

revealed a pair of skeletons lying crouched one above the other in a grave

dug beneath the rampart, while from Flower's Barrow in southern Dorset

there is an early 19th century description of a skeleton of 'enormous length'

found beneath one of the defensive earthworks (A.4.2). Although both these

deposits could represent the fortuitous construction of the ramparts above

earlier graves, there can be less doubt about bodies found within the actual

fabric of the defences. A single skeleton from Badbury, Wilts (A.4.8) and a

group of five bodies from Grovely Castle, Wilts (A.4.9) seem to have been
buried in this way and at Sutton Walls, Hereford and Worcester (A.4.5),
Kenyon was able to demonstrate that a crouched adult male had undoubtedly
been immured during the construction of the 2nd-1st century B.C. Phase A
rampart.

In some instances it is possible to confirm that these crouched
rampart burials belong to the same late Iron Age phase as the main
inhumation series, although it is more difficult to determine the motives
that led to their performance. It may on the one hand be argued that a
tradition that can permit burial within storage pits and ditches could
equally well allow those dying during the construction of rebuilding of a
hillfort to be deposited with a minimum of effort in the fabric of the
growing earthwork. The fact that so many burials have now been recovered
from only a very limited sample of sections cut through the massive rampart
systems in question nevertheless suggests the necessity for an alternative
explanation involving a positive preference for this procedure.

The subject of votive and sacrificial burial within the context of the
British Iron Age is sufficiently complex to merit separate treatment
elsewhere in this study (Chapter 8). For the moment it is therefore
sufficient to anticipate the conclusions drawn in that section by suggesting
that an additional sub-rampart discovery of two disarticulated skeletons from
Breedon-on-the-Hill, Leics (A.4.6), may provide a bridge between the super-
ficially normal rampart inhumations and a more esoteric series of deposits
of human and animal remains that undoubtedly represent the performance of
sacrificial and propitiatory rituals. Of particular importance in this
latter context has been the identification of a series of votive pits

containing the partially dismembered skeletons of goats and dogs from beneath the earliest outer rampart at Danebury, Hants. In describing these features, each of which had once supported a massive standing timber post, Cunliffe postulated that the fort may have served not only as centre of secular social activity, but could also have provided a ritual focus for the communities to which it belonged (Cunliffe, 1971a, 245; 1971b, 55). If this were the case elsewhere in Britain, the presence of votive human burials might now be seen as part of a wider spectrum of religious or ceremonial activity associated with both the construction and occupation of our native hillforts.

## Secondary rites

Although inhumations from pits, graves, ditches and ramparts now represent the most consistent and widespread pre-La Tène III funerary tradition in the region, it is important at this stage to consider a smaller series of eccentric burials that deviate from the central theme of crouched, or more rarely extended, inhumation (Fig. 13). While a number of these almost certainly reflect local and essentially short-lived developments, of limited comparative interest, others may eventually shed some further light on the problem of the unrecognised burial traditions that operated during the earlier centuries of the Iron Age.

## Barrows

Inhumations and cremations supposedly associated with various forms of barrow mound have been reported on a number of occasions, although consistently poor records prevent detailed consideration of many of these

and have necessitated the arbitrary inclusion of all the examples from southern England within a single section of the catalogue, irrespective of the mode of burial (Appendix G.1).

Evidence of primary or secondary inhumation in barrows tends to be less convincing than that for cremation and has, without exception, to be treated with caution. Crouched skeletons from Bronze Age barrows at Collingbourne Ducis (G.1.21) and Idmiston (G.1.22) in Wiltshire have, for instance, been considered as Iron Age secondary burials in the past, but could perhaps be regarded more appropriately as Romano-British or pagan Saxon interments. Further secondary burials from Ridgeway Hill (G.1.8) in Dorset and Box, Wilts (G.1.20) are in some ways better qualified contenders, but still remain essentially suspect, as must the well known Beaulieu Heath barrow from the New Forest (G.1.14). Here excavation of a small turf mound revealed traces of wooden planking, a single pottery sherd and a cast bronze ring, together interpreted as the remains of a Hallstatt vehicle burial. No traces of human skeletal material could be identified, however, and inhumation was assumed purely on the grounds that only unburnt bone could have been totally eliminated by the highly acidic local soil conditions.

A final group of barrow inhumations that have been cited persistently in the literature since they were first assigned to the Iron Age by Fox were found in two adjacent flint and gravel mounds near the Chronicle Hills barrow group at Whittlesford, Cambs (G.1.6). Despite the early date of the primary source, the form and content of both mounds are described in some detail and seem to indicate a class of burial without any obvious parallel in Britain.

When excavated, each barrow was found to contain within its interior a low circular chalk wall or revetment some 22' (6.6 m) in diameter, at the centre of which was a large square burial pit. Both graves, which were respectively 5' (1.5 m) and 4' (1.2 m) square, had been dug to depths of 8' (2.4 m) and contained pairs of skeletons lying one above the other. Although the postures of the bodies in the first grave are not recorded, those in the second are said to have been in a 'sitting' or crouched position. Associated objects were restricted to iron nails, a knife, a spearhead and traces of a corroded bronze object found on the timber-lined floor of the first vault. In the absence of comparable Iron Age graves, evaluation of the Whittlesford burials remains difficult, for although the use of barrow mounds and relatively massive burial pits may seem reminiscent of the early Romano-British vault burials from the Bartlow Hills in Essex (V.C.H., Essex, iii, 1963, 39-43) or the La Tène III series of 'Welwyn' graves from northern Hertfordshire and Essex, the adoption of crouched inhumation and the paucity of associated grave goods is at variance with these later cremation rites, resembling instead the main sequence of pre-La Tène III inhumation burials.

In turning to barrows that may have yielded earlier Iron Age cremations it is again important to distinguish between a handful of relatively well-documented examples and a larger group of more doubtful ones. In the former category are two cremations from Tickenham, Avon (G.1.1), and Ebworth, Gloucs (G.1.13), both of which have been shown to belong to the transitional period between the end of the Late Bronze Age and the beginning of the Iron Age. A third suggested example of very early Iron Age cremation in the same area, from King's Weston Hill, Bristol, however, has now been

relegated to a Middle Bronze Age horizon and can no longer be included as a burial of the Hallstatt period (Green, 1973).

With the exception of another questionable primary burial from a barrow just outside the Oliver's Battery hillfort in Hampshire (G.1.15), the remaining non-La Tène III cremation barrows all lie within East Anglia and are known principally through secondary accounts by Fox (1923) and R.R. Clarke (1939). These include a secondary burial with an iron knife and bronze brooch fragments from Chrishall, Essex (G.1.11), a somewhat suspect primary cremation from Weeting Park, Norfolk (G.1.17), a group of cremations from barrows on Thriplow Heath in Cambridgeshire (G.1.5), a pair of possible, but unconfirmed cremations from Risby, Suffolk (G.1.18-19) and the well-known, but still ambiguous, deposit of Iron Age pottery and burnt animal bone from a barrow on Warborough Hill, near Stiffkey, in Norfolk (G.1.16). While few of these examples provide acceptable individual evidence, as a group they do give the impression that an older cremation tradition may have survived into the earlier or middle Iron Age in parts of the Fen and Breckland region.

Whether the same explanation can be offered in the case of the often-quoted Wooley Down barrows in Berkshire is more doubtful. Although excavation of two ring barrows and a third emaciated mound here revealed a considerable quantity of stratified Iron Age and Romano-British pottery and metalwork, the absence of either cremated or unburnt bone in the first two structures suggests that it would be unwise to continue to regard the site as having had a specific and unambiguous Iron Age funerary function.

A final sequence of barrows from Winterborne Steepleton and Handley,
Dorset (G.1.7;  G.1.9) and Leckhampton, Gloucs (G.1.12) may perhaps
belong to the latest phases of the period and are distinguished principally
by their surrounding square ditched or banked enclosures, a characteristic
that has in the past allowed them to be compared with square-plan La Tène
barrows from eastern Yorkshire (Stead, 1965, 23-4).  Excavation at Leckhampton
and Handley, however, has failed to provide conclusive evidence of date,
although the latter barrow did yield an unurned cremation and fragments of
Iron Age and Romano-British pottery.  The use of embanked rather than
ditched enclosures at both Leckhampton and Winterborne Steepleton is,
moreover, in marked contrast to La Tène practices elsewhere and until
further excavation is carried out the origins of these southern barrows
are likely to remain obscure.

## Flat grave cremation

In view of the shortage of well-attested Late Bronze and Early Iron
Age burials in southern Britain, any scattered examples of cremation
continue to assume a particular importance as a potential means of
bridging the gap between the Middle Bronze Age sequence of cremation
graves and the inception of inhumation within the last three or four
centuries of the 1st millennium B.C.  It is therefore essential that the
handful of cremations from barrows already reviewed should now be
augmented with brief references to a further small series of examples
from more conventional flat-grave contexts.

Among the most significant of these are the cremations from a small
cemetery at Bromfield, Shropshire (G.2.1), whose C-14 determinations of
762 ± 75 and 850 ± 71 b.c. compare well with the 715 ± 130 b.c. obtained

from the Tickenham cairn cremation and the reading of 751 $\pm$ 41 b.c.

for an urned burial from Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Warwicks (G.2.6). Although

both these sets of readings might fall outside the conventional

chronological limits of the Iron Age when recalibrated, they nevertheless

suggest the survival of an older cremation principle into the 1st

millennium B.C. and add some weight to other less firmly dated, but

apparently early cremations. Among these are two flat grave burials

from Creeting St Mary and Lakenheath in Suffolk (G.2.2;  G.2.3), both

associated with earlier Iron Age pottery vessels, an in-urned cremation

from beneath the primary rampart at the Caburn hillfort in Sussex (G.2.4)

and a simple burial in a small pottery vessel from a shallow hollow at

Park Brow, Sussex (G.2.5). Leaving these broadly comparable examples

aside, the only other cremation that may not belong to the intrusive La

Tène III sequence is an anomalous burial from Ham Hill, Somerset (F.144),

in which the cremated remains had been buried with an early 1st century

A.D. anthropoid dagger and fragments of Durotrigian pottery in a small

rock-cut pit sealed with a clay capping.


## Cave deposits

One final group of discoveries that merit consideration have all

been recovered from late Iron Age cave and rift deposits in Avon,

Somerset and Wiltshire and perhaps reflect more than one kind of ritual

performance. The first and more straightforward set of examples all

involve the seemingly conventional inhumation of bodies within the

interiors of caves that are known to have been occupied during the Iron

Age. An example of a contracted skeleton from Cook's Hill Wood is not

closely dateable (G.3.5), although a second burial from the neighbouring

Wookey Hole cavern was associated with a billhook and other pieces of

utilitarian ironwork that suggest burial shortly before or after the

Claudian conquest (G.3.4). A larger group of skeletons from the nearby

Read's Cavern (G.3.2) was indirectly associated with a comparable

collection of metalwork that also included La Tène II and III brooches

and iron slave shackles, although in this instance there is some doubt

as to whether the bodies had been deliberately buried or had been

trapped and killed by a sudden roof-fall.

The evidence from three remaining sites is more ambiguous and

seems to indicate that caves may sometimes have been used for both

normal burial and for the secondary deposition of disarticulated skeletal

material. At Guy's Rift, near Slaughterford (G.3.6), for example, the

partial skeletons of at least four adults and three children were found

in a confused state within a narrow limestone fissure; while at Backwell

(G.3.1) a similarly disturbed collection of bones is reported to have been

found in association with sherds of later Iron Age pottery. Although

one or two individuals from both these caves may have been buried

normally, the available evidence tends to suggest that most of the

remains were deposited in a mutilated or disarticulated state. This

impression is borne out by the better-documented Hay Wood Cave excavations

(G.3.3) which resulted in the recovery of parts of at least 28 skeletons,

no more than three of which were judged to represent the burial of

complete and fully articulated bodies. The remainder of the material

appears to have been divided principally between a series of isolated

unaccompanied skulls and one or more concentrations of fragmentary cranial

and post-cranial bones that implied the secondary burial of clean dry

bones brought to the cave from elsewhere.

Whether deposits of this type should be taken to represent subsidiary aspects of conventional burial practices or as evidence of more specialised votive performances is a question that can be dealt with more adequately in a later chapter. It is nevertheless useful to observe at this point that broadly similar burials are known from limestone caves in the Pennines and elsewhere (Appendix H.3) and may, with their Somerset counterparts, hint at a widespread contemporary concern with caves, both as places of refuge and as sites of possible sacred significance.

## Chapter 2

### Durotrigian inhumation in southern Dorset

In the previous chapter it was argued that inhumation in storage pits
and a variety of forms of earthen or stone-lined graves was widely practised
throughout central southern England during the latest pre-Roman centuries
of the Iron Age but that it never assumed the role of a majority burial
form.  It must be emphasised, however, that this preceding discussion
deliberately ignored an important, and in many respects exceptional, series
of burials from sites that lie clustered along the southern coast of Dorset,
for these appear to represent a distinct regional sub-tradition that
requires separate and more detailed consideration in its own right.  The
essential characteristics of this secondary tradition, which seems to have
emerged only during the latest decades of the 1st century B.C. amongst a
restricted section of the native Durotrigian population, are the use of
simple earth graves or, more rarely, stone-lined cists;  the development
for the first time in central southern Britain of clearly defined formal
burial grounds;  the regular provision of a limited but distinctive range
of grave-goods and a continued preference for certain socially established
burial rules governing the position and orientation of bodies in their
graves.  At the present time it is difficult to assess how long the rite
survived in the region, but the available evidence would tend to suggest
that it gradually evolved into an as yet imperfectly understood, but long-
lived, Romano-British inhumation tradition during the later 1st and early
2nd centuries A.D.

## The earlier Iron Age background

Evidence for burials of any sort in southern Dorset in the period
preceding the development of the main Durotrigian rite is surprisingly
limited and to a certain extent contrasts with the relative profusion of
pit and ditch burials from settlement sites and hillforts in the northern
parts of the county. With the exception of a single child burial from
a simple two-stone cist at Worth Matravers (B.31) whose attribution to an
Iron Age 'A' horizon may be suspect, the adequately documented examples
all come from the excavations at Maiden Castle and suggest that the
shortage of further material may in some measure derive from a basic lack
of comparable large scale excavations elsewhere in the area.

The majority of the pre-Durotrigian burials from Maiden Castle belong
to Wheeler's Iron Age 'B' phase, his earlier 'A' period having yielded
but five infant inhumations and a single crouched adult burial from the
supposed foundation grave at the junction of the Phase I and Phase II
ramparts (A.1.15.1; A.2.10.2-3; A.4.4.1,2,4). With the exception of the
skeleton of an adult female found near the Neolithic long mound at the
centre of the hillfort (A.1.15.6), all the remaining eight 'B' period
adults came from contexts within the most extensively examined eastern
entrance. Of these, five were in conventional storage pits (A.1.15.2,3-5,7);
one had been buried in the filling of a ditch (A.3.9.1); one within a
grave dug into the counterscarp bank of the main ditch (A.2.10.1) and a
final example between tip lines in a 'B' phase rampart (A.4.4.3). Four
infant skeletons of the same period came from further pits, while a fifth
child had again been buried in a silted ditch (A.1.15.1,8-10; A,3.9.2).
In every instance the bodies, whether of young children or adults, had been

buried in crouched or flexed positions, but with little observable
preference for either the right or left side of the body (Fig. 14).
Orientation also tends to be variable, although the restricted group
of adults from storage pits seem to show some preference for an arc
between NNE and SE, a tendency that may assume greater significance in
subsequent discussion of the succeeding burial sequence.

Close dating of these earlier burials is difficult in view of a
total absence of accompanying grave goods, but the majority would appear
to belong within the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C.  Only the stratified
foundation burial that lay sealed beneath the Phase II rampart offers
stronger evidence of a mid-3rd century B.C. introduction of crouched
inhumation.  Perhaps the most significant feature of the series, however,
is the apparent demonstration that pit-burial at Maiden Castle was more or
less confined to the 'B' phases of occupation, only reappearing on a single
occasion in the Durotrigian 'C' period (B.28.14).  While the rite may
indeed have been largely replaced by earth-grave burial in the later
period, it should nevertheless be remembered that the majority of the 'B'
period pit-burials could be dated only by the limited contents of the
pits in which they were found.  The possibility therefore remains that
a number of the examples could belong to a slightly later period,
especially in those cases where burial may have taken place in the upper
fillings of long-disused pits.

## The Durotrigian burial sites and their distribution

In collecting and listing examples of burial that belong to the main
Durotrigian sequence it has occasionally been necessary to adopt somewhat
arbitrary criteria in assessing whether inadequately recorded examples
should or should not be included. Although a number of more recently
excavated groups of burials present little problem in this respect, the
majority of graves are known only from 18th, 19th and early 20th reports
and are often hard to distinguish from later Romano-British inhumations.
This problem becomes most acute in the case of the urban or semi-urban
cemeteries and burial grounds of Dorchester, Weymouth, Portland and
Swanage, and it has usually been found that the only practical solution
is to include in the gazetteer only those burials that are known to have
yielded characteristic Durotrigian pottery vessels as grave goods. There
is, however, little doubt that many other inhumations from these cemeteries
belonged to the same period and cultural tradition and it should therefore
be borne in mind that Appendix B purports to represent no more than a
sample of the later pre-Roman and early post-Conquest inhumations
concerned.

The most important of the better documented cemeteries is undoubtedly
the extensive burial ground excavated near the Romano-Celtic temple on
Jordan Hill, to the north-east of Weymouth in 1843 (B.24). No detailed
records of the individual burials and grave-groups survive, but general
accounts indicate that over 80 crouched inhumations were encountered and
that the majority of these were accompanied by Durotrigian pottery vessels
and a wide range of additional grave furnishings. Although it is not

clear when the cemetery was first established, there can be little doubt that it ceased to be of importance by the end of the 1st century A.D. and therefore probably represents the burial ground of an essentially native community.

Two smaller burial grounds that also seem to span the decades immediately before and after the Roman occupation of southern Dorset have more recently been found associated with minor farming settlements at Whitcombe (B.27) and Litton Cheney (B.14), although the largest number of well-recorded Durotrigian burials again come from the excavations carried out between 1935 and 1937 in the eastern entrance system of Maiden Castle (B.28). The burials from the latter site in fact fall into two distinct categories, although the rite is in each case essentially the same. The first group comprises 16 adult and two infant burials which were all apparently performed under conditions of peace before, and perhaps soon after, the Roman capture of Maiden Castle (B.1.28.1-18). Although some of these graves lie widely scattered between the defensive outworks, the majority come from a defined area some 100m south of the main entrance gates and seemed to represent but a small part of an orderly and perhaps extensive burial ground.

The second major burial area was encountered even closer to the eastern gateway, but this time indicated that the 38 adults recovered by excavation had all been buried more or less simultaneously in shallow, hastily dug graves in the aftermath of the battle in which the Legio II Augusta, under the leadership of the future emperor Vespasian, had stormed and disarmed the fort in A.D. 44. Although the repeated presence

of lethal sword-cuts and other injuries to skulls and post-cranial bones indicates that many, if not all, the dead had been killed during the defence or in the course of an ensuing massacre, their burial had nevertheless been performed with some care by native survivors who were clearly anxious to adhere as closely as conditions allowed to the conventional Durotrigian funerary customs. In discussing the war-cemetery burials at a later stage it will nevertheless be necessary to bear in mind the exceptional circumstances obtaining at the time, as these will have inevitably influenced and possibly distorted the burial procedure from its normal form in a number of important respects.

In addition to isolated graves or small burial groups, usually only poorly recorded, from Bridport (B.1), Burton Bradstock (B.3), Corfe Castle (B.4), Langton Matravers (B.13), Worth Matravers (B.31) and possibly Wool (B.29), the remaining inhumations known to have been associated with traditional Durotrigian grave-goods all come from essentially Romano-British cemeteries at Portland (B.16-19), Weymouth (B.22-27) and Dorchester (B.5-12). The difficulties that arise in attempting to isolate such burials from the considerable numbers of undated or later graves in these urban cemeteries has already been referred to, although there would seem to be sufficient evidence to demonstrate that native-style burial was being performed in or near each of the three towns by the last quarter of the 1st century A.D. At Dorchester and Portland, moreover, there is reason to believe that the burial grounds may even have had their origins in a pre-Conquest phase, though this will remain difficult to confirm until further controlled excavation can take place.

The distribution of Durotrigian burial sites is confined to a narrow coastal strip entirely within the modern county of Dorset and bounded on its northern side by the valley of the River Frome. Towards the west sites lie scattered as far as Bridport, at the mouth of the River Brill, while to the east they extend into the Isle of Purbeck but fail to penetrate the heathlands that lie to the north (Fig. 15). It is also of some interest to note that the main groupings between Dorchester and the Isle of Portland and within the restricted Kimmeridge area of Purbeck correspond with both the basic concentrations of later and undated Romano-British burials and with the known scatter of pre-and post-Conquest settlement in southern Dorset    (R.C.H.M., Dorset, 1970, map facing p.634). Only to the west, therefore, are there Durotrigian inhumation sites which do not seem to be succeeded by burials belonging to derivative 2nd-4th century A.D. cemeteries. The apparent absence of either pre- or post-Conquest burials in the central part of the county is also surprising. The North Dorset Downs seem, indeed, to form an empty hinterland between the main Durotrigian burial zone to the south and the chalklands that lie north of the River Stour. In this latter area the practice of pit-burial has already been seen to survive up to or beyond the Roman occupation at sites such as Gussage All Saints, Hod Hill, Marnhull and the various Cranborne Chase settlements, including Rotherley, Woodcutts, Woodyates and Tollard Royal (A.1.10-14;  A.1.35-36;  A.1.43), thereby presenting a potentially significant cultural difference between the northern and southern zones of what has otherwise been regarded as a more or less homogeneous tribal territory.

## Graves and burial grounds

One of the most significant features of the emergent southern Durotrigian burial tradition is, as we have already seen, the regular development of defined burial areas. Although extensive cemeteries of the kind represented by Jordan Hill may still have been exceptional, the smaller funerary areas set aside for the use of isolated farming settlements at Litton Cheney (B.14) and Whitcombe (B.27) suggest strongly that the new rite was providing for the first time a standard form of archaeologically discernible inhumation for most, if not all, members of the community. Although the majority of the recorded burial grounds continue into the post-Conquest period there can be little doubt that the concept of the formal cemetery had already emerged in the pre-Claudian decades of the 1st century A.D. and could thus have provided an entirely native inspiration for the major urban cemeteries that developed so quickly around the Roman towns and lesser industrial settlements near Dorchester, Portland, Weymouth and Swanage.

Our knowledge of the actual arrangement of burials within these cemeteries is limited, although it has been suggested that at least some of the peace-time graves at Maiden Castle were regularly arranged in lines (Wheeler, 1943, 348-9). At Jordan Hill, moreover, it is reported that graves were found grouped together on several occasions and that these supposed family clusters were sometimes further defined by low encircling dry-stone walls, although the exact form and purpose of these structures remains obscure (Warne, 1872, 225-35).

In turning to the form of individual graves it would seem that two alternative procedures were adopted and that these mainly reflect differing local geological conditions. The most common type of grave appears to have been a simple unlined earth or chalk-cut cavity, often irregular in shape and frequently dug to only a limited depth. Burials from Jordan Hill, Whitcombe, Litton Cheney and Maiden Castle all seem to have employed earth-graves of this kind, as do the majority of burials from the major Dorchester cemeteries. The second, and in Durotrigian terms less frequently employed, form of grave is a rectangular or occasionally circular cist lined and covered with flat slabs of slate. With the exception of the isolated burial from Wynford Eagle (B.32) the use of cists tends to be restricted to the areas around Weymouth and Portland and to the burials from the Isle of Purbeck, thus suggesting that the practice was a regional modification in those areas where sources of suitable stone were near to hand. Whether timber coffins or grave-linings were used in conjunction with the orthodox earth graves, thus providing a potential model or mirror of the cist principle, is uncertain, as the use of iron coffin fittings and nails has been reported only from later Romano-British graves.

## Body position and orientation

The only sites that provide adequate information relating to the posture and orientation of individual skeletons are Whitcombe, Litton Cheney and Maiden Castle. The uniformity of the preferences that these display are nevertheless so striking that the three sites may probably be taken as a reliable representative sample, although the Maiden Castle war-cemetery admittedly presents certain special problems of its own.

The first and most obvious feature is that bodies in peace-time burial grounds invariably lie in a crouched or flexed position and that there is a very strong tendency for individuals to be placed on their right, rather than left, sides. At Maiden Castle, for example, only two of the 17 recorded peace-time 'C' phase skeletons lie on their left sides (B.28.14-15 and Fig. 16), while at Whitcombe and Litton Cheney no fewer than 15 of the combined total of 16 recorded bodies lay on their right sides (B.27.1-8,12; B.14.1-3,5-6 and Figs. 17-18). This very marked preference can also be seen to contrast with the somewhat earlier series of Maiden Castle 'A' and 'B' phase inhumations, for although all these adopt a crouched position there appears to be no particular predominance of one body side over another (Fig. 14). In the case of the war cemetery the situation is again rather different (Fig. 19), for although the majority of the battle victims were found in roughly crouched positions, nearly a third lay more or less extended on their backs or faces, implying that less care than normal had been taken in placing them in their graves; an impression that is heightened by the repeated occurrence of single graves occupied by two or more individuals (B.28.22-23,29-33,36-41).

Elsewhere in the area the evidence is poor, but it is implied that almost all the Jordan Hill (B.24) skeletons lay on their sides with the legs flexed and that individual burials from Burton Bradstock, Corfe Castle, Dorchester, Portland, Tyneham, Weymouth and Wynford Eagle (B.2, 4,11,17,19,20,22,23,26,32) also employed a crouched posture. Although examples of extended skeletons accompanied by Durotrigian pottery vessels have been reported on two occasions at Dorchester (B.6,11) and Osmington (B.15), it would seem that the latter posture became popular only during

the later 2nd century A.D. and effectively serves to distinguish the main

sequence of 2nd - 4th century A.D. romanised burials from the earlier

series of traditional native Durotrigian interments.

Whether orientational regulations were modified in a similar manner

during this period is less easily determined in the absence of adequate

data relating to all the earlier post-Conquest urban and semi-urban

cemeteries. The evidence from Whitcombe, Litton Cheney and Maiden Castle

nevertheless leaves us in little doubt that the basic Durotrigian burial

customs included some distinct directional preferences, although these

are perhaps less clearly defined than the rules of body posture. At

Whitcombe and Litton Cheney, therefore, we see a relatively strong

clustering of graves whose occupants lie with their heads directed between

NE and SE, with only two examples deviating to W and NW (Figs. 17-18),

while at Maiden Castle all but one of the 17 'C' phase peace-time skeletons

again lie with their heads directed between NE and SSE (Fig. 16). This

particular arc would also seem to have been favoured by the five earlier

adult pit-burials from the hillfort, although the overall pattern for the

preceding 'A' and 'B' periods becomes less distinct with the inclusion of

infant burials and adult skeletons from contexts such as ditches (Fig. 14).

In the case of the war cemetery it may be necessary to exercise caution in

view of the exceptional circumstances under which the burials were

performed, although there would appear to be little doubt that the marked

concentration of examples directed between E and SSE resulted from

continued conscious adherence to an established set of socially defined

rules and preferences (Fig. 19). That so many of the bodies also happen

to be aligned with the central axis of the main eastern gateway is in all

probability fortuitous, although the existence of a stronger causal connection cannot be ruled out.

## Sex, Age and Pathology

Earlier discoveries of burials in the region provide very little useful skeletal data, although it is reported that the Jordan Hill graves contained the bodies of both adults and children and that isolated burials from Bridport, Burton Bradstock and Worth Matravers (B.1;  B.3;  B.30) yielded adults of both sexes and the skeleton of at least one child.  To obtain a more realistic view of the physical characteristics of those buried we have therefore to turn once more to the main burial groups from Whitcombe, Litton Cheney and Maiden Castle.

At the former two sites the great majority of skeletons belonged either to adults or adolescents, there being but one body of a 5 year old child from Litton Cheney (B.14.6).  Of the adult skeletons from Whitcombe six could be identified as male and three as female, while the Litton Cheney group showed a rather more equal balance of three males and two females.  Both burial grounds are, however, too small to provide statistically reliable evidence and it would seem probable that larger samples would show no particular discrimination between sexes.  This impression is indeed confirmed by the Maiden Castle 'C' period burials (B.28.1-18) which include the bodies of two infants, seven adult females and eight adult males.  It also deserves to be noted in this context that at none of these sites does the sex of an individual appear to have any discernible effect on the choice of either body position or orientation.

In the case of the Maiden Castle war cemetery (B.28.19-56) it is impossible to regard the occupants of the graves as representing a normal cemetery population and the recorded ratio of 22 males to 10 females does indeed seem to confirm that the majority of the dead were probably warriors killed in the defence of the eastern gate. In terms of physical age the 28 recorded individuals show little difference from their peace-time counterparts (Figs. 16 and 19). Goodman and Morant's assessments for 9 'C' phase skeletons show an average age at death of 28.4 years, while in the war-cemetery the average female age was 26.5 years and that for males 31.25 years. With the exception of a single female aged between 18 and 20 (B.28.34) and two adult males who were each over 40 years old (B.28.33 and 39), all the war-dead seem to have been young adults, there being no children or very aged individuals among the victims.

One of the most distinctive features of the series is the very high incidence of major traumatic lesions to skulls or post-cranial bones. The most common wounds were those inflicted by swords to the skulls of nine male and three female skeletons, but others showed signs of having been battered with blunt hand-held instruments or injured by arrows and ballista bolts. In a number of cases, including that of a skeleton which had no less than nine separate sword cuts to its skull (B.28.27), these wounds are far more vicious than would be required to cause death and suggest the possibility that some individuals may not have been killed during the height of battle, but could have died in a subsequent execution or massacre of survivors in the aftermath. There is also some evidence that the bodies of those already killed, or at least very severely wounded, may have been the subjects of secondary attacks during or after

the battle. Skeleton P.7 (B.28.22) had, for instance, suffered a potentially

lethal ballista wound before receiving three massive sword cuts to the

head, while skeleton P.7A (B.28.23) from the same grave had similar

cranial injuries in addition to the wound already caused by an iron

arrow-head embedded in the spine.

In all, 16 of the 32 adequately preserved skeletons had received

injuries affecting bones and it can only be assumed that the remaining

individuals had all died as a result of flesh wounds. Comparison of

orientation and body position reveals no special treatment of those with

observable skeletal injuries, nor is there any evidence that members of

this particular category were more or less likely to be provided with

formal grave goods.

## Grave goods and Chronology

In the preceding sections of this chapter we have seen that the

immediate pre-Conquest population of southern Dorset suddenly, and

apparently independently, devised a standard procedure for burying many

or all of their dead in defined burial areas. An additional, and

archaeologically more significant, aspect of that new formalism is the

simultaneous adoption or invention of the custom of providing the majority

of corpses with carefully chosen grave goods. Although the funerary

offerings are for the most part simple and unostentatious, they neverthe-

less provide a welcome insight into prevailing social values and attitudes

towards the dead. More important still, they collectively form the basic

framework for any relative or absolute chronological assessment of the

Durotrigian inhumation rite and its subsequent transformation into a broader regional Romano-British tradition.

The objects associated with the earth grave burials most frequently and characteristically are pottery vessels. For the most part these belong to one or other of the nine distinctive pre- and post-Conquest Durotrigian ceramic forms defined by Brailsford (1958), although grave-groups occasionally include imported Samian vessels and native copies of these and Gallo-Belgic wares. Almost as common, but very much more easily overlooked, are small deposits of animal bone that seem to represent the burial of joints of meat. Usually these are of pig or sheep, but the occasional presence of horse, ox and chicken bones implies that the choice was not rigidly defined. The remaining objects provided as grave-goods are more varied, but tend to comprise minor ornaments and utensils, presumably chosen by the close relatives and associates of the deceased on a personal and sentimental basis. Before considering the combined chronological and social implications of this material it will be useful to look first at some of the individual collections of grave-goods in more detail in order to determine what, if any, criteria governed their selection.

Turning first to Whitcombe it can be seen that each of the nine undisturbed burials included one or more imperishable items, although in four instances these were restricted to meat bones (B.27.1 and 7) or to meat bones and a glass bead (B.27.2) or iron bracelet (B.27.6). Three further burials, all of adult males, each contained two Durotrigian pottery vessels (B.27.3-5), while the skeleton of a girl of 16 (B.27.8) was accompanied by a string of 13 glass, wooden and paste beads, two more

Durotrigian pots and two imported Samian vessels. One of the latter
pieces, a Déchelette Form 67 globular beaker, belongs to a relatively rare
Gaulish pottery class current only in the period A.D. 90-110, thus
confirming that the Whitcombe burial ground continued in use into the
early years of the 2nd century A.D. (Aitken, 1966, 113).

Whether the other burials with native pottery vessels belong to this
same later period is still uncertain, although a final, and in every other
respect exceptional, set of objects from Burial 12 confirm that the
cemetery was certainly founded before the Roman Conquest. In this instance
the skeleton of a muscular young man in his middle twenties lay crouched
and oriented in exactly the same manner as all the other Whitcombe bodies,
but had been provided with a La Tène III long sword, a La Tène II brooch,
a circular bronze belt-hook and a selection of subsidiary weapons and
tools that relate the burial to a distinctive and widespread southern
British class of later Iron Age warrior burials whose significance is
discussed at greater length in Chapter 5. Although the Whitcombe grave
group has yet to be published in detail, the general character of the
component pieces confirm that the burial can hardly be placed later than
the second decade of the 1st century A.D. and that it is more likely to
have been performed towards the end of the preceding century. Leaving
aside for the present the question of how such a warrior came to be buried
amongst a group of Durotrigian farmers, it is therefore possible to
recognise that a standard form of burial may have been performed at
Whitcombe for as long as 100 years.

The evidence from Litton Cheney is broadly similar to that yielded by the Whitcombe graves, although there is little here to confirm that burial began much before the mid-1st century A.D. Of the four recorded adult skeletons, two females were without grave goods of any sort (B.14.3 and 4), while two males had respectively a Class 1 bead-rim bowl and iron brooch (B.14.1) and a bead-rim jar, a Class B penannular brooch and the complete skeleton of a young sheep (B.14.5). A fifth burial of a five year old child (B.14.6) is somewhat unusual in having been provided with a particularly elaborate group of grave furniture that included a Class 1 bowl, a further Class B penannular brooch, a bronze bracelet with a suspended bronze ring, and a hinged flattened-bow brooch of tinned bronze. In this case all the metalwork objects were found on the chest of the child, where they had presumably been placed as a sentimental token of affection by the mourning parents. Rather similar motives must also have guided the choice of objects laid in the crook of the arm of a boy of 16 from Burial 2, for these included, in addition to a pig mandible and two iron shroud or clothing fasteners, a set of 20 gaming pieces and an iron stylus, perhaps used for scoring points during play. The constitution of this gaming set is itself interesting, for the pieces comprise two series of pebbles; one group circular in shape, the other oval. Eight members of the circular set are formed from calcium carbonate pebbles, as are nine of the oval ones. Two circular and one oval replacement pieces had then been made at a later stage from pieces of oyster shell, coarse pottery and a Samian sherd, presumably to make up for earlier losses (Bailey, 1967, Fig. 10).

The only other known collection of Iron Age gaming equipment from this country is the set of 24 decorated glass counters from the exceptionally rich La Tène III cremation burial excavated at Welwyn Garden City (Stead, 1967, Pl.1; Appendix F.106.1). There is, however, a basic difference between these two groups, in that the Welwyn counters divide into four 'teams', each of a different colour, whereas the Litton Cheney examples form only two sets, each of ten rather than six pieces. In discussing games played with counters Stead has pointed out that those involving four sides are usually 'race games' played with the aid of dice or some similar independent scoring mechanism, whereas those with only two sides are essentially games of attack and defence played by two opponents on a marked board (Stead, 1967, 19). In these terms the Litton Cheney game would thus seem to be closer in form to our modern draughts or archaeologically-attested attacking games such as nine-mens-morris than the 'ludo' suggested for the Welwyn example.

In turning to Maiden Castle it is immediately apparent that the provision of grave goods is confined to the 'C' period peace-time graves and to burials in the war-cemetery. Like their counterparts in other areas the individuals from the earlier pit and rampart contexts are entirely unaccompanied.

Of the 17 peace-time burials, 9 were associated with grave goods, although no skeleton had more than one object with it. The items concerned include four pottery vessels, mainly of Brailsford's Classes 1 and 2, with an infant, an adult male and two adult females (B.28.1,6,9 and 11); sheep bones and a collection of slingstones with two further males (B.28.4 and 7) and a bronze toe-ring, an iron arrow head and a pig skull with the three

remaining females (B.28.15,16 and 18). Taken as a whole this collection shows no obvious discriminatory features and it may also be noted that the unaccompanied skeletons belonged to four males, two females and the second of the two infant skeletons in the series. An additional burial (B.28.17) of an adult female accompanied by the skeletons of a dog and a young lamb was also related with this burial sequence in the original excavation report, but can perhaps be regarded as a later Romano-British inhumation on the basis of an extended body position, the presence of iron coffin fittings and the characteristic burial of the body in shoes or boots studded with hob-nails.

In the larger war-cemetery grave goods were again provided for rather more than half (58%) of the total of 38 recorded burials, although there is here a suggestion that a slightly higher than average proportion of males may have been unaccompanied. Pottery vessels are as usual the most frequently occurring objects and were found in 9 male and 3 female graves (B.28.19,21,22,31,32,36-39,44,48,52). The commonest form was the Class 1 or 1a 'war-cemetery' bead-rim bowl, represented by no less than 9 specimens, although there were also two Class 2 bowls, two Class 9 'lids' and a single Class 7 piriform jar. The only other objects that occurred with any frequency were six deposits of sheep or ox bones (B.28.25,28,33, 34,39,42) and five examples of finger and toe rings apparently worn at the time of death (B.28.19.28.33,42,45). All the other pieces, with the exception of a shale armlet (B.28.47), represent single items of metalwork chosen on an individual ad hoc basis and include an axe, a bracelet, an iron knife, a bronze ear-scoop from a toilet set, and a single Durotrigian struck bronze coin (B.20,36,41,48).

There appears to be no clear correlation between choice of objects
and the sex of individuals, nor is it possible to detect any preferences
operating in favour of, or against, those suffering major skeletal
injury.  The most obvious feature of the series is instead its surprising
normality, and the inclusion of presumably fresh joints of meat in addition
to pre-existing manufactured objects serves to reinforce the impression
that the survivors were left free to bury their dead exactly as they
wished.

The grave goods from the three most recently excavated cemetery areas
have been described here in some detail because they alone come from
contexts that will allow detailed consideration of the social factors
affecting their selection.  Objects from other burials in the region can
rarely be related to individuals of known age or sex and therefore tend
to be of more limited and essentially chronological interest.

The largest single collection of material, from Jordan Hill (B.28.24),
remains unpublished and the individual grave associations of the objects
now preserved in museum collections or recorded in earlier documentary
sources are unknown.  Eighty pottery vessels, from an original total of
perhaps 125 (R.C.H.M., Dorset, 1970, 617) and a wealth of subsidiary
material nevertheless confirm that the majority of the eighty or more
burials must have been accompanied and that the cemetery, while occupied
until at least the end of the 1st century A.D., was probably founded
shortly before or after A.D.44 to serve the needs of an essentially native
Durotrigian community.  Aside from a small group of Samian and imitation
Samian pieces and examples of gallo-belgic terra-nigra and terra-rubra
wares, the majority of the ceramic material is strongly Durotrigian in

character and includes 20 Class 1 bowls, seven Class 2 bowls, four Class 4 bowls, five Class 7 jars, three Class 8 tankards and a single Class 9 'lid'. Other objects known to have come from burials are very varied, but conform generally to the patterns already established at the better documented sites. In addition to personal ornaments such as brooches, bracelets and the now familiar finger-rings, there are, for instance, reports of skeletons associated with utilitarian implements such as knives, weaving combs and iron styli, or with a variety of personal weapons, including a sword, a spear, arrow heads and sling-stones. It is difficult to determine in detail the differences in wealth that may have been displayed by different graves, although it is perhaps significant that the nine pottery vessels from the richest reported grave group all belonged to later 1st or perhaps early 2nd century A.D. romanised forms rather than to the traditional Durotrigian sequence.

Although no other cemetery as large as Jordan Hill has yielded such a high proportion of traditional native material, isolated inhumations from Romano-British burial grounds elsewhere in the Weymouth area, from the Isle of Portland and from the suburbs of Roman Dorchester are known to have contained similar objects. Durotrigian pottery vessels, and in particular Class 1 bead-rim bowls, again predominate in these urban or semi-urban cemeteries, as they do amongst isolated burials from rural sites such as Burton Bradstock (B.3), Broadmayne (B.2), Corfe Castle (B.4), Langton Matravers (B.13), West Stafford (B.21), Wool (B.29) and Worth Matravers (B.30), but need not necessarily imply pre-Conquest cemetery origins. Rather more significant from this point of view are two mirror handles from cist graves near Portland (B.18 and 19) and a single example

associated with a bead-rim jar in the grave of an elderly woman from West
Bay, Bridport (B.1). While such mirrors could certainly have remained in
use as family heirlooms until the later 1st century A.D., most recent
assessments of the structural and decorative elements agree that the
main period of their manufacture ended during the second or third decades
of the century. Comparison with other mirror burials from Trelan Bahow
in Cornwall (C.7); Mount Batten, near Plymouth (C.15); Birdlip, Gloucs
(A.2.14), and Arras in eastern Yorkshire (D.1.18.29) would also suggest
that the practice of providing females of high rank with such objects was
limited to the same period.

The burial of a horse with a two-link snaffle bit in its mouth, from
the foundations of St. George's church at Fordington on the eastern
outskirts of Dorchester, is more difficult to interpret than the mirror
burials, but may likewise imply the pre-Conquest foundation of an adjacent
Romano-British cemetery area. The bit itself belongs to a type that was
current in south-western Britain towards the end of the Iron Age and is
formed from two central bronze-plated iron links mounted between a pair
of cast bronze cheek pieces (R.C.H.M., Dorset, 1970, Pl.230 and p. 574).
Although there is insufficient evidence to support earlier suggestions
that this find represents a La Tène cart burial of the kind otherwise
restricted in Britain to eastern Yorkshire, there can be little doubt of
the formal nature of the interment, either as a sacrificial deposit
analogous to votive horse burials from Blewburton, Berks, and elsewhere
(Harding, 1976, 143), or as an otherwise unprecedented adjunct to the
burial of the animal's owner.

Before turning to a more general analysis of the grave-good evidence
it is necessary to consider one further group of material that has been
ascribed in recent years to a pair of exceptionally wealthy burials
performed within the interior of the univallate hillfort at Bulbury,
some distance to the east of the main Durotrigian inhumation zone.
Although no accompanying human bones were reported, Cunliffe has suggested
that the large collection of utilitarian and decorative metalwork and
glass found at the site between 1881 and 1882 is too varied in its
composition to be regarded as a single hoard, and has preferred instead
to argue in favour of at least three separate deposits; two of them
accompanying male and female burials and a third representing a more
limited iron-worker's hoard  (Cunnington, 1884, 115-20; Cunliffe, 1972,
293-306). The female grave would thus have contained a bronze mirror with
a multiple looped handle of Fox's Class IIIA, a string of eight glass
beads and two fragmentary bronze bowls, while that of the male would
have been provided with a fragmentary Class IVA sword hilt (Piggott, 1950,
27), a bronze tankard handle of Corcoran's Class IV (1952, 99), two cast
bronze rings that possibly served as the side elements of a horse-bit, and
a group of bronze mountings that have been interpreted as the decorative
fittings of a chariot yoke.  While the supposed female assemblage can
indeed by matched exactly at Birdlip, and in terms of the mirror and necklace
combination, again at Trelan Bahow and in the Lady's Barrow at Arras, the
male grave-group shows so many unprecedented features that its
reconstruction must be regarded with considerable doubt.  Although the
equally suspicious absence of bones could perhaps be explained in terms of
unfavourable conditions for preservation in the London Clay on which

Bulbury lies, it also remains hard to overlook the remarkable coincidence that two richly endowed burials should not only have been performed within the unlikely context of a hillfort interior, but in such close proximity to an entirely separate iron-work hoard that Cunnington was able to record that the material was 'all found together' some 120 feet WNW of the hillfort's centre (R.C.H.M., Dorset, 1970, 492-3 and Fig.). For the present, therefore, the two postulated burials can at best be regarded with extreme caution and would, even if genuine, have little in common with the basic Durotrigian burial tradition currently under discussion.

## The social implications of the grave-goods

Having described the range of artefact forms associated with burials at individual sites, it remains to consider whether any common pattern of choice can be detected between sites, either in general terms or in relation to more subtle socially defined factors such as age, sex and social status.

It has already been shown that the most distinctive class of objects buried are pottery vessels and it may be of some value to begin by assessing whether or not any of the nine basic Durotrigian ceramic forms defined by Brailsford were considered to be particularly appropriate as funerary accompaniments. In carrying out this exercise, it is necessary to compare the ratios of pottery classes from burials with those from conventional excavated settlement sites, in order to confirm that any observed funerary preferences are not simply reflections of similar variations in domestic frequencies. It should be emphasised, however, that the figures given for non-burial contexts in Fig. 21 are not exhaustive

totals and should instead be regarded as interim samples compiled from available published sources. Nor should it be forgotten that little detailed work has yet been carried out on the precise chronology and geographical distribution of the various Durotrigian forms. As a consequence it is possible that the relative frequencies of the different ceramic types may have varied with changing fashions and tastes between the later pre-Conquest period and the 2nd century A.D. Although some, such as the Class 1 bowl, are known to have been popular for long periods, others may have had much shorter life-times and thus could distort any statistical assessment based on crude numerical frequencies. Similar difficulties will also persist until more is known of the individual production centres and market zones for each ceramic type, and the relationship of these to the main Durotrigian burial area.

Bearing in mind these limitations it is nevertheless possible to observe a number of significant features from the data assembled in Fig. 14. Most striking of all is the frequency with which the Class 1 bead-rim bowl occurs in burials. Available evidence would tend to suggest that this characteristic Dorset vessel emerged fairly early and this may in some measure explain its particular popularity at both Maiden Castle and Jordan Hill. Class 2, the pedestalled bead-rim bowl, also occurs with considerable frequency in graves, although it appears to be less common in other contexts, and at Maiden Castle exists in very much smaller proportions than elsewhere. The introduction of the form cannot be dated accurately, but its developed physical characteristics and repeated presence in urban burials from Dorchester may imply that it did not reach the height of its popularity until the later 1st century A.D. The only

other type of bowl, the Class 3 channel-rimmed style, is a relatively rare
form in any context and it is therefore of little surprise that no
confirmed examples have been reported from burials.

The comparative rarity of Class 4 bead-rim jars and the almost total
absence of jars of Classes 5 and 6 in graves is more remarkable, the three
forms being amongst the most widely represented in occupational deposits.
Although some of these latter pieces are known to be from late contexts,
their origins nevertheless appear to be relatively early since examples
of all three have been encountered in pre-Conquest horizons at Maiden
Castle and Hod Hill (Wheeler, 1943, Fig. 74, Nos. 216 and 218; Fig. 75,
No. 239; Brailsford, 1958, 117-8). It is therefore possible that
Classes 4 - 6 are rare in the context of burials as a result of a
specific distaste for such jars as grave goods, rather than through the
influence of any chronological or distributional irregularities. The case
of the Class 7 pear-shaped jar thus presents a particularly interesting
problem, for we have here a vessel that is very limited in total numbers,
but which occurs on as many as 10 occasions in burials. The form clearly
falls into the category of jars, but it must be supposed from its extreme
rarity on settlement sites that it had some specialised function that
rendered it peculiarly suitable as a grave-offering. The Class 8 handled
tankard with its connotations of ceremonial feasting and drinking is more
obviously appropriate as a burial type. The provision of comparable
vessels made from metal and wood is well known from La Tène III cremation
graves in south-eastern England, and in Dorset at least 7 of the 17
reported examples are from inhumations. The final ceramic form in
Brailsford's basic Durotrigian sequence is the small, flattened Class 9

vessel that can be regarded either as a shallow saucer-like bowl or as a lid for a larger vessel. Examples of this form, which appears to have strong connections with Birchall's continentally-derived Type 8 lids from cremations at sites such as Hitchin, Herts, and Creeksea in Essex (Birchall, 1965, Fig. 14, No. 120; Fig. 25, No. 209), are generally rare in the Durotrigian zone, but are known from Jordan Hill and from at least two Maiden Castle war-cemetery graves (B.28.36 and 44). Other alien ceramic types, including a butt-beaker from Worth Matravers (B.30.2), real or imitation Samian vessels from Whitcombe, Broadmayne, West Stafford and Portland (B.27.8; B.2; B.21; B.16) and imported and copied gallo-belgic wares from Jordan Hill occur only in limited numbers and serve to reinforce the impression that the conventional native styles were always strongly preferred for funerary purposes.

Turning to the more limited series of burials in which the sex and age of the dead have been adequately recorded it is possible to draw a number of further tentative conclusions regarding grave-good preferences. From the crude tabulated information in Fig. 22 it can be seen that closely comparable percentages of males (67.5%), females (71%) and children (75%) are known to have been provided with grave-goods. A more detailed consideration of the assessed ages of the adult skeletons of known sex suggests, however, a more subtle disparity between males and females. Whereas the average ages of men buried with and without grave-goods are 34 and 27.5 years respectively, the comparable figures for women are 26.75 and 27.85 years, thus implying that the provision of funerary objects tended to favour older male and younger female members of the community. Although the influence of other factors cannot be ruled out,

this kind of differentiation could perhaps be explained most satisfactorily in terms of an existing system of social stratification and wealth distribution. If young Durotrigian men, like their counterparts in many contemporary societies, were debarred from achieving full economic and material independence until the middle or later years of adulthood, their early deaths would tend to leave them with few disposable possessions from which grave-goods could be chosen. Girls and young women, on the other hand, might be expected to fare better in this respect, for they are not only likely to have married older, wealthier men as soon as they reached child-bearing age, but could themselves have been the subjects of substantial dowry and bridewealth payments between kinship groups.

Comparison of the form of the objects accompanying men and women reveals few important distinctions, partly, perhaps, because the available samples are so small (Fig. 23). Pottery vessels, as the predominant category, seem to be equally appropriate for either sex and the only possible discrimination may lie with the categories of brooches, which so far have been recorded only in male or child graves, and animal bones. Whereas joints of sheep or lamb have been found in both male and female graves, deposits of ox bones are restricted to two male burials (B.28.39 and 42) and pig bones to three female examples (B.21.1 and 2; B.28.15).

Chapter 3


Inhumation in south-western England:   the cist burial zone


Although over 40 years have now elapsed since the publication of Prof.
H.O'N. Hencken's pioneering study of the archaeology of Cornwall and the
Isles of Scilly (1932), close understanding of the regional Iron Age
culture has developed relatively slowly.  Despite a continuing and energetic
history of excavation among the well-preserved hillfort and settlement
sites that lie densely scattered on and around the granite moors of the
peninsula, most of the available evidence continues to relate to the later
phases of the Iron Age;  the mid-1st millennium B.C. remaining an obscure
and somewhat impoverished period in the cultural development of this
isolated highland region.

This poverty of information applies as strongly to funerary sites as
it does to evidence of settlement activity, with the result that Cornwall,
like Wessex, may be seen to possess a relative wealth of Early and Middle
Bronze Age and later Iron Age graves, separated by a long period without
burials of any kind.  This chapter, therefore, will be devoted exclusively
to discussion of a distinctive inhumation tradition that emerged in Cornwall
between the 3rd and 2nd centuries B.C. and survived in the region until
perhaps the end of the 1st century A.D.

With the exception of a number of isolated burials from the mainland
and two important groups of graves excavated in the Isles of Scilly, the
main inhumation sites were all discovered during the 19th and early 20th
centuries and are poorly documented (Fig. 24).  Nevertheless, sufficient

information survives to indicate that cemeteries of varying sizes were encountered at Trelan Bahow, on the Lizard peninsula in 1833 (C.7); at Trevone, near Padstow, in 1848 (C.4); at Stamford Hill, Plymouth in 1864-5 (C.15); and at Harlyn Bay, again on the North coast, in 1900 (C.13). Surviving or illustrated metalwork items and other grave-goods serve to confirm the pre-Roman origins of all these mainland cemeteries, but only Harlyn Bay is sufficiently well-recorded to allow an adequate assessment of the nature and characteristics of the burial rites used. It is therefore essential that the Harlyn evidence should be considered in some detail as a preliminary to a broader consideration of the south-western rite and its origins.

The cemetery itself lies on a gently sloping valley side, little more than 200m from the present seashore, and remained undiscovered until exploratory well-digging in the early summer of 1900 revealed a stone cist buried at a depth of over 4m in the blanket of shell sand that covered the site. Extensive excavation carried out during the remainder of that year and on a more modest scale during the period 1901-5 then revealed a total of over 130 individual inhumations. No formal report on the excavations was ever published, however, and apart from a number of short and often confused accounts describing the circumstances of the discovery and ascribing the cemetery to a Neolithic community (Whitley, 1902; Anon., Jour. Roy. Inst. Cornwall, 1901), the main contemporary account is provided by the Rev. Ashington Bullen's rambling and frequently obscure guide to the antiquities of Harlyn Bay, apparently written without first-hand experience of the excavation. (Bullen, 1901,1902,1912) This latter account nevertheless provided the only major source for subsequent

discussions of the cemetery by Crawford (who visited the site in 1917) and
Hencken, and more recent references to its importance in the context of
the Cornish Iron Age by Thomas and Fox (Crawford, 1921;  Hencken, 1932;
Thomas, 1966, 77;  Fox, A., 1964, 113).

Although providing useful verbal descriptions of the cists, the major
defect of Bullen's account is the absence of an overall excavation plan.
A set of some forty pages of manuscript field notes compiled during the
summer of 1900 which were recently recognised in the library of the
Royal Institution of Cornwall is therefore particularly important in
providing rough drawings or verbal descriptions of nearly 50 graves,
together with sketch plans and detailed measurements that allow the
positions of 53 burials to be located with reasonable accuracy.  (C.13.1-53;
Fig. 25)  The relationship of this sequence to the remaining 70 graves is
unknown, although the plotted burials can be placed with some confidence
in the area now occupied by the house called 'Tamariska'.

Although incomplete, this plan provides a large enough sample to
confirm some of Bullen's basic observations.  A striking feature is that
bodies were almost invariably placed in graves lined and covered with flat
slabs of slate.  Only three burials were without any protective stone
structure (Nos. 21, 37 and 49:  Bullen, 1912, 40), and the majority of
cists take the form of rectangular boxes varying from 0.9 m to  1.2 m
in length and from 0.5 m to 0.75 m in width.  The only deviations from
this standard form were five relatively tiny cists used for the burial of
young children (Nos. 1,8,20,31,35), an oval cist containing a single
adult skeleton (No. 32) and an exceptional circular grave divided by a
central partition (No. 56, location unknown).  This latter cist, which

contained the skeletons of two crouched adults and an infant in its western compartment and a single adult in the eastern half, may, on the basis of marked skeletal disturbance, represent a reopened family grave.

In addition to a pair of skeletons found beneath a buried wall (p. 249 below), four further graves were used for the apparently simultaneous burial of two individuals (Nos. 21, 23, 35, 39). The practice of double burial, though best known in the context of La Tène I and II inhumation cemeteries in northern France (Dechelette, 1914, 1035-1036; Bretz-Mahler, 1971, 182-183), can be paralleled in eastern Yorkshire at both Danes Graves (D.21.43,46,56,67,85,93) and Burton Fleming (Stead, 1977, 223), and in southern England by several recordings of pairs of skeletons from the fillings of storage pits or conventional earthen graves (A.1.2; A.1.6; A.1.11.1; A.14.2-3; A.1.24; A.1.41; A.1.44; A.3.14; B.1.).

In both these areas bodies may lie side-by-side or above one another, although it is not yet clear how closely British examples reflect the French practice of regularly burying together the bodies of a man and a woman. Returning to Harlyn it can be seen that the illustrated skeletons always lie in crouched, or more rarely contracted, positions and that almost all the cists are aligned on a common NNE – SSW axis. Of the 17 recorded skeletons, 11 lie on their left sides and six on their right. Moreover, with the single exception of the occupant of the uniquely trapezoidal cist 51, every individual lay with its head to the north, a preference whose importance will shortly become apparent in a discussion of the origins of the Harlyn rite (Fig. 28).

One shortcoming of our partial plan is that it may not fully
represent the reported arrangement of graves in regular rows running
from north to south, nor can it show whether the illustrated graves lay
at the same or different stratigraphic levels. Bullen's remarks on this
point are revealing and provide the most positive evidence for a prolonged
burial period. "The graves are placed methodically in regular lines and
in some cases four cists have been put one above the other. Probably
through the centuries during which the place was used for interments, the
sand encroached and covered up the lower levels". (Bullen, 1912, 39-40)
That earlier graves may sometimes have been forgotten, and as a result
disturbed by secondary burials is indicated both by the field notes,
which record the disturbance of earlier graves by burials 22, 26 and 34,
and by Bullen's description of a "prehistoric charnel-house" used for the
"promiscuous reception of human bones taken from other cists previously
existing, the cists of those thus dispossessed being again devoted to the
use of fresh tenants. The bones in the charnel-house occur pell-mell as
though thrown in carelessly". (Bullen, 1912, 40) Whether this collection
of bones had been placed in a specially built cist is uncertain, although
it is stated explicitly that the deposit was found in a secondary level
immediately above the buried wall. It would also appear that the 'charnel-
house' has nothing to do with either the group of disturbed, but uncisted
skeletons (No. 50) found to the south, or two small graves containing
collections of human skulls. In one of these (No. 10) four skulls had
been arranged in a square formation with a fifth placed 'over them'. In
the other example (No. 46) three skulls lay in a north-south line and all
faced towards the west. Interpretation of these two cists is not easy

as detached skulls are otherwise unknown from Iron Age cemeteries in
Britain. The question whether the skulls from Harlyn had served as
battle trophies, as at Glastonbury, Somerset, and Bredon Hill, Hereford
and Worcester (Bulleid and Gray, 1917, 667-8; Hencken, T.,1938, 21-25),
or merely represent the formal reburial of ancestral heads is therefore
beyond speculation. Descriptions of two otherwise normal Harlyn burials
nevertheless make it apparent that deliberate beheading may sometimes
have taken place before burial. A manuscript sketch of burial 37 clearly
shows the skull positioned close to the feet, while Prof. A.C. Haddon's
description of a cist excavated in 1905 (C.14.60) includes the remark that
"the skull is quite dissevered from the body and rests on its upper
surface and jaw" (Bullen, 1912, 162).

General pathological data on the excavated skeletons are very limited,
the only major reported abnormality being a set of severe sword-cuts to
the skull of an adult from burial 58. Skeletal and cranial reports by
Beddoes and Haddon (Bullen, 1912, 65-75) nevertheless indicate that the
cemetery was used for the burial of adults of both sexes, while the
additional presence of at least seven child graves is remarkable in view
of the rarity of formal juvenile burials in the British Iron Age.


Grave-goods and chronology

Although the exact number of skeletons provided with formal grave-
goods is unknown, field note descriptions suggest that the majority were
unaccompanied. With the exception of pieces that may have been dispersed
at the time of the excavation, the surviving material is now preserved in

Truro Museum, some of it having previously been held in the private museum at Harlyn, where inadequate labelling and the passage of time had unfortunately confused the provenance of a number of objects. The following discussion therefore deals only with those items that can positively be related to the cemetery.

## Metalwork

The best-known pieces are a closely matched, but not identical, pair of bronze disc-footed brooches (Fig. 26, 1 and 2), each member of which has as its principal element a high arched bow, sharply returned foot and long skeuomorphic bilateral spring-bar with knobbed terminals. The enlarged decorative disc was cast separately and then rivetted to the bulbous foot. The pins of both brooches are now missing, but one in position at the time of excavation swung from the false spring-bar by means of a simple ring-swivel. In addition to the cast grooves on the terminal disc, each brooch is decorated with a series of fine spinal ridges running the length of the bow. The only other recognised examples of this brooch form from Britain are a pair of similar bronze specimens from the Stamford Hill inhumation cemetery near Plymouth (Fox, 1958, Pl. 31, Nos. 24 and 25), although a severely corroded iron object (Fig. 26, 3) from Harlyn can probably be regarded as a further member of the series, despite a missing spring-bar.

E.T. Leeds followed Sir Herbert Read in identifying northern Spain as the source for both the characteristic knobbed spring terminals and the massive disc feet of the Harlyn brooches (Read, 1907, 372-4; Leeds, 1927,

229-30, and Fig. 10), although more recent work now confirms that these
same elements are to be found amongst brooches from later Hallstatt
cremation burials in the Aquitaine region of south-western France (Fabre,
1952, Pl. VIII; Leeds, 1927, Fig. 10; Louis and Taffanel, 1960, Fig. 107;
J-P. Mohen, personal communication). The orthodox coiled springs and 6th
or 5th century B.C. date of these pieces nevertheless prevents closer
comparison with the Harlyn and Stamford Hill brooches, whose accompanying
metal-work strongly militates against the establishment of inhumation
cemeteries in south-western England much before the 4th or 3rd centuries
B.C. Although a single Cornish brooch might therefore be treated as an
heirloom acquired two or three centuries earlier, a series of five
examples can only be viewed as imports from an area in which Hallstatt-
derived brooches were still current during the La Tène Iron Age. Because
no such source can be identified in south-western France, and as the
concept of the false bilateral spring-bar is paralleled in Britain only
on a single La Tène I brooch from Hunsbury (Hodson, 1971, 52 and Fig. 1a),
the appropriately archaic metalworking tradition must once again be sought
to the south of the Pyrenees. Recent work has confirmed that typologically
developed brooches with swivelling pins do occur in this area and it has
been suggested, moreover, that the type may not have developed here until
the later 3rd century B.C. (I am indebted to Professor C.F.C. Hawkes
for this information which was provided in advance of more detailed
discussion in his forthcoming report on castro excavations in Portugal.)

The remainder of the Harlyn metalwork is less exotic and belongs more
happily within the context of the middle or later British Iron Age. Two
thin bronze wire bracelets and a fragmented iron specimen are undiagnostic

(Fig. 26, 4,5 and 12), but a simple bronze ring-headed pin (Fig. 26, 6;
Dunning, 1934, Fig. 3, No.3), a more massive example in iron (Fig. 26, 13,
not listed by Dunning) and a spiral bronze finger ring (Fig. 26, 10) are
all familiar southern British forms, though rare in the south-western
peninsula (Dunning, 1934, 281-282 and Fig. 6; Jope and Wilson, 1957, 81
and Fig. 3). The function of a flat bronze strip decorated with an
infilled pair of incised wavy lines is uncertain (Fig. 26, 9) but a
second bronze fragment is apparently the bow of an early Romano-British,
or perhaps La Tène III brooch (Fig. 26, 3). Although this piece cannot
be closely compared, 1st century A.D. brooches have been encountered
amongst all the main inhumation cemeteries in the south-west. In addition
to a Nauheim-derived brooch from Trelan Bahow (Jope and Wilson, 1957, 90)
there are seven bow brooches from burials in the Isles of Scilly (Ashbee,
1954, Figs. 5 and 6), two from Stamford Hill (Bate, 1866, Pl.31) and a
single specimen from Trevone (Trollope, 1860, Pl. facing p.325, Fig. 12).
Most of these examples have general affinities with Collingwood's later
1st century A.D. Group H and although difficult to date in a Cornish
context, may have continued in the region until the 2nd century A.D.
(Fowler, P., 1962, 53).


Glass

The only glass object is a small bead formed in two segments (Fig. 27,
10). Although conventional spherical beads are known from Trelan Bahow and
Hughtown (Rogers, 1873, 271-2; Ashbee, 1954, 18 and Fig. 6, No.10), the
only other segmented example from Cornwall is a green triple-bead from the
Romano-British settlement at Goldherring (Guthrie, 1969, 27 and Pl.IVb).

## Spindle-whorls

Seven spindle-whorls, made from slate, stone, pottery and bone were associated with the cemetery, although it can only be assumed that each was in a different grave (Fig. 27, 3-9). The four flattened slate and stone examples contrast with the taller pottery specimens, one of which (Fig. 27, 6) belongs to a southern British class of biconical whorls largely abandoned by the time of the Claudian conquest (Wainwright, 1965, 5-6 and Fig. 3). The use of spindle-whorls as grave-goods cannot be matched in the south-west and is generally rare in central southern England, although examples are known from female burials at Arras, Danes Graves and Burton Fleming in eastern Yorkshire (Greenwell, 1906, Figs. 20 and 56; Stead, 1977, 219).

## Pottery

No complete pottery vessels were associated with graves and with the exception of a single triangular shaped sherd said to have been found by the mouth of a skeleton, all surviving body and rim fragments appear to derive from the kitchen midden explored to the south of the burial ground. These mainly represent plain, well-fired late Iron Age or Romano-British vessels, although three decorated sherds belong to Peacock's Group I Glastonbury series (Peacock, 1969, 57 and Fig. 1).

## Slate and Shale

Several hundred supposedly worked and polished fragments of slate retrieved from graves and the occupied land-surface beneath the blown sand

are in fact natural pebbles whose resemblance to implements is purely coincidental (Bullen, 1912, Pl.8). At least four of the surviving specimens nevertheless represent the products of a polished slate industry without parallel elsewhere in southern Britain. A sharply pointed 'knife' (Fig. 27, 14) may derive its basic shape from a natural beach stone but has undoubtedly received secondary working to its facetted blade. The remaining three implements are all narrow pointed borers or needles, two of which (Fig. 27, 11-12) are distinguished by small basal perforations and thread-worn grooves that suggest their use for manufacturing or repairing fishing nets.

Although difficult to date, this slate-using technique is illuminating as an example of the localised exploitation of an available raw material in an area where metal was generally scarce (Fowler, P., 1962, 54). The superficial resemblance of this Cornish phenomenon to the more sophisticated Kimmeridge shale industry of the Isle of Purbeck is all the more striking in the light of two shale bracelet fragments from Harlyn graves (Fig. 27, 1-2). Both are roughly oval in section and represent narrow bangles similar to a complete example recovered from the outlying Trevone cist in 1955 (Dudley and Jope, 1965, 21-22, Fig. 8).

Taken alone the Harlyn grave-goods indicate a materially impoverished community whose few ornamental possessions were obtained as a result of sporadic, wide-ranging trade with both central southern England and south-western Europe during the later centuries of the pre-Roman Iron Age. In turning to the south-western cist burial tradition as a whole this reliance on outside markets will be seen as a recurrent theme, although some individual communities show signs of greater wealth than others.

## Cist burial in south-western England

Although Harlyn Bay remains the largest excavated Iron Age cemetery
in the Cornish peninsula, several other burial groups allow the
recognition of a distinct funerary tradition whose shared characteristics
may be compared with related burial forms from other parts of southern
Britain.

Geographically closest to Harlyn is the cemetery discovered two miles
to the north-east at Trevone in 1848 (C.4). No formal reports concerning
the site survive, but it is recorded that two superimposed groups of
graves were encountered beneath, and possibly separated by, layers of
blown sand (Trollope, 1860, 312). The upper level comprised a series of
supposedly early Christian or medieval cists directed east-west, beneath
which were several rows of similarly constructed graves aligned on a
north-south axis. The number of graves, their dimensions and the posture
of individual skeletons are all unrecorded and the only known associated
object is the Romano-British brooch illustrated by Trollope (1860, Pl.
facing p. 315, Fig. 12). An additional cist discovered in 1955 (C.5)
nevertheless confirms the Iron Age origins of the cemetery. Though larger
than most of the Harlyn graves, this latter slate cist was similarly
oriented and contained the remains of a skeleton whose head lay to the
north. In addition to iron and shale bracelets the body was accompanied
by two 2nd or 3rd century B.C. La Tène II brooches probably imported from
a manufacturing source somewhere in central southern England (Dudley and
Jope, 1965).

Another extensive cemetery was destroyed during military clearance operations on Stamford Hill, Plymstock in 1864-5 (C.15). Once again the majority of the skeletons lay crouched or contracted in graves lined and covered with flat stone slabs, although comments that individual graves occasionally cut one another at 'right-angles' suggest that variations in orientation may have occurred over an extended period (Bate, 1866, 501). The majority of the grave-goods associated with these burials were unfortunately destroyed during the Second World War, but had previously been examined and photographed by Sir Cyril Fox, whose account together with Bate's descriptions and P.J. Clarke's subsequent discussion, provides the only reliable basis for assessing the date of the cemetery (Bate, 1866, 502-507; Fox, C., 1958, 14 and Pl.31; Clarke, 1971).

In his contemporary account Bate stated that at least six bronze bracelets, four bow brooches, a penannular brooch and parts of three bronze mirrors were found in graves, together with a fragmentary glass bowl or vase and a series of Romano-British pottery vessels (1866, Pls. 30-32). Fox subsequently illustrated three early or middle La Tène bracelet fragments, two La Tène I brooches, a matched pair of bronze disc-footed brooches, a swan's-neck pin, two straight-shafted pins and an unusual disc-headed pin, although it is not confirmed that these pieces were all directly associated with burials (Fox, 1958, Pl.31; Clarke, 1971, Pl.1).

Although important in their own right, it is at present sufficient to accept that all three bronze mirrors belong to a short-lived insular manufacturing tradition that flowered towards the middle of the 1st century A.D. (Fox, 1949; 1958, 93; Stead, 1965, 56; Spratling, 1970). The

bronze bracelets cannot yet be so closely dated, although a group of 'knobbed' examples allied to specimens from La Tène II contexts in eastern Yorkshire and Lincolnshire may have been imported to Stamford Hill direct from northern France. At least three of the remaining four bracelets had rounded bodies, hinged opening sections and raised curvilinear decoration reminiscent of the elaborately decorated Newnham Croft example. Like the knobbed bracelets these latter pieces probably belong with the 2nd or 1st centuries B.C., although earlier dates could be considered (Bate, 1866, 502-503 and Pl.31, Figs. 1 and 2; Fox, 1958, Pl.31 and Fig. 6a; Stead, 1965, 49-54; Clarke, 1971, 147).

Of the recorded brooches, two examples from north-western Spain or Portugal have already been discussed in relation to the Harlyn brooches. Four remaining bow brooches fall into two distinct cultural horizons, one represented by two later 1st or early 2nd A.D. century brooches broadly compatible with the examples from Trevone and Hughtown (Bate, 1866, Pl.31, Figs. 5-8), the other by a pair of La Tène Ic specimens (Fox, 1958, Pl.31, Figs. 26 and 27). The association of these latter early La Tène pieces and the even older-looking swan's-neck and disc-headed pins with graves has never been confirmed, but if accepted would inevitably push the origins of the cemetery back as far as the 4th or 3rd centuries B.C. The only other brooch known to be from a burial is a Class A.1 penannular specimen with knobbed terminals (Bate, 1866, Pl.31, Fig. 3; Fowler, E., 1960, 174).

The fourth mainland cemetery of importance was discovered in 1833 at Trelan Bahow on the Lizard peninsula where 'several' graves composed of flat side and cover slabs lay with their long axes directed east-west (C.7).

The posture of the bodies is unknown, but the elaborate grave-group associated with an assumed female skeleton confirms that the burial ground was in use during the middle of the 1st century A.D. In addition to another decorated bronze mirror, this group included a La Tène III Nauheim-derived flat-bowed brooch, fragments of a second brooch, several bronze rings and at least two glass beads. Although the appearance of such a rich burial in a remote corner of the Lizard is at first sight surprising, Peacock's demonstration that the area was closely linked to the rest of south-western England through its export of local gabbro clays (Peacock, 1969) could nevertheless allow the Nauheim brooch to have been imported, along with the bronze mirror, from central western England where insular versions of the form are relatively plentiful (Jope and Wilson, 1957, Fig. 2).

Although further groups of cists have been discovered near Phillack Church (C.1) and at Crantock (L. Olson, personal communication), there is as yet insufficient evidence to confirm that these and several isolated grave sites actually belong to Iron Age cemeteries. Better qualified, but nevertheless unconfirmed, contenders are a long cist containing a pottery vessel and an unidentified iron object from Calartha, St. Just (C.6), and single cists aligned on distinctive north-south axes, but without grave-goods, from Landewednack (C.3) and Ladock (C.2). A further cist associated with 1st or 2nd century A.D. pottery fragments from Woodleigh, near Kingsbridge in Devon, is geographically peripheral but merits inclusion as the skeleton was again crouched with the head directed north (C.16).

Of greater interest, however, are the dry-stone wall or boulder-built cists from the Isles of Scilly (Ashbee, 1974, 120-147). Seven or eight

isolated examples from St. Mary's and St. Martin's are not closely dated, but two small cemeteries on St. Mary's (C.10 and 11) and single graves from St. Mary's (C.12), St. Martin's (C.8 and 9) and Old Man Island (C.14) indicate a strong 1st century A.D. tradition of crouched inhumation. In discussing the eleven burials from Hughtown (C.10) Ashbee initially distinguished a predominant group of oval cists (Type 1) and a secondary class of more massive rectangular graves (Type 2). Five graves from Poynter's Garden, St. Mary's (C.11) and the single cists from St. Martin's and Old Man confirm this pattern and the characteristic use of weathered granite boulders as a building material, although it is doubtful whether these local morphological and constructional variations provide any fundamental distinction between the Scillonian and mainland cist traditions. Much more significant is the adoption within the Scillies of the same funerary prescriptions that were in use at Harlyn Bay and elsewhere. At Hughtown, Poynter's Garden, Old Man and St. Martin's it is either confirmed, or implied by cist size, that bodies always lay crouched in graves directed roughly north-south. Despite poor preservation of bones it is also known that four skeletons from Poynter's Garden and seven from Hughtown lay with their heads to the north, while two other Hughtown examples were directed respectively north-east and north-north-east (Fig. 28).

Although Poynter's Garden provided little dateable material, three penannular brooches and eight later 1st century A.D. bow brooches from Old Man and Hughtown confirm that the Scillonian burials are broadly contemporary with some of their mainland counterparts (Tebbutt, 1934, Fig. 3; Ashbee, 1954, 24 and Figs. 5 and 6; Fowler, E., 1960, 175-176). An additional disc brooch from the same Hughtown grave (C.10.2) as a

Class C penannular brooch has, however, been treated in the past as a 3rd century A.D. piece, even though this late date seems incompatible with the earlier bow brooches and Romano-British pottery vessels from adjacent graves (Ashbee, 1954, 16-19 and Fig. 7).

## Summary and conclusions

Despite often fragmentary surviving evidence it is now possible to define a Cornish and Scillonian inhumation tradition characterised by the use of stone-line graves, a distinctive crouched body position, a predominant preference for northerly orientation and the limited, but occasionally quite lavish, provision of grave-goods. Although much of the associated metalwork belongs to the 1st century A.D., La Tène II brooches, decorated bronze bracelets, ring-headed pins and the imported disc-footed brooches confirm that the Harlyn, Trevone and Stamford Hill cemeteries were all in operation by at least the 2nd century B.C.

Acceptance of the doubtful assumption that the Stamford Hill swan's neck pin and La Tène I brooches were genuine grave-goods would, moreover, force the origin of the south-western cist inhumation back into the 4th or 3rd centuries B.C. Although comparable evidence from other parts of Britain now indicates that such an early introduction is feasible, it remains difficult to overlook the effects of imposing a 400 year life-span on the few Cornish burial grounds that have so far been recorded. In the case of even a comparatively large cemetery such as Harlyn, 130 graves spread over 400 years would allow only one burial to have been performed every three years, assuming that all individuals were interred in the same

fashion.  Add an hypothetical average human life-expectancy to this figure

and it becomes apparent that the cemetery could never have served a living

population of more than ten people.  The contention that a handful of

communities of this size could have sustained a distinctive, stable

burial rite in apparent isolation over such a long period is so difficult

to accept that it would seem wiser to argue in terms of a considerably

compressed time scale until further cemeteries are discovered or better

dating evidence becomes available.

In turning to the critical question of the tradition's origins, a

total absence of earlier Iron Age and later pre-Christian Romano-British

burials in Cornwall adds weight to the impression that inhumation was never

widely adopted and may instead have emerged only temporarily in peripheral

parts of an area with a stronger native cultural preference for a different

and archaeologically indetectable method of disposal.  Earlier attempts

to trace an insular source for the inhumation principle were persistently

hampered by an apparent absence of parallel burial forms in central southern

Britain; Crawford and Hencken implicitly concluding an independent Cornish

development.  Thomas has more recently suggested an alternative origin

among the analogous stone grave cemeteries from the coastal sand-dunes of

Brittany (Thomas, 1966, 77;  Giot, 1960, 184-6), although this initially

attractive hypothesis is weakened by a near universal adherence to an

extended body position in Brittany and Giot's subsequent demonstration

that several of the better known Breton cemeteries belong to the later

Roman and sub-Roman periods rather than to the La Tène Iron Age (Giot,

1973).

A second possible source are the Channel Islands of Alderney and
Guernsey, where a series of cist burials provide positive evidence of the
survival of inhumation into a continental La Tène III, or even post-
Caesarean, horizon (Kendrick, 1928, 186-98). An invariable preference
for extended burial with grave-goods that include cordonned pottery
vessels and items of warrior equipment nevertheless distinguishes the
Channel Island rite from the Cornish tradition, whose characteristic
elements can only be matched by returning to southern and eastern England,
where inhumation has already been shown to have been widely established by
the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C. While the majority of these inhumations
had been carried out in storage pits or simple earthen graves, a significant
number were associated with slab-built cists morphologically similar to
those from Harlyn Bay and other south-western sites. It would nevertheless
be unwise to jump hastily to the conclusion that the examples from Birdlip
and Hailes in Gloucestershire (A.2.14; A.2.15); Clevedon in Avon (A.2.2)
or Sheepwash on the Isle of Wight (A.2.24) are therefore directly related
to their south-western counterparts. It is instead much more likely that
these, and the sequence of Durotrigian and early Romano-British cists from
the Isle of Portland - Purbeck area (p. 53 , above) are parallel local
inventions of the technique in those areas where suitable stone was
easily obtained and could provide an effective form of lining for an
inhumation grave.

Of more profound significance than this simple parallel development
of cists in the rocky, and often treeless, environment of the Cornish
peninsula is the reappearance in the area of the combined preference for
a crouched body position and for burial with the head to the north which

has already been recognised in the Wessex region and which will shortly be encountered yet again in discussion of the contemporary burial traditions of eastern Yorkshire. How these prescriptions were transmitted to visible traditions of inhumation in the south-west remains for the moment obscure, but in no way detracts from their importance as indicators of a cultural connection between the isolated communities of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly and contemporary groups in central and eastern England.

## Chapter 4

## La Tène inhumation in eastern Yorkshire

In the preceding chapters of this work attention has been devoted to the retrieval of a relatively small number of burials from the mass of evidence relating to more general aspects of Iron Age social life in southern Britain. In turning attention northwards towards eastern Yorkshire it will be found that the state of knowledge regarding burial and settlement activity has been turned on its head, with the result that the later Iron Age regional culture has been identified almost exclusively through a profusion of cemetery sites and the characteristic funerary rituals which these have displayed. This situation, reminiscent as it is of the earlier Bronze Age in Wessex, results from the physical nature of the archaeological sites themselves. In southern England a long and energetic tradition of Iron Age settlement excavation grew up as a response to the wealth of defensive sites, whose often massive surviving earthworks persistently provided an obvious and irresistible focus for archaeological interest. On the chalk uplands of the Yorkshire Wolds there has never been any comparable sequence of major hillforts, and although there is now ample evidence for extensive and often highly complex farming settlements in the area, this derives almost entirely from the aerial photography of crop marks and not from any upstanding physical traces identifiable from the ground. By way of contrast the sequence of burials which we are about to consider habitually involved the construction of easily visible barrow mounds. Although all but a handful of these barrows have since been razed by the progressive incursion of

arable cultivation, many still survived in extensive groups during the

19th century and attracted the attentions of an enthusiastic group of

Yorkshire antiquaries, prominent amongst whom were Canon William Greenwell,

J.R. Mortimer and the Reverend E.W. Stillingfleet. During the earlier

years of barrow diggingon the Wolds no clear distinction was drawn

between earlier Bronze Age and Iron Age inhumation burials, the whole

being subsumed within the accurate, but hardly specific, category of

"British barrows". The more observant and inquiring approach of

Greenwell and Mortimer towards the end of the 19th century, however, led

to the recognition of a specific sequence of Early Iron Age burials,

amongst which were a spectacular group of interments containing remains

of wheeled vehicles, quickly dubbed "chariots" by the heroically inclined

antiquarian mind. Discoveries of very similar vehicle burials among the

La Tène cemeteries of the Champagne region in northern France then led

to a widespread acceptance of a fundamental connection between the two

areas (Dèchelette, 1914, 1104), although little formal work on the nature

of this relationship was carried out until I.M. Stead undertook a detailed

reappraisal of the evidence both from the point of view of the burial

rites and the comparative study of the associated metalwork items

(Stead 1965).

In assessing the characteristics of the Arras Culture and its

apparent association with the historically attested Yorkshire tribe of

the Parisi Stead was at first compelled to work almost solely with

information obtained prior to 1900. The principal result of this work

was confirmation that one or more inhumation rites, broadly bracketed

between the fourth and first centuries B.C., could be identified within

a restricted area of the modern county of Yorkshire that centred on the

higher chalklands of the Wolds, and extended northwards across the Vale

of Pickering to the Limestone Hills and eastwards out into the Plain of

Holderness. In the absence of detailed descriptions of barrow and

burial forms, Stead initially concentrated much of his attention on

the surviving items of grave furniture, and in particular to the

equipment associated with up to 14 individual vehicle burials. Comparison

of this latter group of cart-burials with the more numerous La Tène I

and II examples from northeastern France established a positive affinity

with a continental tradition of wheeled vehicle-burial that appears to

originate within a later Hallstatt horizon in central Europe before

moving westwards into the Rhineland, Switzerland and ultimately the

Champagne region.

In the absence of any clearly defined later Iron Age inhumation

traditions elsewhere in southern Britain Stead was also inclined to

associate a sequence of simpler Arras Culture inhumations from cemeteries

such as Arras, Danes Graves, Cowlam and Eastburn with the same continental

stimulus that had introduced the principle of cart-burial. In support of

this view it was demonstrated that another characteristic of the

Yorkshire burials was the use of a surmounting barrow surrounded by a

very distinctive form of square enclosure rather than by a conventional

circular quarry ditch. Square barrows had first been recorded during

the Arras excavations of 1850, but their significance remained

unappreciated until it was shown that a range of similar enclosures,

conventionally described in the literature as carré funeraire, play a

key role amongst those La Tène cemeteries in the Marne region of

northern France which provide evidence of inhumations with wheeled carts

(Stead, 1961). The appearance of two such distinctive funerary features

in conjunction in Yorkshire can hardly be considered coincidental and an increasing number of recorded square barrows in eastern Yorkshire has reinforced Stead's initial hypothesis.

In the years since publication of The La Tène Cultures of Eastern Yorkshire (Stead, 1965) renewed interest in the excavation of Arras culture burial sites has begun to provide a very much more effective body of formally recorded evidence which will eventually supply the necessary material for a penetrating analysis of the burial rites, their chronology and cultural ancestry. Stead's own work in the great cemetery area that straddles the parishes of Rudston and Burton Fleming has now provided a sample of over 200 individual graves, while the long term campaign conducted by T.C.M. Brewster and (latterly) J.S. Dent at the neighbouring Wetwang Slack burial and settlement complex is providing a parallel assemblage of burials, amongst which has been the first example of a cart burial excavated in Yorkshire since the Pexton Moor grave in 1906 (Stead, 1977; Brewster, 1971; Dent, 1978).

A second major source of new evidence regarding the distribution and nature of the La Tène cemeteries has come as a result of intensive aerial reconnaissance of the Yorkshire Wolds, where crop-marks of square barrow ditches have proved easily identifiable as a morphological form. Examples were first recorded nearly 30 years ago by J.K.St. Joseph, although it was not until some considerable time later that their function was understood and efforts were made to locate further examples. The Burton Fleming cemetery was itself identified from crop mark evidence (St. Joseph, 1964, 217) and square barrows have now been recognised in groups and in isolation at over 100 sites between the Humber and the southern flanks of the North Yorkshire Moors.

While recent excavation and reconnaissance have gone far in confirming the distinctive nature of the Arras Culture burial sequence and its restricted distribution, the recognition of other burial rites elsewhere in southern Britain no longer allows the Yorkshire forms to be regarded as an isolated appearance of inhumation during the later Iron Age. In the following sections of this chapter it will be necessary to examine the Yorkshire material in the light of the evidence from Wessex and elsewhere, and as a result it will become apparent that certain recognised and undisputed continental affinities are in fact counterbalanced by features belonging to an essentially insular tradition. The Arras Culture will thus be seen as an amalgam of ritual notions, deriving not from the simple introduction of a discrete disposal tradition from abroad, but as a result of the imposition of certain imported principles onto an existing structure of native tradition.

## The sites and their distribution

Although the most significant series of excavations took place late in the 19th century, a handful of La Tène inhumations may have been investigated more than a hundred years earlier and a reference in the Kilham Parish Register notes that a single barrow within the Danes Graves cemetery was opened as early as 1721 (Stead 1965, 105). The first major excavation of which any formal record survives did not take place until 1815, when the Rev. E.W. Stillingfleet and Bernard Clarkson began a systematic exploration of the contents of between 90 and 200 small barrows near Market Weighton on the southern Wolds (D.1.18). In the first three seasons of work in the Arras cemetery, which was subsequently adopted as the type-site for the regional Iron Age culture, a sequence

of crouched or, more rarely, extended skeletons was revealed (D.1.18.1-23).
At least two of the burials were associated with the remains of
dismantled two-wheeled carts and the harness equipment for pairs of
horses. The first of these, nicknamed the "King's Barrow" (D.1.18.1),
also contained the skeletons of the horses themselves and in this respect
remains unique among the Yorkshire group of vehicle graves. Three
further barrows were excavated at the site in 1850 (D.1.18.24-26) and a
third cart-burial was recognised by Greenwell after its discovery
during chalk-quarrying in 1875 (D.1.18.28). In 1959 two of the Arras
barrows were re-excavated, and although the central graves had been
disturbed by previous investigators, the presence of square enclosure
ditches, which probably surrounded every barrow in the cemetery, was
confirmed (D.1.18.29-30).

In the years following Stillingfleet's work a number of further
confirmed or probable vehicle burials were discovered at Beverley (D.1.1.1),
Seamer (D.1.23) and Huggate (D.1.13), while simpler inhumations were
recorded from Bishop Wilton (Calais Wold; D.1.3); Grindale (Huntow;
D.1.10); Millington (Grimthorpe, D.1.20) and Bugthorpe (D.1.4). This
period also resulted in Greenwell's examination of five square-ditched
barrows on the high wold-top at Cottam (Cowlam; D.1.8). Of greater
importance than these individual and often accidental encounters was the
work which was carried out in the immense barrow cemetery that lies in
the parishes of Nafferton and Kilham and which was locally referred to
as the Danes Graves (D.1.21). Greenwell was informed that 500 individual
burial mounds were once visible within a belt of woodland lying in a
shallow dry valley to the west of the deserted medieval village of

Pockthorpe. Later in the nineteenth century nearly 200 examples could still be surveyed by the Ordnance Survey and many of these have survived until the present day. Greenwell (1906, 255) also observed that traces of ploughed-out barrows could be seen as soil marks in the fields bordering the wood and the results of aerial photography have now confirmed that more than a hundred square and circular barrows lie closely packed in different parts of an area measuring approximately 500 x 400 yards (D.2.70). These latter barrows have never been photographed under entirely satisfactory conditions and it is apparent that more favourable seasons could reveal enough crop marks to confirm that Greenwell's original estimate may not have been unduly inflated.

The size of the Danes Graves cemetery inevitably attracted the attention of local excavators and in addition to the barrow explored in 1721, further small samples were examined in the first half of the nineteenth century by the Rev. W. Drake, John Milner, John Kendall and the Yorkshire Antiquarian Club. In 1864 Greenwell examined graves at the centres of 14 barrows and revealed a series of crouched inhumations in shallow graves (D.1.21.15-28). Two similar burials were observed by Mortimer in 1881 (D.1.21.29-30), and in 1897 a joint excavation by Mortimer, Greenwell and Boynton uncovered 16 further burials (D.1.21.31-46), amongst which were a cart-burial containing two contracted skeletons and a rare example of a single grave in which five individuals had been interred simultaneously (D.1.21.43 and 46). A second sequence of excavation took place in the following year when 37 barrows (D.1.21.47-80), three of which had been previously disturbed, were examined. These confirmed the existence of a standard burial procedure involving crouched

inhumation and the provision of a generally limited range of grave goods,
typically comprising single pottery vessels, pig bones and occasional iron
or bronze brooches and bracelets. A final group of 8 barrows opened by
Mortimer in 1909 yielded yet more crouched or contracted skeletons, but
little by way of associated material objects (D.1.21.99-106).

Mortimer was fortunately more methodical than the excavators who had
preceded him at Danes Graves and elsewhere. As a result, the precise body
positions and orientations of 81 individual inhumations are recorded and
provide a substantial and reliable sample on which to base a consideration
of the Danes Graves burial form (Mortimer, 1895, 1898, 1911; Greenwell,
1906). No other series of excavations provided a comparable body of data
until the work begun during the last decade, although a sample group of
barrows was excavated by Mortimer at Scorborough Park, Leconfield, in
1895 (D.1.17.1-6). At the end of the 19th century 170 individual mounds
still survived at the site, arranged in a wedge-shaped group covering an
area of 4 acres. A number of these are still visible on the ground, but
no informative excavation has since taken place.

Among a handful of other isolated discoveries of inhumations can be
included important vehicle burials from Thornton-le-Dale (Pexton Moor;
D.1.26) and Hunmanby (D.1.14); less well-documented examples from
Hornsea (D.1.12) and Middleton-on-the-Wolds (D.1.19), and a warrior-
burial discovered at Birdsall (North Grimston) in 1902 (D.1.2). A
complete cemetery of at least 75 ploughed-out barrows was unfortunately
destroyed during the construction of Eastburn airfield in 1938 (D.1.16).
Although a number of objects associated with individual burials were

retrieved from graves at the centres of circular, rather than square, barrow platforms, no useful indications of burial postures and orientations survive.

The period following the outbreak of the First World War saw very little activity directed towards formal excavation of further inhumations until Stead re-excavated two barrows at Arras and examined six examples at Cowlam (2.1.8). Four of these latter barrows had been previously excavated by Greenwell, but two others and a pair of graves without barrows were found to be undisturbed (Stead, 1971, 22-24). At both Arras and Cowlam it was found that the barrows were surrounded by distinctive square-plan enclosure ditches and in the light of this discovery excavation was begun in 1967 within a trial area of the Rudston-Burton Fleming cemetery and confirmed that the features first identified as crop-marks from the air represented inhumation barrows of the same class. Successive seasons of work in different parts of the cemetery have now revealed more than 200 individual inhumations belonging to two ritually distinct, but closely related funerary procedures (D.1.6). A similar number of burials has now been recorded from the nearby Wetwang Slack cemetery area, currently the subject of intensive excavation in advance of gravel extraction (D.19).

## The distribution of ground-based discoveries

Although it has been shown that the majority of excavated burial sites lie on the chalk hills of the Yorkshire Wolds themselves, it is important to consider the extent of their distribution with some care. It can be seen (Fig. 29) that the major cemetery areas of Danes Graves,

Eastburn, Burton Fleming and Wetwang Slack all lie on the lower slopes of
the northern Wolds, while the Arras cemetery is located on the central
spine of the chalk, some 20 miles to the south. Scorborough provides
the only excavated example of a major burial ground in the low-lying
Plain of Holderness, although the small group of barrows from Beverley
lies at a similar altitude. To the west of the chalk hills, in the
Vale of York, two separate cemetery areas have been reported within the
parish of Skipwith (D.1.24 and 25). Inhumations discovered in isolation
also tend to lie close to the eastern or western margins of the Wolds,
although a number drift into the lowland areas and at least four others
extend the distribution to the southern slopes of the limestone hills
to the north of the Vale of Pickering.

The most important single factor governing the discovery of the
majority of these sites was their survival as earthworks in areas of
woodland, enclosed parkland or high pasture on the uncultivated wold-tops.
The erosion of barrows by arable cultivation has been a progressive
phenomenon, however, and it is therefore probable that the present
distribution is distorted in favour of those areas where barrows had
been provided with the opportunity to survive intact into the 19th and
20th centuries.

A check on the validity of this initial distribution, which is
essentially the same as that offered by Stead in 1965, can be made by
comparing it with the scatter of square-barrow sites recorded by the
independent medium of aerial photography.

Aerial reconnaissance and the results of crop-mark survey

In the years since the end of the Second World War, the development

of aerial photographic methods first devised by Allen, Crawford, Riley and

Bradford in the 1920's and 1930's has provided the most powerful single

technique for revealing archaeological sites whose identification on the

ground would otherwise be difficult or impossible. The ways in which

buried sites may be revealed fall into three categories. Those features

which still survive in slight relief, such as the defences of some Roman

military stations, or the more irregular banks and hollows belonging to

abandoned medieval settlements, can be recorded most effectively under

conditions of oblique afternoon or evening sunlight, when strong shadows

are cast by minor variations in surface topography. Although photography

of shadow-sites is of value in recording prehistoric earthworks in unploughed

pasture    or moorland, it is of little use when all upstanding traces

have been obliterated by the gradual and insidious action of the plough,

or the more sudden impact of bulldozers. In these situations it is

possible to identify sites only in terms of marks that may be visible in

bare plough soil or through variations in the growth of vegetation over

buried archaeological features. The manner in which such marks may

develop is now well-known through earlier descriptions of the phenomenon

by Crawford (1928) and subsequent summarised considerations of the problem

by St. Joseph (1965) and other workers, both in Britain and western

Europe (Agache, 1962, Scollar, 1964). Marks in bare soil may be produced

either through the presence of disturbed masonary foundations brought

to the surface by plough action, or more importantly as a result of

differential soil colourations above silted ditches and other features

excavated into an otherwise homogeneous subsoil or bedrock. Marks seen

in vegetation derive from similar variations in the nature and composition of soils in which plants are growing and can be detected because of the extreme sensitivity of certain species to minor variations in soil structure, fertility and moisture content. Although a wide range of plants respond in this way, the effects of their sensitivity are only likely to be apparent when large areas are occupied exclusively by a single species, thus allowing minor changes in growth or colour to be recognised against a uniform tonal background. The best results thus tend to be obtained from arable crops and areas of grassland and although some broad-leaved plants, such as sugar-beet and lucerne, will provide evidence of differential growth, the most favourable results are invariably obtained from cereal crops.

While accurate prediction of the appearance of crop marks in any given area or year remains difficult, it is possible to isolate some of the principal factors involved in their formation. Plants growing over the foundations of walls, or above the densely packed surface of buried roadways, tend, on the one hand, to show poorer, shorter growth, due to lack of moisture and soil fertility; plants whose roots can penetrate deep into the silted fillings of ditches and pits, on the other hand, will benefit from increased sources of water and thus grow taller or remain green while their shorter counterparts are in the process of ripening. The development of such marks tends to occur most freely in areas where thin top-soils and good sub-soil drainage allow the maximum contrast in soil moisture. Heavy clays are thus unrewarding, while the most impressive results are invariably obtained from the wide gravel terraces of river valleys and over cultivated areas of chalk or limestone downland. In eastern Yorkshire the thin calcareous soils

of the Wolds are particularly suitable for the detection of crop mark features and over the past 30 years many hundreds of individual archaeological sites have been discovered in the region by photographers such as J.K. St.Joseph, D.R. Wilson, D.N. Riley, J.N. Hampton, and A.L. Pacitto.

Analysis of the crop mark features recorded in the Cambridge University Collection of aerial photographs, however, shows that sites are not evenly spread over the area (Fig. 30). Before beginning any discussion of the distribution of square barrows therefore, we must first determine whether the overall scatter of crop marks reflects an actual variation in the pattern of prehistoric settlement, or whether it is subject to distortion by the ability or disability of different soils to reveal the archaeological sites beneath them. It is also necessary to ask whether aerial reconnaissance has unwittingly concentrated on particular areas of known potential, to the detriment of less immediately rewarding districts.

The distribution of crop mark sites north of the Humber shows an expected poverty of recordings on the clay soils of the Holderness Plain and along the western margins of the Wolds, in the Vale of York. The alluvial soils of the Vale of Pickering have similarly and predictably proved unresponsive, although an absence of sites on the limestone hills to the north has been a source of concern. Only under conditions of exceptional drought, as in the summer of 1976, has reconnaissance there been fruitful.

On the chalk uplands of the Wolds themselves the distribution is by no means consistent. The heaviest concentrations of crop marks lie

along the southern margin of the eastern Wolds, where there is a
pronounced tendency for sites to cluster along the sides of shallow
dry steam valleys. The most densely settled area of all is the Gypsey
Race Valley, where the stream which runs eastwards from Duggleby towards
Bridlington provides one of the only open water courses on the eastern
Wolds.

Moving westwards further concentrations of sites can be identified
south-east of Molton, but to the south the higher ground of the central
Wolds yields only a scatter of sites, extensive areas having remained
totally barren. Despite a slight improvement to the south-east of
Market Weighton, the extreme south of the Wolds is similarly disappointing,
and it would seem that a series of deeper soils which blanket parts of
the central spine of the chalk may be less suitable for the production
of crop marks than the shallow soils and chalk gravels of the eastern
Wold valleys. Detailed soil mapping of the area by the Soil Survey for
England and Wales is unfortunately incomplete, but the dangers of arguing
that the known distribution of crop marks provides an accurate reflection
of early settlement is already apparent.

Detailed interpretation of the crop mark evidence recorded by a
number of private flyers, the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments
and the Cambridge University Committee for Aerial Photography has now
resulted in the positive identification of square barrows at over 100
individual locations in eastern Yorkshire, although even larger numbers
are implied by a distribution map recently published by Ramm (1977,
Fig. 4). In comparing examples recorded from the air it is necessary
to consider not only the basic geographical distribution, but also the

morphological characteristics of the barrows themselves, their spatial
arrangement in groups of differing size and the overall relationship
which can be identified between barrows and other archaeological
features. Basic information relating to each of the barrow sites is
presented here in Appendix D.2. In the great majority of cases it is
possible to identify discrete burial groups, and to these a central
six-figure grid-reference has been given. Only in the case of the
sprawling Rudston-Burton Fleming cemetery complex has it been found
necessary to divide concentrations of burials into groups with separate
grid-references on a more arbitrary basis. In addition to general
descriptions of the barrows and their approximate sizes, Appendix D.2
also lists the height above sea level at which each site lies.

The scatter of square barrow sites recorded in Fig. 31 tends to
conform well with the overall distribution of crop-marks photographed
in eastern Yorkshire. Once again, the majority of sites lie on the
northern Wolds, with a marked concentration along the line of the Gypsey
Race. The lower slopes of the chalk to the north of Driffield has
produced another dense grouping of barrows, but the remaining sites tend
to lie scattered fairly loosely along the northern and eastern flanks
of the Wolds, avoiding the higher ground to the centre of the area and
the southern extension of the chalk towards Market Weighton and the
Humber. More surprising is the group of sites which lie at a very low
altitude to the south of Bridlington, in the vicinity of Carnaby.
Relatively few crop marks of any form have been identified in this area
and the ratio of barrows to other features is therefore unusually high.
The situation on the limestone hills to the north of the Vale of Pickering,

where a poverty of crop-marks has already been alluded to, is more predictable, only two groups of square barrows having so far been recorded.

Probably the most significant feature of the distribution is the manner in which it contrasts with that of ground-based discoveries. Whereas these latter burials lie scattered almost randomly across the Wolds, spreading out into the lowlands to the east and west and onto the limestone hills to the north, sites identified as crop marks adhere more closely to the lower slopes of the chalk, straying only rarely out into Holderness or the Vale of York.

Comparison of the height above sea level at which the sites lie indicates a potential contrast between examples discovered from the ground and those identified from the air. Although the samples are too small for the results to be statistically reliable, a histogram (Fig. 32) suggests two significant trends. Firstly it can be seen that burials have been recorded on the ground in roughly the same proportions at low and high altitudes, although there is a suggestion of a slightly higher concentration below 50'. On the other hand, barrows recorded from the air show a more restricted range, the great majority lying between 50' and 350', with only a handful recorded above 400'. In weighing the evidence for the two forms of discovery it seems that the distribution of ground-recorded sites might be distorted in favour of marginal land at the lowest and highest altitudes, while that of crop mark recordings is linked to areas of intense cultivation. A marked preference for the lower Wold slopes among the latter group of barrows matches a corresponding fall in the number of ground discoveries at these heights,

perhaps indicating more widespread and earlier destruction of barrow mounds at these altitudes.

## Burial Rites

### Inhumation and Graves

Without exception, burials of the La Tène period in eastern Yorkshire take the form of inhumation. Very few unambiguous cremations have been found in a pre-Arras Culture context, nor is there any evidence of the intrusion of a La Tène III cremation technique later in the period. In assessing the ritual characteristics of the tradition it will be necessary to consider in turn the principal attributes of the burials themselves. These can best be defined in terms of the sequence of events making up the funerary procedure as it is represented archaeologically:

1. Grave construction

2. Burial procedure:  Body position

 Orientation

 Provision of associated objects

3. Barrow construction.

The degree of consistency observed within each of these component attributes will allow the recognition of important ritual themes and variations in the Arras Culture sequence and may in turn permit different elements of the tradition to be related to practices from areas beyond Yorkshire.

Graves

Grave pits can be considered in three groups, according to their location. A handful of examples may have existed in isolation as simple flat graves, but the majority lie at the centre of barrow enclosures while a third, relatively small group of graves are found dug into the fillings and floors of barrow ditches.

It is difficult to determine the total number of flat-grave burials, as many apparently isolated nineteenth century discoveries may have been at the centre of ploughed-out barrows, unrecognised by their excavators. At North Grimston (Birdsall), for instance, no barrow ditch was reported by Mortimer (D.1.2) although a series of square enclosures at the probable site of the burial have now been identified from aerial photographs (D.2.5). The group of flat graves found within the Grimthorpe hillfort provide more reliable evidence (D.1.20). Four skeletons, including one with a complete set of warrior equipment, lay less than 10' (3m) from one another and the impression that there could never have been a covering mound is reinforced by the observation that Burial 3 was subsequently recut for the insertion of Burial 4. In addition to a single extended skeleton found at Wharram Percy (D.1.27), and two flat graves from Cowlam (D.1.8) the only unprotected example comes from Burton Fleming, where once again the absence of a mound was implied by the presence of a later burial cutting an existing grave (Stead, 1977, 222). The apparent absence of barrow-ditches elsewhere in the same cemetery may, however, be due to continuous ploughing gradually eroding all traces of unusually shallow surrounding ditches.

Graves beneath mounds are normally located at the centres of their barrow platforms, are usually aligned with the sides of the ditched square, and vary widely in both shape and depth. The largest recorded pits are those associated with cart burials or with multiple inhumation. At Arras the graves in both the 'King's' and the 'Lady's' barrows were circular in plan and had diameters of at least 12' (3.5m) (D.18.1 and 29). Although the Wetwang Slack (D.1.9) and Hunmanby (D.1.14) graves achieved a similar size, the rectangular examples from Danes Graves (D.1.24.43) and Beverley (D.1.1.1) were rather smaller, with a maximum length of only 8' (2.4m). The depth to which these graves were dug ranged from 3'6' (1m) at Hunmanby to as little as 18" (0.45m) in the King's Barrow at Arras.

Conventional inhumations within the main excavated cemeteries tend to be placed in rectangular or oval pits of a size just sufficient to accommodate a crouched or contracted skeleton, although a series of extended burials from Burton Fleming use rectangular grave-pits, up to 6' (1.80) in length. A more important source of variation derives from the comparative depths of these simpler graves. Greenwell's observation that skeletons beneath the comparatively large barrows at Cowlam (D.1.8.1-5) were placed on the old ground surface is paralleled at Burton Fleming, where a number of skeletons have also been found in exceptionally shallow graves. 13 of the largest barrows in the cemetery indeed revealed no trace of surviving burials and thus provided further evidence that the construction of larger barrows mounds may have removed the necessity to dig deep graves. As a corollary to this argument it can also be observed that the smallest barrows, with the shallowest

surrounding ditches at both Burton Fleming and Wetwang Slack regularly

have the deepest graves of all, some attaining a depth of more than 4'

(1.2m). There are no records of the depth of graves at Arras,

Scorborough or the Danes Graves, but the absence of positive observations

of surface burial suggests that graves of some form were normally used,

even if these may have on occasions been very shallow.

The variation in grave depth has also had a marked effect in terms

of crop-marks identified from the air. Because of their small size graves

at the centres of barrows can normally be identified only under especially

favourable crop conditions when the filling of the grave provides

sufficient contrast with the surrounding subsoil in terms of moisture

retention levels. Whereas a deep grave filled with humic topsoil or

decayed turf may register as effectively as the silted filling of the

barrow ditch, a shallow example, or one packed with newly excavated

clean chalk, could fail to provoke any differential crop-growth. Graves

can in fact be identified at 40 of the 113 square barrow sites, although

it is rare for every barrow in a group to show such marks with equal

clarity, and it is without doubt the smaller barrows which show graves

with the greatest frequency. This contrast is most clearly demonstrated

in the Bell Slack area of the Burton Fleming cemetery complex (D.2.27),

where upwards of 100 tiny agglomerated barrows with scarcely visible

ditches are revealed by their strongly marked central graves (Fig. 33).

Six barrows of much greater size, with much broader ditches lie within

the same group and show no traces of any internal features. The same

phenomenon can be seen at a number of other sites, including Foxholes,

(D.2.36 and Fig. 34), Grindale (D.2.42), Slingsby (D.2.100 and Figs. 35-36)

and the great cemetery at Carnaby (D.2.31), where graves among the 200
visible barrows are perhaps more sensitively revealed than in any other
burial area (Figs. 37-38).

## Sex and Age

Although Mortimer and Greenwell have provided assessments of the
sex of individual skeletons excavated at Danes Graves, the determinations
are probably to be considered unreliable in view of modern misgivings
about earlier methods of determining sex from skeletal material. The
detailed osteological examination of skeletons from Burton Fleming
nevertheless suggests that males and females are probably represented
in equal proportions and that the square barrow inhumation rite was
appropriate for adult members of either sex (Stead, personal communication).
The regular shortage of infant and child skeletons in all the excavated
cemeteries is more significant. At Danes Graves only two barrows (D.1.21.
46 and 85) contained the burials of children, and in both cases these
accompanied the skeletons of adults. At Burton Fleming 5 skeletons
from a total of 200 belong to children or adolescents and in only one
barrow was the child alone in a primary position. Stead has argued,
with justification, that some alternative method of disposal may have
been used for those who had not reached the formal social state of
adulthood (Stead, 1977, 223). The presence of one child in the filling
of a barrow ditch suggests that a proportion of the juveniles may have
been buried as secondary interments in or around existing barrow mounds.
If this were the case, almost all the examples in the cemeteries
currently under excavation would have been removed by earlier ploughing

activity. No secondary burials within the body of surviving mounds at Danes Graves and elsewhere have been reported, however, and it is therefore possible that many infants dying in the first months or years of life were disposed of away from the cemetery areas altogether. That the skeletons of children in barrows are normally found in conjunction with those of adults warrants comparison with the pit-burial evidence from southern England, where the burial of infants again seems incidental to that of the adults they accompany. A Burton Fleming grave containing an adult, an eight year old child and a new-born infant, and the simultaneous burial of 3 adults, a child and an infant in Danes Graves Barrow 46 both suggest the sudden death of whole family groups, while the infant and adult from Danes Graves Barrow 85 may represent a mother and child.

Multiple burial within a single grave is not restricted to the combination of adults and infants. In addition to the 'family' burial referred to above, four other Danes Graves barrows, including the single cart-burial, contained pairs of adult skeletons (D.1.21.47,56,67 and 93). In a single instance (Barrow 56) the bodies had been placed one above the other and in all the others the skeletons lay side by side. At Burton Fleming three examples of simultaneous burial have been discovered, each involving skeletons lying side-by-side. Although as many as ten Garton Slack barrows have showed evidence of secondary burial, only one confirmed example of simultaneous burial has been identified.

Because the number of double burials is still small, it is difficult to assess their implications with confidence. We have, however, already

seen that multiple burial makes an occasional appearance elsewhere in
southern England, while the evidence from La Tène I and II cemeteries in
northern France shows that the proportion of double burials in some of
these is so high that the practice cannot easily be explained in terms
of natural causes of death. Déchelette and, more recently,Bretz-Mahler
have drawn attention to at least 30 large and small cemeteries in which
double, or more rarely multiple burials, have been discovered (Déchelette,
1914, 1035-6; Bretz-Mahler, 1972, 182-3). In most situations only one
or two graves within a cemetery contain pairs of skeletons, but
occasionally the proportions increase dramatically. At Gourgançon,
Marne, six double burials were reported from a group of no more than 15
graves, while at Thuisy, Marne, a total of 64 graves revealed no less
than 28 double and 4 multiple burials (Fourdrignier, 1880). Equally
impressive is the record of 40 double and 9 multiple burials from the
cemetery of 219 graves at Witry-les-Reims, Marne (Bourin, 1909, 1911).
Although a number of multiple burials include the skeletons of infants,
the great majority of double graves contain adult skeletons, and at
Thuisy and Witry-les-Reims the nature of the associated grave-goods
convinced the excavators that these were almost invariably in male-female
pairs. Déchelette and Bretz-Mahler have both argued that these double-
burials, involving bodies laid side-by-side or more commonly above one
another, represent the deliberate killing or suicide of one spouse on
the death of the other, and the subsequent simultaneous burial of both.
Nevertheless, evidence from the more recently excavated Mont-Troté
cemetery (Marne), where 101 graves included 10 double or multiple examples
suggests that the second body may, in some instances, have been inserted
at a later date and caused slight disturbance to the earlier burial

(Rozoy, 1970). Although this explanation may well apply to a number of the burials in other cemeteries, however, it can hardly explain the skeletons of a man and a woman with their hands placed through a single metal ring, from Bergères-les-vertus, or skeletons from Marson and Sogny-aux-Moulins with their hands or arms clasped together (Morel, 1875-90, 10, 103; Thierot, 1930, 378-84; Bretz-Mahler, 1971, 182-3).

## Body Position

Evidence relating to the way in which individual bodies were placed in graves has fortunately been well-recorded and allows the definition of two distinct ritual approaches involving either a crouched or an extended posture. The former alternative is by far the most common and should be considered first.

Stillingfleet, in his recollections of the excavations at Arras, observed that the majority of skeletons in the cemetery lay in a crouched position, although he failed to record the side on which each body had been placed and gave no indication of the extent to which individual bodies had been contracted. More recent excavation at Burton Fleming and Wetwang Slack suggests, however, that the degree of contraction can vary between light flexing of the legs and a tightly huddled position with the knees almost touching the chin and the heels drawn back towards the pelvis. No observable factors controlling this variation have so far become apparent and it would seem that the ruling stipulated no more than that the body should be lain on its side in a generally crouched position.

The choice of the side on which the body was to lie appears to have been more important, as can be seen from an examination of the data from Scorborough, Danes Graves, Burton Fleming and Wetwang Slack. The numbers and percentages of skeletons on different sides of the body are shown in Fig. 39 and reveal a consistent preference for the left side rather than the right at each of the sites. That the ratio of left to right remains constant at almost exactly 5 to 1 can hardly be the result of coincidence, although it is difficult to determine what might distinguish the individuals in the larger group from those consigned to the smaller. The unequal ratio rules out simple sexual differentiation and the evidence of associated grave goods provides no additional assistance in interpreting the reasons for the choice. From a comparative viewpoint explanation of the tendency is less important than the recognition of its similarity with the preferences already encountered both in the central pit-burial sequence and within the Cornish inhumation tradition. It is equally significant that a crouched or contracted posture plays no part in continental La Tène inhumation rites. Although there are isolated crouched inhumations from late Hallstatt contexts at sites such as Les Jogasses and Mont-Troté, Marne (Favret, 1927, 124, 126; Rozoy, 1970, 44), every one of the many hundreds of La Tène I and II inhumations excavated in northern France lies in a conventional extended position on the back. That a crouched posture is so alien in this part of Atlantic Europe allows much greater weight to be attached to the connection between the Arras Culture sequence and the burials from southern England.

Contrasting with the majority of crouched skeletons is a much smaller sample of extended Yorkshire inhumations, some of which clearly belong to

a significant secondary Arras Culture tradition. Isolated extended bodies were first recorded in the 'King's' and 'Lady's' barrows (D.1.18.1 and 29) at Arras, and a limited number of similar burials may have been found elsewhere within the cemetery. The Grimston (D.1.2) warrior also lay in this position and Sheppard indicates that some, if not all, the skeletons at Eastburn (D.1.16) lay on their backs, rather than on their sides.

The Eastburn evidence is now supported by an important series of 53 burials discovered in various parts of the Burton Fleming cemetery and associated typically with either the smallest examples of square barrows or, as at Eastburn, with a class of small circular barrows. This latter Burton Fleming group is distinguished principally by a characteristic change in orientation which will be discussed at a later stage, but for the present it can be noted that 29 of the skeletons lay fully extended and that a further 19 were only very lightly flexed. Examination of the skeletons has confirmed that no sexual or pathological selection had been in operation and it has also been noted that the grave goods associated with these extended skeletons are entirely different from those found with crouched skeletons at Burton Fleming and elsewhere. Although this newly identified sub-tradition may be reflected by some of the burials from Eastburn, it has not been identified at either Danes Graves or Wetwang Slack and does not yet appear to have any close connection with the extended burials from Arras.

## Orientation

The direction in which graves and skeletons are positioned has again been well-recorded only from Danes Graves, Burton Fleming and

Wetwang Slack, but provides further evidence for the definition of primary

and secondary ritual traditions. The problem of specifying an accurate

orientation for a curved skeleton is particularly apparent, however, in

the case of the Danes Graves excavations, where data reported independently

by Greenwell and Mortimer differs in a number of important respects. In

describing burials excavated between 1897 and 1898 both writers classify

orientation in terms of 16 compass points, but variations in the two

sets of results show that different personal criteria and standards were

used in collecting the information. Because Greenwell did not record

individual burial orientations, but merely published tabulated data,

there is no way of determining where the discrepancies occurred, but it

would on the whole seem that Mortimer's records, which also include the

results of work carried out between 1900 and 1909 should be considered

the more reliable in the absence of supporting field drawings. At

Burton Fleming and Wetwang Slack the excavators have adopted a simpler

system which uses only four compass points in describing the orientation

of graves or skeletons. While this procedure reduces reliance on

subjective interpretations of individual burials, it inevitably yields

a cruder measure of orientational variability and in both cases it may

eventually be necessary to extract more subtle data from detailed site

drawings.

The available information from Danes Graves burials 31-106 relates

to 81 inhumations and shows two distinct trends (Fig. 40). While the

majority of skeletons (63%) lie with their heads directed between N

and NE, a second smaller group mirror the pattern and lie between S and

SW (25%). A positive preference for these directions is demonstrated

by the very thin scatter of burials in the NW and SE sectors. Compression

of the Danes Graves data into just four compass points, for purposes

of comparison with Burton Fleming and Wetwang Slack, would accentuate

the importance of the north-south axis still further, by limiting the

number of east-west burials to six.

At Wetwang Slack the avoidance of east-west burial is equally

apparent, with 196 of the 206 recorded skeletons (95%) lying either to

the N or S. Here, however, the emphasis on N itself is much stronger,

this direction being used for no less than 167 (81%) of all burials

(Fig. 42). Furthermore, none of the east-west burials occupied primary

positions at the centres of barrows, all having been found as secondary

interments in barrow ditches.

The evidence from Burton Fleming (Fig. 41) is slightly more difficult

to deal with, since distinct and opposed orientational preferences are

used for the groups of crouched and extended skeletons. Although every

one of the bodies directed N (96) or S (35) was crouched in the

conventional Arras Culture manner, at least 48 of the 54 skeletons

buried with their heads pointing E or W lay in extended or lightly

flexed positions. This latter series of E-W graves cannot be matched

elsewhere in eastern Yorkshire, but does show the same mirroring tendency

as the N-S graves, with 31 skeletons directed to the E and a smaller

group of 22 lying with their heads to the W.

Evidence from other sites is more limited, but Stillingfleet appears

to have noted a northerly preference at Arras and this was confirmed by

the 'Lady's Barrow' subsequently recorded by Mortimer (D.1.18.29). At

Scorborough a single skeleton with its head to the W is outnumbered by two

bodies directed N and two more to the S (D.1.17). The N - S alignment

was also used for the warriors at Grimthorpe (D.1.20.1) and North

Grimston (D.1.2), even though the skeleton of the latter individual lay

extended rather than crouched. The evidence of crop marks is

unfortunately of less value as regards the detection of grave

orientations, owing to the often blurred or distorted impression given

when such small features are seen through an essentially linear pattern

of modern cultivation. The direction of graves within one cemetery area

to the west of Burton Fleming village can be discerned with some

confidence, however. Whereas a group of larger barrows in the northern

part of the modern field have conventionally directed N-S graves, the

compact series of smaller enclosures to the south show a distinct E-W

alignment (D.2.25). Elsewhere within the Rudston - Burton Fleming

cemetery complex graves are too poorly defined to allow a realistic

assessment of orientation (Fig. 33), and the same applies to the main

cemeteries at Grindale and Foxholes (Fig. 34). At Carnaby, however,

definition is much improved and all the visible grave pits are firmly

along the N-S axis of the cemetery itself (Fig. 37). The orientation of

graves both within and between barrows at Slingsby are less easily

determined, but it would again seem that the majority are directed N-S,

even though the cemetery is in this instance directed along an E-W line

(Fig. 35).

The results obtained from excavation and aerial reconnaissance thus

confirm the existence of identifiable prescriptions regarding orientation

among Arras Culture burials. With the exception of the particular class

of extended E-W burials from Burton Fleming, which are further distinguished
by their characteristic grave-goods, every site shows a strong N-S
preference.  There is nothing, however, to indicate the factors
determining which of these two points was to be used.  The possibility
of a sexual distinction can be ruled out by the heavy preponderance of
north over south;  nor is there any way of effectively correlating burial
on a particular side of the body with a specific compass direction.  That
the ratio of N to S is approximately the same at each of the sites
nevertheless suggests a non-random selection process which once again
cannot be interpreted in the light of existing data.

Comparison of the two Arras Culture orientational preferences with
the evidence from southern England and the continent tends to confirm the
implications of body postures discussed above.  Taking first the sequence
of crouched burials, it can be seen that the strong tendency towards an
orientation between N and NE corresponds almost exactly with the directions
favoured in the central southern counties and in Cornwall.  The only major
source of variation lies in the Yorkshire practice of occasionally
inverting the basic orientation by placing approximately one third of all
bodies with their heads to the south.  Cemeteries such as Harlyn Bay show
no signs of this mirroring procedure, nor can it be detected within the
main pit-burial sequence.

Data gathered from the Early and Middle La Tène cemeteries excavated
in northern France provides emphatic evidence that these too display
certain well-defined orientational prescriptions. Despite a number of
cemeteries which deviate from the norm, for either social or topographical

reasons, both Déchelette and Bretz-Mahler have been able to show that the majority of burial grounds contain skeletons interred with their heads directed towards the west. This particular preference appears to have been current throughout the whole of the Champagne region from the introduction of flat-grave inhumation in the earliest La Tène phase, through to the change to cremation burial in the La Tène II - III period (Déchelette, 1914, 1032-3, Bretz-Mahler, 1971, 171-2). Although particular cemeteries, such as Mont-Troté (Ardennes) with an overall north-easterly alignment (Rozoy, 1970), may superficially resemble the examples from Yorkshire, there is little opportunity for arguing any positive association between the main orientational preferences of the two areas. It has nevertheless to be admitted that the secondary series of extended burials from Burton Fleming, whose body posture has already been seen as atypical in Britain, happen to make use of the same E-W alignment used in northern France. That this particular group of burials should adopt positional rules that are alien to Britain but apparently characteristic of Champagne temptingly suggests the identification of a direct relationship between the two regions. The relative chronology established for the crouched and extended sequences at Burton Fleming shows, however, that the situation is not as simple as it might first appear, in that the extended burials belong not to the primary, but to the latest phases of the cemetery and thus cannot in any way be associated with the original introduction of either the square barrow or vehicle burial practices. Although the coincidence remains remarkable, it is as yet impossible to argue that the appearance of extended E-W burial in Yorkshire results from anything other than a local variation of the established Arras Culture burial procedure.

Grave-goods

One of the principal characteristics that distinguishes the Arras
Culture sequence from all but the Cornish and Durotrigian groups of
burials from southern England is the regular provision of grave goods
with the dead. The surviving objects from earlier excavations in the
East Riding have already been catalogued in detail by Stead (1965), who
has also made a thorough comparative study of the metalwork and its
chronological implications. For the present it will therefore be of
more value to consider the range and choice of items from a ritual and
social point of view. In assessing the evidence it is possible to divide
the burials into four groups, each of which makes use of a distinctive,
but internally fairly flexible, repertoire. The principal series are
the vehicle burials; simpler crouched inhumations; extended inhumations,
and the small sub-group of warrior-burials, originally assigned by Stead
to a separate cultural group, outside the main Arras Culture sequence.

Vehicle burials

A total of nine burials from eastern Yorkshire have yielded positive
evidence of the association of wheeled vehicles with the deceased
(D.1.1.1; D.1.7; D.1.9; D.1.14; D.1.18.1,2,28; D.1.21.43; D.1.26),
while reports of discoveries at a further four sites may refer to examples
of the same practice (D.1.12; D.1.13; D.1.19; D.1.23). In all cases
the vehicles possessed a single pair of wheels, represented on excavation
by the outer iron rim-tyres and pairs of iron nave-hoops. Stead has
wisely rejected use of the term chariot, with its specifically military
connotations, in favour of the neutral 'cart' on the grounds that the

Yorkshire graves never contain items of weaponry. Evidence for the use of war-chariots in Britain until the first century B.C. or later is nevertheless well-known from literary sources, and the presence of a wide range of hand-arms in earlier La Tène vehicle-graves from northern France adds further archaeological weight to the notion that many such vehicles may have indeed been used for fighting as well as for more conventional transport. Although there is little to indicate the form of the superstructure, the association of pairs of horse-bits and groups of terret rings used for guiding the reins shows that two horses were normally employed to pull the vehicles and that these were harnessed on either side of a central pole projecting forward from the front of the cart. Burial of the horses themselves is a rare phenomenon and in eastern Yorkshire only the 'King's Barrow' at Arras contained the skeletons of a pair of animals on either side of the body of their owner (D.1.18.1). In Britain it was normal for the cart itself to be dismantled before burial, the individual pieces being laid either flat on the floor of the grave, as at Danes Graves (D.1.21.43), Beverley (D.1.1.1), Garton Slack (D.1.9) and the Lady's Barrow, Arras (D.1.18.29); or partially over the human or animal bodies, as in the Arras 'King's' and 'Charioteer's' burials (D.1.18.1 and 2). In northern France it is normal for the vehicle to be buried intact, with all the additional fittings and harness equipment in their proper positions. In Britain, only the burial from Pexton Moor (D.1.26) has shown clear evidence of this approach, in that the wheels of the vehicle were there found standing upright in slots cut into the grave floor. A cart said to have been discovered standing on the old ground surface beneath a barrow at Cawthorn Camps (D.1.7) and the example from Hunmanby (D.1.14) may also have been buried intact, but the evidence is less satisfactory in both cases.

While the provision of an entire vehicle and its fittings suggests a burial of unusual wealth and status, it is remarkable that very few additional items were placed in these graves. Only Danes Graves 43, the 'Lady's Barrow' at Arras and Hunmanby included material unconnected with the cart itself. Of the two Danes Graves skeletons, one was associated with a fragmentary iron brooch and an iron ring or ring-headed pin, while at Hunmanby a fragmentary wooden and bronze object was recorded by Sheppard as a shield, although Stead has suggested that this might also be identified as part of the cart itself (Sheppard, 1907; Stead, 1965, 35). A more significant object is the iron mirror found with a group of pig bones near the head of the skeleton in the 'Lady's Barrow' at Arras. Greenwell himself expressed some doubt regarding the sex of the skeleton found in this grave and the barrow did not receive its nickname until many years later (Fox, 1958, 6). Although Stead has observed that mirrors need not be restricted solely to the graves of females in other cultures, it is apparent that the British examples excavated from burials at Bridport (B.1), Birdlip (A.2.14) and Trelan Bahow (C.7) were all associated with material that suggests that they accompanied women rather than men. A limited number of cart burials from northern France have also been ascribed to women on the basis of grave-goods and it is therefore possible that the practice may not have been intended to reflect specific warrior prowess so much as general social rank and standing.

Crouched inhumations

The majority of remaining Arras Culture inhumations are either unaccompanied or provided with small items of personal ornament, pottery

vessels and animal bones representing offerings of food. Occasional rich graves, such as the 'Queen's Barrow' at Arras (4.1.18.3) with its unusually lavish collection of bracelets, rings and other pieces of jewellery, are exceptions to an overriding impression of sparse, unspectacular simplicity, and a sizeable percentage of graves, especially at Scorborough and Danes Graves, are entirely without associated objects.

Isolated inhumations can provide little useful information about the range and choice of objects, and the main cemeteries have again become the most important sources of evidence. In the case of Arras, the limited amount of detailed information relating to individual burials makes any assessment of the number with and without grave-goods difficult. The positively recorded grave-groups nevertheless tend to show a marked preference for bronze objects, and in particular bracelets, while items of ironwork, brooches and pottery vessels are either unusually scarce or for some reason unreported.

The evidence from Danes Graves is fortunately better, although many items alluded to in written reports have subsequently been lost and cannot be used for comparison with the full range of material from more recently excavated sites. From the information listed in Appendix D.1.21 it can be seen that 17 pottery vessels form the largest single group of items. No more than one of these pots, all of which belong to a particular class of small, coarse shoulderless jars, was ever placed in a single grave, but it was repeatedly found that the vessels were associated with humeri, and occasionally other bones of domesticated pigs, suggesting the deliberate burial of joints of meat. Three burials were found to contain the skeletons of entire animals; in one instance a pair of goats lay on

either side of the body and in another two goats had been placed at either side of the head and two pigs in a corresponding position near the feet (D.1.21.19,73,97).

Items of metalwork appear to have been placed with up to 32 bodies, although a large proportion of these were of iron and could not, in their corroded state, be clearly identified by their excavators. 15 brooches, mostly of iron, were positively identified, as were six bronze or iron bracelets. Again, no skeleton was ever provided with more than a single brooch and in only one instance were a brooch and bracelet found together (D.1.21.56B). Only 7 of the brooches are still known to survive and Stead has shown that these comprise three flattened-bow examples, two bronze insular involuted specimens, one brooch of a rare local form and a single penannular example (Stead, 1965, 45-49). All the examples of bow brooches employ a swivel mechanism in preference to the more traditional coiled spring and all belong broadly within an insular La Tène II tradition.

With the exception of the single cart burial, the Danes Graves inhumations seem to be associated with an essentially very modest range of offerings, few of which provide any striking examples of individuality or reflect any marked differentiation of social role or sex. Indeed, it must be emphasised that 58, or over half, of all the graves provided no objects of any sort.

The evidence from Burton Fleming (Stead, 1977, 217-23) tends to support the Danes Graves situation very closely. The major difference is that the sequence of east-west burials have an entirely different

range of associated objects which further distinguish them from the conventional north-south graves. Of the skeletons belonging to the latter series recorded between 1968 and 1975, 33 were associated with simple Danes Graves jars, again typically accompanied by the characteristic single pig-humerus. The proportion of pottery vessels to skeletons accords well with the evidence from Danes Graves, as does the ratio of brooches and bracelets. 52 Burton Fleming skeletons were accompanied by brooches, all but four of which are of the same La Tène II flattened-bow or involuted forms. Of the remaining examples, 3 suggest affinities with higher-bowed La Tène I types, while a single specimen represents the transition to a La Tène III tradition. Of the seven bracelets found, four are of bronze and three were of turned or carved shale. The strength of the preference for this limited range of items is demonstrated by the fact that three glass beads, a ring-headed pin, and two bronze rings are the only objects to deviate from the standard range of materials. As at Danes Graves, rather more than half the skeletons were unaccompanied.

Among the east-west burials approximately the same proportion of skeletons were accompanied by grave goods, although not one was associated with either pots, pig-bones, La Tène II brooches or bracelets. Instead, there is a marked preference for essentially utilitarian items made mostly of iron. The largest single category of objects comprises a group of 10 short, broad-bladed iron swords, generally laid at the side of the body. These very functional weapons differ somewhat from the better known series of British La Tène II and III swords (Piggott, 1950), both in the shortness of their blades and in the general lack of embellishment to their simple wooden or leather scabbards. Six of the sword burials

were also accompanied by iron spear-heads, and two further spear-heads
were found on their own in graves. Other objects associated with this
group of graves are a fragmentary shield, a single bronze toe-ring,
three spindle whorls and five iron knives (Stead, 1977, 219).

Burials of both classes at Burton Fleming may also have been
regularly performed with wooden coffins, the stains of which have been
identified in plan within the fillings of 19 individual graves, mostly
of the north-south series (Stead, 1977, 218). None of these coffins
appear to have been constructed with nails or other metal fittings and
their presence can thus be determined only under especially favourable
conditions. The use of such wooden burial containers was not restricted
to Burton Fleming, however, as similar soil-markings have been recorded
in 49 graves at the neighbouring Wetwang Slack cemetery area (J.S. Dent,
personal communication).

The general range of grave-goods at Wetwang Slack is almost identical
to that at the cemeteries already described, with a strong preference
once again for brooches, pots and accompanying pig-bones (Dent, 1978).

A remaining group of burials whose grave-goods suggest affinities
with a different and more widespread social tradition are the three
important warrior graves from Bugthorpe (D.1.4), Grimthorpe (D.1.20.1)
and North Grimston (D.1.2). In each of these graves the body was
accompanied by at least one iron long-sword and a variety of additional
items of military equipment, which strongly suggest burial according to
the rules of a distinct and more widely distributed tradition to which
we shall return in Chapter 6. That none of the burials have been found

in a conventional Arras Culture cemetery seems to confirm Stead's original hypothesis of a separate cultural origin, although the recent recognition of square barrows in the vicinity of the North Grimston find-spot (D.2.5) may yet allow the group to be amalgamated with the main eastern Yorkshire sequence.

## Chronology

In his assessment of the metalwork associated with Arras Culture burials excavated before 1965 Stead has convincingly shown the existence of a regional manufacturing tradition, related both to the Iron Age cultural zones of central southern England and to contemporary sources of inspiration among the earlier La Tène communities of northern France. It is nevertheless apparent that the majority of the items from eastern Yorkshire are relatively simple in style and range, showing little of the stylistic diversity that has allowed contemporary French metalwork to be so valuable for comparative study. A series of brooches, bracelets and items of horse-harness nevertheless provide the basis for some useful comparisons and allow the establishment of a relative chronology for the area. The more recently excavated sequence of brooches from Burton Fleming and Wetwang Slack are now augmenting the existing corpus of material and should eventually allow a more subtle evaluation of the regional metalwork sequence.

Only one brooch of undisputed La Tène I form has so far been found in the context of a burial. The high bow and enlarged spring-coils of the example from Cowlam would, however, place the piece early within the

developmental sequence in Europe, as originally defined by Viollier and

subsequently refined by work on the Münsingen cemetery in Switzerland

(Viollier, 1916, 39-44; Stead, 1965, 45 and Fig. 25,1; Hodson, 1968).

Unfortunately no other closely dateable metalwork was found at Cowlam

to confirm whether the burials might be contemporary with the manufacture

of the brooch early in the fourth century B.C., or whether the item may

have been an imported heirloom. The majority of all other Yorkshire

brooches, whether of iron or bronze, not only belong to a distinct La

Tène II horizon, but also diverge from their continental forbears in

rejecting the classic spring mechanism in favour of various hinged or

swivel-mounted pins. The only other brooch with an uncontested spring

comes from Huntow (D.1.10) and appears to mark the inception of the

insular La Tène II flat-bowed brooch, which, with the incorporation of

the hinge-mechanism, subsequently became the most widespread form in the

area (Stead, 1965, 45). Another distinctive style of brooch, with a

folded or involuted bow, appears to have developed out of the flattened

bow tradition and again makes a regular appearance at Eastburn, Danes

Graves, Burton Fleming and Garton Slack, where it seems to be more or

less contemporary with the flattened bow series. The involuted brooch

again shows no close relationship with contemporary continental traditions

and the development of the type almost certainly occurred in central

southern England, where classic examples from Woodeaton, Beckley and,

more recently, Trevone have been broadly dated to a period beginning in

the late third century and continuing into the first century B.C. (Dudley

and Jope, 1965; Harding 1974, 189). With the exception of a single La

Tène III bow-brooch found within a grave at Burton Fleming (Stead, 1977,

222), the only other brooch style which makes an appearance in Yorkshire

is the penannular form, represented by bronze examples of Fowler's Types A and Aa from Huntow (D.1.10) and Sawdon (Stead, 1965, 112) and iron specimens from Arras (D.1.18.29) and Danes Graves (D.1.21.55). Dating of these types has always been difficult, although it would seem that they derive either from insular invention or as a result of a tenuously defined borrowing from northern Spain (Fowler, 1960, 158; Stead, 1965, 49).

Bracelets, and in particular a series of decorated bronze examples from Arras, Cowlam, Danes Graves and Eastburn, fall into two loose classes, defined by their shape and method of closure. A group of wire examples, usually with a central bezel, have a distinctive 'tongue-in-glove' device, by which one tapered end of the bracelet may be inserted into the flared mouth of the opposite terminal. Stead has argued that this principle was commonly used both in late Hallstatt and Early La Tène contexts over a wide area of Europe (1965, 51 and Fig. 27). The second class of 'knobbed' and 'ribbed' bracelets, with heavily moulded plastic decoration (Stead, 1965, Figs. 28-30), belong to the same general horizon as the tongue-in-glove forms, La Tène I and II examples having been cited from burials in Burgundy and Franche-Comte, as well as more conventional Marnian sites (Stead, 1965, 53). With the exception of a group of ribbed and knobbed bracelets from Mount Batten, a single specimen from Newnham Croft and two fragments from Llanmelin (Gwent), the Yorkshire examples are not easily paralleled in southern Britain and appear to show a very much stronger debt to continental prototypes (Clarke, 1971, 147 and Fig. 3, 5-7; Nash-Williams, 1933, Figs. 53-54; Fox, 1958, Fig. 6).

Whether two cast bronze ring-headed pins from Sawdon and Danes Graves
(D.1.21.41) can be related to similar continental La Tène traditions is
more doubtful, as both examples (Stead, 1965, Fig. 32) have a pronounced
shoulder that would seem to tie them to the tradition of insular ring-
headed pins based on the earlier swan-neck forms (Dunning, 1934). The
precise affiliations of two iron mirrors, one of them lost and never
illustrated, from Arras (D.1.10.18 and 28) are open to similar doubts.
Although a fifth century B.C. bronze example from La Motte St. Valentin,
Haute Marne, and an iron specimen from Chotin, Czechoslovakia (Stead,
1965, 55 and Fig. 31) show similarities in design, there is also a well-
documented sequence of typologically developed mirrors from southern
Britain. Amongst these are examples from Mount Batten and Billericay with
bar handles which could reasonably be seen as developments of the surviving
Arras Mirror (Stead, 1965, 56). It has therefore been argued that this
latter piece may fall early within a sequence that has its flowering late
in the first century B.C. (Spratling, 1970, 15).

Metalwork specifically associated with carts and their harness has
been discussed in detail by Stead, who has shown that the sequence of
iron tyres, nave-hoops, lynch pins, horse-bits and terrets undoubtedly
has its collective origins within the later Hallstatt and early La Tène
vehicle tradition, although the Yorkshire material shows signs of having
undergone substantial modification and divergence from comparable source
items (Stead, 1965, 28-45). Among the surviving nave-hoops, only a La
Tène III specimen from Nanterre shows close similarities with a
Yorkshire example from Cawthorn, although a distinctive pair of curved
linch-pins from Danes Graves belong more closely to a recurrent Marnian

form (Stead, 1965, 34). The horse-bits from the East Riding graves, which
are manufactured either from bronze and iron, or from iron alone, are
all of the 3-link type considered by both Ward-Perkins and Fox as an
essentially Yorkshire-based form (Ward-Perkins, 1939;  Fox, 1946, 30-31).
Stead has shown that these belong to two distinct types, depending on
whether the central element takes the form of a simple ring (Pexton Moor)
or a moulded double-ring link ('King's' and 'Lady's' Barrows, Arras;
Hunmanby). The Pexton Moor form can be paralleled by examples from
Fère-en-Tardenois (Aisne), Prunay (Marne) and Ciry-Salsogne (Aisne), all
of which belong broadly within a La Tène Ia or b horizon (Stead, 1965,
40). Although the double ring bit is rarely encountered in northern
France, an apparent prototype for the Arras-Hunmanby series can be
identified in the bronze example from the 'La Gorge-Meillet' cart burial
from Somme-Tourbe, Marne. The association of this particular piece with
an imported Italic bronze flagon, unequivocally dated to the fifth
century B.C., provides an important chronological link for the series,
although Spratling has doubted that there can be a close connection
between the French example and the second or first century B.C. Arras-
Hunmanby group (Fourdrignier, 1878;  Stead, 1965, 41;  Spratling, 1973,
123).

No such close parallels exist for the series of terret rings from
Arras and Hunmanby graves and a number of small, but significant
modifications in the remaining Yorkshire double-looped bits have again
been taken as evidence that the insular cart-grave material belongs to
a later period than the continental metalwork from which it ultimately
derives.

Barrows and cemeteries

In turning from comparison of graves and their contents to the barrow
mounds and enclosure ditches with which they were surrounded it is
important to consider both variations in the size of individual barrows
and the spatial arrangement of groups of burials in cemeteries and
smaller burial grounds.

Although barrows now survive as upstanding earthworks only at
Scorborough (D.1.17) and in the Wykeham Forest at Loft Howe (D.1.28),
their former existence elsewhere is confirmed by the records of work
at Arras, Danes Graves, Eastburn, Skipwith and other sites. Intensive
cultivation has been largely responsible for the subsequent levelling
of these and other burial groups, but the original presence of covering
mounds may still be inferred from the presence of surviving enclosure
(and presumably quarry) ditches, first positively identified in the
re-excavation of barrows at Arras (Stead, 1961). Excavation has now
shown that individual barrow platforms may vary in diameter from as much
as 50' (15m) (Cowlam, D.1.8.5; Arras, D.1.18.29) to as little as 12' or
15' (3.5m or 4.4m) (Danes Graves, D.1.21.31; Burton Fleming, D.1.6),
with the majority clustering between 20' and 30' (6m and 9m). The size
of the original mounds is hard to assess in the absence of surviving
examples. Although a barrow at Grindale (D.1.10) and another at Danes
Graves (D.1.21.11) stood to a height of 5' (1.5m) when excavated in the
nineteenth century, examples at Arras, Cowlam and Danes Graves appear
rarely to have survived to more than one or two feet. It would
nevertheless seem that there may be a correlation between the height
of a barrow, the size of its platform and the depths of the ditches and

central graves. Work at Cowlam, Burton Fleming and Wetwang Slack has
consistently shown that those barrows which have the deepest ditches
are not only the largest in area, but also tend to show exceptionally
shallow graves, often little more than scraped hollows in the chalk
surface. By way of contrast, many of the smallest barrows, both at
Burton Fleming and Wetwang Slack, have ditches so shallow that they
are sometimes obliterated by ploughing activity (I.M. Stead and J.S.
Dent, unpublished information). These latter barrows compensate by
having unusually deep graves, suggesting that the depth may have been
determined in inverse proportion to the intended height of the surmounting
mound. On this principle it could be argued that the protective properties
of a more massive mound were felt to obviate the need for a deeper grave,
and vice-versa. Preliminary results of the current Burton Fleming and
Wetwang Slack excavations are also beginning to suggest that the size of
barrows may be related to their date, with the smallest and slightest
enclosures falling late in the barrow sequence at both cemeteries.

In shape the excavated barrow enclosures are almost invariably
square, although in many cases the sides are not absolutely parallel and
it is normal for the corners to show markedly rounded angles (Stead, 1977,
Pl.XXXV). There is, however, an additional class of circular barrow
enclosures, the precise implications of which are uncertain. Sheppard
reported that the exceptionally tiny barrow platforms at Eastburn
(D.1.16) were surrounded by ring ditches and at Burton Fleming a number
of the extended east-west burials are at the centre of similar enclosures.
These latter examples tend to lie close to the smallest of the square
barrows, and like them have very shallow perimeter ditches.

The excavated evidence for square barrow enclosures can, as we have already seen, be augmented by numerous examples identified from the aerial photography of crop marks. These again show some considerable variation in shape, and while the majority demonstrate the sub-angularity typical of excavated examples, others have very much straighter and more uniformly parallel sides. It is, in particular, the smaller enclosures which tend to be regular in shape, and the way in which these often cluster together suggests a further chronological or functional distinction from the larger barrows.

Accurate measurement of the diameter of individual barrows from oblique air-photographs is not easily achieved using elementary plotting methods and the difficulties are increased when individual barrows lie in the middle of large arable fields, often a long distance from points of reference which can provide an indication of scale. It is nevertheless possible to determine that the largest enclosures exceed 15m (c.50') when measured from the outer ditch edges. Barrows of this size have been photographed at about a dozen sites, including Seamer (D.2.94), Rillington (D.2.83) and Burton Agnes (D.2.16). A number of similarly proportioned enclosures have been recorded within the Rudston – Burton Fleming cemetery complex (D.2.18,21,28), but here, as elsewhere, it seems that the majority of examples fall within a 10m – 16m (30-50') range and only rarely achieve greater dimensions (D.2.17-28; 84-92). One of the main characteristics of this series of large barrows is that they are often markedly rounded in appearance and frequently have sides of unequal length, resulting in enclosures of distorted shape. Large barrows of this type are found in all areas of the Wolds and occur both within the main cemetery areas and in isolation.

As barrows become smaller their shape is often better defined, with a marked sharpening of the corner angles. At Slingsby (D.2.100), for instance, the series of small barrows which lie between the larger examples vary in size between 6.5m and 8.5m (20-25') (Figs. 35-36). The same range predominates in the linear cemetery at Foxholes (D.2.36), where the enclosures are again more uniformly square (Fig. 34). It is nevertheless apparent that no clear divisions can be drawn between different sizes of barrow within the 6.5m - 16m class and that the correlation between size and angularity cannot at present be recognised as more than a trend.

A clearer distinction can be drawn between the larger enclosures described above and a class of very small barrows whose diameter rarely exceeds 4m (13.5'). Whereas normal barrows lie detached from their neighbours and often appear to have been individually placed within cemetery areas, examples of this latter form show signs of more organised planning and lie so close together that it sometimes appears that adjoining enclosures actually share ditches and become, as it were, 'semi-detached'. Barrows of this type are often hard to identify, as the enclosure ditches may sometimes be so narrow and shallow that they fail to register as crop marks even under ideal conditions. The marks of central graves are more distinct, however, and help to indicate the location of the surrounding barrow ditch. A simple example of the phenomenon can be seen at Barmston (D.2.3) where six conjoined barrows extend in linear formation. More impressive groups of agglomerated barrows are found within the cemetery areas east of Burton Fleming village, where hundreds of individual barrows lie clustered so close

together that they take on the characteristics of frog-spawn, each central grave assuming the appearance of an embryonic tadpole (D.2.25.27.28 and Fig. 33). Within the great cemetery at Carnaby (D.2.31), some 7 miles (11kms) south-south-east of Burton Fleming, the clustering of the scores of tiny barrows is again very apparent and here there is a clear contrast between the agglomerated enclosures and a series of larger barrows ranging up to 17m (56') in diameter (Figs. 37-38). At the present time the only other cemeteries known to include barrow clusters of this kind are Foxholes (Fig. 34), which lies $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles (7km) west of Burton Fleming, and Grindale, located a similar distance to the east (D.2.36; D.2.42). An isolated pair of conjoined barrows has, however, been located elsewhere in Foxholes parish (D.2.38) and again in Grindale there is a linear arrangement of three enclosures (D.2.43). Other cemeteries on the Wolds reveal only detached barrows and it would appear that this particular class of burial is restricted to sites lying in the eastern section of the Gypsey Race valley.

## Barrow Groups

In considering the morphological characteristics of individual barrows there has already been some reference to the relationship between examples within recognisable burial areas. It will be of some value to consider this specific question of grouping in greater detail, as the concept of burial grounds and cemeteries undoubtedly plays an important role in the funerary tradition of the area.

Although attention tends inevitably to focus on the larger cemetery areas, it must be remembered that nearly half of all the excavated burial

sites are represented by single graves. Other sites, such as Beverley and Cowlam, have revealed groups of 4 or 5 burials (D.1.1; D.1.8), while the cemeteries at Eastburn, Arras and Scorborough range in size from 75 to possibly 170 individual barrows (D.1.16; D.1.18; D.1.17). A further major jump in scale leads to the three massive burial areas of Danes Graves, Wetwang Slack and Burton Fleming, each with several hundred component graves and barrows (D.1.21; D.1.9; D.1.6).

The absence of overall site plans unfortunately prevents detailed assessment of the spatial distribution of individual barrows in cemeteries excavated in the nineteenth century, and verbal descriptions make little reference to distinctive groupings within any of these areas. The evidence already obtained from Burton Fleming and Wetwang Slack neverthe-less indicates that important social and chronological factors may have affected the layout and growth of both burial areas. The precise nature of these trends and any more subtle internal divisions and subgroupings will not, however, be fully appreciated until very much larger areas of each cemetery have been excavated. In the meantime, the evidence of aerial photography can provide a more useful indication of the size, location and internal organisation of a much larger sample of sites.

Of the 113 square barrow sites recorded as crop marks, nearly a quarter are represented by seemingly solitary burials. Furthermore, the majority of barrow groups comprise fewer than 6 or 8 individual enclosures, and no more than a dozen can be shown to contain more than 20 barrows and thus legitimately earn the title of cemetery. Among these, the burial areas at Carnaby, Grindale, Rudston and Burton Fleming are alone in achieving the exceptional proportions of the largest excavated cemeteries

and again suggest that there may be a functional distinction between small family burial grounds and major community cemeteries (Fig. 43).

The difference between the smaller and more massive groups tends, nevertheless, to be one of scale alone, in that the form of individual barrows may be the same in either class. Although the distinctive series of agglomerated barrows may occur more frequently in the larger cemeteries, examples are also known from the much smaller burial areas at Barmston, Grindale and Foxholes. The appearance of exceptionally large, and possibly early barrows within the Burton Fleming and Carnaby burial areas similarly prevents any simple chronological distinction between groups of different size.

A more important feature of the larger cemetery areas is that these repeatedly show signs of some formal organisation of barrows within defined spaces. Whereas a number of the smaller barrow groups are loosely scattered, often with gaps of 30m or 40m between burials, many larger cemeteries have made more economical use of ground and concentrate barrows into dense clusters. This phenomenon is often also accompanied by a more orderly arrangement of barrows. In at least one section of the Burton Fleming complex it would seem that many of the tiny agglomerated barrows, as well as some larger examples, are laid out in lines (Fig. 33). Another expression of this tendency is most clearly seen at Carnaby, Slingsby and Foxholes, where the entire cemeteries are laid out in linear form (Figs. 34-38). A possible explanation of this practice may lie in the fact that many burial grounds, including the main Rudston-Burton Fleming area, lie along the bottoms or sides of the many shallow dry stream valleys that occur on the lower wold slopes. The presence of

more easily dug chalk gravels in these depressions may not only have
determined their initial selection as burial places, but could also have
encouraged the extension of the growing cemeteries along the natural line
of the less resistant subsoils. Although the Carnaby cemetery lies off
the chalk at an altitude of only 25', the way in which the barrows appear
to follow a slight gravel ridge, visible as a darker band across the
aerial photographs, again suggests that geological variations may have
been partially responsible for determining the area used for burials
(Fig. 37).

In other situations the location of burial grounds may also have
been affected by social factors. At Slingsby many of the barrows lie
between two parallel lines of ditches that may have had a secular rather
than ritual function, while at several points within the Burton Fleming
area barrows can be seen to run up to, but not cross, linear features
apparently forming contemporary land boundaries. The association of
smaller groups of barrows with similar ditches and trackways is a
recurrent theme throughout the Wolds (Challis and Harding, 1975, 168),
but one of the clearest examples is provided by a compact cemetery at
Kilham which lies in a triangle of land, bounded on two sides by major
linear ditches (D.2.59). Although it has not yet been possible to
determine how the distribution of cemetery areas compares with the
location of the settlements to which they belong, it would seem likely
that the growth of at least the larger burial grounds would have been
delimited by a pre-existing scheme of land-allocation. The nature of this
relationship will hopefully become clearer as a result of the detailed
mapping of the crop marks of the former East Riding by the Royal Commission
on Historical Monuments (England).

Northern France

Square funerary enclosures of the La Tène period, though confined to
restricted areas of Britain, have a more widespread distribution on the
continent and belong to a larger family of ritual and funerary enclosures
associated with Celtic cultural groups from Czechoslovakia in the east
to northern France in the west.  For our present purposes it is
unnecessary to consider in detail the more elaborate cult and shrine
sites from eastern Europe or the important group of viereckschanzen earth-
work enclosures from southern Germany, for although these sometimes
contain deposits of human remains, it is apparent that burial of the dead
is not their principal function (Piggott, 1968, Petres, 1972).  Somewhat
similar ritual precincts have also been recorded in the Champagne region
of northern France, where their proximity to conventional La Tène burial
sites may provide them with a particular significance.  Although the long
narrow rectilinear enclosure excavated at Aulnay-aux-Planches, Marne,
seems to represent a more esoteric sacred site, despite a number of
cremation burials, a series of square enclosures from Normée, Marne,
appear to have been used both as cemeteries and as ritual foci for cult
activities and will be of greater importance in terms of this present
discussion (Brisson and Hatt, 1953;  Brisson, Lopin and Fromols, 1959).

Rectangular enclosures surrounding more orthodox single burials have
been recorded in at least two Czechoslovakian La Tène I cemeteries, while
attention has also been drawn to the existence of a number of square
enclosures, or grabgarten, surrounding late La Tène and early Roman
cemeteries from western Germany (Stead, 1965;  Decker and Scollar, 1962;
Scollar, 1968).  While these examples are interesting in their own right,

their connection with the more immediate problem of square funerary
enclosures in Britain is tenuous, and very much more positive results
can be achieved by turning attention to evidence derived from excavation
and aerial reconnaissance in northern France.

In considering examples of rectangular carré funeraire excavated in
north-eastern France, Stead has been able to establish that ditched
enclosures of various sizes were used for burial from at least a La Tène
Ia horizon, through to Flavian times (Stead, 1965, 24-27), although
nowhere is it possible to identify entire cemeteries of burials at the
centres of such enclosures. At Mairy-sur-Marne, Marne, for example,
Favret identified two square and eleven circular enclosures among a total
of 270 flat-grave burials, while at the more recently excavated Mont-Troté
cemetery at Manre, Ardennes, two of the 117 inhumations had square
enclosures (Favret, 1913; Rozoy, 1970). Three other burials in the
cemetery were surrounded by circular ditches, at least one of which
appeared once to have contained a central barrow. Another Ardennes
cemetery at Aure ('Les Rouliers') has also provided evidence of at least
one La Tene I square burial enclosure associated with a barrow (Bull. Soc.
Arch. Champenoise, 1972, 13-55), while further examples (many of them
associated with larger numbers of ring ditches) have been reported at
Witry-lès-Reims, Vert-la-Gravelle, St. Remy-sur-Bussy, Gravon, Allonville
and the recently excavated La Tène II and III cemeteries at Bouy, Juniville,
Tinqueux, Ménil-Annelles and Ville-sur-Retourne (Stead, 1961, Fig. 5;
Ferdiere et.al. 1973; Flouest and Stead, 1977; Stead, personal
communication).

Whether all these enclosures, many of which surround richer graves, were originally covered by barrow mounds cannot be confirmed, although the intensity of post-medieval arable cultivation in the region could well have obliterated any upstanding earthworks before the sites attracted the attention of 19th and early 20th century excavators. While there can be little doubt that the majority of French La Tène inhumations were indeed without any form of protection and show no traces of surrounding ditches, it has been confirmed that a handful of wealthy La Tène I burial sites were covered by barrows at the time of excavation (Bretz-Mahler, 1971, 188-9). This evidence would seem to add weight to the notion that the use of barrows may have been more widespread than was once thought, although it remains unlikely that such structures were ever associated with a second sequence of square enclosures which contain groups of graves rather than individual burials. A La Tène I example of this practice has been recorded from Etoges, Marne, where two small squares appear to have contained respectively three and four inhumations (Bretz-Mahler, 1971, 191 and Pl.159, Fig. 2). Multiple burial enclosures may have gained popularity during succeeding phases at sites such as Normée, Fère Champenoise and Ecury-le-Repos, where each of the ditched squares appears to have taken on the characteristics of a defined cemetery area, used over an extended period (Brisson, Loppin and Fromols, 1959; Brisson and Hatt, 1960; Brisson and Hatt, 1955).

## Aerial reconnaissance

The impression that funerary enclosures and barrows may have been repeatedly overlooked by earlier excavators in northern France, just as

they were on the equally heavily cultivated slopes of the Yorkshire Wolds, is strongly supported by the results of aerial reconnaissance over the chalklands of Champagne and along the river valleys to the south and west. The existence of crop marks in the Somme Valley was first recognised by Bradford, as a result of military flying carried out shortly after World War II (Bradford, 1957, 7,75,76), although specific flights of archaeological reconnaissance were only begun during the late 1950's. The results of this work have nevertheless been rewarding throughout northern France, with the most spectacular progress having been made in the Somme basin region of Picardy, where Roger Agache has succeeded in identifying an astonishing density of prehistoric and Gallo-Roman settlement and ritual sites in an area previously believed to be archaeologically barren (Agache, 1975).

Work on a more limited scale has also been carried out in areas to the east by I.M. Stead, J.K. St.Joseph and a number of local flyers, all of whom have found it possible to record crop and soil marks throughout the departments of Marne and Ardennes and southwards as far as the Yonne Valley. Although features have been recorded in this area during the summer months, experience has shown that some of the best results may be obtained from crop-marks formed during early spring in fields of winter-sown wheat (Stead, personal communication).

An important outcome of this reconnaissance has been the recognition that small square-ditched enclosures make regular appearances as crop-marks or soil-marks and that their distribution seems, in the light of present knowledge, to be restricted to an area of north-eastern France

between the middle reaches of the rivers Marne, Aisne and Yonne. Intensive reconnaissance of north-western Picardy by Agache has failed to provide evidence of small squares that might be associated with individual burials, although the area has yielded numerous examples of larger enclosures which may perhaps be funerary in character.

Some of the first successful photography of small square enclosures in the eastern region was carried out by Parruzot, who identified a number of distinct groups in the Yonne valley. Excavation at Cheny subsequently confirmed that at least one of the groups of enclosures was associated with La Tène I and II graves (Parruzot, 1954, 1960; Stead, 1965, 27). Of the square enclosures recorded by St.Joseph, the largest group is again from the department of Yonne, where at least 8 small squares, 2 ring ditches and up to 10 aligned rectangular graves without enclosing ditches have been identified as crop marks at Vinneuf (Fig. 44). Additional small marks within and between the smaller enclosures may represent yet further inhumation graves. A faint central mark can also be seen within a square enclosure at Queudes, Marne, although in this instance the two rectangles are heavily outnumbered by a concentration of 12 or 13 ring ditches. At Villeneuve-la-Guyard, Yonne, a group of three squares is confined to one end of the site, while as many as eight ring ditches can be identified at the other. This juxtaposition of round and square enclosures is a recurrent feature amongst the crop mark sites and has also been recorded at St. Gibreu (Marne), Balloy (Marne), Aulnay-sur-Marne (Marne) and, further west, at Longue-les-Amiens (Somme), Pierrepont-sur-Arne (Somme) and Bertangles (Somme) where single squares of larger size are associated with isolated circles of similar proportions. That

enclosures of these two distinct and opposed shapes should be found in conjunction does nothing to diminish the argument of an essentially funerary function, and indeed it has already been seen that a preponderance of circles to squares is as characteristic of excavated sites as it is of those seen from the air. It is more difficult, however, to confirm whether a large number of isolated ring ditches belong to the same La Tène horizon or reflect, as in southern Britain, the funerary activity of earlier and later cultural periods.

Returning to the more distinctive square enclosures it is important to distinguish between the majority of examples without entrance causeways and a smaller number which do show such features. In many instances the poor rendition of marks (especially in leguminous crops, such as lucerne) prevents confident interpretation, but it is possible to determine an entrance in an isolated enclosure from Cherville, Marne, and another through the side of a somewhat elongated square photographed near Neufles-St-Martin, Eure. In both cases the causeways lie directly in the centre of their enclosure sides and contrast strongly with the emphatically uninterrupted ditches at sites such as Bertangles or Vinneuf. While it might be argued, in the absence of excavation, that an enclosure with an entrance could represent the site of a regularly visited burial ground or shrine, it is equally possible for the defined area to have contained a house or some other form of secular structure. Access to an enclosure without an entrance would be more difficult, however, requiring either a permanent or portable bridge and while strategic considerations might make the latter alternative attractive in the case of overtly defensive sites, they would hardly seem appropriate for features rarely exceeding

15m in diameter. The absence of entrances in the majority of enclosures
thus allows the inference that accessibility was not the immediate concern
of those who designed and constructed the features and it can in turn be
suggested that this characteristic may have been a positive feature if
such enclosures were intended to define and physically isolate a funerary
area from the outside world of the living.

Up to this point attention has been focussed on the class of small
enclosures which have the closest morphological affinities with examples
from eastern Yorkshire. It is now necessary to consider an additional
class of enclosures which may also be funerary in character, despite their
larger size, different distribution and occurrence in isolation rather
than in groups.

Between 1961 and 1974 St.Joseph recorded a series of enclosures
varying between 15m and 30m in diameter in the departments of Somme and
Loiret. Although examples from Breilly (Somme), Coudray (Loiret),
Airanes (Somme) and Cardonnette (Somme) lie entirely on their own, one
square at Longpré-les-Amiens (Somme) is associated with a single and two
multiple ring ditches (St. Joseph, 1962, Pl.37a), while the combination
of one square and one circle has been photographed at Bertangles (Somme)
and Pierrepont-sur-Arne (Somme). The characteristics shown by this small
sample are reflected in the results obtained by Agache. In addition to
the examples photographed by St.Joseph, Agache has listed 70 sites at
which the same distinctive square enclosures have been seen (Agache, 1975).
This larger series confirms that the features are concentrated in the
central Somme Basin around Amiens, and published photographs of ten of

the sites illustrate the homogeneity of this class of enclosure, again

typified by an absence of entrance ways (Agache 1962, Figs. 53,65; 1964,

Figs. 138,139; 1970, Figs. 316,326-329,331,350). Agache confirms that

his examples "ils se recontrent souvent isolément, parfois par deux,

mais jamais par groupes denses, comme c'est le cas dans la vallée de

Yonne, en Bourgogne et dans le Centre-Est de la France" (Agache, 1970,

32). Although the majority of these enclosures show little in the way of

internal features, some signs of central disturbance, possibly related to

graves, have been noted at Cagny (Agache, 1970, Fig. 329) and within an

unusually small enclosure at Conde-Folie. Furthermore, a second enclosure

at Conde-Folie may show traces of a heavily ploughed central barrow mound

(Agache, 1970, Fig. 350 and p. 32). Although it has been confirmed that

an example from Allonville contained a La Tène II cremation (Ferdiere et

al, 1973), there is as yet insufficient excavation evidence to determine

whether the Somme Basin enclosures are generally funerary in character.

Even if it could be confirmed that the series of isolated western

squares habitually contain single burials (or, in view of their larger

size, groups of graves) it will still be necessary to draw a fundamental

distinction between them and their smaller, grouped counterparts in

Champagne, which at the present time present the closest analogies for

the sites from eastern Yorkshire.


## Southern England

In seeking parallels for square barrows in parts of Britain beyond

the chalklands of eastern Yorkshire Stead was able to identify a number

of small square earthworks that had survived destruction in unploughed

upland areas of Dorset, Sussex and Gloucestershire, although none of these has provided confirmation of a La Tène funerary function (Stead, 1965, 23-24). Furthermore, these examples, which have been recorded at Didling, Sussex; Winterbourne Steepleton, Dorset; and close to the Iron Age hillfort at Leckhampton, Gloucs, all take the form of low earthen mounds surrounded by square-plan embanked enclosures rather than the perimeter ditches that characterise Arras Culture barrows. The only Wessex barrow which has been associated positively with a square ditched enclosure was excavated at Handley, Dorset, but provided inconclusive evidence of its date and cultural associations (White, 1970). Although it was apparent that the central burial had taken the form of a cremation, the disturbed nature of the deposit prevented the excavator from determining whether the interment should be associated with the later Iron Age or Romano-British pottery recovered from the site.

Aerial photography has been unable to reveal further examples of possible funerary enclosures in central or western counties of southern England, but a series of nearly 50 crop mark sites in the East Midlands and East Anglia requires more serious consideration (Fig. 45 and Appendix D.3). In the absence of adequate excavation any assessment of this sequence of features must nevertheless be based entirely on morphological characteristics shared with the enclosures from eastern Yorkshire and northern France. The majority of the more convincing examples lie on the archaeologically rich river gravels of the Trent, Welland and Ouse, where their distribution corresponds well with that of East Midland crop marks in general. A second group of square enclosure sites has been identified in a fairly restricted area of southern Essex and requires similar attention.

Within the Trent Valley the most superficially barrow-like enclosures are those that lie between the parallel ditches of a Neolithic cursus near Aston-on-Trent, Derbyshire (D.3.6). In 1967 one of the 5 or 6 visible enclosures, whose similarity to Yorkshire barrow enclosures had already been recognised by St.Joseph (1966), was excavated in order to determine whether it was indeed a La Tène barrow. The results of this work were unfortunately inconclusive, for although Iron Age pottery sherds were recovered from the upper levels of the ditch filling, no traces could be found of a central burial, surrounding bank or barrow mound. The general shape of the feature nevertheless conformed well with that of Yorkshire barrows, and in view of the relative shallowness of the ditches the excavator argued that any upstanding earthwork, along with the burial beneath it, might have been removed by many generations of arable cultivation (May, 1970, 20 and Fig. 2).

A pair of enclosures lying in close proximity at Oakthorpe, Leics (D.3.30), and a single example from Tixall, Staffs (D.3.46), bear a similar resemblance to La Tène barrows in the use of softened sub-angular corners and in a complete absence of entrance causeways across the ditch circuit. A sequence of about 5 crop marks enclosures at Lockington, Leics (D.3.29), are less convincing, however, as at least one member of the group shows traces of a possible entrance, which may suggest, if not imply, a domestic rather than funerary function. A group of variously aligned enclosures which have been recorded on several occasions on the banks of the Trent at North Muskham, Notts (D.3.38) are similarly confusing. Here it is the narrowness of the ditches, coupled with the unusual angularity of the corners, which prevents close comparison with

the true square barrows, although it does appear that each of the enclosures is again without a defined entrance (Fig. 46). The size of the examples from both Lockington and North Muskham seems to range between 10m and 15m and is certainly compatible with the examples from eastern Yorkshire.

The most important of the Welland valley enclosure groups lies within an extensive system of crop marks at Greatford, Lincs (D.3.32), which apparently represents a major area of Iron Age and Romano-British rural settlement. At least 6 small squares, none of them with obvious entrance causeways, can be seen here arranged roughly in a row. With the exception of the most northerly example, which is tilted to one side, all the squares have approximately the same alignment and are of the same size (7 - 9m) and sharply-angled shape (Fig. 47). Although their regular positioning suggests a coherent and organised group, it is difficult to determine whether small dark marks at the centres of at least two of the squares should be interpreted as grave pits or as stray members of a loose group of occupational pits which lie in the same modern field. A smaller cluster of four squares has also been photographed at Dowsby, Lincs (D.3.31), while further up the Welland Valley there is a clearly defined pair of enclosures at Ketton, Leics (D.3.28). Like the Greatford examples, the Ketton squares appear to have a common alignment, but fail to show obvious internal features, although this may be due in part to the very ripe condition of the overlying crop. The two enclosures lie approximately 30m apart and show no direct association with any other crop mark features, although three large ring ditches and two larger enclosures can be recognised some 75m to 150m to the north.

No square enclosures have yet been identified in the otherwise archaeologically rich Nene valley, but an interesting and well-defined row of squares was photographed close to the banks of the Ouse at Hemingford Grey, Cambs (D.3.6), during the exceptional summer conditions of 1975 (Fig. 48). In this instance there is little evidence that the enclosures have any connection with settlement features. Each of the three squares in the group is 8m - 10m in diameter and none shows traces of either entrances or central graves, although the width of the ditches and the slight rounding of the corner angles is strikingly similar to orthodox barrows.

A series of isolated square enclosures from southern Essex also have morphological affinities with square barrows, although the poor definition of some of the crop marks renders close comparison difficult. This series of examples, all of which lie in an area of dense prehistoric, Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon settlement on the gravel terraces north of the Thames estuary, were recorded for the first time during the summers of 1975 and 1976. Probably the most convincing examples are a pair of enclosures lying approximately 10m apart at Birch (D.3.11), although both of these have apparently been cut by a linear ditch relating to one of several large rectilinear settlement enclosures of later Iron Age or Romano-British date. Single isolated enclosures at Langford, Gray's Thurrock, Little Baddow, Mount Bures, Great Braxted and Langham are all associated with ring ditches (D.3.12,14,16,18,20 and 22), although it is impossible to determine from photographic evidence whether all or any of these are funerary enclosures rather than domestic structures. At Gray's Thurrock (D.3.12) the relationship between the square enclosure

and ring ditch is particularly interesting, as both lie close together within a slightly larger rectangular enclosure with at least two well-defined entrances. At Little Baddow (D.3.20), however, the nature of the association is different, with the square enclosure actually confined within the ring ditch. In this instance there does appear to be a small central feature resembling a grave, and at Hatfield Peverel (D.3.15) similar dark marks can be identified within a single square and three probably circular enclosures clustered within a larger ditched rectangle. Among the remaining examples of square enclosures in Essex, those at Stanway (D.3.23), Wivenhoe (D.3.24) and a second site at Langham (D.3.19) seem to be associated with prehistoric settlement sites and can only be related to others in the series in terms of their general shape, small size and lack of visible entrances.

Interpretation of the square enclosures from the East Midlands and Essex cannot easily be made in the absence of detailed investigation on the ground, although it is difficult to trace any record of such features having been excavated in the context of conventional Iron Age settlement sites in the region. There is therefore no particular reason why the examples recognised from the air should have a domestic rather than a ritual, or more specifically, funerary function. Indeed, the characteristic absence of entrance causeways may add weight to the latter alternative, for although there can be few forms of secular enclosure to which a means of access is undesirable, it is quite normal for a funerary enclosure to entirely surround the burial area.

Detailed study of the Iron Age burial traditions of southern Britain has shown that inhumation beneath barrows is indeed restricted to eastern Yorkshire and that the related inhumation forms used over a wider area of southern England during the later centuries of the pre-Roman Iron Age are never associated with square ditched enclosures. During the closing decades of the first century B.C., however, the introduction of cremation as a novel disposal technique provides the possibility of renewed contact with north-eastern France and with it the notion that it may eventually be possible to relate some small square enclosures with La Tène III burials. As we have already seen, the practice of using such enclosures for single graves or larger groups of burials continued in northern France through the La Tène III phase and into the period of Roman occupation. In south-eastern England Aylesford Culture cremations have been found associated with square or rectangular enclosures on only three occasions. At Owslebury, Hants (F.83) a single inhumed warrior and 18 cremations were all confined within two rectangular enclosures (Collis, 1968, 23-28), while at St. Albans (F.101) several groups of cremations were similarly enclosed within the King Harry Lane cemetery. More important still from our present point of view is the single 8m square with a solitary central cremation reported from Baldock, Herts (Stead, personal communication). This particular example is so strikingly similar in size to the small enclosures identified as crop marks that it becomes tempting to question whether similar features may not have escaped notice in the course of excavation elsewhere in south-eastern England, just as the barrow ditches of Yorkshire were overlooked by all but the most recent excavators. If this were the case it would be no coincidence that so many of the examples have been photographed in

southern Essex, for this area has consistently provided one of the densest concentrations of insular La Tène III cremations (Fig. 54).

The attraction of this hypothesis is marred only by a number of distributional inconsistencies that cannot be ignored entirely. Firstly, it must be remembered that early British La Tène III cremations are equally well-known south of the Thames in northern Kent but that a square enclosure has been recognised only once among the wealth of crop marks that lie along the western extension of the North Downs and on the chalk ridge of the Isle of Thanet (D.3.27). A second difficulty can be seen as an exact inversion of the first. Although it is possible to detect square enclosures in the densely settled river valleys of the East Midlands, La Tène III cremations cannot be associated with these areas, their distribution lying no further north than the Trinovantian or Catuvellaunian territories of northern Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire. A slight outward extension of this zone might be capable of absorbing the group of three enclosures from Hemingford Grey, but it is at present difficult to accept that the examples from the Trent and Welland valleys could be tied to the south-eastern cremation rite. Until further excavation can be conducted on an adequate sample of square enclosures in both Essex and the East Midlands there can be little chance of reaching more useful conclusions about this sequence of suggestive, but problematical features.

Chapter 5

## Inhumations with swords

Although almost all general studies of the British Iron Age

emphasise the continuous process of cultural change that was occurring

during the pre-Roman period, few have attempted, until very recently,

to understand or interpret the mechanics of the systems that could have

introduced novel features into the extant material and ethical assemblages.

It is vital in terms of southern Britain, with its confusion of native

and continental metalwork and pottery traditions, that there should be

some solution to this problem in order that recourse to damagingly

extreme invasionist and anti-invasionist positions will become unnecessary.

It was argued at the outset of this study that rituals of death might be

an important source of data for the determination of real cultural

identity, on the grounds that ritual activity is less easily modified than

ceramic, metalworking and decorative traditions.  In most situations the

latter activities are governed by few of the rules and prescriptions that

ordain the form of burial rites and thus it is that the shape of bowls or

brooches need sometimes imply no more than a change of fashion amongst the

community concerned.  A dramatic change in disposal technique, however,

suggests a major restructuring of the fundamental belief system.  Whereas

the occurrence of foreign material forms within an otherwise unchanged

cultural assemblage can be explained in terms of shifting patterns of trade

and diffusion, the presence of alien burials is of much greater significance

and may indicate the actual movement of people, as well as of ideas and

materials.

An example of this phenomenon has already been highlighted in discussion of the origins of the Arras Culture sequence in the previous chapter and we shall shortly have to consider the parallel problems surrounding the introduction of the apparently foreign tradition of La Tène III cremation burial to south-eastern England during the later first century B.C. In the meantime it is important that closer attention should be paid to a third, and in many ways more problematical, series of continentally derived burials involving the inhumation of male warriors with swords and other items of martial equipment. In discussing the relatively small insular sample of such burials it will be seen that there is a fundamental difference between their widely scattered geographical distribution and the relatively restricted and regionally coherent groupings of the Yorkshire inhumation cemeteries and the south-eastern Aylesford Culture burial grounds. The absence of any distinct sword-burial cultural zone to match those of the Arras and Aylesford cultures will, in particular, raise a number of serious questions regarding immigration and settlement from abroad. Whereas conventional concepts of major population movement might still be tenable in the south-east and in Yorkshire, these may have to be augmented in the case of the warrior burial sequence by an awareness of the possibility of an additional pattern of settlement operating on a very much less formal and centralised basis.

Until a few years ago it was thought that the tradition of sword burial was restricted in Britain to a tiny area of the Yorkshire Wolds, with but a single outlier in East Anglia (Stead, 1965, 68). Further examples of this distinctive form of burial have since been discovered (and rediscovered from older accounts) in other parts of Britain and now

provide a larger and very much more scattered sample which has been the subject of further consideration by I.M. Stead (1968, 173-8; 1969, 353-4) and a more lengthy contribution by J.R. Collis (1972). In the latter paper, which was concerned with all classes of British Iron Age burial associated with items of weaponry, Collis attempted to cover much of the material that had previously, and independently, been collected for this present chapter. It will be found, however, that his approach to the problem of warrior inhumation differs in many respects from that adopted here. In particular it will be argued that his conclusions regarding the insular adoption of the tradition are both simplistic and unacceptable, having been based not only on a misleadingly superficial definition of the rite itself, but also on a wholly inadequate consideration of the widely varying and universally contrasting regional funerary and cultural contexts in which it has been recorded, both in this country and abroad.

Before attempting to re-evaluate the overall cultural implications of the series it is therefore essential that we should begin with the form and context of the individual graves and burial-groups, in order that the range of variation and conformity between these can be determined and the essential characteristics of the rite and any subsidiary traditions adequately defined. In the course of this exercise our attention will be devoted solely to the 25 British and Irish inhumations that were certainly or probably associated with La Tène II or III swords (Fig. 49). La Tène III cremations from Snailwell (F.36), and Stanfordbury (F.11.1) whose grave groups include fragmentary shields, and a further cremation with an anthropoid dagger from Ham Hill (F.144) clearly belong to a quite separate tradition and will receive no further discussion at this stage. We shall

similarly ignore, for the present, a number of inhumations associated

only with spear-heads, for these again fail to conform to the basic

pattern of true warrior-inhumation and probably fall more happily within

the context of native burial traditions.

Although the total distribution of sword graves is exceptionally

widespread and now includes examples from Norfolk, Hampshire, Dorset,

Oxfordshire, Anglesey and the western coast of Ireland (Fig. 50), it can

be recognised that the heaviest concentration still lies within the area

of the Yorkshire Wolds already associated with the major cemeteries of

the Arras Culture. The best known of these north-eastern burials are

the three well-endowed examples from Bugthorpe (E.4), North Grimston (E.11)

and Grimthorpe (E.7) that formed the basis for Stead's original assessment

of the warrior tradition in Britain.

The circumstances surrounding the discovery of the first of these,

the Bugthorpe burial, are unfortunately unknown, it being recorded simply

that the surviving sword and a group of decorated bronze discs and studs,

perhaps to be interpreted as shield fittings, were associated with an

inhumed skeleton encountered during drainage work in 1860. In the cases

of North Grimston and Grimthorpe, however, the evidence is rather better,

the excavation of both graves having been supervised and subsequently

published by J.R. Mortimer (1869, 180-2; 1905, 354-7). At North Grimston

it was therefore confirmed that the skeleton of the warrior lay extended

in a shallow grave with its head directed to the south, and that the body

was accompanied by a short iron sword with a bronze anthropoid hilt, a

longer sword in an iron scabbard and the entire carcass of a pig placed by

the left side of the body. The remaining objects from the grave included a circular bronze belthook, two sword suspension rings, amber and jet rings and lengths of bronze tubing, possibly from a shield.

At the time of its discovery and for many years afterwards the North Grimston grave, like its Bugthorpe counterpart, was thought to lie in complete isolation and to have been unprotected by any form of surmounting barrow mound. Recent aerial photography has, however, revealed crop marks of at least four square barrow enclosures at the burial site and it would therefore now seem probable that the warrior had in fact been interred within a small, but conventional Arras Culture cemetery, even if his own grave may never have been covered by a barrow (D.2.5).

Although subsequent excavation has now confirmed that no comparable barrows ever existed within the interior of the univallate hillfort at Grimthorpe (Stead, 1968), the association of the third warrior with four simple unaccompanied, but apparently contemporary, crouched inhumations again suggests that richer sword burials can occur within the context of native burial grounds. In this instance, moreover, the warrior also lay crouched on his left side, the head once more being directed to the south. Although Mortimer failed to provide a drawing of the burial deposit, Stead has been able to reconstruct the arrangement of the accompanying objects from verbal descriptions (Stead, 1968, Fig. 11) and has shown that the characteristic long sword was placed at the right of the body, which was itself covered by a wooden shield, with a bronze boss and fittings. Other objects associated with the grave included an iron spearhead, a decorated bronze disc analogous to the examples from Bugthorpe, a coral bead mounted on a bronze pin and 16 bone points, perhaps used to fasten a shroud.

The remaining Yorkshire sword burials are either very poorly documented, as in the cases of the vaguely reported associations of bones with an anthropoid hilted weapon from Clotherholme (E.12), near Ripon, and an enamel-decorated sword from Thorpe in the Gypsey Race Valley (E.9); or are of a very much simpler and less flamboyant kind. The latter category includes a single burial from the extensive Eastburn cemetery (E.6) that was provided with a short iron sword in a wooden sheath, and at least ten inhumations from Burton Fleming accompanied by essentially similar broad-bladed weapons and occasional iron spearheads (E.5). Although the Eastburn burial seems to have been crouched like all its more conventional counterparts in the cemetery, the Burton Fleming examples belong without exception to the secondary sequence of extended east-west oriented burials from the site, and may therefore belong to a distinct local sub-tradition, only loosely related to the main warrior rite.

With the exception of the important, but in many respects unique, extended inhumation of a warrior buried with a bone-hilted anthropoid sword resting across its chest beneath a medieval cemetery at Shouldham in West Norfolk (E.10), the remaining English graves with swords all come from a relatively restricted area within central southern England. In no case, however, has more than a single example ever been found at any one site, nor is it yet possible to discern any clear distributional pattern within the region, several of the burials having been found in otherwise disparate cultural contexts.

Perhaps the most striking in this respect is the warrior grave encountered at the centre of a rectangular funerary enclosure adjoining

the later Iron Age and early Romano-British settlement at Owslebury,

a few miles south-east of Winchester (E.3). Here the body of a middle

aged man had been buried in an extended position with its head directed

to the north in a cemetery subsequently devoted entirely to La Tène III

and early post-conquest cremation burial. The contrast between the

solitary inhumation and the sequence of later cremations is all the more

striking in view of the selection and physical arrangement of the warrior's

grave goods. Just as at Grimthorpe, the body was covered by a shield with

a central bronze boss and had been provided with a long iron sword placed

by the right arm and a spear with an iron head laid along the left side

of the body. Two bronze rings and a circular winged belt-hook found close

to the sword are clearly the fittings for a shoulder strap and baldrick.

Another spearhead and a very similar set of suspension equipment

were also associated with the sword that accompanied the body of a younger

adult warrior from Whitcombe in southern Dorset (E.2). In this case,

however, there were no observable traces of a shield, the remaining grave

goods comprising a La Tène II brooch, an iron hammer head, a perforated

chalk pommel and a further iron tool of unknown purpose. The Whitcombe

warrior differs from his Owslebury counterpart, moreover, in having been

found within a small inhumation burial ground belonging to a Durotrigian

farming community. Like all the other eleven skeletons excavated, his

body had been placed in a crouched position on its right side and only

deviated from the apparently strict local norms by being oriented towards

the SE rather than to the E (Fig. 17).

The circumstances surrounding the burial of the third warrior to
have been discovered in recent years are different yet again, the
grave having in this case been found in apparent isolation at St Lawrence,
on the south coast of the Isle of Wight (E.9). It nevertheless deserves
to be recalled that the contracted skeletons of an adult female and
child were found within a hundred yards of the warrior grave site some
forty years earlier, in 1921 (A.2.26), and that there are at least four
other reports of similar later Iron Age crouched inhumations from the
same very restricted area of the Undercliff between Niton and Ventnor (A.2.27-30).
In the light of this seemingly strong local burial tradition it therefore
comes as no surprise that the St Lawrence warrior was itself considered
to have been buried with the legs flexed or contracted to the side. Severe
disturbance of the burial deposit had confused the positions of both the
skeleton and its accompanying objects, but the presence of the now familiar
combination of an iron sword, its suspension rings and a shield boss
strongly suggest an arrangement similar to that used at Grimthorpe and
Owslebury.

This distinctive pattern may also be used as a means of defining a
fourth, unpublished, southern warrior burial from Sutton Courtenay in
Oxfordshire (E.13). Although the metalwork associated with this grave,
which was accidentally unearthed in the course of gravel-digging close
to the River Thames in 1826, is now lost, the surviving manuscript
descriptions refer to a contracted skeleton covered by a shield with an
iron boss and accompanied by an iron object described as a weapon and at
least one bronze suspension ring. Further evidence of the late Iron Age,
rather than pagan Saxon, origin of the burial is provided by a surviving

watercolour illustration of no less than five La Tène III brooches said to have been associated with the skeleton (Fig. 51). Although such a large collection of brooches is entirely unprecedented in the context of any British Iron Age inhumation and may, in the light of an additional description of a group of associated pottery vessels filled with 'ashy' soil, imply the presence of one or more Aylesford Culture cremations, there is no reason to doubt that the inhumation is indeed a conventional warrior burial.

Less satisfactory in every respect are two further suggested burials from Bradford Peverell (E.1) and Bulbury in Dorset. The former of these two, like the examples from Clotherholme and Thorpe in Yorkshire, is known only through an unsatisfactory verbal account that the surviving sword hilt was found with bones, while the existence of the latter burial, already discussed in an earlier chapter, rests solely on an hypothetical assumption that another sword handle and other items of metalwork are less likely to have come from a founder's hoard than from a rich male grave (Cunliffe, 1972, 293-306).

Moving away from Wessex there are two final sword burials from Gelliniog Wen (E.15), in Anglesey, and Lambay Island (E.14), off the coast of Co. Dublin, that deserve particularly careful attention on account of their exceptionally isolated locations. The Gelliniog Wen burial was discovered in 1909 and comprised an extended skeleton lying with its head at the western end of a cist lined and covered with flat stone slabs. The only objects known to have been associated with the body were an iron sword with a bone hilt, contained in a leather scabbard, and a single

fragmentary iron suspension ring. The Lambay Island deposit may, by contrast, be more complicated and derives from the unscientific excavation of a series of crouched inhumations in the course of work on the construction of a harbour wall in 1927. The individual associations of the considerable range of surviving metalwork published by Macalister (1929, 240-246; Pls XXII, XXIV-XXV) are therefore unknown, although it may be possible to argue the existence of at least two particularly wealthy burials, one accompanied by a fragmentary iron sword, a group of bronze scabbard mounts, a shield boss and perhaps one or more bronze and iron rings, and the other associated with an iron mirror with a simple bar handle. A penannular bronze collar ornamented with eight cast bronze heads belongs to a widespread northern class of similar objects and would perhaps be appropriate in the context of a mirror burial, by analogy with the beaded necklaces from Birdlip (A.2.14) and Trelan Bahow (C.7). Two Dolphin brooches and a thistle brooch may similarly belong to other, and perhaps rather later, burials, but a La Tène III Langton Down brooch matches the example from Sutton Courtenay and might perhaps have been buried with the warrior, as could a bronze disc decorated with elaborate repoussé curvilinear La Tène motifs. The purpose of this, and comparable discs from the River Bann in Londonderry and Annalore, Co. Monaghan, is uncertain, although it may be significant that a fourth example was associated with an anthropoid hilted sword from a La Tène inhumation grave at Châtillon-sur-Indre (Jope and Wilson, 1957, 98).

Taken as a whole, the Lambay Island burials still present a number of very serious problems of interpretation, many of which are unlikely to receive satisfactory explanations. For the present, however, it is sufficient to recognise that the practice of crouched inhumation is otherwise

unknown in the context of the Irish Early Iron Age and that insular

British La Tène and Early Romano-British metalwork also tends to be

uncommon in the province. The combined presence of these two elements

at Lambay Island would therefore seem to provide strong evidence of the

presence of a small immigrant community in the area; similar perhaps

to that which was responsible for the contemporary Late La Tène cremation

found near Donaghdee in Co. Down (K.1).

Having described the individual burials in some detail it is now

important to assess whether any overall themes can be isolated, either

in terms of the selection of objects, or regardingthe physical arrangement

of the corpse in the grave.

The first distinction that should be drawn is between warriors

buried with single swords and those associated with a fuller complement

of supporting equipment. In addition to the more doubtful burials from

Clotherholme, Thorpe, Bradford Peverell and Bulbury, the former category

includes the simple sword graves from Eastburn and Burton Fleming, the

Bugthorpe burial and the isolated burials from Shouldham and Gelliniog

Wen. Although the sword from the latter grave was accompanied by a single

suspension ring and that from Bugthorpe with an enigmatic decorated bronze

disc, none of the burials from this series come close to matching the

better-endowed group that includes Whitcombe, Owslebury, St Lawrence, and

perhaps Sutton Courtenay, in the south; Grimthorpe and North Grimston from

the north, and probably Lambay Island in the extreme west. Although the

individual selection of objects in these latter burials can vary, all

include some pieces from a range that comprises, at its most distinctive

level, sword-suspension rings, shields, spear-heads and belthooks.

Although Owslebury is the only grave that contained all four classes of

object, the others each yielded at least two, and more usually three,

elements from the repertoire, with particular emphasis on sword rings,

which were absent only at Grimthorpe, and perhaps Lambay Island; and

shields which seem to have been placed in every grave but Whitcombe.

In a number of instances, moreover, the lack of certain standard objects

is compensated by the presence of additional specially chosen pieces,

such as the La Tène II brooch, iron hammer and chalk pommel from the

Whitcombe grave; the decorated bronze disc and bone points from

Grimthorpe; the pig skeleton from North Grimston or the group of five

La Tène III brooches possibly associated with the Sutton Courtenay

skeleton.

The broad similarities in the range of essentially martial equipment

from these seven complex graves is matched, apparently, by a complementary

preference for placing the spear and the sword and its strap or baldrick

fittings by the side of the body, and the shield, when present, over the

chest and probably the head. This distinctive and essentially logical

pattern has been confirmed in varying degrees at Grimthorpe, Owslebury,

Whitcombe and Sutton Courtenay, and was in all probability adopted for the

three remaining, but less adequately documented, burials in the group.

In view of this consistency it is therefore surprising to find that the

burials differ from one another in terms of body position and orientation.

Whereas Grimthorpe, Whitcombe, St Lawrence, Sutton Courtenay and Lambay

Island were all probably crouched in the manner of native insular tradition,

North Grimston and Owslebury both adopted an extended posture that is more

strongly characteristic of continental European La Tène inhumation

traditions. This supine posture nevertheless recurs in the cases of the

later Burton Fleming graves and in the two simpler sword burials from Shouldham and Gelliniog Wen, and it is perhaps not coincidental that both these latter examples come from areas in which no strong local tradition of crouched burial has yet been identified. At Shouldham and Burton Fleming, moreover, the sword was sometimes placed across the chest of the corpse, rather than along the side, in a manner that is again atypical.

Orientation is similarly variable in the few situations in which it has been recorded. The Grimthorpe and North Grimston warriors thus lay with their heads to the south in a manner that is compatible with the north or south preferences of the main Arras Culture sequence, while at Whitcombe the south-easterly orientation matched that of the other inhumations from the cemetery. The northerly alignment of the Owslebury warrior also happens to coincide with the predominant preference of the main pit-burial sequence from central Wessex, although in this instance the unusual context of the burial makes it difficult to determine whether the similarity was really intended. Among the simpler sword burials, orientations are only known from Gelliniog Wen, where the already rather exceptional occupant of the grave lay with his head to the west, and at Burton Fleming where the examples were all directed to the east, or more exceptionally the west, in a way that has already been seen to contrast with the main Arras Culture preferences.

## Chronology

Before attempting a more detailed interpretation of the various

classes of sword burial and their origins it is essential that attention

be paid to the relative dates at which the individual burials may have

been performed, in order to determine whether the rite can be confined to

a limited, strictly defined phase, or emerges intermittently through a

longer period. The results of this exercise will be of considerable

importance in subsequent discussion of possible continental sources of

inspiration and it is therefore unfortunate that the dating evidence is

confined almost solely to associated metalwork, and in particular the swords,

shields, belthooks and brooches. With the exception of brooches, objects

of these classes tend not only to be relatively rare in closely dateable

contexts, but are frequently the highly individual products of specialist

metalworkers and as such can be compared only in terms of subtle, and often

necessarily subjective, stylistic analysis. Pieces of potentially high

intrinsic value, such as swords and shields, can, moreover, be expected

to have had unusually long individual life-times and may frequently have

been the subjects of trade and ceremonial exchange over wide areas, thereby

confusing the chronological and distributional perspectives still further.

While it might therefore be hoped that the material from the British

graves was manufactured near the home and during the life-time of the

owner with whom it was subsequently buried, this point cannot easily be

confirmed in any individual case.

These important reservations aside, the warrior burial metalwork

has fortunately been the subject of considerable attention in the past.

In addition to numerous references to the decorative characteristics of

individual pieces by Leeds (1933), Fox (1958), Megaw (1970) and other

writers discussing Celtic art and design in Britain, the swords and shields

have in particular been the subject of detailed typological analysis by

Piggott (1950), Hawkes (Clarke and Hawkes, 1955), Stead (1968) and

Savory (1976). Although the earlier of these studies may now need some

revision in the light of more recent discoveries, the necessarily

intensive level of reassessment required to bring them up to date lies

beyond the limited horizons of this present work. The critical summary

of the material evidence that follows will therefore be framed in terms

of existing typological and chronological assessments; minor qualifications

and adjustments being added only where these seem appropriate to the

particular class of burial under discussion.

The earliest of the true sword burials is almost certainly Shouldham,

to which Hawkes ascribed a date within the third century B.C. on the

grounds of the supposedly imported anthropoid hilted weapon with a human

headed pommel found lying across the torso of the skeleton (Clarke and

Hawkes, 1955, 206, Pl. XXIV, 1 and 3). Even though this sword is the sole

member of its Early La Tène sub-class to have been recorded in Britain,

and is thus difficult to date with any precision, there can be little doubt

that it is considerably older (at least in terms of its manufacture) than

any other sword from a British burial. It is indeed so much earlier, in

terms of Hawkes chronology, that it would seem essential, in future, to

regard Shouldham as an unique and separate middle Iron Age forerunner of

the main later Iron Age sequence of warrior burials, though derived in all

probability from the same continental La Tène tradition.

Further anthropoid swords are also known from Mortimer's extended

North Grimston burial and the more doubtful Clotherholme grave, but in

each case the weapons belonged to the developed knobbed-hilted western

Class F which is believed to have made its first appearance in Britain

during the later second century B.C. (Clarke and Hawkes, 1955, 211).

While it is possible that the Clotherholme sword was indeed buried at

this time, the North Grimston weapon, regarded as another imported

piece by Hawkes, was associated with a conventional long iron sword of

Piggott's Group II 'Hunsbury' form. Although undecorated and lacking

its scabbard chape, this latter weapon belongs to an essentially southern

British La Tène II type, otherwise first recorded only in later first

century B.C. contexts at sites such as Llyn Cerrig Bach, and known to

survive, on the basis of finds from Spettisbury and Bredon Hill, into the

middle decades of the first century A.D. (Piggott, 1950, 10 and Fig. 5).

While the North Grimston sword could, as Piggott has argued, be an

exceptionally early member of the series, it is also feasible to suggest

that the less adequately dated anthropoid sword, used to substantiate

this claim, might have been a late survival. This latter possibility is

further reinforced by the two swords from Grimthorpe and Bugthorpe, both

of which offer better material for stylistic analysis and belong to

Piggott's north-eastern Group III (the 'Bugthorpe' type) as contemporary

first century B.C. derivatives from Group II (Piggott, 1950, 12). The

dating of these swords with their distinctive massive-lipped chapes, has

been discussed widely, but being works of master craftsmen the pieces

present features absorbed from many different insular decorative traditions.

A date of c. 75 B.C. offered by Fox for the Bugthorpe scabbard, the bronze

front-plate of which is decorated along the whole of its length with an

irregular running series of curvilinear motifs whose 'matted' infilling

harks back to the decorative elements of Group II swords from Hunsbury and

Amerden, and forwards to the fully developed La Tène III technique of
the later British mirror plates, has nevertheless been accepted tacitly
by both Piggott and Stead (Fox, 1945, 215;  Piggott, 1950, 14;  Stead,
1965, 69).  At Grimthorpe, moreover, this same early to mid-first century
B.C. horizon is supported by the additional evidence of the inscribed
bronze disc ornament, equated in terms of its decoration with the
crescentic plaque from Llyn Cerrig Bach (Fox, 1946, 38 and Pl.1;  Savory,
1976, 187-189), and the set of surviving shield fittings.  While this
shield is in some respects unique amongst insular examples derived from
continental La Tène II prototypes in having the central boss and spine
covers cast as separate pieces, rather than as a single component (Stead,
1968, 176), there can be little doubt that the pair of kidney shaped
bronze plates that flanked the central bronze umbo are related to the
fully developed crescentic plaques on the shields from Moel Hirradug and
Tal-y-Llyn.  Although Savory has inclined to place these latter pieces
before Grimthorpe in his suggested typological scheme on the grounds of
their decorative features (Savory, 1976, Fig. 1), Stead has argued
convincingly that the Grimthorpe shield's construction must give it
priority over the Welsh examples, both of which, moreover, come from
hoards containing later first century B.C. or first century A.D. material
(Stead, 1968, Fig. 18).  The gulf that separates the British shield
fittings from their iron butterfly-bossed counterparts from Europe is
nevertheless still very great and for the present it is therefore
impossible to go further than suggest that the Grimthorpe shield and its
accompanying sword were probably manufactured at about the same time
during the middle of the first century B.C.

Whether the broad-bladed swords with undecorated wooden or leather

sheaths from Burton Fleming and Eastburn belong to this same period is

uncertain, as the examples all belong to a localised class of weapon

that is unmatched within Piggott's earlier typological sequence. That

the Burton Fleming specimens all come from graves that appear to belong

to the latest cemetery phase would nevertheless seem to suggest that the

type may not have been current, at least as a funerary accompaniment,

until the pre-Conquest decades of the first century A.D. (Stead, 1977,

219, 222).

Moving once more to the southern and western series of burials it

can again be shown that the majority of the weapons belong somewhere

within the second half of the first century B.C. At Owslebury the broad-

bladed iron sword in a wooden scabbard is unambiguously related to the

general class of La Tène III swords that mark, as Piggott's 'Battersea'

Group V, the introduction of a new weapon-making tradition from the

continent. Although the precise source of the weapons and the date of their

arrival in this country have not yet been plotted adequately, it is

significant that the St Lawrence sword in a simple straight-mouthed iron

scabbard and the Whitcombe example in a wooden sheath are both of this

type and with Owslebury seem to augment the two comparable Group V swords

previously identified from burial contexts at Gelliniog Wen (in an iron

scabbard) and Lambay Island (through surviving open-work decorated scabbard

mounts). With the exception of these latter two swords, a group of

apparently similar examples from the Llyn Cerrig Bach votive deposit, just

a few miles from Gelliniog Wen, and a fragmentary scabbard mouth from

Westmorland, the distribution of Group V swords is confined to central

southern England and at this stage still seems to support the initial

equation of the introduction of the type with middle or later first century B.C. La Tène III immigration from northern France, even though such swords have never been found in the stricter context of Aylesford Culture cremation burials in England (Piggott, 1950, 21-2 and Fig. 13).

The southern and western shield fittings are less consistent in form than the swords and are thus more difficult to interpret. At Owslebury, for example, the boss is of bronze, like most of its insular counterparts, but is quite unlike all the other British pieces in form. Not only does it lack the metal spine-casings of the other shields, but the boss itself is provided with integral side-plates that give it the distinctive 'butterfly' shape of the continental middle La Tène strip-bosses of the La Tène or Vevey type (Collis, 1972, Fig. 4; Savory, 1976, Fig. 1). Unlike these earlier forms, however, the Owslebury example's central circular umbo rises to a point, more typical of later La Tène types, and suggests that the shield and an equally distinctive winged belthook of tinned bronze may both be pieces imported from the continent (Collis, 1972, 126-8; Fig. 4, Nos 5-6; Fig. 5).

The St Lawrence shield fittings are again unlike other insular examples, this time through being of iron rather than bronze. The fusion of the central umbo and the spine coverings to form a single vertically aligned construction is, however, firmly within the British tradition and serves to link the St Lawrence shield with, in particular, the Llyn Cerrig Bach, Wandsworth and South Cadbury fittings, all of which in their surviving forms lack the side plaques of the Grimthorpe-Moel Hirradug group (Stead, 1968, Fig. 18; Savory, 1976, 190; Spratling, 1973).

In the absence of clear descriptions or illustrations of the Sutton

Courtenay boss, which was apparently again made of iron, the only

remaining example is the curious bronze umbo from the Lambay Island

metalwork collection (Macalister, 1929, Pl. XXIII; Fig. 19). This

hemispherical piece, with a disc-shaped knob at the crest, was made in

two parts and from bronze of differing compositions. An upper cone,

with the knob, thus rested over, and was rivetted to, a lower one which

in turn has a broad basal flange for attaching the entire object to the

face of the shield. Although Macalister (1929, 243) specifically states

that the piece was found in the same grave as the sword, it is difficult

to find close insular parallels for the form in Britain without turning

to the knobbed bosses of Saxon or Viking date, all of which are invariably

of iron. Broadly comparable fittings are, however, recorded from a number

of continental burials, including Taubendorf, in eastern Prussia, and

Carniole, and would therefore suggest that the Lambay boss belongs some-

where within the wider sequence of continental La Tène III hemispherical

bosses (Dechelette, 1913, 582, Fig. 444, No. 2; 679, Fig. 495, No. 4).

The only remaining metal objects from the southern warrior graves

are a bronze brooch of La Tène II design from the shoulder of the Whitcombe

warrior and the group of five fibulae said to have been associated with

the Sutton Courtenay warrior and illustrated in two surviving contemporary

watercolour illustrations (Ashmolean Mus. Collection; Albert Way, MS. Vol.,

Fibulae, Society of Antiquaries Library, London). Three of these latter

pieces are unambiguous examples of developed La Tène III Colchester brooches

with fretted catchplates, while a fourth, whose foot has become masked

through prolonged contact with a corroding iron object, is almost certainly

a member of the same class (Fig. 51, 1-4). The remaining specimen, with

its ribbed bow and cylindrical spring cover belongs to the equally

distinctive 'Langton Down' class (Fig. 51, 5) and like its Colchester

counterparts represents a form that became common only during the early

decades of the first century A.D. While brooches of these developed types

are frequently found in Aylesford Culture cremation burials of Stead's

secondary Lexden phase (Stead, 1976, 412-414), none have ever been

encountered before with inhumations or Welwyn-phase cremations, nor has

so large a collection of brooches been reported from a single burial of

any cultural group in this country. There is therefore some reason to

suppose that the Sutton Courtenay deposit, which also included at least

two pottery vessels filled with dark 'ashy' soil, may have been more

complex than contemporary accounts suggest, and it is perhaps necessary

to consider the possibility that the warrior may, like his Owslebury

counterpart, have been buried close to one or more La Tène III cremations.


## Cultural origins

There can be little doubt that burials like those from Owslebury and

Grimthorpe, with their complete collections of personal armour laid

beside and over the deceased, derive their basic inspiration from a widespread

European class of later Hallstatt and La Tène warrior inhumations. No

detailed comparative work has so far been undertaken as regards the

history and distribution of the rite in its continental setting, but it is

clear from a cursory examination of available sources, and in particular

Déchellette's still invaluable material, that such burials occur in an area

stretching from Hungary in the east, through Bohemia, Switzerland, eastern

France and into Britain (Déchellette, 1914, Chapters 3 and 4, pp. 1012-1106).

The precise origins of the practice, which could conceivably have developed

independently within more than one stratified martial society of the

later first millennium B.C., is as yet uncertain, but there are

certainly examples of later Hallstatt sword inhumations from sites such

as Combe d'Ain in the Jura and even, perhaps, in Yorkshire, where a

Hallstatt 'C' bronze sword was supposedly associated with an inhumed

skeleton at Ebberston (Déchelette, 1913, 652-3;  Elgee, 1930, 172,179).

During the earlier La Tène phases sword burial, almost always in the

context of extended inhumation, can be seen as a major element in the

disposal traditions of the Champagne, Marne, Aisne, Bas Dauphine and

other regions of north-eastern France (Déchelette, 1914, Chapter 3, pp.

1012-61). The form of these burials seems to have been remarkably

standardised, as can be seen by comparing illustrations of Middle La

Tène examples from Vevey in Switzerland and Montfercault, Marne

(Déchelette, 1914, Figs 427 and 447). In both of these examples the

sword and spear by the side and the shield over the body recall vividly

the arrangement of the warrior's possessions in the Owslebury grave.

Unfortunately, however, any attempt to isolate the precise source of our

British warrior burials suffers from the same problems encountered in

analysis of the Yorkshire vehicle and square barrow burials. Although

the rite seems to have clear continental affinities, the presence of

indigenous weapons in the graves prevents close comparison in terms of

material typology. While the British burials may thus resemble those

from Europe in their general form, there can be no certainty, as with

so many adopted and modified importations, of the specific place of origin

or time of initial arrival. It is nevertheless possible to take this

matter a little further.

Throughout this study there has been a recurrent emphasis on the concept of crouched inhumation. A standard distinction between the insular Arras culture burials and their Marnian antecedents is that the former deviate strongly from the continental extended rule and adopt the more typically native crouched or contracted posture. The Grimthorpe and Eastburn warriors in the north, and the St Lawrence, Whitcombe, Sutton Courtenay and Lambay Island ones in the south and west, were similarly crouched, leaving only the early Shouldham skeleton and the three later warriors from Owslebury, Gelliniog Wen and North Grimston in the extended posture that would more happily reflect genuine first generation immigrants arriving in this country with a clear and unclouded memory of their homeland burial tradition.

As has been shown, all but one of these burials could be dated satisfactorily to a closely restricted period during the second half of the first century B.C. or earliest years of the next century, a time at which warrior inhumation appears largely to have been ousted from north-eastern France in favour of Late La Tène cremation practices. If inhumation with swords and other weapons had indeed become extinct throughout the whole of France by this time it would have to be supposed that the rite was introduced to Britain at an earlier period, and as evidence of this it is easy enough to cite the extended Shouldham burial with its anthropoid sword and (though with rather more caution) the comparable warrior grave from North Grimston. A further problem is raised, however, by the absence of burials in the period between Shouldham, in the later third or early second century B.C., and the majority of the very late sword graves. The extraordinarily scattered physical distribution

of these essentially post-Caesarean examples also adds a further

difficulty at this stage. Originally the presence of an isolated group

of such graves on the western slopes of the Yorkshire Wolds, close to

the seemingly intrusive cart-burials and barrow cemeteries of the eastern

and central Wolds, implied the presence of a second group of colonists,

either from the continent or from somewhere in southern England (Stead,

1965, 70). Now that similar burials have been found scattered throughout

widely differing cultural zones in central southern and western Britain

it is time to think again. That sword graves are still rare and are

always found in isolation in this country indicates that the rite was

not a normal one. This apparently alien and intrusive character is

further implied by the totally disparate contexts within which the

examples have been found. Either it must be supposed that the rite did

indeed appear at a time roughly defined by Shouldham and then persisted

in isolation before re-emerging with a wholly exceptional distribution

at the end of the first century B.C., or we have to consider the

possibility of further fresh arrivals at a later period. If the latter

were the case it might be assumed that each of the known burials

represented the presence of isolated groups of immigrants adopted by

various local communities in different parts of the country, but

retaining to varying degrees what they regarded as the essential features

of their own homeland rite. This second explanation is the most

attractive in the light of the chronological gap between Shouldham and

its successors, but is confused both by the normal association of La Tène

III colonists with the Aylesford Culture cremation tradition and by the

apparent absence of any comparable sequence of female burials to provide

a more respectable funerary assemblage. If any evidence of the latter

could be found, and if it could be demonstrated that sword burial persisted in certain regions of western France into the Caesarean decades of the first century B.C., the argument for secondary immigration would be greatly enhanced.

The problem of a corresponding female burial ritual is difficult and the evidence for an appropriate inhumation series is admittedly limited.  It is nevertheless worth considering at this point the distinctive, and otherwise exceptional, burials associated with bronze or iron handled mirrors and other unusually valuable objects.  Although a number of these might seem to belong to a later generation than some of the sword graves, their distribution and cultural characteristics are out of keeping with most native traditions and thus seem to have something in common with the warrior series (Fig. 50).  Leaving aside iron mirrors from conventional Arras Culture burials at Garton Slack (D.9) and the Arras cemetery itself (D.18.10 and 28), these examples are confined to southern and western Britain and include the Birdlip grave from Gloucestershire (A.2.14), one or more mirror burials from Mountbatten, Devon (C.15), a single example from a cist grave at Trelan Bahow on the Lizard peninsula (C.7), one from Bridport, on the Dorset coast (B.1), another from Lambay Island (E.14) and a final doubtful example from Bulbury in eastern Dorset (Cunliffe, 1972).

While this scattered sample of mirror inhumations, together with two further mirror-bearing cremations from Colchester (F.48) and Dorton (F.17), may reflect no more than a heightened desire for conspicuous funerary consumption amongst independent communities in the decades preceding the Roman Conquest, it is perhaps significant that the Lambay Island and

Bulbury mirrors both come from sites that have certainly or possibly yielded sword burials. In the case of Bulbury, moreover, the supposed female grave-group included a beaded necklace and one or more bronze bowls that exactly parallel the selection provided at Birdlip, where, it should be recalled, the skeleton lay in an extended, rather than crouched, position (Cunliffe, 1972, 306). The body postures used for the other inhumations in the series are unfortunately unknown, but the presence of beads and a brooch in the Trelan Bahow grave and the possible association of the Lambay mirror with a beaded bronze collar and one or more bronze brooches again provides a connection, albeit tenuous, with Birdlip and suggests a possible common theme running through the series. Even though no other group of correspondingly wealthy female burials has yet been identified in this country, it would be unwise, in the light of the existing evidence, to go further than to hint at a possible relationship between the mirror graves, which have admittedly limited continental affinities, and the main sequence of warrior graves.

Identification of a sword inhumation tradition surviving into the La Tène III period in mainland France is similarly difficult, although it must be admitted that insufficient work has yet been carried out on material from the Atlantic provinces, and in particular the Normandy region. That this area, or another further inland, may eventually reveal a continuation of the older warrior burial rite is implied by the evidence, published many years ago by T.D. Kendrick, from the Channel Islands of Alderney and Guernsey (Kendrick, 1928, 196-8; 241-252). Amongst a large number of stone-lined cists and a handful of conventional earth graves attributed generally to the Iron Age or Gallo-Roman periods, there are several that have yielded inhumations accompanied by weapons.

Leaving aside graves with swords and pottery vessels that no longer

survive or have never been the subject of published illustrations,

the most important burials were all found within two miles of one

another in the parishes of St Saviour and Catel in the north-western

corner of the island of Guernsey. In no case were bones sufficiently

well-preserved to allow their recognition by early excavators, but the

relatively consistent length and general proportions of the cists

strongly suggest that each was used for the burial of an extended body.

One of these, from Richmond, contained only a sword (Kendrick, 1928,

Fig. 88) and a single pottery vessel, but others from three separate

sites at Le Catioroc, Les Issues and La Hogue-au-Comte, all yielded

larger collections of material that included swords, iron shield bosses,

iron spearheads, glass and amber beads, and a number of pottery vessels

(Kendrick, 1928, 190-8, Figs 88-92). At least one of these swords,

that from La Hogue-au-Comte, was contained in a decorated scabbard whose

general breadth and rounded foot strongly suggest that it is a late La

Tène piece (Kendrick, 1928, Fig. 92,ii), while two very similar burnished

cordonned urns from Catioroc and Les Issues can probably be assigned to

the same period (Kendrick, 1928, Fig. 90). Although no modern study has

yet re-examined this material in detail, Kendrick's own descriptions and

Jaquetta Hawkes' subsequent observations (1938, 137) strongly imply that

these burials do indeed belong to the middle or later first century B.C.

and that they are, moreover, the only recognised Iron Age burials in the

islands, the earlier periods being barren of funerary evidence, like so

much of southern Britain.

It would thus appear that the graves from Guernsey and Alderney not only confirm the survival of warrior inhumation close to the time of our own insular examples, but that they may also imply that the introduction of the rite to the islands resulted from a similar pattern of emigration from the continental mainland. In seeking an appropriate stimulus for this new movement of people we have only to consider the numerous flight hoards of Gaulish and Armorican coins that have been found in the Channel Islands during the last two centuries (Hawkes, J., 1938, 123-8). One of these, the classic Le Catillon hoard, is widely thought to have been buried in, or shortly after, 56 B.C. by a wealthy Gaul fleeing in the face of the Caesarean conquest and submission of northern France. Bearing in mind that the successful conclusion of these campaigns would almost certainly have led to a universal, if only temporary, prohibition on the possession of offensive arms by the native tribes, the incentive for leaving the country would be even greater for any community whose burial customs required the provision of weapons in graves. It is thus possible to suggest that the Channel Island and insular British warrior burials may together provide a physical reflection of just such a refugee movement. That the British weapon-bearing graves almost invariably contain metalwork manufactured within this country need not weaken the argument, for if the continental settlers had arrived here without their own weapons, having converted their available wealth into portable gold coinage, they could have purchased new swords and shields from the communities with whom they made their new homes.

Until more British examples of sword-burial are known and the continental parallels are better understood, little more can be said,

except to reiterate the point that this particular continental intrusion, whether linked to the specific years of Julius Caesar's Gallic campaigns or to a broader and less well-defined period, is unlikely to have been effected by the sort of full-scale invasion that was formerly postulated in terms of the British Iron Age. Instead, the scattered geographical distribution of the burials and their frequent appearance alongside, and even partially influenced by, groups of native interments gives a vivid impression of small informal groups of settlers making their new homes wherever local communities were prepared to make them welcome.

Chapter 6

Late La Tène cremation in south-eastern England:   the Aylesford Culture

Throughout the earlier chapters of this study our attention has been
devoted almost exclusively to  the problems of a series of inhumation
traditions that emerged with differing degrees of strength and coherence
in widely scattered parts of Britain in the last centuries before the
Claudian conquest.  Despite the possession of certain shared insular
characteristics we have also seen that there are still sound and
acceptable reasons for arguing that at least two of these traditions, the
Yorkshire-based Arras Culture rite and the more restricted and specialised
practice of sword burial, owe much to funerary traditions developed by
continental communities during the Early and Middle La Tène periods.  In
this present section it is therefore essential that this survey of the
British Iron Age disposal traditions should be concluded with an
examination of the evidence for what has long been regarded as the
intrusive burial rite par excellence, the dramatically novel and
relatively profuse sequence of Late La Tène cremations traditionally
associated with the colonisation of south-eastern England by members of
the Belgic tribes of northern France.

It must nevertheless be emphasised from the outset that the following
brief discussion of the cremation tradition and its adoption and develop-
ment in this country will seek to provide no more than a summary account
of a topic that has already received considerable, and increasingly
detailed, attention over the years.  Although a further and fully
exhaustive reassessment of the combined burial evidence, and in particular

the overwhelmingly important ceramic element, is now urgently needed, such treatment lies beyond the limited scope of this present study. This present chapter will instead be confined to a broad, and necessarily still superficial, evaluation of the ritual characteristics, chronology and geographical distribution of the rite, and the socio-historical relationship of the new custom to the earlier and contemporary inhumation traditions in southern Britain. Efforts have, however, been made to compile here a more comprehensive catalogue of the known pre-conquest burials than has hitherto existed (Appendix F), and it is hoped that this gazetteer will eventually provide the basis for a more adequate consolidation of the groundwork laid by earlier writers.

Although pre-Roman cremation burials are known to have been discovered on nearly a dozen separate occasions in Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Northamptonshire, Essex and Kent between 1798 and 1885, the true character of the rite remained unrecognised until Sir Arthur Evans' publication of the now classic Aylesford cemetery, partially excavated under rescue conditions in the Medway Valley between 1886 and 1890 (Evans, 1890). Subsequent chance discoveries and more formal work by Bushe-Foxe at the neighbouring Kentish urnfield at Swarling in 1921 (Bushe-Foxe, 1925), and by Reginald Smith a few years earlier at Welwyn (Smith, 1912), then began to consolidate the archaeological evidence for the new and apparently intrusive tradition and allowed C.F.C. Hawkes and G.C. Dunning to establish the framework for all future work through the publication in 1930 of their seminal paper on the 'Belgae of Gaul and Britain'. In this work the authors sought not only to define the character of the cremation rite as it was then known in this country,

but successfully confirmed Evans' original suggestion that a similar
cremation technique, accompanied by a comparable, but longer established,
ceramic tradition, could be identified in northern France. The concluding
argument that these elements were carried to Britain in the wake of two
historically attested waves of Belgic migration during the first century
B.C. has until recently remained largely unchallenged, although
significant contributions by D.F. Allen and Ann Birchall began to shake
the essential simplicity of the invasion hypothesis in the early 1960's
(Allen, 1959, 1962; Birchall, 1965).

In the first of these studies Allen turned away from the funerary
and ceramic evidence to examine the distribution and chronology of
various sequences of Gallo-Belgic coinage imported to this country from
different regions of north-western France and Belgium. In so doing he
was able to identify at least six separate coin series, his Gallo-Belgic
A - F groups, which appeared on the basis of the available associational
and typological evidence to span the period between c.120 B.C. and the
Caesarean conquest of Gaul in 52 B.C., and thus to imply not two, but at
least five phases of colonisation, beginning as early as the late second
century B.C.

While of considerable significance in its own right this suggestion
of a prolonged period of continental influence quickly raised new and
more difficult problems in terms of the non-numismatic archaeological
evidence, for it was subsequently demonstrated by Birchall (1965),
Stead (1967,1976) and Peacock (1971) that the introduction of cremation,
together with that of wheel-thrown La Tène III ceramic pottery forms and

associated metalwork material, could not, on the basis of the available

evidence, be dated any earlier than c.50 B.C.  In the light of this

apparent hiatus between the introduction of the earliest coin sequences

and the first emergence of any supporting funerary or ceramic traditions

it became clear that the whole process of British 'belgicisation' was

likely to be more complex than had been envisaged previously, perhaps

involving an intricate history of wide-ranging diplomatic and commercial

ties between different tribal groups in addition to more straightforward,

but less easily attested, movements of migrant settlers.  As a result,

at least one recent writer has gone so far as to suggest that the

emergence of cremation in Britain may in fact reflect nothing more than

the adoption of a new and perhaps prestigious continental rite by a group

of innovative native communities (Rodwell, 1976, 218).  While declining

to espouse openly such an extreme view at this present stage, Stead has

similarly advocated a more critical approach to the problem by rejecting

further use of the historically-loaded term 'Belgic' in connection with

insular La Tène III burial, preferring instead to recognise a single

archaeological, cremation-using Aylesford Culture (Stead, 1976, 401).

This he would in turn divide into two successive chronological phases;

an earlier _Welwyn_ period, beginning c. 50-40 B.C., and a secondary _Lexden_

phase, emerging with  the introduction of imported Gallo-Belgic table-

wares c.15-10 B.C., and surviving up to and beyond the Roman Conquest in

A.D. 43.  Although some modification and refinement of this basic scheme

may eventually prove necessary, Stead's proposed terminology is likely to

gain widespread support in future and will therefore be followed here on

the grounds of its essential and unambiguous clarity.

A further introductory observation that deserves to be raised at this point concerns, quite simply, the methodological problem presented to prehistorians by a community's adoption of a flat-grave cremation technique. Leaving aside for the moment the less easily answered social and ideological questions that are inevitably raised by any such dramatic change in funerary procedure, it is immediately apparent that the practice of burning a corpse before burying the resultant ashes removes from the physical record a great deal of valuable evidence relating to the sex, age and pathology of the deceased. It can similarly be recognised that the reduction of a complicated articulated body to a compact and jumbled collection of fragmentary calcined bones drastically simplifies the act of burial itself, removing, as it does, the opportunity for the display of the complex postural and orientational preferences sometimes associated with inhumed burials. Evidence relating to socially established funerary ritual is therefore restricted in the case of cremations to the way in which the ashes themselves are interred and to the choice and physical arrangement of any accompanying grave-goods. While such information can indeed be of considerable value in defining regional and chronological variations in such traditions, the essentially fragile and subtle nature of the evidence tends to make accurate recording more difficult. The majority of insular La Tène III cremations have thus been found and recognised only through the chance discovery of associated ceramic and metalwork items; little, if anything, being known of the form of individual graves and the spatial organisation of their contents. In many cases, moreover, the accompanying ashes have been recognised only when these happened to have been contained within cinerary vessels lifted intact from their graves, and it is thus possible that large

numbers of unurned cremations or burials associated with purely organic

containers have in the past been overlooked. It is similarly likely that

many of the isolated, but unbroken, La Tène III ceramic vessels and

imported mediterranean amphorae now held in museum collections were also

once associated with such burials, even though those funerary contexts

may not have been appreciated at the time of their discovery. The

accompanying catalogue contained in Appendix F is therefore a necessarily

selective list that includes only those burials that are confirmed by

references to associated calcined bone or that are strongly implied by

the size and character of unassociated deposits of material objects. A

considerable, but less satisfactory, series of single ungrouped and

often poorly provenanced pottery vessels has been omitted on the grounds

that their association with burials, while likely, cannot legitimately

be assumed.


## The sites and their distribution

As a preliminary to a more detailed consideration of individual sites

and their chronology it will be useful to provide a brief description of

the overall geographical distribution of the known Aylesford Culture

cremation sites. With the exception of a single exceptional burial from

Donaghdee in Co. Down (K.1), the examples have all been recorded in an area

of southern England extending eastwards from Dorset and Somerset to the

Kent and Essex coasts and the margins of the Cambridgeshire Fens (Fig.

52). Within this roughly triangular region, however, the scatter of

burials varies considerably in density; some areas being entirely barren

of sites or represented by only a handful of widely dispersed examples,

while others are relatively densely populated and suggest stronger support for the new rite.

Turning first to counties lying south of the Thames it can be seen that the heaviest concentration of burials lies along the northern and southern margins of the North Downs in central and eastern Kent. At least 23 confirmed and four probable sites from the county can now be listed, and of these some 16 were apparently represented by small groups of cremations, rather than by individual, isolated graves. It is nevertheless unfortunate that most of these discoveries were made accidentally during the later 19th and early 20th centuries, often, as in the case of both the Aylesford and Swarling burial grounds (F.113 and 133), in the course of quarrying activity. As a result, very few of the sites have been the subject of formal controlled excavation and it is now not only impossible to reconstruct the composition of many individual grave groups, but it is equally difficult to determine with any certainty the exact extent of cemeteries that probably existed at Deal (F.19), Faversham (F.120), Folkestone (F.121-124), Maidstone (F.129), Barming (F.114) and elsewhere.

The most striking single feature of the Kent distribution is its signal failure to penetrate into the southern part of the county or to extend westwards beyond the Darent Valley in the pre-Conquest period. Although a small cemetery of infant cremations from the early Romano-British farming settlement at King's Wood, Sanderstead (F.152), may perhaps originate in the decade of the Claudian conquest (Little, 1961), none of the remaining Surrey cremations, including those from cemeteries at Haslemere and Godalming, or from a series of isolated graves in the Hog's Back area, can be dated much earlier than the end of the first

century A.D., despite their apparent Aylesford Culture ancestry (Clark

and Nichols, 1960, 47-50, 60-64; Holmes, 1949; Harrison, 1961; Lowther,

1939, 207-208). Further south, in Sussex, the situation is essentially

the same, and although a number of Durotrigian bead-rim bowls from the

burial ground excavated near the Romano-Celtic temple on Lancing Down

(F.153) could perhaps pre-date Roman occupation of the area (Frere, 1940,

Fig. 15), the majority of the material from the site, together with that

from near-contemporary cemeteries reported at Falmer and Greatham (V.C.H.,

Sussex, 3, 1973, 56-7), clearly belongs to the later first or early

second centuries A.D.

In moving westwards, towards the chalklands of central Wessex, it is

possible to identify a second zone in which cremation was practiced in

the pre-Conquest period. The scatter of sites, many of which are not yet

closely dateable, is much thinner here, however, and provides less

convincing evidence for widespread adoption of the rite. Most of the

recorded burials, including the exceptional and wealthy Hurstbourne

Tarrant barrow cremation (F.84), two probable bucket burials from

Marlborough (F.154) and Silkstead (F.85) and a pair of significant out-

lying graves from the Isle of Wight (F.111 and 112), have been found in

isolation and the use of established burial grounds by whole communities

has rarely been attested. Two such cemeteries may once have existed at

Winchester (F.88), and at Yateley (F.89) in the Blackwater Valley, but

the only adequately documented example is that recently discovered during

the excavation of a rural farming settlement at Owslebury (F.86).

Whether a cremation associated with a Durotrigian pottery vessel

from the Jordan Hill inhumation cemetery in southern Dorset (Hawkes and

Dunning, 1930, 302), or another accompanied by an anthropoid-hilted dagger in a chalk-lined grave from Ham Hill in Somerset (F.147), should be regarded as the westernmost members of the series is open to doubt. Neither example can yet be dated with any real confidence to the pre-Conquest period, while two further Dorset cremations, from Handley and Cogdean, provide more convincing evidence that the sporadic appearance of cremation in the Durotrigian zone may have been an essentially post-conquest phenomenon, unrelated to any significant change in funerary attitudes amongst the seemingly conservative native population (Hawkes and Dunning, 1930, 284-6; White, 1970).

Although the Late La Tène cremation rite has come to be associated traditionally with the classic cemetery sites from Kent, the largest number of Aylesford Culture burials have in fact been found north of the Thames, in a broad arc of country that sweeps north-westwards from the gravel-terraces of the Thames Estuary towards southern Cambridgeshire, and then south-westwards along the line of the Chiltern Hills. Although the distribution of sites tends to be more complex in this region than in counties south of the river, a number of potentially significant patterns can usefully be identified at this stage and may eventually be of some importance in determining the physical spread of cultural, and perhaps tribal, groupings in the area during the late first century B.C. and early decades of the Christian era. It has nevertheless to be emphasised again that the majority of these cremation sites were encountered during the early 20th, 19th and even late 18th centuries, and therefore tend to be recorded in a manner that now leaves much to be desired. It must similarly be recognised that the distribution presented here reflects the

undifferentiated growth of the rite during a period of between 75 and 100 years. Although it will be argued later that the basic elements of this pattern were fairly firmly established in certain critical core areas at an early stage, some secondary expansion, regression and re-location must inevitably be allowed for, bearing in mind the complicated and turbullent political relationships that seem to have existed between local tribes in this period.

Ignoring for the present those sites whose funerary character can only be presumed (although the distribution of these accords well with that of the better documented examples), it is possible to begin by distinguishing in broad terms between an eastern cremation zone, confined almost entirely to the modern county of Essex, and a western one concentrated around the northern margins of the Chiltern Hills. Between these two areas there is some slight suggestion of a narrow corridor yielding rather fewer burials, while to the south there is a very much more remarkable and impressive absence of cremations in an extensive territory running the length of the Lower and Middle Thames Basin.

Within the eastern, Essex, zone there seem to be at least three identifiable concentrations of cremation sites. The first, represented by four probable burial grounds and a similar number of isolated graves, lies between the mouth of the Thames and the Crouch estuary, while a second, comprising eight further confirmed burial sites, is grouped a little further north in the Chelmer and Blackwater valleys. The third and most easterly Essex group is smaller in size but includes, in addition to small rural burial grounds from Ardleigh (F.38) and Boxford

(F.148), the important series of cremations discovered during the last 150 years in the Lexden area that apparently formed part of a major cemetery serving the tribal capital established at Camulodunum towards the end of the first century B.C. (F.46-50).

Moving away from the coast, towards the borders of Essex, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire, a string of probable cemeteries from Little Hallingbury (F.61), Ugley (F.77), Wendon's Ambo (F.78) and Great Chesterford (F.54) appears to lie between the main eastern and western zones and extends northwards towards Cambridge, where a cluster of confirmed and suspected burials from the city and its surrounding parishes suggests strong localised interest in the new rite (F.21-27,29,31,32,35,37). Evidence of further penetration towards the Breckland or into the Fens is very limited however, the area north of Cambridge having yielded only four isolated and widely scattered burials from Elveden in Suffolk (F.149), Snailwell (F.36), Colne (F.28) and Longthorpe (F.34).

South-west of Cambridge the modern counties of Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire reveal a very much denser concentration of burials, which may perhaps be seen to form four main clusters. One of these, focussed on the Baldock-Hitchin-Letchworth area, extends westwards to include burials from Old Warden (F.7 and 8), Stanfordbury (F.11) and perhaps Kempston (F.4); another is defined by important groups of graves from around Welwyn and Welwyn Garden City (F.106-109); a third comprises the two major cemeteries recently excavated outside the Roman Town of Verulamium at St. Albans (F.104-105), while the fourth is represented by cremation groups from Aldbury (F.91), Ivinghoe (F.20),

Berkhampstead (F.94) and Puddlehill (F.3) in the heart of the Chilterns. Beyond the close limits of this central zone the scatter of burial sites tends to thin out abruptly, although a handful of isolated graves from Aston Clinton (F.16), Dorton (F.17), Aston Rowant (F.145), Pyrton (F.146), and perhaps Sutton Courtenay (E.13) do serve to extend the distribution south-westwards into the Upper Thames Valley. Two further cemeteries from Duston (F.141) and Irchester (F.142) similarly confirm that the tradition eventually, if hesitantly, extended north-eastwards as far as the Nene Valley.

## Funerary Ritual

Having considered the simple physical facts of the geographical distribution of Aylesford Culture cremations it is now necessary to look in rather more detail at the socially derived evidence relating to the manner in which individual burials were performed. Although a great deal of the relevant information is now irretrievably lost, enough survives to allow a tentative assessment of the tradition's ritual coherence and variation in the hundred years between its first introduction and its subsequent absorption into the succeeding funerary traditions of the post-conquest period.

Because so much of our knowledge is gained from the contents of sealed grave deposits found either in isolation or within defined cemetery areas, little is known of the actual cremation technique used to reduce the body to a collection of calcined bones suitable for burial. The very fragmentary and distorted appearance of much of this material, together

with the occasional associated presence of severely burnt or melted bronze and glass objects in graves, nevertheless suggests the regular use of large and efficient timber-built pyres, and one such area of burning has in fact been recorded in conjunction with a cremation grave at Sandown in the Isle of Wight (F.112).

While the act of burial would normally seem, as at Sandown, to have taken place as a separate performance after the cremation fire had died down and cooled sufficiently to allow the remaining bone fragments to be collected together, two burials from the small cemetery at Puddlehill in Bedfordshire indicate that bodies may sometimes have been burnt while lying in their graves. In one of these two instances the cremation of a corpse wearing a bronze brooch appeared to have been performed in a partly silted storage pit (F.3.8), but in the other the calcined bone and a mass of charcoal fragments were found spread along the floor of a specially dug rectangular or oval grave, whose length implied that it ought once to have contained an extended or lightly flexed body (F.3.7). In the latter case, moreover, a clear restriction of cranial bone fragments to one end of the grave seemed to provide further indisputable evidence that the body had been burned in situ.

Elsewhere the form and size of the grave used for the final deposition of the ashes tends to be determined principally by the bulk and shape of the objects chosen as grave-goods. Unaccompanied collections of cremated bone found at Puddlehill (F.3.3-6) and Owslebury (F.86) were thus interred in graves that are little more than shallow depressions dug into the surface of the underlying chalk, while cremations associated with single

ceramic vessels or small groups of pots from sites such as Aylesford (F.113),

Swarling (F.133), Welwyn Garden City (F.109, 2-7) and St. Albans (F.104)

seem normally to have been placed in simple bucket or bag-shaped pits,

rarely more than two or three feet in diameter and one to two feet deep.

Although one of the more richly provisioned Aylesford burials (F.113.2)

and the somewhat anomolous Ham Hill cremation (F.147) were both contained

in pits whose walls had apparently been whitened with a chalk wash, there

is little evidence of any more elaborate grave preparation in the area

south of the Thames. Further north, however, the emergence of a

spectacular class of extravagantly furnished burials belonging to Stead's

restricted 'Welwyn' class led to the construction of a group of very much

larger and more sophisticated graves. Among the most impressive of these

are the two massive 15' x 12' (4.5m x 3.6m) vaults with tiled floors

excavated at Stanfordbury in Bedfordshire in 1832 (F.11); the well-

known Snailwell grave (F.36), which was over 10' long and $6\frac{1}{2}$' wide (3m x

1.95m), and the more recently discovered Welwyn Garden City vault (F.109.1)

measuring 10'6" by 7'3" (3.15m x 2.18m) at its mouth and no less than

8'6" by 4'9" (2.55m x 1.43m) at the level of its floor. While other

burials in this Welwyn class may also have been performed in better

constructed, often rectangular graves, the majority were probably more

restricted in overall size, thus providing, in terms of scale, a bridge

between the wealthiest burials and the mainstream of North Thames cremations

from small and overtly functional grave-pits.

A further characteristic feature linking the richer members of the

Aylesford Culture burial series with their more humble counterparts is a

widespread preference for flat-grave burial. Although the location of

individual graves, especially in larger cemeteries such as King Harry Lane, St. Albans (F.104), must once have been recorded visually to prevent the accidental disturbance of older interments by succeeding burials, the method of marking remains unknown. There can, however, be little doubt that the provision of elaborate covering mounds was rare, bearing in mind that many graves lie clustered closely together, often little more than one or two meteres apart, in compact burial areas. Two recorded cremation barrows from Essex and Hampshire and a third less adequately documented example from Cambridgeshire would therefore seem to be somewhat exceptional constructions, devised more or less independently to honour particularly important, high ranking tribal leaders.

Of these three examples, the best known and most impressive is the low mound excavated by P.G. Laver at Lexden, on the outskirts of Colchester, in 1925 (F.46). Because the underlying oval grave pit was of such massive proportions and yielded an exceptionally lavish collection of grave-goods, this burial was for many years thought to be the tomb of Cunobelin himself. Subsequent evaluation of the ceramic and metalwork material from the grave has, however, shown that the burial is more likely to have been performed during the last 15 years of the first century B.C. than at the time of Cunobelin's own death in c. A.D.40. It has therefore been suggested recently that a more appropriate historical association might lie with the earlier Trinovantian leader Addedomarus (Peacock, 1971, 178). Although such attempts to equate the burial with one or other of the shadowy royal figures of later prehistory may seem attractive, they are nevertheless of dubious value in the long run, and for our present

purposes it is more instructive to follow Peacock's observation that the
Lexden tumulus is, in archaeological terms, little more than an elaborate
and eccentric member of the generally opulent and individualistic series
of Welwyn graves (Peacock, 1971, 175). Indeed, a possible analogue to
Lexden may have existed in the form of a second barrow excavated at
Lord's Bridge, near Cambridge, between 1817 and 1818 (F.22). Although
the accounts of the successive discoveries made at this latter site are
altogether poor, it would seem likely that a cremation accompanied by at
least three pottery vessels, an amphora, a pair of iron fire-dogs and a
6-man gang-chain, all derived from a single Welwyn-type grave covered by
the mound. Whether a third and more isolated barrow excavated at Blagdon
Coppice, near Hurstbourne Tarrant, in western Hampshire in 1905 should be
regarded as a member of the same class is more doubtful (F.84). Although
the central grave-pit found beneath this small clay and flint mound
contained an elaborate and broadly contemporary collection of pottery
vessels and bronze ornaments, in addition to a fragmentary wooden bucket
holding the cremated bones, the barrow's physical remoteness from the
Lexden and Lord's Bridge examples suggests that it should for the moment
be regarded as a separate, unrelated monument, invented spontaneously
for the burial of a distinguished Atrebatic leader.

Very much more important than these sporadic, and essentially
atypical, aristocratic variations is the limited but widespread evidence
for the development of small, and in one instance very extensive, formal
burial areas which imply the permanent adoption of the new cremation rite
by some individual communities. Although at least 49, or roughly a third,
of the 152 recorded cremation sites would appear to have been represented

by more than one burial, the vast majority of these groups comprise fewer
than five individual graves, and are more usually restricted to just two
or three. While it is possible that a number of such examples, and in
particular those revealed over protracted periods in the course of
quarrying or building work and as a result of limited sampling and
rescue excavation, may once have been more extensive than surviving
records imply, the evidence from better documented sites seems, on the
whole, to confirm that small groups were always the norm. South of the
Thames, for example, there are only three cemetery sites that are known
to have contained more than ten graves; Aylesford with an estimated 15
to 17, Swarling with between 17 and 19, and Owslebury with about 15. In
counties North of the Thames the situation is essentially similar, and
although small groups of graves are known from numerous sites in Essex,
Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire, larger cemeteries are again restricted
to just three sites, all of which lie close to major pre-Conquest
settlement areas. One of these, at Lexden, is now represented by as many
as 20 burials encountered intermittently during the last 150 years and
must once have been a cemetery of some importance (Stead, 1976, 416), while
the remaining two have both been discovered in the course of more recent
excavations outside the Roman walls of Verulamium. The first of these
St. Albans' cemeteries, lying to the east of the town in the Verulam
Fields area (F.105), was again fairly modest in size, yielding just 21
graves, but the second, excavated in its entirety at King Harry Lane
between 1965-1966 (F.104), was of a quite different order, comprising no
fewer than 445 individual burials. Why this one great burial ground
should have achieved such remarkable proportions - it is unquestionably
the largest single pre-Roman cemetery yet recorded in this country -

remains unknown, although its extra-mural location strongly suggests that
it may represent a novel urban counterpart to the restricted rural burial
grounds that seem to have served single farming communities at Aylesford
and Owslebury, or more wealthy aristocratic or entrepreneurial lineages
living at Welwyn, Welwyn Garden City and Stanfordbury.

With a few limited exceptions our knowledge of the way in which these
burial grounds were organised and demarcated is non-existant. Apart from
descriptions of a ring of pottery vessels found at Kempston in Bedfordshire
(F.4) and of graves arranged in lines at Ardleigh, Essex (F.38) and Stone
in Kent (F.137), the sole sources of evidence are the descriptions by
Evans and Bushe Foxe of the Aylesford and Swarling cemeteries and the
more recent interim accounts of the burial grounds excavated at St. Albans
and Owslebury. In the case of Aylesford no plan of the cemetery survives,
but it is recorded verbally that the majority of the graves were arranged
in rings, one of which comprised the six burials conventionally known
as the 'Family Circle' (F.113.4-9). A somewhat similar method of grouping
graves has also been observed at King Harry Lane, where a number of the
more richly furnished burials were surrounded by groups of satellite
cremations (F.104 and Stead, 1969, 50). That these burial clusters may
indeed belong to individual families or lineages is further indicated by
their occasional isolation within small rectangular ditched enclosures.
Although comparable delineating features have so far been recognised in
this country only at the neighbouring Verulam Fields cemetery (F.105),
Baldock (Stead, personal communication) and Owslebury (F.86), other
examples could well have been overlooked during earlier excavation or
salvage work concerned only with the examination of graves and their

contents. Whether or not these insular funerary enclosures should be equated with their Early to Late La Tène continental counterparts discussed in a preceding chapter remains to be determined. For the present it is important to recall that crop marks of morphologically similar features have recently been identified in increasing numbers in south-eastern Essex as a result of aerial reconnaissance (D.3.10-24). Although none of these latter examples can yet be identified positively with known cremation sites, their compatible distribution and lack of obvious secular function suggests that they may eventually prove to be enclosures surrounding individual cremation burials or groups of graves.

Turning from the physical organisation of burials in cemetery areas to the spatial arrangement of material within individual graves the quality of the recorded information improves. Before dealing with the more important aspect of this evidence, the choice and arrangement of accompanying grave goods, it is possible to distinguish between two alternative methods of interring the calcined bone fragments collected from the cremation pyre. The most common approach in all areas, and the one that most usefully characterises the Aylesford Culture rite, involved the burial of the ashes in a cinerary container. Although ceramic vessels, and in particular pedestal urns, a series of wide-mouthed bowls and, later, butt-beakers, were always the most popular containers, the remains of a smaller and presumably more wealthy group of individuals were placed in bronze or iron-bound wooden buckets and tankard-like vessels. Examples of this latter practice, which appears to denote differences in status, rather than any fundamental variation in funerary ritual, have been confirmed at both Aylesford (F.113.2) and Swarling

(F.133.13), as well as at a number of more scattered sites including

Marlborough (F.154), Old Warden (F.7) and Elveden (F.149). While other

buckets from Great Chesterford (F.54), Harpenden (F.98), Silkstead (F.85)

and Hurstbourne Tarrant may also have acted as funerary containers, some

could instead have been provided as incidental items of grave-furniture,

following the example of the buckets from Baldock (F.93), Welwyn Garden

City (F.109), Lexden (F.47) and Grave X at Aylesford (F.113.1).

In the second of the two modes of interment use of a formal cinerary

vessel is dispensed with, the ashes instead being placed loose and

unenclosed on the floor of the grave. Burials performed in this fashion,

though less common than their inurned counterparts, seem to fall into

two categories, representing different ends of the social spectrum. At

the lower level it is thus possible to identify a number of very simple

burials, including three examples from Puddlehill (F.3.3-6) and two

deposits of calcined bone from Quinton, Northants (F.144), in which the

cremated material was not only unenclosed, but was also buried without

any accompanying objects. Contrasting with these impoverished graves,

many more of which must have been destroyed without having been

recognised, is a group of very much more wealthy burials in which the

unenclosed ashes lie surrounded by their accompanying grave-goods.

Although the majority of the examples of this practice, including Welwyn

'A' (F.106.1), Welwyn Garden City (F.109.1), Standfordbury 'A' (F.11.1),

Hertford Heath (F.102) and Snailwell (F.36), are all associated with

burials belonging to the restricted 'Welwyn' class and have thus been

shown to have some affinities with a comparable group of exotically

furnished cremation graves from Arras, Pas-de-Calais (Stead, 1967),

other unurned cremations associated with more restricted groups of material
have been reported from the King Harry Lane cemetery and from Owslebury,
where only one of the 15 pre-Conquest cremations appears to have been
contained in an urn. Whether the ashes were genuinely unenclosed in
all these cases is uncertain. One Owslebury example in fact appeared
to have been enclosed in a wooden container, perhaps a box, and it is
thus possible that others may have been placed in similar wooden vessels
or leather and cloth bags that are difficult to detect archaeologically.

The final, and in many respects most important, element in the
Aylesford Culture rite is an almost universal concern that the ashes of
the deceased should be provided with one or more material objects to act
either as cinerary containers or as supplementary grave-goods. Although
an exhaustive analysis of the composition of all the recorded grave-groups
cannot be attempted here, it is possible to identify at this stage some
of the general themes and preferences that underlie the selection of the
material. In particular it can be shown that most burials fall into one
or other of two main classes. In the first of these the ashes are
accompanied by a limited, circumscribed range of essentially modest
material forms, while in the second smaller group the selection of
objects tends to become much broader, more idiosynchratic and at times
openly ostentatious. While it remains almost impossible for us to
appreciate the nature of the ideological and social pressures that
prompted surviving kinsmen and friends to provide their dead with these
offerings, many of which probably had symbolic rather than purely
functional connotations, some very pronounced variations in displayed
wealth yield an important insight into the stratified nature of

society in south-eastern England during the century preceding the Claudian conquest.

Of all the accompanied burials the simplest are those in which the only object placed in the grave is a ceramic vessel, such as a pedestal urn, butt-beaker or bowl, used to contain the collected calcined bone. Examples of this minimal, but nevertheless apparently acceptable, level of furnishing are provided by no fewer than 8 of the 19 recorded cremations from the Swarling cemetery (F.133), while 28 comparable single-vessel burials have been reported from at least 18 other sites, including Aylesford (F.113), Welwyn Garden City (F.109), Hatfield Peverel (F.57) and Aston Rowant (F.145). More often, however, it was felt appropriate to augment the central cinerary vessel with other subsidiary objects which can more properly be regarded as grave-goods in the formal sense. Although groups of between one and five additional pots, including both native pieces and imported Samian and Gallo-Belgic table-wares, tend to be the most popular supporting items in all areas, a few non-ceramic objects also make an appearance amongst the more modest burials of the non-Welwyn class. The most commonly occurring of these are undoubtedly the various forms of La Tène III bow brooch which have now been recorded singly, in matched pairs, or very occasionally in larger groups, from at least 32 sites, including the King Harry Lane cemetery (F.104) whose 454 graves contained no fewer than 222 individual specimens. Other small items of metalwork associated with simple groups of pottery vessels tend to be very much rarer, but include a bronze toilet-set from Deal (F.119.2), a group of four bronze bangles from a grave at Plaxtol (F.134), a bronze belt-buckle from Letchworth (F.101) and an iron knife from Ivinghoe (F.20.1).

Moving on from this sequence of modest burials with their essentially stereotyped collections of material it is possible to identify a second, but more limited, intermediate group whose equipment, while not achieving the distinctive individuality of the more spectacular Welwyn burials, does suggest a higher degree of social status and wealth. At Aylesford the three burials known as X, Y and Z (F.113.1-3) all fall into this category on the grounds that they respectively contained, in addition to groups of between 4 and 6 pots, an iron-bound wooden bucket; a bronze plated bucket, three brooches and a bronze oenochoe and patella and, in the case of burial Z, a bronze plated tankard. An iron bound bucket accompanied by 4 pots and a pair of brooches from Grave 13 at Swarling would seem to belong to this same class (F.133.13), as would various of the other burials associated with comparable wooden vessels from sites such as Elveden (F.149), Lexden 'A' (F.47), Marlborough (F.154) and perhaps Silkstead (F.85) and Felmersham (F.9). Sometimes these large vessels, which may, as Stead has suggested, have served originally as ceremonial containers for wine (Stead, 1971a, 276-8), are accompanied by other objects of value, such as the turned shale pedestal urns and Italic silver-gilt brooches from Great Chesterford (F.54), a similar pair of urns and a bronze dish from Harpenden (F.98), or a glass vessel from Hurstbourne Tarrant (F.84). Perhaps comparable with this group of bucket burials are two further graves from the Colchester cemetery at Lexden. In one of these, Lexden 'B' (F.48), a group of 5 pottery vessels was accompanied by a coral-decorated bronze cup and bronze mirror, and in the other, Claudian, example from St Clare's Drive (F.49), the grave-group yielded no fewer than ten bronze brooches, a fragmentary glass vessel and a bronze bangle in addition to a collection of Gallo-Belgic pottery vessels.

Cremations belonging to the third and most lavishly furnished sequence all come from counties north of the Thames and have been grouped collectively as members of a distinct 'Welwyn' class on the grounds of the rich and often exotic nature of their contents (Stead, 1967). Of the nine principal members of the series, which includes the two Stanfordbury 'vault burials' (F.11); graves A and B from Welwyn (F.106.1 and 2) and the isolated interments from Snailwell (F.36), Mount Bures (F.64), Hertford Heath (F.102) and Baldock (F.93), one of the most impressive is the example excavated at Welwyn Garden City in 1965 (F.109.1). Here, in addition to 36 native and imported pieces of ceramic tableware, the grave-group comprised 5 Dressel IB amphorae, an imported silver cup, a bronze dish and bronze strainer, 24 decorated glass gaming counters, remains of an iron-bound wooden bucket, an iron knife, and several fragmentary wooden vessels with metal fittings. Amongst other burials in the series the range of material is similarly broad, although certain sorts of object occur with greater frequency than others. In addition to comparable Italian, or more rarely Spanish, wine amphorae, which were included either singly or in groups of up to 5 or 6 specimens in all the other graves, the material types most frequently favoured were items of silver or bronze tableware (as at Stanfordbury A, Welwyn A and B, Baldock and Hertford Heath); sets of iron hearth furniture including fire-dogs, tripods and spits (from Baldock, Stanfordbury A, Welwyn A and B and Mount Bures), and imported glass vessels (Hertford Heath, Stanfordbury B, Mount Bures). Objects chosen on a more individual basis than these recurrent types include two wooden buckets and a bronze cauldron from Baldock, an iron knife and shears from Hertford Heath, a bone flute and a probable

bronze shield boss from Stanfordbury A and a silver buckle and shale bracelet from Stanfordbury B.

In view of the apparent emphasis on feasting and drinking implied by the consistent provision of wine containers, drinking vessels, table-ware and hearth-furniture, it is somewhat surprising that surviving offerings of food are represented only by a small collection of animal bones from Snailwell and the almost complete skeleton of a pig at Baldock. It is similarly interesting to note Stead's further observation that objects of personal ornament, such as brooches and bracelets, also tend to be rare in the richest burials and that weapons, with the possible exception of the Stanfordbury shield boss, are entirely absent.

Although the nine main Welwyn-type burials still stand alone in terms of the combined character of their graves and contents, a number of other burials from the region may belong to the same general class in terms of their furnishings. In addition to the important Lexden 'C' barrow burial (F.46), whose contents included 16 amphorae and a portrait medallion of Augustus, and the comparable Lord's Bridge cremation deposit (F.22) apparently associated with one or more amphorae, a set of iron fire-dogs and a gang-chain, there are some 26 further confirmed or suspected burial deposits which appear to have contained amphorae. The majority of these, which have been listed in consecutive publications by Stead (1967), Peacock (1971) and Rodwell (1976), tend to be poorly documented, but at least 7 examples, including Lindsell (F.60) and Colne Engaine (F.51) in Essex; Maulden Moor (F.6) and Old Warden (F.7 and 8) in Bedfordshire; Aston Clinton (F.16) and Dorton (F.17) in Buckinghamshire

and Braughing (F.95), Hertfordshire, are known to have been found with cremated bone and suggest that the practice of including large wine vessels may have been both popular and widespread.

While a handful of these latter examples, including Old Warden, Maulden Moor and Dorton, have some claim to be regarded as true Welwyn-type burials on the basis of further accompanying objects of high value such as mirrors, shale urns or wooden buckets, it would seem likely that many of the others, and in particular the relatively profuse group of examples from Essex, were more modestly furnished and ought thus to be considered apart, perhaps as north Thames counterparts to the lower or middle ranking burials from Aylesford and Swarling.

## Chronology

Besides demonstrating the way in which some (if not all) communities in south-eastern England sought to emulate their contemporary continental counterparts in the matter of grave-furnishing, the material objects from Aylesford Culture graves provide a valuable source of evidence for dating the introduction and development of the new rite. In particular, the regular practice of including objects modelled on foreign prototypes or pieces imported direct from closely dateable continental sources has allowed a number of recent writers to construct the foundations of what will eventually prove to be a relatively precise chronological framework for the insular cremation tradition. The arguments used in the course of these discussions have tended to be complex, however, and for our present purposes it will be impossible to provide mor than a brief summary of the most crucial elements.

In her initial comparison of the material from the Aylesford and Swarling cemeteries Birchall began the task of developing a relative chronological sequence by classifying the most frequently occurring wheel-thrown pottery forms from counties north and south of the Thames into ten distinct groups (Birchall, 1965, 242-58). On the basis of the differing associations and distributions of these characteristic wares, all of which were shown to originate stylistically in parts of north-eastern France, it was then suggested that three main insular burial phases could be isolated;  an Early phase proposed entirely on the evidence of a small 'homogenous' group of burials from Swarling associated with examples of the rare and supposedly primary cordonned pedestal urn (Type Ia) and cordonned conical urns (Type IX);  a Middle phase characterised by the introduction of further pottery forms, including plain-bodied pedestal urns, corrugated urns, small 's'-sided bowls and biconical jars (Types Ib, II, IVa, V);  and a Late phase defined by the subsequent adoption of yet further vessels such as the butt-beaker and flat-based platter (Types VI and VII).  In addition to these three main groups it was also argued that a group of simple ungrouped coarse-ware urns from single-vessel graves at Aylesford might point to a fourth, but essentially shadowy and uncertain Earliest phase.

Although the absence of appropriate associated non-ceramic material has consistently frustrated attempts to establish the primacy of the Earliest and Early groups of burials in terms of absolute chronology, a number of grave groups belonging to Birchall's Middle and Late phases fortunately contain objects that can be dated more effectively by analogy with comparable pieces from continental sources.  Of central importance

in this context are a series of imported metal table-vessels from Aylesford
'Y' (F.113.2), Welwyn 'A' and 'B' (F.106.1-2) and Welwyn Garden City
(F.109.1). These pieces, which include three bronze wine jugs, or
oenochoe, of the Kelheim type and a group of bronze patellae can all be
compared with material from cemeteries in the Ornovasso area in northern
Italy, where their introduction occurs soon after 50 B.C. It has been
demonstrated, moreover, through an assessment of the contexts of similar
pieces from sites north of the Alps (Werner, 1954), and as a result of
the more recent publication of the associated material from Grave 'B' at
Goeblingen-Nospelt in Luxembourg (Thill, 1966; 1967a; 1967b; Stead,
1976, 412), that jugs and strainers of the Aylesford-Welwyn kind are
unlikely to have reached Britain much before the third quarter of the
first century B.C., although a slightly earlier date has been suggested
by Harding (1974, 212). A pair of silver cups from Welwyn B and a third
example from Welwyn Garden City can also be shown to have been manufactured
in the mediterranean area during the second half of the first century B.C.
(Stead, 1967, 22) and it would therefore appear likely that the four
principal burials from the Welwyn area and Aylesford together represent
the earliest firmly dated grave-groups, having been performed at some
time within the period c.40-30 B.C. to 15 B.C. (Stead, 1976, 412).

As a corollory to this critical evaluation Peacock has subsequently
been able to confirm, through a detailed morphological and petrological
study of Italian and Spanish wine amphorae from the north Thames area,
that the Dressel IB vessels habitually associated with many of the most
important Welwyn-type burials were unlikely to have been imported before
the Caesarean campaigns and more probably belong to the years between 50

- 10 B.C. (Peacock, 1971, 173-8). As this class of amphora has a relatively long lifetime, however, its presence in graves without demonstrably early metalwork is insufficient, with the possible exception of two rich cremations from Baldock (F.93) and Hertford Heath (F.102), to confirm chronological compatibility with Stead's core group of primary dated burials. A further series of deposits which can be linked to this phase have nevertheless been identified in a recent consideration of a class of distinctive early La Tène III trumpet-headed brooches whose bows are decorated with bosses that perhaps represent the vestigial survival of the La Tène II collar linking the foot to the main body of the brooch. Because examples of this form are notably absent from all later Lexden phase deposits, including the extensive King Harry Lane cemetery with its large collection of developed brooch types, but are known to have been associated with both the Aylesford 'Y' grave-group and the Caesarean or slightly later Le Catillon coin hoard from Jersey, there are adequate grounds for assuming that the type was in use concurrently with the earliest metal table-vessels and Dressel IB amphorae (Stead, 1976, 401-12). Thus the original core group provided by Aylesford 'Y', Welwyn 'A' and 'B' and Welwyn Garden City, together with Hertford Heath and Baldock, can now be increased to a total of 14 burial sites on the basis of further Aylesford-type brooches from Swarling (F.133.13), Deal (F.119), Folkestone (F.124), Faversham (F.120) and Borough Green (F.134) in Kent; Great Chesterford (F.54) in Essex; Hitchin (F.99) in Hertfordshire and Guilden Morden (F.30) in Cambridgeshire.

Having established this sequence as the earliest reliably dated group of burials, Stead then went on to contest the claims of Birchall's

supposedly older, but undated, Early phase by arguing that the Type Ia
vessels used to define that horizon could have continued in use until
the last decades of the first century B.C., on the grounds that at least
one comparable vessel, from Grave 19 at Swarling, was known to have been
associated with a fragmentary brooch of the developed 'Colchester' form
(Stead, 1976, 401-2). In the light of this observation it was therefore
proposed that the former division of the Aylesford Culture burial sequence
into Early, Middle and Late phases should be abandoned in favour of a
revised scheme divided between an earlier Welwyn period, distinguished
by the small group of graves containing demonstrably early metalwork and
pre-Gallo-Belgic ceramic forms, and an ensuing Lexden phase characterised
by the introduction of imported Arretine and Samian table-wares, native
imitations of some of these superior ceramic forms, brooches of Colchester,
Thistle and Langton Down types, and a further group of later amphora
forms, from c. 15 - 10 B.C. until after the Claudian Conquest in A.D. 43
(Stead, 1976, 401, 412).

Although the great majority of Aylesford Culture cremations, including
examples from both Aylesford and Swarling, as well as all the graves from
King Harry Lane and the Lexden cemetery itself, fall within this later
period, closer dating of most individual grave groups remains difficult.
It is nevertheless to be hoped that further detailed comparative work on
the better associated material, and in particular the forthcoming analysis
of the ceramic and brooch collections from King Harry Lane, will eventually
allow further refinement of the Lexden phase chronology.

Conclusions

Having established that the rite of cremation burial emerges in a
dateable form more or less simultaneously amongst restricted, and seemingly
wealthier, sections of society in parts of Kent and the north Chiltern
area during the second half of the first century B.C., before spreading
over a wider territory in the following eighty or ninety years, it is
important to consider the cultural implications of the funerary evidence.
In particular, it is necessary to pose the crucial question whether the
appearance of the new burial procedure should be regarded as proof of
the presence of one or more groups of foreign settlers in south-eastern
England, or ought instead to be treated as an alien custom adopted by
indigenous, but outward-looking and innovative native communities.  While
the truth may, in reality, lie somewhere between these two opposed
alternatives and is unlikely to be revealed until considerably more work
has been carried out on the complementary continental material, the
principal elements in the problem are already well-defined.

The foremost argument in favour of an invasion or migration hypothesis,
as proposed by Hawkes and Dunning (1930) and subsequently supported by
Hodson (1964), Birchall (1965) and others, rests with the observable
fact that a comparable flat grave cremation technique emerged and
apparently ousted preceding Early and Middle La Tène inhumation traditions
in various parts of northern France during the first century B.C.  The
dynamics and chronology of this complex transformation, which occurred
both to the east, in the Champagne-Ardennes region, and further west in
Normandy and Picardy, are not at all clear at the present time.  It can

nevertheless be established beyond reasonable doubt that all the standard ceramic forms recognised in Birchall's insular Aylesford-Swarling series are represented amongst these Late La Tène burials and derive their morphological forms from pottery styles developed in north-eastern France during the Early and Middle La Tène periods (Birchall, 1965, 278-9). Moreover, certain of the insular practices of providing wealthy members of the community with specific types of object of greater intrinsic value can frequently be matched in the context of continental cremations. Graves of the British Welwyn class can, for example, be matched by burials containing Dressel I amphorae and items of hearth furniture from Presles-St.Audebert, Aisne (Birchall, 1965, 262), and Arras, Pas-de-Calais (Stead, 1967, 48); Aylesford 'Y' and Welwyn 'A' and 'B' by the discovery of complementary oenochoe and patellae from burials at Hannogne and St. Germaincourt, near Rethel, Ardennes (Birchall, 1965, 269); and the use of buckets as cinerary containers or auxilliary vessels by examples from sites such as Hallais, Varimpre, Armentieres, Presles-St. Audebert and Hannogne (Birchall, 1965, 271).

While there are thus firm grounds for assuming that the insular rite was closely modelled on contemporary continental traditions, both in terms of the cremation technique and in the choice of accompanying objects, a fundamental difficulty is imposed by the evidence of the imported Gallo-Belgic coin series in southern Britain. If Allen's proposed chronology for these and their early British derivatives is accepted (Allen, 1959, 1962), together with the assumption that their dissemination was the result of the commercial activities of a number of distinct groups of settlers or invaders, it becomes apparent that there is a crucial funerary

hiatus between the first appearance of imported A - C staters from c. 120 - 100 B.C. and the emergence of identifiable cremations in the immediately post-Caesarean phase. Although no final solution to this problem is yet in sight, a number of alternative explanations can be proposed.

The first, and perhaps least satisfactory of these approaches would be to question altogether the basic, and now widely accepted, premise of a phase of primary Belgic settlement, by suggesting that the early Gallo-Belgic coins were introduced purely as a result of a developing pattern of trade with northern France. While attractive as a means of overcoming the lack of an adequate cultural assemblage to complement the numismatic material, this explanation is nevertheless weakened by the sheer number of coins now recorded and by the very distinctive territorial patterns of their distribution. By turning back to the concept of some form of true physical settlement, however, we are inevitably forced to conclude that the newcomers must have brought with them a technique for disposing of their dead, even if their graves have not yet been recognised. In order to tackle this problem it would seem necessary to consider two alternative explanations, one quantitative and the other qualitative.

On the one hand it could be argued that the absence of identifiable early burials is a function of the size of the initial colonising communities. If, for example, the process of belgicisation began with the arrival of a handful of tribal leaders and cultural envoys, rather than through a mass migration of their followers, the number of distinctively continental burials resulting from their presence would be very small, perhaps amounting to no more than two or three hundred

individual graves. Bearing in mind the battery of factors that consistently inhibit the preservation or discovery of Iron Age burials in Britain, and considering at the same time the difficulties already encountered in isolating the primary interments of the Yorkshire Arras Culture sequence, it would indeed be very surprising if such a tiny population of pioneer graves had contrived to emerge in an archaeologically recognisable form. It is also important to remember that the relatively large numbers of later Arras and Aylesford Culture graves can themselves represent no more than a tiny proportion of the tens, or even hundreds, of thousands of comparable burials that must once have been performed, but which have either been destroyed subsequently or still await discovery.

The second possible answer to the shortage of early burials involves a rather different line of argument and derives from the observation by Hawkes, and latterly Stead (Hawkes, 1972, 110-11; Stead, 1976, 412), that our knowledge of the late second and early first century B.C. burial customs in many parts of northern France is exceptionally limited. In particular it has been suggested that Middle and Late La Tène, funerary evidence is most ellusive of all in precisely those areas of Artois and Picardy that seem to be the homeland of the early coin series. If it could be demonstrated that the prevailing method of burial in this region does indeed leave little archaeological trace of itself, like our own obscure Early and Middle Iron Age rites, it would be reasonable to assume that the burials of colonists moving to south-eastern Britain would be as difficult to detect as those of the peoples amongst whom they settled. While this latter theory could thus dispense effectively with the problem of the missing burials of very many more settlers than the first limited

colonisation argument, any notion of a large scale population movement must still be frustrated unless an accompanying domestic ceramic tradition can be identified in the context of contemporary settlement sites. Despite earlier efforts by Birchall (1965, 248, 288) and more recent work by Harding (1974, 210) and Rodwell (1976, 221-37) in this direction, no really convincing alien pottery sequence has yet been displayed in the pre-Caesarean period, and it has therefore to be assumed that the earliest settlers were either content to adopt native ceramic styles to an astonishing degree, or were once again so few in number that the work of any potters amongst them has failed to register archaeologically.

Regardless of which of these necessarily insubstantial and unproven explanations may be preferred - and of the three the limited colonisation argument seems the most effective at the present time - it remains apparent that some further factors must have been responsible for the introduction of the Aylesford ceramic sequence and for the simultaneous emergence of the cremation rite in the post-Caesarean decades. In tackling this problem we would again seem to be faced with a number of alternatives. The first, and perhaps least satisfactory, of these rests with the suggestion that no further colonisation took place after the initial phase defined by the Gallo-Belgic A - C coin series and that wheel-thrown La Tène III pottery and the Gallo-Belgic D - F coin groups were all introduced as a result of secondary trading activity (Rodwell, 1976, 218). In terms of this hypothesis the emergent cremation technique in Kent and the Welwyn area would have to be accounted for in either of two ways. On the onehand it could be taken to represent the native adoption and modification of a rite introduced by a small group of very early colonists,

and on the other it could be regarded as a tradition borrowed wholesale

from across the Channel, along with the later coin and pottery styles,

for use by native or earlier Belgic-derived communities who previously

employed different but 'invisible' methods for disposing of their dead.

While superficially plausible, these two theories are weakened by

a single difficulty;  the overt strength and coherence with which the

cremation rite eventually emerges in this country.  Whereas a tradition

that had been adopted second-hand, or modified over a fifty year period

within the country, ought to show some significant signs of evolution

away from its initial source of inspiration, our insular burials, both

of the simpler and more elaborate kinds, in fact show close compatibility

with their contemporary mid-first century B.C. counterparts in northern

France.  As a result, it may be more profitable to consider for the

moment the case for a further major phase of colonisation by one or more

groups of settlers who not only introduced the techniques of manufacturing

La Tène III pottery, but also brought with them their own cremation

burial customs.  The single outstanding advantage of this provisional

argument is that it is the only one which allows the funerary and ceramic

elements to have been imported as a single, coherent cultural 'package'.

In its support, moreover, we have the additional and potentially important

evidence of Allen's Gallo-Belgic D and E quarter-stater and stater coins,

the complementary issues that are known to have circulated over an

unusually large territory stretching between modern Belgium, the Seine

and the Marne, before being introduced to Britain in the decades

immediately before and after the Roman Conquest of Gaul.  Despite his

argument that the insular spread of this prolific series through areas of

primary Belgic settlement was principally the result of trade, rather than invasion, Rodwell has admitted the possibility of some secondary refugee settlement following the historically attested political and social upheavals that shook the Belgic territories of pre- and post-Caesarean Gaul (Rodwell, 1976, 195). From our present point of view this concession is vital, for it happens that the distribution of Gallo-Belgic E in Britain not only contains the scatter of Welwyn phase burials, but coincides almost exactly with the secondary spread of Lexden phase and undated burials (Rodwell, 1976, Fig. 7). While further work on the continental material is obviously needed before the numismatic, ceramic and funerary elements can be linked firmly as products of a final, and perhaps particularly influential, phase of migration, the hypothesis may at present provide the most economical and logical, if necessarily simplistic, explanation of the complex and ambiguous insular archaeological evidence currently available.

Chapter 7

Peripheral burial practices:   the northern and western zones

As the reader will be aware, this study has so far concerned itself

almost exclusively with the identification and definition of burial

practices employed in relatively restricted zones of southern and eastern

England.  It should be emphasised at this stage that there was no original

intent to limit its scope to these areas and that efforts have indeed been

made to isolate comparable traditions in all other parts of mainland

Britain and, to a lesser extent, Ireland.  The results of this search have

been disappointing, however, and with the notable exception of the Arras

Culture rite in eastern Yorkshire, the regions north of a line drawn

roughly from the mouth of the Severn to the Wash are represented by

little more than a handful of isolated and often poorly dated burials,

few of which can be grouped as members of distinct regional traditions.

To some extent this situation may have been exacerbated by a less energetic

history of excavation and recording in these areas, by poorer conditions

of preservation in highland zone graves, or through an absence of readily

dated grave-goods amongst the burials of more impoverished Iron Age

communities.  There can nevertheless be little doubt that the overall

lack of burials, and in particular formal cemeteries, in northern England,

Scotland and Wales is real, rather than apparent, and points strongly to

a positive connection with the 'invisible' disposal methods used in

central southern, south-western and eastern England before the emergence

of the better-defined inhumation and cremation traditions in the last

centuries of the pre-Roman Iron Age.

Northern England

What little evidence there is for later first millennium B.C. burial
in central and northern England beyond the geographically and chronologically
limited Arras Culture tradition of the Yorkshire Wolds has recently been
summarised by Challis and Harding (1975, i, 174-9) but will be reviewed
again here for the striking contrast it provides with the more prolific
material from elsewhere. Leaving aside a group of widely scattered and
somewhat obscure discoveries of Late Bronze Age metalwork apparently
associated with inhumation burials from cists and flat rock or earth-dug
graves at sites such as Dalton-in-Furness, Lancashire; Follifoot, West
Yorkshire; Shenstone, Staffordshire, and Buxton, Derbyshire (Challis and
Harding, 1975, ii, 56-57; Burgess, 1976), it is possible to distinguish
a small group of cremations, a slightly larger series of inhumations and
a number of cave deposits which may perhaps belong to the Iron Age.

With two exceptions, the cremation burials have all been recorded in
Yorkshire and include, in addition to primary or secondary examples
associated with pottery sherds of Late Bronze Age or very early Iron Age
type from barrows at Rathmell in Yorkshire (H.1.7), Kildale in the
Cleveland Hills (H.1.6), Sudbrook in Lincolnshire (H.1.2) and Elmswell
on the eastern slopes of the Yorkshire Wolds (H.1.1), the important but
ambiguous group of nine disturbed barrows excavated in 1937 and 1966 on
Ampleforth Moor, north-west of Pickering (H.1.5). Here the actual evidence
of the burials themselves was lacking, but two corrected radiocarbon
determinations for charcoal deposited beneath Barrows 3 and 7 of 582 $\pm$ 90
and 537 $\pm$ 90 b.c. appear to confirm, with the parallel evidence of Late
Bronze Age pottery fragments from a pyre area encountered beneath Barrow 2,

that an earlier tradition of barrow cremation may have straggled on in the area until the beginning of the Iron Age. Whether a similar explanation is appropriate in the case of a burial from a pyre area beneath a small low cairn at Alnham in Northumberland (H.1.3) is more doubtful, for in this exceptional instance the scattered calcined bone was found associated with the fragmentary remains of an iron ring-headed pin (Jobey, 1966, Fig. 11). Although badly burnt, this piece originally had a milled head with settings for a number of coral or enamel studs and has thus been compared with a similar second or first century B.C. specimen from Grave 41 at Danes Graves (Stead, 1965, 57 and Fig.32,3) and to a number of related La Tène pins from Ireland (Jobey and Tait, 1966, 29-32; Herity and Eogan, 1977, 240 and Fig. 98,10).

Among the putative Iron Age innumations from the region, the earliest, and thus most unusual, is that represented by the discovery of supposedly human bones with two later Hallstatt bronze swords, one of them a member of Cowen's Grundlingen type at Ebberston (H.2.11), just north of the Vale of Pickering, in 1861. Because no other burial of its kind has been recorded elsewhere in Britain it is difficult to know how to treat the deposit, although contemporary Hallstatt C razors from Staple Howe, on the other side of the Vale, confirm local contact with continental manufacturing sources at this time and suggest the possibility of some very limited migration from north-eastern France or the Rhineland (Brewster, 1963, 115 and Fig. 61, Nos. 1 and 2; Challis and Harding, 1975, 176).

With the rather doubtful exception of a cairn on Roomer Common, near Swinton (H.2.18), whose otherwise empty stone cist contained fragments of

an iron object and a sherd of pottery tentatively dated to the third century B.C. (Waterman, 1955, 395; Challis and Harding, 1975, Fig. 8,8), the remaining inhumations listed by Challis belong to the later Iron Age, if not to ensuing periods. One of three crouched skeletons found at Crosby Garrett, Cumbria (H.2.2) in 1873 was, for example, accompanied by a penannular bronze bracelet that is more likely to be an early Romano-British than Iron Age piece, while two unaccompanied, but extended, burials from Catcote, Cleveland (H.2.1); a group of skeletons from High Conniscliffe in County Durham (H.2.4), and a single skeleton with an undiagnostic iron ring from Lancaster (H.2.6) all lack adequate evidence of date. Two contracted inhumations recently recovered from storage pits within a later Iron Age settlement at Ledston, near Castleford (A.1.34), are more reliable in this respect, but present, as we have already seen (Chapter 1), their own problems as apparently isolated outlying members of the southern pit-burial tradition.

Similarly difficult to interpret, but more easily recognised as examples of a distinct local cultural tradition, are a series of single and multiple inhumations from a restricted area in the limestone uplands of western Yorkshire, between Airedale and Warfedale. In some instances, as at Stainforth (H.2.17), these burials were performed within limestone clints beneath dry stone walls, but more frequently bodies appear to have been laid as primary burials in cists beneath barrows or stone cairns, or as secondary interments within the fabric of pre-existing mounds. With the sole exception of an example from Grassington supposedly associated with sherds of Romano-British and Samian pottery (Challis and Harding, 1975, 178), these burials lack closely dateable grave-goods, but are almost

invariably provided with iron knives, as at Conistone (H.2.10) and

Grassington (H.2.12 and 13), or iron spearheads in the cases of inhumations

from Airton (H.2.9), Billington (H.2.5) and two cairns near Malham (H.2.14

and 15). Fragments of further knives were also found with at least two

of the 13 deposits of disarticulated human bone placed as secondary

burials in the surface of the well-known Bronze Age barrow at Seaty Hill,

Malham (H.2.16). Although this enigmatic site again failed to provide

any conclusive indication of the date of the interments, other associated

objects included three beads and the widely discussed Malham bone pipe;

an instrument fashioned from a sheep tibia to provide, either intentionally

or by remarkable coincidence, four almost perfectly pitched notes in the

Dorian mode (Megaw, 1960, 10-12). Although this and other more orthodox

barrow inhumations from the Malham - Grassington area have been classed

as Iron Age performances, the evidence for such an early attribution seems

at best equivocal, bearing in mind the post-Conquest pottery from one

Grassington grave. The practice of providing secondary barrow inhumations

with iron knives and spearheads is, moreover, common in the pagan Saxon

period and it is important to note here that two further spearheads from

a pair of inhumation graves at Winster, Derbyshire (H.2.3), though listed

by Challis as pre-Roman, have beem classified elsewhere as Anglo-Saxon

pieces (Challis and Harding, 1975, 11, 57; Swanton, 1973, 153).

Another complex burial site, whose contents resemble in some respects

those from the Seaty Hill barrow at Malham, was excavated more recently

at Beadnell on the Northumberland coast (H.2.8), although the true

character and affinities of the practice involved remain unclear. Here,

a low cairn 19' (5.7m) in diameter and 4' (1.2m) high covered a small

primary cist that had initially contained a single crouched skeleton before being enlarged and used for the consecutive burial of no fewer than 18 further bodies. With the exception of the three uppermost and relatively intact skeletons, these secondary burials were all represented by severely disturbed deposits of disarticulated bone. Much of this material, which included at least 15 complete or fragmentary skulls, lay tightly packed at the southern end of the cist and it was therefore concluded that the mound had been used as a communal burial place over a considerable period of time, the bones of earlier occupants of the cist being repeatedly moved to make room for successive burials. The only evidence for the date of this remarkable cairn, which may perhaps be paralleled by a similar multiple grave from Lochend, Midlothian (p. 235 below), is provided by a single bronze penannular brooch of Fowler's first to third century A.D. Type A.3, found with one of the articulated, and thus latest, skeletons from the highest level in the cist (Tait and Jobey, 1971, Fig. 43).

A final group of interments that deserve some brief consideration have all been recovered from cave deposits and may perhaps mirror the examples from Somerset and Wiltshire discussed in an earlier chapter. One of the most interesting of these northern sites was explored at Bishop Middleham (H.3.2) in Co. Durham in about 1930 and revealed parts of at least 11 human skeletons buried in a narrow fissure at the back of a cave. Although the remains of a number of these individuals had been severely disturbed, either in antiquity or through the subsequent action of water running into the fissure, several other skeletons showed signs of having been deliberately placed in crouched positions beneath large flat stones, together with one or more supposed Iron Age pottery vessels and a bone

point of the type associated with the warrior burial from Grimthorpe in eastern Yorkshire. Raistrick, who was responsible for the publication of the Bishop Middleham discovery, also referred to at least four similar groups of skeletal material from caves in the Grassington area in western Yorkshire (H.3.3-6), but was in no instance able to provide clear evidence to support his claim that they all belong to the Iron Age. Equally problematical, but for slightly different reasons, is a further report of human remains found in a pot-hole-like cave known as the Dog Hole, at Haverbrack in Cumbria (H.3.1). In this instance the majority of bones were found lying together in the lowest level of the filling in the northern part of the cave and represented the disarticulated remains of at least 23 individuals of all age groups. Associated objects included a badly corroded iron penannular brooch, perhaps of first or second century A.D. type; a group of four twisted bronze wire bracelets; a bronze finger ring; an iron axe head, and a number of jet and glass beads. Because some of this material, and in particular the glass beads, could have been manufactured as late as the ninth century A.D., some doubts have been expressed regarding the archaeological integrity of the whole deposit, and although ritual activity has not been ruled out, it has been suggested that much of the material could simply have been washed into the shaft, which lay at the centre of a 4.7 acre catchment area, by flood action (Benson and Bland, 1963).

Apart from these scattered, and on the whole unsatisfactory, ground recordings, the only other potential source of evidence for conventional Iron Age burial in the region is provided by a number of groups of small square enclosures identified as crop marks in Lincolnshire and the central

Midlands. The morphological similarity between some of these enclosures, from sites such as Dowsby and Greatham in Lincolnshire (D.3.31 and 32); Chapel Brampton (D.3.35) in the Nene Valley; Ketton (D.3.28) on the Welland gravels, and Aston-on-Trent, Oakthorpe and Lockington in the Trent Valley system (D.3.7,30 and 29), with those surrounding square barrow platforms in eastern Yorkshire has already been noted, although none of the southern examples can yet be shown conclusively to have had a funerary function. Only one group, lying within a Neolithic cursus at Aston-on-Trent (D.3.7), has so far been the subject of formal excavation, and in this instance only one of the five or six identifiable enclosures was examined (May, 1970). No evidence of a central burial could be located, but sherds of Iron Age pottery from the ditch filling and the overall degree of plough damage suggest that the site may nevertheless be contemporary with its Yorkshire counterparts and could once have served a similar funerary function.

## Scotland

In turning to counties lying north of the modern Scottish border the evidence for pre-Roman Iron Age burials becomes even less adequate. Here, however, the situation tends to be exacerbated by a remarkably strong and consistent regional tradition of inhumation in stone cists that often makes it difficult to distinguish poorly provisioned or unaccompanied Iron Age burials from Bronze Age, Roman Iron Age or medieval and post-medieval interments performed in a similar manner. It is thus possible that the handful of more adequately dated burials described here form a limited, and potentially unreliable, sample of what may really be a very much larger group of contemporary inhumations.

With the questionable exception of a cremation barrow from Broughton, Peeblesh&#x131;re (I.1.1), that has been compared on purely structural grounds with the late Iron Age example from Alnham (H.1.3), the burials with which we are concerned are all inhumations.  Of these, one of the most significant is a single interment from a shallow, boulder-built cist at Burnmouth, Berwickshire (I.2.6), for in this instance the body not only lay crouched on its right side with its head to the north-east, but had been provided with an iron knife and two bronze scoops or spoons of the type that have otherwise been encountered in the context of Middle or Late La Tène burials only at Pogny in the Marne (Déchelette, 1914, 1275 and Fig. 552) and Deal, Kent (A.2.32).  Although it may be difficult to explain how these spoons managed to retain their significance over such long distances, their presence in the grave introduces the possibility that a number of other cists with less-easily dated grave-goods may belong to the same period and tradition.  Among these are the extended inhumation of an adult female with a bronze penannular bracelet from Blackness Castle, West Lothian (I.2.20);  two comparable burials with iron penannular brooches from Luffness (I.2.9) in East Lothian and Craigie, Angus (I.2.4); and a double inhumation from a short slab-built cist on the Moredun Estate in Midlothian (I.2.13).  The two adult individuals from this latter grave appeared to have been interred simultaneously, one above the other, and were accompanied by a third iron penannular brooch, the terminal loop of an iron ring-headed pin and an iron bow-brooch of early Romano-British type.  Other burials that may belong to the same post-conquest Iron Age horizon include an example from Cumbernauld, Dumbartonshire (I.2.8), associated with a large shale arm-ring;  another from Airlie, Angus (I.2.3),

in which a Roman glass vessel had been placed in a cist whose length implied crouched inhumation, and a third from Tarland, Aberdeenshire (I.2.2). The precise character of this latter burial is uncertain, but it would appear that sand quarrying had disturbed a slab-built cist containing an inhumed skeleton accompanied by a small silver penannular brooch, a tiny baluster-shaped glass object and four flat glass discs, a number of quartzite pebbles and a unique miniature cast-bronze cauldron. Although this tiny vessel stands only 4 cms high and has a maximum diameter of 5.5 cms at its mouth, its distinctive bag-shaped base and high flaring rim, decorated with rows of imitation rivets, demonstrate that it is closely modelled on the sheet-bronze cauldrons of Piggott's Carlingwark type (Piggott, 1953, 28 and Fig. 7).

Of the numerous other short and long-cist inhumations recorded in the literature, very few can be dated with confidence. Most lack grave-goods of any kind, while the objects from the remainder have either been lost or are not sufficiently diagnostic to be of real value. One grave from Camelon, Stirlingshire, is, for example, reported to have contained and iron sword, while others from Dalmeny, West Lothian (I.1.21); Edderton, Ross and Cromarty (I.1.18); East Langton, Midlothian (I.1.14); West Linton, Peebles (I.1.15); and Gullane, East Lothian (I.1.10) were accompanied by a miscellaneous selection of objects that included a bronze finger ring, a perforated bone pin, glass beads and iron knives. Four extended skeletons from cists constructed within the henge monument on Cairnpapple Hill, West Lothian (I.2.22) are equally difficult to interpret. All of these were unaccompanied, and although their excavator has argued in favour of Iron Age, rather than Early Christian re-use of an

older sacred site, the point is not easily proved. That late Iron Age or early Roman period inhumations were sometimes performed without grave-goods is nevertheless confirmed by the discovery of a cist containing fragments of the skeleton of an adult female in the outer ditch of a broch at Torwoodlee in Selkirk (I.2.19). Because rubble from the main structure was found to lie beneath and above the cist there can be little doubt that the burial was performed at the time that the broch was being systematically demolished, perhaps as a punitive measure by Roman occupying forces, early in the second century A.D. (Piggott, 1957, 114-5).

Apart from these relatively simple burials from cists there are three further inhumation sites from Scotland that deserve attention, although none is easily explained. The first, from Lochend, near Dunbar on the East Lothian coast (I.2.11), took the form of a slab-built cist with an internal length of 6'8" (2m) and a maximum width of 3' (0.9m). Within this grave, whose capstones originally lay at the level of the old ground surface, were the jumbled, disarticulated remains of at least 21 skeletons, all but one of which belonged to mature adults. Detailed observation of the distribution of bones within the cist appeared to rule out the possibility of a single deposition of disarticulated material and it was instead suggested that intact bodies had been buried consecutively over an extended period, the bones of the earlier skeletons being disturbed each time the grave was re-opened for further use. The associated presence of fragments of an iron penannular brooch not only confirms the late Iron Age or early Roman origin of the site, but emphasises its affinity with the comparable communal grave from Beadnell (H.2.8), some 47 miles to the south on the Northumberland coast.

Of even more obscure significance than these two exceptional mass-graves is an early report of human remains found within a cave at Seacliff, near Tantallon Castle, again on the East Lothian coast (I.2.12). Here the bones of two new born infants were found interred, together with sherds of supposedly Iron Age pottery, beneath a massive stone erected on a low earth and rubble mound in the mouth of the cave which, until the time of discovery, had been completely choked with an accumulation of wind-blown sand. This stone, which stood 4'6" (1.35m) high and had a maximum diameter of 6'9" (2.04m), inevitably came to be regarded as a pagan 'altar' and the two child skeletons beneath it as sacrificial foundation deposits. Although this hypothesis has in the past received some cautious support (Layard, 1933, 399-40; Hawkes and Hawkes, 1934, 326), the evidence is so vague that it is now impossible to determine with any certainty whether the burials represent conventional funerary activity or some more specialised ritual performance.

A final burial site that deserves to be noted here is more straight-forward than the Lochend and Seacliff deposits, but presents certain rather different problems of interpretation. In this instance aerial reconnaissance of the Lunan Water valley in Angus had revealed crop marks of a small square enclosure at Boysack Mills, near Inverkeilor (I.2.5), which was morphologically very similar to the La Tēne barrows of eastern Yorkshire. Subsequent excavation of the feature confirmed that a central, deeply dug earthen grave pit contained an inhumation accompanied by a large iron ring-headed pin. Whether this significant burial can be linked with the late pre-Roman Arras Culture rite or its continental counterparts is at present uncertain, although it is perhaps important to

note that similar square enclosures with central grave pits have recently
been identified from the air at sites near Forteviot and Dunning on the
gravel terraces of the Earn in Perthshire (D.3.50 and 51).

## Wales

The evidence for Iron Age burial practices in Wales is again very
limited, being restricted to a small sample of often poorly documented
or dated inhumations from just six sites. In addition to the geographically
peripheral late La Tène warrior buried with a Group V iron sword in a
stone-lined cist at Gelliniog Wen in Anglesey (J.4 and Chapter 5 above)
and two undated inhumations from stone-lined graves at Merthyr Mawr in
Mid-Glamorgan (J.5 and 6), the only discovery recorded in any detail was
made in the course of the excavation of a small multivallate hillfort at
Llanmelin, near Caerwent, in Gwent (J.3). Here two skeletons, one of an
adult male and the other of a woman, were found buried in the filling of
an enclosure ditch and in a shallow earth grave within a contemporary
annexe to the main fort. In neither case is the posture or orientation
of the body recorded, and in the absence of associated grave-goods it
can only be assumed that the burials were performed at some time during
the hillfort's active lifetime between the third century B.C. and c. A.D.
75. Perhaps rather more significant in this respect is the reported
discovery of a single crouched skeleton in a rock cut grave at Coygan
Camp on the Dyfed coast in 1842 (J.2). Although this inhumation was again
unaccompanied, the subsequent discovery of a matching pair of thin bronze
bracelets with flat decorated bezels and two small serpentine rings led
to the suggestion that further burials had been disturbed at the site in

the course of quarrying work (Wainwright, 1967, 40). The bracelets
themselves are of particular interest in that they belong to a Middle
La Tène type otherwise represented in Britain only by a pair of similar
examples from Grave 4 at Arras in eastern Yorkshire (D.1.18.4, Wainwright,
1967, 40-1, 83 and Fig. 21, Nos. 1 and 2; Stead, 1965, Fig. 27, Nos. 3
and 4).

Although it has been suggested that the famous bronze hanging bowl
from Cerrig - y - Drudion in Clwyd (J.1) may once have accompanied an
inhumation on the grounds that it was found in a stone cist (Fox, 1958, 1;
Savory, 1977, 26-7), the absence of associated bones inevitably weakens
the evidence for a funerary association, even though adverse local soil
conditions could well have destroyed all traces of inhumed skeletal
material. Similarly difficult to interpret is the extraordinary record
of a discovery made on Ogmore Down, near St. Bride's Major in Mid-
Glamorgan in 1818 (J.7). Despite the somewhat obscure character of the
surviving report, it would appear that two skeletons were here found
wearing elaborate bronze helmets embellished with silver and red enamel
decoration. Although these remarkable pieces, together with two additional
objects described as 'brass skull-caps', pieces of iron chain and a number
of barbed iron objects said to resemble daggers, were all lost while being
sent for exhibition at the Society of Antiquaries in London, a secondary
illustration taken from a contemporary drawing at first sight suggests
that they belong to the widely discussed class of Italo-Celtic helmets
manufactured in northern Italy during the fourth to third centuries B.C.
(Archaeologia, 43, 1872, Pl.36; R.C.H.M. Glamorgan, Vol. 1, Pt.2, 1976, 6).
Whether the Ogmore Down examples are attributed to this group or to a later

helmet-making tradition, it remains apparent that no comparable pieces have been reported elsewhere in Britain. In the absence of any supporting evidence it is therefore difficult to understand how the owners of such exotic headgear contrived to be buried on the comparatively remote coast of southern Wales.

## Ireland

Although Raftery (1940) and Herity and Eogan (1977, 244) have demonstrated a relatively prolific scatter of inhumation and cremation burials from long cists, earth graves and barrows in Ireland, the few well-dated examples almost all appear to belong to the latest pre-Christian centuries of the Irish Iron Age, rather than to the La Tène or pre-La Tène periods (for example, Eogan, 1974, 68-87; Flanagan, 1960, 61-2; Raftery and Moore, 1944, 171-2; O'Riordain, 1940, 133-9; Rynne, 1974, 270-1). Indeed, it has been recognised that the earlier Irish Iron Age is characterised by exactly the same sort of funerary lacuna that is experienced in all parts of mainland Britain and that Late Bronze Age burial is so far represented only by a single cremation deposit from Rathgall in Co. Wicklow (Herity and Eogan, 1977, 244; Raftery, 1973, 295). In view of this situation, two relatively well authenticated late La Tène burial sites from the east coast of Ireland assume a particular importance as exceptional, and perhaps intrusive, members of alien British or continental traditions.

The first of these sites was recognised through the discovery of a number of inhumation burials during construction of a new sea wall on Lambay Island, off the coast of Co. Dublin (K.2 and E.14). All apparently

lay crouched in hollows dug into the clay sub-soil and were covered with up to 5'6" (1.65m) of sea sand. No plan of the site and the exact arrangement and orientation of the bodies was made, nor were the individual associations of the important series of grave-goods accurately recorded. It would seem, however, that one burial was accompanied by an iron sword, of Piggott's La Tène III Group V, contained in a wooden or leather scabbard with three plain and decorated bronze mounts. The implications of this deposit, which was perhaps accompanied by a somewhat exceptional bipartite hemispherical bronze shield boss and a number of bronze sword suspension rings, have already been discussed (Chapter 5, above) and it has been suggested that the burial may belong to the small, scattered British group of later Iron Age warrior inhumations. The presence of one or more other wealthy burials is implied, moreover, by additional material of insular British origin or design from the site. These pieces include a simple bar-handled iron mirror, a beaded bronze collar of the type otherwise restricted to first or early second century A.D. contexts in northern Britain, a fragmentary bronze disc with repoussé curvilinear decoration, a La Tène III brooch of Langton Down type, three 'Dolphin' brooches, one of which is a non-functioning native copy designed to match one of the authentic examples, and a large lignite ring probably intended for use as a bracelet (See Appendix E.14).

The second Irish burial with which we are concerned was encountered by chance near Donaghdee, on the coast of Co. Down in 1850 (K.1), and almost certainly represents a Late La Tène cremation deposit. The original report of the discovery makes no specific mention of calcined bone fragments, however, and refers only to a quantity of 'black earth' filling

a small pit dug to a depth of 2' (0.6m). In addition to a bronze needle, a number of amber beads and one or more fragmentary glass and shale armlets dispersed shortly after the discovery was made, the surviving grave-goods comprise a string of 151 blue, yellow and spiral-decorated white glass beads; two bangles, one of blue and the other of purple glass; a La Tène III Nauheim-derived bronze brooch; a pair of bronze tweezers from a toilet set; two bronze finger rings, one a simple cast example and the other formed of a spiral of thin bronze wire, and a small bronze rod with knobbed terminals, perhaps used in conjunction with some form of buckle or clasp (Jope and Wilson, 1957, Fig. 1 and Pl.V). Although almost all the items in this collection can be paralleled from first century A.D. contexts in southern Britain, it remains difficult to regard the burial as a geographically peripheral member of the La Tène III Aylesford Culture sequence of cremations from south-eastern England. Not only does the Donaghdee grave-group lack the pottery vessels that distinguish all better furnished Aylesford burials, but its Nauheim-derived brooch, spiral finger-ring and glass beads and bracelets are all objects that are unknown among such graves. While it is possible that this divergence in the choice of accompanying material was dictated simply by the restricted range of ornaments that their owner would have been able to obtain while living on the Irish coast, it is also important to note that every one of the objects in the collection can be matched from late La Tène sites on the continent, as well as from south-western Britain (Jope and Wilson, 1957, 77-84). On the basis of the available evidence it may therefore be more appropriate to consider the Donaghdee deposit as the burial of a migrant settler from mainland Europe rather than as that of a woman from south-eastern England.

Chapter 8

Sacrifice and rituals of violence

Regardless of differences in the mode of burial, the form of graves
or the choice of accompanying objects, the Iron Age interments discussed
up to this point all appear outwardly to have a common purpose;  the
formalised disposal of the bodies of dead members of the community.  Not
all deposits of human bone from insular sites need derive from performances
with such straightforward motives, however, and as a postscript to our
examination of conventional burial rituals it may be useful to look
briefly at the evidence for a range of rather different ritual and secular
activities that seem to have involved human subjects for purposes other
than simple burial.  In particular, we shall have to pose, and attempt to
answer, the longstanding question of whether there is sufficient
archaeological evidence to testify that activities such as human sacrifice,
votive burial, head-hunting, and even cannibalism, took place in Britain
during the pre-Roman Iron Age.  Although numerous Greek and Roman
commentators, as well as the Early Christian authors of some Irish
mythological and quasi-historical texts, consistently attribute this sort
of behaviour to the native Celtic populations of Britain and mainland
Europe, many modern scholars have found it difficult to assess the extent
to which these travellers tales and heroic legends can be relied on as
faithful ethnographic accounts, rather than as mere propagandist
fabrications designed to reveal the barbarian tribes of the north and
west in the most unfavourable light.  While some embellishment and
distortion has without doubt found its way into the more exaggerated and

bizarre of these accounts, and in particular those that are probably based on second or third-hand verbal or written testimony, the consistencey with which certain aggressive attitudes and physically violent forms of activity are reported is too strong to be disregarded altogether and demands an open and objective consideration of the corresponding archaeological sources.

Although this is not the place for a detailed analysis of the literary and iconographic evidence, much of which has already been examined at length elsewhere (Kendrick, 1927; Tierney, 1960; Ross, 1967; Piggott, 1968), it may be useful to remind ourselves of some of the more significant practices described in these sources. Celtic human sacrifice, for example, is repeatedly referred to by a host of classical geographers and historians and one of the earliest accounts, by the Greek poet Sopater, concerns the ritual burning of prisoners taken in war (Athenaeus, IV, 1; Tierney, 1960, 196; Chadwick, 1966, 28-9). A similar custom of burning criminals or entirely innocent victims in vast anthropoid wickerwork cages as Druidic propitiatory offerings in Gaul is quoted from the first century B.C. ethnographic observations of Posidonius by Strabo (IV, IV, 5), Diodorus Siculus (V, 32,6) and Caesar (VI, 16, 4-5). Examples of other forms of deliberate killing described by these same authorities and later writers involved stabbing, strangulation, drowning and dismemberment of victims and seem to have been carried out for at least two separate reasons. On the one hand the mass cremations referred to above, and the sacrifice of captives on the Druidic altars of Anglesey (Tacitus, XIV, 30), are clearly propitiatory acts. Either they serve as rites of thanksgiving for success in war, or they are designed to gain the assistance of the gods in future

undertakings. The second incentive for sacrifice is rather different and belongs more properly within the field of magic than with true religion. Strabo and Diodorus thus describe the way in which the death-throes of a man stabbed in the back could be used as an oracular source (Strabo, IV, IV, 5; Diodorus, V, 29), while Tacitus remarks that the Druids of Anglesey would foretell the future by examining the entrails of their victims (Tacitus, XIV, 30).

Such subtle motivational distinctions may not be easy to distinguish in terms of surviving archaeological evidence, however, and it is important to bear in mind that the literary sources also refer to a range of related practices that might be expected to leave rather similar traces. In addition to the problematical issue of cannibalism, described again in the Irish sources and by a number of the perhaps less reliable mediterranean writers we are, for example, repeatedly told of a widespread interest in the human head as an object of great social and religious significance. In addition to several vivid descriptions of Celtic warriors riding from battle bearing the heads of the slain, there are numerous verbal accounts relating to the preservation and display of skulls as trophies in houses and tribal shrines. These together provide further convincing evidence for a long-lived and deeply rooted tradition in which elements of the human body were used as symbols of aggressive dominance and prowess in societies obsessed with conflict and hostility between tribal groups.

With these brief preliminary observations in mind we may now turn to the archaeological material from Britain. In so doing it will be necessary to consider evidence from two different kinds of source. On the one hand

there is a series of formal burials whose peculiar characteristics or unusual locations single them out as examples of exceptional, special-purpose practices, and on the other there is a large, and ever-growing, collection of finds of fragmentary human bones, and in particular skulls, from settlement and funerary sites that seem to derive from activities other than the simple disturbance of earlier, forgotten inhumation graves.

In considering the formal deposits with sacrificial or votive connotations it will be useful to begin with a remarkable series of discoveries of severely mutilated or dismembered skeletons from hillfort and open settlement sites in southern England. One of the first of these burials to receive detailed attention was found in the upper levels of a storage pit at Stanton Harcourt, Oxon. (A.1.32) where it was specifically observed that the corpse had been 'dismembered and heaped haphazardly in the partly-filled pit; the foot bones were found articulated, but placed on top of a couple of rib-bones; arm and leg bones lay above a badly damaged cranium' (Williams, 1951, 14). That this was not simply an isolated and exceptional act is confirmed by the subsequent discovery of similarly mutilated skeletons from pits at Wandlebury, Cambs (A.1.9.1 and 2), and Heacham, Norfolk (A.1.23), although the most emphatic evidence of all is provided by two bizarre ritual interments from Danebury in Hampshire. In one of these latter examples, excavated in 1971 (A.1.20.8), the articulated bones of a human torso and two legs had been heaped, together with a lower mandible, at the base of a large bath-shaped pit that had previously been open long enough for a thin layer of silt to accumulate over the floor. In the second of these ritual graves a similar deposit of primary silt was found, although in this instance the

pit contained not one, but three burials, arranged one above the other (A.1.20.3). The lowest of these was the extended skeleton of an adult and the highest the crouched body of an infant, between which had been deposited a fully articulated arm, a cranium and other parts of a corpse that again appeared to have been deliberately dismembered before burial.

While it may be difficult to comprehend the significance and purpose of performances of this seemingly extreme kind, it is important to recall that a number of earlier first millennium B.C. votive burials have been found beneath the outer Iron Age defences of the Danebury hillfort and that one of these contained the same layer of primary silt, upon which had been laid the dismembered remains of three dogs (Cunliffe, 1971, 243; Ross, 1968, 263). In the light of this repeated evidence that sacrificial activities were being performed at the site over an extended period, and in the absence of further close archaeological parallels, it may also be useful to remind ourselves of the following account from Posidonius, repeated with a certain sense of incredulity by Strabo. It concerns a group of women belonging to the tribe of the Samnitae who were said to live on an island lying off the mouth of the Loire and who were 'possessed of Dionysus and propitiate the god with initiations and other sacred rites; and no man may land on the island, but the women themselves sail out from it and have intercourse with men and then return . It is their custom once a year to remove the roof from their temple and to roof it again the same day before sunset, each woman carrying part of the burden; but the woman whose burden falls from her is torn to pieces by the others and they carry the pieces around the temple crying out 'euoi' and do not cease until their madness passes away; and it always happens

that someone pushes against the woman who is destined to suffer this fate
(Strabo, IV, IV, 6. Trans. Tierney, 1960, 270).

Whether or not we choose to believe this particular tale, there can
be little doubt about the votive character of a second group of
inhumations found beneath or within the fabric of Iron Age hillfort
ramparts in southern Britain. Examples of this practice, which frequently
involved the careful burial of single crouched bodies in specially
prepared pits immediately prior to the erection of reconstruction of
defensive elements within the main earthwork systems, have already been
described in some detail in an earlier chapter. For the present it is
therefore sufficient to remind ourselves that the better documented
rampart burials from Maiden Castle, Hod Hill and South Cadbury (A.4.4,3
and 7) can be matched by accounts of similar discoveries at a number of
other western hillforts, including Grovely Castle (A.4.9), Solsbury (A.4.1),
Sutton Walls (A.4.5) and perhaps Budbury Camp (A.4.8) and Flowers Barrow
(A.4.2). The frequency with which such burials have been encountered
accidentally or in the course of limited sampling excavation is indeed so
striking that it is now hard to escape the conclusion that each was
intended as a dedicatory foundation offering and that the practice must
once have been both common and widespread. Although physical signs of
violent death are, with the possible exception of two disarticulated or
dismembered skeletons from Breedon-on-the-Hill (A.4.6), admittedly
limited, it is important to remember in this context the evidence of a
parallel series of Iron Age votive inhumations from water-logged peat
deposits in Denmark. Because of their remarkable state of preservation,
a number of these latter bodies, including those from Tollund, Grauballe

and Borre Fen (Glob, 1969), showed that their owners had died of strangulation or as a result of having their throats cut; both modes of execution that would leave little or no detectable trace in terms of the purely skeletal material normally available to us in Britain.

Unambiguous examples of human votive interments from contemporary house sites in Britain are unknown, and with the exception of a curious discovery of an undated, but perhaps Iron Age, crouched skeleton buried beneath a construction of massive timber beams on the floor of a stream at Perranarworthal in Cornwall (Journ. Royal Inst. Cornwall, 4, 1873, 206-9 and Fig.), we have no deposits of human remains from watery contexts to match those from Scandinavia, or the numerous collections of votive metalwork or wooden objects recovered from peatbogs, streams and wells throughout Britain and northern Europe (Piggott, 1965, 230-1, 262-3). Skeletons of adults and children have, however, been recorded from a number of Iron Age and Romano-British structures that seem to have served ritual or ceremonial functions. The young adolescent female and infant buried in separate graves on the northern and southern sides of the interior of the stake-built enclosure at Frilford, Oxon (A.2.34), have, for example, been regarded as foundation deposits within an Iron Age shrine (Harding, 1972, 61-9), while the crouched skeletons of four infants carefully laid in each of the internal corners of Temple IV at Springhead in Kent demonstrate the survival of the votive principle into the second century A.D. (Penn, 1960, 121-7). Slightly more difficult to interpret on account of the poor quality of surviving records, but of apparently similar significance, is the reported discovery of two crouched skeletons beneath one of the largest slate foundation slabs of a dry stone wall excavated

within the area of the Harlyn Bay cemetery in Cornwall (C.13.57; Bullen, 1912, 54-8 and Pl.12). Both bodies had in this instance been completely flattened by the weight of the wall erected immediately above them, but subsequent examination of adult and milk teeth from the two shattered skulls was able to confirm the burial of an adult and a child, the latter of whom had been provided with a bronze ring and an iron bracelet. While there can be little doubt that this double burial represents another deliberate foundation deposit, the original function of the superimposed wall remains uncertain. The original excavators of the site concluded that it had served as part of a cemetery boundary (Bullen, 1912, 54), but more recent work indicates that it may instead have been one of the sides of a circular or oval sunken-floored building, erected and subsequently dismantled before or during the main period of cemetery use (Whimster, 1978). Examples of similar structures associated with pre-Roman burial grounds in Britain tend to be ellusive, but it is perhaps significant to recall that further skeletons are said to have been found within the fabric of one or more low, dry-stone walls used to define 'family' burial plots at Jordan Hill in Dorset (B.24; Warne, 1872, 225-35). No plan of these latter structures survives, but the verbal descriptions indicate that at least one was crescent-shaped and may thus, like the Harlyn wall examined in 1900, have been but an arc of a complete enclosure, either roofed or open to the air. Bearing in mind that the inhumation rites from Cornwall and Dorset belong within the same overall insular tradition, this parallel example of intra-mural burial adds some weight to the argument that the Harlyn structure was indeed a component element of the cemetery, even if it may not be possible to determine whether it served as a formal shrine or as some kind of mortuary building.

Whether the skeletons of two infants found underneath a massive stone 'altar' at Seacliff Cave on the East Lothian coast (I.2.12) or the various groups of skeletal material from caves in the Mendip region (G.3.1-6) and northern England (H.3.1-6) should be included within the same category of special-purpose burial is open to some question. Although a number of the skeletons from these latter contexts are relatively intact and seem to have been the subject of formal burial, others, from sites such as Guy's Rift, Hay Wood and Bishop Middleham (G.3.6; G.3.3; H.3.2) show considerable signs of disturbance and disarticulation and thus suggest that the interiors of caves may sometimes have been used for interments or deposits of an abnormal, if not necessarily sacrificial, character. The evidence provided by two separate accounts of secondary Iron Age deposits of disarticulated skeletal material from Bronze Age barrows is equally ambiguous. At Seaty Hill, near Malham in West Yorkshire (H.2.16) it will be recalled that parts of thirteen skeletons had been carefully buried as individual deposits in the surface of an older mound, while at Box in Wiltshire (G.1.20) the fragmented remains of at least ten individuals were found associated with large quantities of Iron Age pottery in a barrow that appeared to have contained originally a single Middle Bronze Age cremation. In the case of this second site the excavators were indeed quick to assume that the mound had served as the focal point for ceremonies involving human sacrifice, but in retrospect there is insufficient evidence to confirm that the skeletal material may not instead have derived from disturbed burials of a more conventional kind or from secondary re-burial of scarrified bones.

Before going on to consider other aspects of the use of human bone
in seemingly votive contexts we should at this point turn aside to remind
ourselves of a rather different sort of sacrificial practice that is
implied by the repeated discovery of burials in which two or more
individuals appear to have been interred simultaneously. Although the
most impressive evidence for the ritual slaying or suicide of one member
of a marital partnership on the death of the other is provided by the
remarkably high incidence of double graves containing male and female
bodies in Early and Middle La Tène cemeteries in north-eastern France
(above, p. 215), a growing sample of broadly comparable interments from
Britain is now beginning to suggest that similar customs may sometimes
have operated on this side of the Channel. In eastern Yorkshire, for
example, graves containing the skeletons of two adults lying side-by-side
or placed one above the other were encountered on five occasions in the
Danes Graves barrow cemetery (D.1.21.43,46,56,67,93) and have more recently
been recorded at both Burton Fleming and Garton Slack (Stead, 1977, 223;
J.S. Dent, unpublished information). In southern and south-western
England the double burial of adults occurs rather more sporadically and
there is often little available evidence regarding the sex of the
individuals concerned. Male and female combinations have, however, been
confirmed at both Bridport (B.1) and at Weston-super-Mare (A.1.6), and
it is therefore possible that comparable burials of two adults from
Salisbury (A.1.41), Harlyn Bay (C.13.21,23,39,56) and two pits at
Christon in Somerset (A.1.2) may represent further examples of the same
phenomenon.

In addition to this small group of burials that could perhaps represent the simultaneous inhumation of husbands and wives, there are other multiple burials in which the relationship between the individuals is obviously rather different. The interment of adult women with new born infants or young children is, in particular, a practice that recurs with some frequency. At Burton Fleming one grave contained the skeletons of an adult female, and eight year old child and a very young baby (Stead, 1977, 223; and unpublished information), while Barrow 85 at Danes Graves (D.1.21.85) revealed what would seem to be the bodies of a mother and single infant. Amongst the southern series of pit, grave and ditch inhumations there are at least five further examples of the burial of women with children from Roudham, Norfolk (A.1.24); Cassington Mill, Oxon (A.3.14); Hod Hill, Dorset (A.1.14.3) and two sites near Ventnor on the Isle of Wight (A.2.26 and 28). Although the majority of these deposits yield the bones of only one very young child, and could thus derive from the death of the parent and the infant shortly after birth, one of the two Ventnor graves contained the skeleton of a six-year-old child in addition to that of a newborn baby (A.2.28). Whether or not the members of this, and the family group from Burton Fleming, had all died together of natural causes remains uncertain, as it does in the cases of a number of more complex multiple burials. Whereas the three sword-marked skeletons from Pit 9 at Worlebury, Avon (A.1.4.4) would indeed seem to represent the genuinely casual disposal of battle victims, little is known of the pathological condition of the remains from the other pits and graves concerned. These include the bodies of a man, woman and six-year-old child from Pit 62 at Woodcutts (A.1.11.1); a group of three adult males and another six-year-old from a pit at Casterley

Camp, Wilts (A.1.44); three adults and two young children from beneath Barrow 46 at Danes Graves (D.1.21.46) and three further adults and an infant buried in a large circular cist at Harlyn Bay (C.13.56).

In addition to possible votive or ceremonial interments of more or less complete human skeletons and an important series of comparable animal burials that fall beyond the scope of this present study, it is also important that some attention should be given to the very numerous deposits of individual human bones and bone fragments that have been recorded during the excavation of Iron Age ramparts, ditches and storage pits in Britain. In the past many excavators tended to dismiss these discoveries of 'detached pieces of humanity' (Cunnington, 1919, 25) as the products of the accidental disturbance of older graves, and although this explanation may be appropriate in a limited number of cases, it is clearly inadequate to cope with the vast quantity, and often distinctive character, of the material now known. The extent of the problem was indeed first recognised nearly 40 years ago and in the selective discussion of the more significant material that follows it will be necessary to consider a number of alternative explanations, including Clark's suggestion that such fragmentary remains might sometimes be taken as evidence of activities such as cannibalism or the ritual exposure of corpses (Clark, 1940, 101).

Because they are robust and are often more easily identified, skulls and long-bone fragments tend to be reported with greater frequency than other isolated skeletal elements. In a number of instances, moreover, it has been shown that bones of this kind had been buried in what appear to be formal votive contexts. At Pimperne in Dorset, for example, a human

femur and the right-hand half of a pole-axed skull buried beneath a stone and flint capping on the floor of a ditch near the main gateway to the settlement enclosure were found to match an equivalent deposit of animal bones from a second entrance ditch (R.C.H.M. <u>Dorset</u>, Vol. IV, 1972, 54-5). At Broadstairs it is reported that arm and leg bones and a number of skulls had been carefully deposited in a number of shallow chalk-cut depressions (Hurd, 1909, 427-35). In addition to two separate deposits of human skulls from small cists at Harlyn Bay (C.13.10 and 46), somewhat similar collections of bone have been recorded at Aldwincle, Northants (<u>Bull. Northants Fed. Archaeol. Socs</u>., 7, 1972, 1), and from Bredon Hill in Gloucestershire. At the latter site three lower mandibles and a group of post-cranial bones belonging to at least two individuals had been deliberately placed on the flagged floor of a massive central gate-post pit. A second smaller post-hole within the entrance passage also contained a human leg-bone, while the upper jaw of a child had been placed within a similar feature within the interior of the fort (Hencken, 1938, 50). Elsewhere human bones are frequently found in the context of storage pits, and at Findon Park it was specifically observed that human and animal skull fragments had been placed on the floors of these, as if to serve as formal closure offerings when the pits concerned were to be abandoned at the end of their useful lives (Fox and Wolseley, 1928, 451). A practice that may in some ways be analogous has elsewhere been recognised in terms of the regular deposition of skulls and other human bones in the series of very late Iron Age and early Romano-British votive shafts and wells in Britain (Ross, 1968, 277-9; 281-3).

Although much of this skeletal material might be presumed to have been deposited when old and dry, it is perhaps of some interest to note that

skull and limb-bones from pits at Salisbury and Figsbury are reported to have been broken when relatively fresh and green (Stevens, 1934, 618-9; Cunnington, 1925, 52-3). While this evidence need not be of great significance on its own, comparison with reports on material from a number of other sites provides rather stronger reasons for supposing deliberate breakage soon after death. At Wookey Hole a group of human bones are said to have shown unmistakable signs of having been butchered (Balch, 1914, 129-30), while the distal end of a humerus excavated at Croft Ambrey, Herefordshire, bore 'unmistakeable knife-cuts' and had 'without doubt been treated in precisely the same way as bones of meat prepared for food' (Stanford, 1974, 220). Whether such bones can be accepted as indisputable evidence of cannibalistic practices, rather than as further examples of ritual mutilation, is an open question, although the former explanation has recently been offered in the case of a third deposit of human bone from Salmonsbury in Gloucestershire. Here, parts of the skull, arms and legs of a single young adult female were found widely scattered over an occupation floor and it has been argued that the two radius bones, an ulna and the right femur had all been broken intentionally 'soon after death and after the dismemberment of the body for the purpose of extracting the marrow' (Dunning, 1974, 116-7 and Pl.XI).

In considering this evidence it is important to remember that cannibalism, despite its notoriety, is a practice found amongst very few societies in an institutionalised form. In essence there are two reasons for consuming fellow human beings, and in either it is only extreme necessity that forces people to participate in a form of food that is almost invariably considered repulsive. The first and most basic of these

incentives is extreme hunger induced during times of famine or war. In any
society that relies for survival on its own agricultural produce the
destruction or loss of crops and livestock is liable to be felt acutely,
and although too little is known of the way in which Celtic warfare
affected large masses of the population, it is probable that communities
did occasionally have to face the rigours of siege without adequate
supplies of food. Indeed, Caesar was told that the Mandubii of Alesia
had resorted to the expedient of cannibalism during their earlier wars
with the Cimbri and Teutones (109 - 102 B.C.; De Bello Gallico, VII,
68-90), while Strabo observed 'as far as the matter of man-eating, that
is said to be a custom of the Scythians also, and, in the cases of
necessity forced by sieges, the Celti, the Iberians and several other
peoples are said to have practiced it' (Strabo, IV, 5).

The second, and in sociological terms more significant motive for
cannibalism arises when the activity is regularised as a prescribed and
essential part of a particular ritual sequence. In rare instances of
this kind the eating of human flesh may still be repellant to those
participating, but must nevertheless be done for the sake of the rules
rather than despite them. This seemingly paradoxical situation can
develop, for example, when consumption of part of an enemy may be taken
to symbolise the extent to which he and his people have been subjugated.
Alternatively, as among the Asmat of New Guinea, the process may even be
used as a sacrificial mechanism designed to bring peace to warring factions,
on the grounds that the eaters may, through ingesting something of the
physical personality of the eaten, become symbolic kinsmen and blood
relations of those they once fought (Zegwaard, 1959). In the case of the

Asmat, and other tribes, cannibalistic practices tend to be linked closely with head-hunting activities. Bearing in mind the widespread Celtic concern with internecine hostility and the trophy head, this equation might add weight to the archaeological evidence for cannibalism in pre-Roman Britain. If a society chooses to maintain permanently hostile relations with its neighbours, physical expressions of this hatred will almost invariably develop. To eat someone is perhaps the most extreme means to this end, but removal of the head (an important symbol of individual personality) or dismemberment of the body may be equally effective methods of symbolising authority over an enemy. The exhumation and desecration of the body of Oliver Cromwell or the exhibition of severed heads over Traitor's Gate in post-medieval London are actions of exactly this kind, designed to demonstrate extreme contempt for once-feared individuals.

How many other bone fragments from Iron Age sites result from similar practices involving physical mutilation is hard to ascertain, but there is good evidence to show that pieces of human bone were sometimes worked into ornaments and tools. At Lidbury in Wiltshire one of several fragmentary bones found in storage pits was an ulna that had been cut to form a 'scoop-like implement' (Cunnington, 1919, 35 and Pl.X, 10), while a frontal bone from Fifield Bavant had been polished through continual use in a similar fashion (Clay, 1924, Pl.X, 1). Whether four perforated human femur heads from Ham Hill, Somerset (Taunton Mus. Collection, A.1753 Unpublished) had served an equally mundane function as spindle whorls is less certain, on the grounds that a cut and polished humerus head from Worlebury appears to have been perforated for suspension as an ornament

or charm (Dymond, 1902, Pl.X, 10). This latter use of human bone is
paralleled at All Cannings Cross, Wilts, where one of four worked skull
fragments had been formed into a roundel the size of an old penny, the
suspension hole in which showed differential wear indicating that it
had been hung, perhaps around the neck, for a considerable period of time
(Cunnington, 1923, 41). Similar cranial amulets are reported from
Glastonbury in Somerset (Bulleid and Gray, 1917, Pl.101, Nos. 9 and 10)
and Handley, Dorset (Fowler, 1959), while others have been encountered,
either in isolation, or suspended with other charms on bracelets and
necklaces, in the context of at least eight Early or Middle La Tène
inhumations in the Marne region of northern France (Mortillet, 1876, 11
and Fig. 9; Dechelette, 1914, 1295-7 and Fig. 560, Nos. 6 and 7; Bretz-
Mahler, 1971, 82).

Although further examples of excised skull fragments of Iron Age date
are difficult to locate in Britain, there are several significant finds
of isolated skulls bearing holes from which pieces of bone have been
removed. One example, from Hunsbury, Northants, had a triangular
arrangement of three such perforations and is closely matched by a similar
triple-bored specimen from Hillhead Broch, Caithness, while a second
skull from Hunsbury and others from Hardingstone, Northants, and Burghead,
Moray, each had single holes bored through them (Parry, 1928, Pls. IIIB
and IVA; Macdonald, 1862, 358; Woods, 1968, Pl.9).

In his survey of Neolithic and Bronze Age trepanation Piggott drew
attention to the important distinction between surgical and surgical-
ritual use of the technique in simple societies (Piggott, 1940, 119), and

was able to show that the frequency with which the operation was performed in certain cultural zones implies the existence of formal cult practices. In terms of the Iron Age examples a ritual or semi-ritual motivation is certainly indicated, both by the occasional use of excised roundels as pendants, and by the fact that the examples of bored skulls have all been found in isolation, implying removal of the head before or after the operation. Furthermore, Parry observed that the Hillhead and Hunsbury skulls had both been bored with a metal instrument in a manner that did not suggest the delicacy required for a successful surgical operation (Parry, 1930, 96). His interpretation of the deliberate arrangement of holes was that they were intended to facilitate suspension of the skull, possibly as a trophy of war.

One of the first classical authors to refer to the Celtic practice of removing the heads of the slain during battle was Polybius (Histories, III, 67) writing of the battle of Telamon fought in 275 B.C., but more extended descriptions of the custom are provided by both Diodorus Siculus and Strabo from Posidonius' ethnography of the Celts of Gaul. An extended quotation from Diodorus is of particular interest as it contains a number of features that can be corroborated from archaeological sources.

> 'They (The Celts) cut off the heads of enemies slain in battle
> and attach them to the necks of their horses. The blood-stained
> spoils they hand to their attendants and carry off as booty,
> while striking up a paean and singing a song of victory, and
> they nail up these first fruits upon their houses, just as do
> those who lay low wild animals in certain kinds of hunting.

They embalm in cedar oil the heads of the most distinguished

enemies and preserve them carefully in a chest, and display

them with pride to strangers, saying that for this head one of

their ancestors, or his father or the man himself, refused the

offer of a large sum of money' (Diodorus, 29, 4-5. Trans. Tierney,

1960, 250).

Fortunately, Strabo quotes the same Posidonian passage and thus allows

us to see how closely the two writers seem to have followed the original

report.

'They possess a trait of barbarous savagery which is especially

peculiar to the northern peoples, for when they are leaving the

battlefield they fasten to the necks of their horses the heads

of their enemies, and on arriving home they nail up this

spectacle at the entrances to their houses. Posidonius says

that he saw this sight in many places, and was at first

disgusted by it, but afterwards becoming used to it, could

bear it with equanimity. But they embalmed the heads of

distinguished enemies with cedar oil and used to make a

display of them to strangers, and were unwilling to let them

be redeemed, even for their weight in gold' (Strabo, IV,IV,5.

Trans. Tierney, 1960, 269).

In addition to further classical references to the value of skulls

as trophies for display in houses or temples (Silius Italicus, IV,215;

V,652; Lucan, I,447; Livy, XXIII,24) there are comparable Irish

accounts of head-hunting practices. In one such tale Cuchulain is said to have ridden from battle with the heads of his opponents slung from the sides of his chariot, and in another Conal Cernacht avenges the death of the great hero by displaying the heads of his slayers on stakes and then reciting the names of their owners to Cuchulain's widow, Emer (MacCulloch, 1911, 240).

The most striking aspect of these latter descriptions, which are unlikely to have been written down earlier than the ninth or tenth centuries A.D., is the way in which they and their classical predecessors are so closely mirrored in both iconographic and archaeological material from the continent. At Puig Castellar in Spain excavation revealed a series of human skulls pierced with nails that would have allowed them to have been displayed in some prominent position (Hubert, 1934, 191; Filip, 1962, 157), while at Entremont, in Provence, a group of 15 comparable crania were once placed in specially carved stone niches within a tribal sanctuary (Benoit, 1954, 292-4). Comparable niches, some of them still containing skulls, have been recorded on at least four other occasions in the context of Gallic oppida (Piggott, 1968, 56-57), while at Apt (Vancluse) a group of 8 or 9 further skulls had been carefully buried beneath an altar in a Celtic shrine (Ross, 1965, 60). Perhaps the most impressive and immediate continental evidence, however, is that transmitted through the sculptured illustrations on Trajan's column in Rome. In one scene a group of Celts are clearly depicted riding from battle with heads dangling from the flanks of their horses, and in another we are shown Dacian tribesmen evacuating their fort and leaving behind them the trophy heads that had been displayed on posts along the tops of the palisaded defences (Bartoli, 1672, Pl.19).

If we now return to the archaeological evidence from Britain we will find that a number of these practices were again current on this side of the Channel. At Glastonbury, for instance, it would seem to have been customary, as among the Dacians, to display decapitated heads on spears or poles. Almost all the human remains from this site are fragmentary, but the majority are either whole or partial crania. Three such skulls not only show severe sword wounds that would have been responsible for death, but each display damage to the base of the cranium caused by the thrusting of spears through the foramen magnum (Bulleid and Gray, 1917, 676-8; Pl.CI). Wheeler has elsewhere suggested that another skull, bearing lethal axe-wounds, from Stanwick, was displayed in exactly the same manner (Wheeler, 1954, 53), while further evidence of a slightly different kind comes from the Herefordshire hillfort of Bredon, sacked at some time during the first century A.D. Here numerous broken skulls were found immediately beneath the rubble of the slighted gate and it has been suggested that these had originally been nailed to the lintel of the gate structure and had fallen with it (Hencken, 1938, 57). A further significant aspect of this raid, which probably took place during the Roman legionary campaign into the Marches (Kenyon, 1953, 10), is that it also seems to have been responsible for the remains of numerous battle victims left lying just outside the main gate (L.7). Although as many as 67 individuals were represented here, only 46 lower mandibles and 27 skulls were found and it has been suggested that this striking cranial deficit resulted from further trophy-snatching in the aftermath of the assault. While it is possible that Celtic auxilliaries serving with the Roman forces may, on this occasion, have been permitted to deal with the bodies of the native dead in their own tribal and distinctly un-Roman manner, it

must be admitted that other contemporary massacre sites and war graves

provide little in the way of supporting evidence. During the excavation

of the west entrance to the Herefordshire hillfort of Sutton Walls (L.8),

for example, some 24 skeletons, all of young adult males, were found to

have been thrown randomly into the bottom of the ditch. In a number of

cases traumatic lesions to skulls and other bones confirmed that death

had occurred during or shortly after battle, and in at least six instances

decapitation had occurred. Here, however, the heads were not retained,

but had been thrown back into the communal grave along with the remains

of the bodies. Groups of battle or massacre victims from further

communal graves at Houghton Regis, Beds (L.2); Cherry Hinton and

Wandlebury, Cambs (L.3 and 4); Spettisbury, Dorset (L.5) and Mildenhall,

Wilts (L.10), likewise show signs of severe physical injury and mutilation,

but in almost all cases appear to have retained their skulls, as did the

individuals from the Maiden Castle war-cemetery (L.6 and B.28.19-56) and

their less fortunate counterparts left unburied in the gateway at South

Cadbury in Somerset (L.9).

Despite the somewhat negative testimony of these latter deposits, most

of which seem again to belong to the period of the early Roman campaigns

into the south and west, some further support for the Bredon Hill evidence

is provided by a number of beheaded skeletons from more conventional

native graves, both in Britain and in north-eastern France. At Harlyn Bay

it will be recalled that one skull was found by the feet of its skeleton

and that another showed signs of having been severed from the body before

burial (C.13.37 and 60). The same phenomenon was also observed in the

case of a crouched inhumation from a pit at Hanborough, Oxon (A.1.31),

while at Worthy Down in Hampshire (A.1.19.1) the skull belonging to the body of an adult male was altogether absent. Perhaps the most striking examples of this form of deliberate mutilation (which is later reflected in a parallel series of late Roman inhumations of beheaded females buried with their heads between their knees or feet (Hawkes, 1961, 8-9), however, are those provided by inhumations from some Early and Middle La Tène cemeteries in north-eastern France. At Les Bouverets, Marne, for example, all four skeletons from a large multiple grave lacked their skulls (Bosteaux-Paris, 1896, 591-2), while in Grave 13 at Sogny-aux-Moulins, Marne, two headless warriors lay on either side of a third intact skeleton (Thierot, 1930, Fig. 13). Similar examples of decapitated bodies have also been recorded from single and double graves at Les Jogasses, Mont-Gravet, Mont-Troté, Sogny-aux-Moulins, Poix, Grandes Loges and other sites in the Marne region, while further burials from Witry-lès-Reims and Mairy are said to have contained intact skeletons accompanied by additional detached skulls (Bourin, 1911, No.127; Favret, 1927, 340, 343; Bretz-Mahler and Brisson, 1958; Rozoy, 1965; Bretz-Mahler, 1973, 182).

Although it would seem likely that the heads of most of these individuals and their British counterparts had been removed before burial, a further interesting observation has recently been made in the course of the excavation of a contemporary cemetery at Tinqueux. Here it was found that a comparatively large number of skeletons again lacked skulls, but that these had in this instance been robbed from the graves after burial had taken place. Because those responsible could be seen to have re-excavated only the areas of the graves in which the heads were likely to lie and consistently failed to remove accompanying objects of intrinsic

value, such as necklaces and brooches, it seems apparent that interest was restricted to the retrieval of the skulls. It is nevertheless difficult to determine whether these were being removed as legitimate ancestral relics by surviving kinsmen, or as illicit, easily-won trophies by members of hostile communities (Flouest and Stead, 1977, 73).

## Conclusions

This short excursus into the broad and potentially treacherous field of Celtic ceremonial and ritual activity has not attempted to provide more than a brief outline of a class of evidence that will in future need to be the subject of detailed research on its own right. Enough has nevertheless been said to confirm our original suggestion that Iron Age skeletal remains need not always derive from straightforward funerary performances. Indeed it would now seem likely that human subjects, or their bodies, were frequently employed, alongside animals and inanimate objects, as key physical elements in a wide range of activities designed to fulfil quite different social needs. In reaching this conclusion it is nevertheless important that two distinct reservations should be borne in mind. Firstly we must remember that our knowledge of the standard burial practices used in all parts of Britain during the earlier centuries of the Iron Age, and in some regions up to and beyond the Roman Conquest, is still very limited indeed and that some seemingly eccentric burials or deposits of fragmentary bone may well represent funerary techniques of which we are still largely ignorant.

The second and more important point concerns the dangers inherent in any attempt to interpret the fragmentary surviving physical traces of

what must once have been extremely complex performances, governed and stimulated by systems of values and belief that we can never hope to understand at anything other than a superficial ethnocentric level. While it may be possible to recognise the existence of a group of votive, and thus sacrificial, interments from pits, ramparts and other significant contexts, we cannot attempt to guess at, and less still judge, the specific historical factors that led to their performance in each individual case. Nor, in the absence of surviving oral explanations, is it possible to comprehend why some communities may have found themselves compelled to indulge in acts of ritual mutilation and cannibalism, and others to commit a surviving husband or wife to the grave of his or her dead spouse. In examining the evidence for such practices it is only legitimate to surmise that they were believed at the time to be of critical importance to the stability and continuity of society and that they may, like the parallel concern with head-hunting and a cult of the human skull, reflect some of the acute tensions and fears of the communities they served. That similar modes of expression can be recognised throughout barbarian Celtic Europe, from Czechoslovakia and Hungary in the east, to Spain and France in the south, and to Britain and Ireland in the west, is nevertheless of great interest, for they point, like the consistent and re-echoed themes of early Celtic art, to certain shared attitudes to life and death that may in some measure transcend local variations in conventional burial procedure or more mundane material culture.

## Chapter 9

## Conclusions

In seeking to shed further light on the long-standing problem of the methods of burial used by Iron Age communities in different parts of Britain this study has met with somewhat mixed fortunes. While it has hopefully succeeded in isolating a number of previously unrecognised funerary traditions and has perhaps been able to reveal the better-documented Arras and Aylesford Culture rites in a broader insular perspective, it must nevertheless be admitted that it has left many other critical questions unanswered. In particular it has contrived to emphasise, more strikingly than hitherto, the alarming contrast that exists between those limited areas and periods for which modes of burial can now be identified and the remainder that remain as stubbornly obscure as they were before. If we now attempt to assess the character, origins and relationships of funerary traditions that can be seen we will, moreover, find ourselves stumbling on further difficulties that are likely to remain unresolved until more effectively recorded and closely dated archaeological information becomes available. On this cautionary and perhaps pessimistic note we should nevertheless seek to draw what conclusions and lessons the available data will allow.

With the exception of a handful of scattered inhumations and cremations (Burgess, 1976) the evidence for the methods of disposal used between c. 1000 B.C. and 400 B.C. is almost non-existent and prohibits the definition of any distinctive, recurrent burial types. This scarcity is indeed so striking that it would now seem possible to argue the

existence of a burial technique that by definition leaves no visible archaeological trace of itself. Although any attempt to guess at the nature of this invisible rite must await discussion of the visible traditions that succeeded it in certain specific areas, there can be little doubt that it was first adopted at the very beginning of the Iron Age, if not during the latest centuries of the Bronze Age, and subsequently became dominant in all parts of mainland Britain, flourishing in some western and northern regions up to, and beyond, the time of the Roman Conquest. In the absence of positive evidence to the contrary it must also be borne in mind that it may have survived in its unseeable form in areas that subsequently provide more easily recognised burial procedures.

In addition to the later development of the radically different Aylesford Culture cremation rite in south-eastern England, this funerary lacuna was eventually broken by the emergence of four regional inhumation traditions and a fifth sword-burial custom with a more diffuse geographical distribution. Although these latter rites each display certain distinctive and specific characteristics of their own, it may nevertheless be possible to show that all share certain ritual features in common. In order to isolate these consistent themes it will be useful to remind ourselves of the principle diagnostic features of each group.

## Group 1

The 200 inhumations that comprise this group all come from sites scattered throughout central southern and south-eastern England, although there is a marked concentration of examples from the chalklands of central Wessex. The most characteristic members of the series are simple

inhumations from the floors or fillings of disused storage pits, but it is probably legitimate to include within the group an almost equal number of burials from more conventional shallow earth graves and the fillings of enclosure ditches. A further series of isolated interments discovered within, or beneath the ramparts of contemporary hillforts share certain of the distinctive ritual features of the group, but have nevertheless to be treated as a variant phenomenon on the grounds of their seemingly votive, rather than purely funerary, character.

With the exception of a small, heterogene ous collection of grave burials distinguished by eccentric body positions, orientations or grave-goods, the members of the sequence together reveal three more or less consistent themes. Firstly it can be shown that almost all bodies were buried on their sides with the legs flexed, crouched or contracted to the right, or more commonly the left side; secondly it can be demonstrated that there is a marked tendency for skeletons from pits, in particular, to lie with the head directed between north and east; and thirdly it is apparent that all the pit-burials and the majority of their grave and ditch counterparts were performed without the benefit of accompanying grave goods. While these recurrent characteristics serve to define the overall coherence of the tradition, its precise social role and manner of development remain obscure. On the basis of limited available dating evidence the rite seems to have reached the peak of its popularity in the hundred years preceding the Roman Conquest, having first appeared during the third and perhaps late fourth centuries B.C. If it had previously evolved through one or more local developmental phases before emerging in its mature form, these and their duration cannot yet be identified.

A second and potentially more serious difficulty derives from the fact that there may be insufficient grounds for assuming that the various forms of the rite, once introduced, were ever intended to serve the majority of the population. No traces of extensive extra-mural cemeteries of the kind that distinguish the funerary traditions of eastern Yorkshire, southern Dorset, the south-western peninsula and the Aylesford Culture zone have ever been recorded in the region, and although the sample of isolated inhumations has increased greatly in recent years, there are still too few burials to account, in proportional terms, for the dead of what must have once been a particularly populous territory. Bearing this point in mind it has also to be noted that the pit-burials that form the nucleus of the tradition are themselves examples of a form of interment that is in many respects ambiguous and eccentric. Although postural and orientational preferences confirm that these cannot easily be regarded as casual, ad hoc burials of social outcasts and unwelcome hawkers, the use of what is commonly regarded as a rubbish pit as a grave, the general absence of status defining funerary provisions and, most significantly of all, the practice of allowing burial <u>within</u> the area of human settlement, together suggest a certain lack of concern for conventional funerary rules. The criteria used to select individuals for this sort of treatment cannot yet be identified, but it would seem probable that we are dealing here with a practice that was reserved for a minority of the community who were in some way debarred from conventional burial on grounds of their particular ritual or social status. Although the complementary sequence of grave burials from the region is itself too small to be regarded as the model for the coherent group of pit-burials, it nevertheless remains difficult to dismiss the entire tradition as a short-lived secondary

practice of minimal comparative interest, for the simple reason that it shares certain significant ritual features with the more orthodox inhumation traditions from areas to the north and south.

## Group 2

Although it was short-lived and was later absorbed into a more complex regional Romano-British tradition of burial, an important variant inhumation form can be seen to develop in a closely defined area of southern Dorset during the later first century B.C. The essential attributes of the rite, which can presumably be associated with a division of the historical tribe of the Durotriges, are the introduction of simple earth-dug graves, the adoption or invention of the notion of defined cemetery areas, and the regular provision of a limited range of formal grave goods, amongst which Durotrigian pottery vessels and joints of meat figure most prominently. A further characteristic feature is continued adherence to the crouched body position, although burials from a number of sites now show a stronger preference for the right, rather than the left, side of the body. Postural regularities are again complemented by distinct orientational preferences, and although it is possible to detect some slight variation between communities, the majority of burials are confined, like their Group I counterparts, to an arc between N and SE. Without further detailed analysis of the accompanying ceramic material it is impossible to determine the date of the tradition's introduction with any precision. The number of sites now recorded and the absence of obvious external sources nevertheless strongly suggest that it served as a majority rite and that it developed as a purely local innovation out of an older invisible tradition at some stage during the later first century B.C.

## Group 3

A distinctive south-western inhumation tradition, characterised by the use of cist-graves lined and covered with rough granite boulders or flat slabs of slate, has been recognised through the chance discovery and excavation of a number of small cemeteries and isolated burials around the coasts of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. The only burial grounds to have been the subjects of formal excavation are those from Harlyn Bay and the island of St. Mary's. These and verbal reports relating to earlier discoveries nevertheless confirm that bodies almost invariably lay crouched in their cists and that the majority were placed on their left, rather than right, sides. It has also been shown that each of these sites shows a very strong preference for burial with the head directed between N and NE, thus again reflecting the prescriptions defining the Wessex pit-burial sequence. Two further recurrent features of the Cornish rite are the consistent use of formal cemeteries and the intermittent provision of grave goods that include items of metalwork imported from south-western Europe or central southern England. On the basis of these latter objects the tradition can be seen to have flourished between the second century B.C. and the late first or early second centuries A.D., although the precise date of its original introduction and the extent to which it was eventually adopted as a majority rite are in some doubt.

## Group 4

The best known and most prolific of the insular inhumation traditions is confined almost exclusively to the chalk wolds of eastern Yorkshire and

can be defined principally by the practice of burial in rock or gravel-cut graves placed at the centres of barrow platforms surrounded by square, or more rarely, circular quarry ditches. The majority of such barrows are grouped in extensive cemeteries or in small family clusters and because so many have now been revealed by excavation or through the medium of aerial photography it would seem likely that the rite was used for a very considerable proportion of the population.

On the grounds that the use of square-plan barrows and the practice of burying the component elements of wheeled vehicles with some high-ranking individuals can be matched among contemporary communities in north-eastern France it has long been argued that the insular Arras Culture was the unitary product of a phase of Early or Middle La Tène colonisation from the Marne region. While these continental affinities cannot be denied, it is nevertheless of crucial significance that other elements of the Yorkshire rite appear to derive from an older native tradition. Whereas the corresponding continental La Tène inhumations show a universal preference for extended burial with the head to the east or west, almost all their counterparts from the Yorkshire cemeteries lie crouched or contracted on their sides and with their heads directed north, or more rarely south. The only exceptions to this rule, which can be recognised at every major burial ground, including the earliest known example at Cowlam, are a restricted series of burials from Burton Fleming whose extended body positions, east-west orientations and distinctive grave-goods mark them out as members of a subsidiary, and seemingly later, insular sub-tradition.

Although most conventional Arras Culture inhumations are unaccompanied
or are provided with no more than a handful of items from a stereotyped
range of essentially simple grave-goods, it would appear that the rite was
most intensively practiced during the second and first centuries B.C. A
single La Tène I brooch from Cowlam nevertheless suggests that the
amalgamation of the continental and native components of the tradition
may already have taken place by the late fourth or early third centuries
B.C., even though there are as yet no traces of the primary burial
sequences themselves.


## Group 5

Excluding a number of burials with spearheads, it has been possible
to identify a total of 23 British inhumations and a single outlier from
Lambay Island, Dublin, that were certainly or probably accompanied by
swords and in some cases additional items of weaponry that include shields,
spear heads and sword suspension rings. The most distinctive single
feature of the group, however, is its remarkably widespread insular
distribution, for it is apparent that each example has been found in
isolation within an area otherwise characterised by a different funerary
form or a complete absence of burials. At Whitcombe the warrior lay amongst
a group of simple earth-grave burials and shared with them the local
Durotrigian rules of body position and orientation, while at Owslebury
the sword burial was the sole inhumation in a cemetery devoted to La Tène
III cremations. St. Lawrence and Sutton Courtenay are both in areas
otherwise associated principally with Group 1 burials, and although three
examples from Yorkshire form a slightly more coherent group, they too

appear as intruders amongst the conventional weaponless Arras Culture graves. If burials from Anglesey and Ireland are admitted to the series, the distribution becomes more exceptional still and it is necessary to ask whether the practice could have been devised spontaneously in each of these areas, or should instead be related to a similar, but longer lived, continental tradition of sword burial. Although at least four of the insular warriors are known to have been crouched in a manner that reflects native tradition, several others had been buried in a less familiar extended position that adds further weight to the argument that the series may, with the possible exception of the burial from Shouldham, reflect the influence of a small number of settlers or refugees moving from parts of France after the Roman conquest and disarmament of Gaul during the mid-first century B.C.

Leaving aside the exceptional and specific sword burial rite, whose eccentric distribution and alien inspiration single it out as a separate, if not easily interpreted, later development, the remaining four inhumation groups reveal one outstanding characteristic; their universal preference for burial in a crouched position with the head directed to the north. That this same combination of orientational and positional prescriptions is shared by otherwise diverse cultural groups scattered between the Isles of Scilly and eastern Yorkshire would seem to denote the existence of an exceptionally powerful and influential body of common tradition. Because these particular regulations cannot be traced amongst any contemporary continental La Tène societies it would also seem likely that their origin is entirely insular, and it is at this point that we meet with our greatest difficulty - the impossibility of isolating any one sequence of burials

that is clearly older than, and thus potentially ancestral to, all the others. Although the Durotrigian rite from southern Dorset could perhaps be regarded as a later formalisation based on the preceding Group I sequence, all the other traditions contrive to emerge archaeologically at more or less the same time during the third or late fourth centuries B.C. What is more, each can at present be identified only in its mature, evolved form. In none of the regions concerned is there any visible evidence of the method of burial used before the sudden introduction of inhumation, and it thus becomes necessary to ask how and why the same pattern of positional preferences could have been transmitted to Cornwall, Yorkshire and Wessex for use in three quite different burial traditions. In the absence of any adequate cultural evidence for large scale internal migration between these zones it is only possible to argue that the prescriptions are very much older than the inhumation rites they subsequently serve and that they were in each case present in the areas concerned before certain stimuli led to the development of funerary techniques that have the capacity to survive in the archaeological record.

In pursuing this hypothesis two further questions have inevitably to be raised. One concerns the factors that were responsible for the visible emergence of the identifiable traditions, and the other relates to the nature of the preceding invisible rite. Any attempt to tackle these problems in depth would necessarily involve an unacceptable degree of speculation, although there are, in the latter case, clues that guide us firmly to the conclusion that we are again dealing with some form of inhumation. In the first place it is extremely difficult to imagine how a set of inflexible postural rules could have been carried for so long a

period and over such widely dispersed areas by a rite involving cremation
or any comparably destructive technique, and in the second place it can
hardly be a matter of coincidence that each of the emergent rites
happened to take the form of inhumation. If this argument is taken a
stage further it also becomes logical to suggest that the older inhumation
tradition involved the interment of bodies on, or very close to, the
existing ground surface in a manner that immediately rendered them
susceptible to subsequent destruction, and that the succeeding rites can
be recognised solely on account of their adoption of deeper and better
protected graves. In this context the assumption that the Arras Culture
rite resulted from the fusion of an older, invisible tradition and an
incoming continental style of burial is crucial, for it not only implies
that the two component customs were sufficiently compatible for the
interaction to take place, but also provides the essential mechanism, in
the form of protective barrow mounds, that allows the earlier native rite
to emerge in a visible form. Although it is not yet possible to identify
the corresponding cultural catalysts that provided Cornish and Durotrigian
inhumations with the comparable protection of deeply buried stone-lined
cists or earth graves, the surface burial hypothesis is particularly
valuable in relation to the ambiguous evidence of the central southern
zone. In this context it will not only provide a satisfactory and welcome
explanation of the absence of evidence for a majority rite up to the time
of the Claudian conquest, but will, more importantly, at last allow the
burials from the interiors of settlement sites to be confirmed as an
eccentric unrepresentative minority that have survived simply because
they were performed within deep, undisturbed storage pits. How long this
archaeologically invisible rite may have retained its popularity, both

in central southern England and other areas, is extremely difficult to determine, although it is probable that detailed and much needed analysis of post-Conquest native burial traditions will eventually reveal many of the same lacunae that we have had to face in the pre-Roman period.

In attempting to identify the dynamic processes by which elements of Late La Tène culture were transmitted to south-eastern England it may be necessary to face an exactly comparable problem. As we have seen, the introduction of a distinctive and wholly novel cremation rite in conjunction with a wheel-thrown La Tène III ceramic tradition has been used to define the regional Aylesford Culture, but does not occur until the last four post-Caesarean decades of the first century B.C., whereas the main sequences of imported Gallo-Belgic coinage show signs of an energetic phase of infiltration beginning c. 120-100 B.C. In the absence of any insular funerary evidence to accompany this earlier period of supposed colonisation, and on the grounds that contemporary Middle La Tène burials may perhaps be as ellusive in those areas of north-western France from which the main coin series originate, it has therefore been suggested that the primary Belgic migrants may have employed a funerary technique that leaves as little trace as that of the people amongst whom they settled. On the basis of this argument the cremation rite that emerges subsequently could most effectively be associated with a secondary phase of settlement, possibly from a quite different region of northern France, beginning just before, or very shortly after, the Roman conquest of Belgic Gaul. Although the discovery of a major cemetery such as King Harry Lane at St. Albans may suggest the wholesale adoption of a modified form of this tradition by some native communities, the evidence of the

smaller rural burial grounds tends again to imply that it remained something of a minority practice until at least the mid-first century A.D. If this were the case - and it would be unlikely to be otherwise in the context of a pattern of migration rather than full-scale martial invasion - we not only find ourselves in the position of having to consider the continued survival of an invisible native inhumation rite in the areas of most intensive secondary 'belgicisation', but may also, in future, need to examine the case for a complementary and equally ellusive primary Belgic funerary tradition.

The uncritical employment of negative evidence in archaeology, as in any other scientific discipline, is rightly regarded as a potentially dangerous practice that should normally be discouraged on the grounds that it is too easily open to abuse. In certain specific situations, when all other sources of information have been examined meticulously and have failed to provide the required answers to crucial questions, its limited and controlled use nevertheless becomes unavoidable if the visible evidence is itself to be interpreted correctly. Indeed, there are occasions when total reliance only on those cultural elements that happen, through the operation of differential factors of survival, to have been preserved, recovered and recognised archaeologically, can lead to a grossly distorted and misleading reconstruction of historic events and activity. In the context of the British Iron Age the consistent absence of funerary sites in all but very restricted areas and periods may eventually prove to be important as a widespread and long-lived insular cultural trait, even though it has in the past been overshadowed by the more positive and occasionally spectacular evidence of the continentally

influenced rites of the Arras and Aylesford Cultures. While the significance of these and the more recently recognised inhumation traditions from Cornwall, southern Dorset and central Wessex need not be underestimated, it is vital to recall that they together represent no more than the visible, and in certain respects eccentric and unrepresentative, fragments of a total picture whose central themes and patterns extend back to the later Bronze Age and remain shrouded in obscurity.