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Sitting in the grave: An analysis and comparison of Seated burial ritual in North-West Europe in the La Tène period

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Sitting in the grave: An analysis and comparison of Seated burial ritual in North-West Europe in the La Tène period



Jackie Dubbeldam

Image on cover: Map of Northwestern Europe. Figure by Jackie Dubbeldam, 2022.

Sitting in the grave: An analysis and comparison of Seated burial ritual in North-West Europe in the La Tène period



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1. Introduction

The seated burial refers to a burial ritual in which the body is positioned with its vertebral column extended and positioned horizontal or vertical with respect to the floor of the grave (Knüsel, 2014, pp. 40-41). Seated burials are recorded from the Mesolithic up to the Iron Age. However, seated burials are an underexposed funerary ritual (Moinat, 1993, p. 6). Within archaeology, the interest in seated burials and their significance within their respective communities varies per country. While seated burials have enjoyed more thorough excavation and research on the continent, their counterparts in Britain are a relatively obscure ritual among their funerary practices (Lamb, 2018, p. 429). The current hypothesis on their function is based on excavations of seated burials on the continent. They are considered symbolic punishment, post-mortem banishment or relegation (Delattre & Pecqueur, 2017, p. 1).

The absence of information about the treatment of bodies in their specific cultural context is one of the biggest obstacles for analysis. Furthermore, analysis and comparisons are hindered by cursory archaeological documentation (Milella et al., 2015, pp. 2-3). However, seated burial practices cannot be understood when one considers them in isolation. As comparison reveals patterns that helps us understand the rituals significance within society and religious practice, on a local and intra-regional narrative (Lamb, 2018, p. 11). In the paper '*Seated Burials of the La Tène Iron Age*' by A. Lamb (2018) he compares seated burials across North-Western Europe. Here he explores the frequency and possibility of comparisons of seated burials across north-western Europe during the Iron age. Furthermore, research by V. Delattre and L. Pecqueur (2017) '*Entering immobility: deceased in sitting position during the Late Iron Age*' compares archaeological data concerning seated burials across France and Switzerland to establish their cultural and religious significance.

Within my thesis I compare seated burials across north-west Europe from the La Tène period. To understand the religious and ritualistic practice of seated burials within a larger context. Moreover, to understand their cultural and overlapping religious practices. Therefore, I will conduct literary research on seated burials in north-western Europe from the iron age. In order to set a parameter for my thesis, I will use the sites Lamb (2018) recorded as my basis and create an overview to allow for further comparison.

Lamb (2018) describes thirteen sites containing seated burials from the La Tène period in his paper. The sites include Acy-Romance, Avenches, Champs des Rochers à Recoux, Chronicle Hills barrow group, Crosskirk, Dunbar, Granton Pier, Mormont, Pierrières, Reviars, Saint-Antoine, Geneva, Saint-Juste-en-Chausée, and White Horse Stone.

1.1 Research questions

1. What is the religious significance of the seated burials across North-Western Europe from the La Tène period?
2. What comparisons can be made between the seated burials across north-western Europe from the La Tène period?
3. What problems does one encounter when analysing documentation on seated burials across different countries and methodologies?

In order to compare the sites, I will collect data from these excavations and focus on sex, age, body position, burial structures and surrounding landscape of the burials. In the following chapters, I will explain the historical and cultural context of the research area as well as religion. Furthermore, I will elaborate on the research area and sites and the collected data.

1.2 Much to do about Celts

During the La Tène period, the majority of tribes in France and Britain are considered Celtic. Therefore, the following chapter will describe their culture and history to create an understanding of the cultural context in which the 'seated burials' were practised.

The ancient Celts occupied significant parts of Europe between 700 BCE and 400 CE (Cartwright, 2021). However, there is no one definition of Celtic, and who they were and what they represented has been an ever-changing narrative. Their culture could vary from tribe to tribe, and they likely never saw themselves as one. One could imagine their culture like a quilt, tied together by strings, but each part of a different fabric. As a result, the study of the ancient Celts has always been multidisciplinary, ranging from archaeology, history, linguistics and DNA studies. Each has its perspective of what Celtic means (Cunliffe, 2018, pp. 26-27).

From an archaeological perspective, the first visibility of proto-Celts is known as the Hallstatt culture. During a time when they established contact and trade with the Greek settlement of Massalia c.600 BC. The Hallstatt culture is best known for its elaborate burial culture, the princely graves, from the 7th to the 5th century BC (Cunliffe, 2018, p. 3). The Hallstatt cultural influence was most substantial in central Europe. There are many theories concerning their eventual collapse; however, what is acknowledged is that the La Tène culture succeeded them around 450 BC. During this time, the more war-minded culture groups migrated all over Europe.

From the start of their contact with the Mediterranean world, the Celts were injected into their histories with Ephorus in the 4th century BC describing the Celts as one of the four great barbarian people with the likes of Persians, Libyans and Scythians. In mythology, Hercules sired Celtos, Galatos and Iberus, the eponymous ancestor of the Celts, Galatians and Iberians. Their classical contemporaries have referred to ancient Celts in varying ways. Celt derives from the Greek word '*Keltoi*' and the Latin '*Caltae*'. *Caesar* specifically called the inhabitant of Gaul 'Gauls', stating that they did refer to themselves as 'Celts' in their language (Cunliffe, 2018, pp. 3-4).

Most of our perception of Celtic culture comes from Julius Caesar, who wrote about his experience with Celts in "*Commentarii de Bello Gallico*", also known as the Gallic Wars. He describes his campaign to conquer Gaul c. 50 BC (Cunliffe, 2018, p. 9; Cunliffe, 2018, p. 21). However, these sources are problematic as they describe the Celts from an outsider's perspective. Moreover, they likely had ulterior motives to depict the Celts in a certain way. When Caesar describes the Celtic gods, for example, he refers to them in their Roman equivalent, as his audience would be Roman (Cunliffe, 2018, p. 275).

Within archaeology, *Celts* can be defined as 'bearers of La Tène culture'. La Tène art and metalwork are recognized as Celtic art. However, what is considered La Tène culture can also vary per country. Linguists have a different view stating that the earliest inscriptions currently found in the Celtic language date from c.600 BC in Lepontic, a language from the northern regions of Italy in the Po Valley. The writing system was adapted from the Greek alphabet (Cunliffe, 2018, p. 32). They can be defined as people who spoke the Celtic language or produced Celtic art (Collis, 2014, p. 291). However, people in the past could have been multilingual, and the Celtiberians did not produce artwork that would fit the La Tène mould (Collis, 2014, p. 301).

1.3 Religion

Their religion was a unifying factor within Ancient Celtic culture (Cartwright, 2021). The Ancient Celts did not write down their religious practices. It was ingrained in the Celtic culture that the druids, their religious and moral leaders, had to remember their teachings rather than write them down. An apprenticeship could take up to twenty years (Cunliffe, 2018, pp. 273-274). Our primary sources on Celtic religion are delivered from Graeco-Roman literature, which is naturally subject to bias. According to Julius Caesar, the druids were involved in religious matters. The druids were in charge of public and personal sacrifices and the interpretation of religious customs and ceremonies. Classical sources recorded that the Celts believed in an immortal soul. This is confirmed in the works of Diodorus Siculus in the 1st century BC. The Celts considered that the soul was located in their heads. This belief is supported by the well-documented head-hunting culture (Pope, 2019, p. 4). The Celts had a polytheistic religion, with over 300 known names of Celtic deities. However, most deities are only mentioned once (MacCulloch 2005, pp, 23-24). Many of the deities were depicted or represented by an animal. There were local variations of deities, but some were worshipped across the Celtic world. The deity that appears most prominently in the Celtic world is *Lugus*; *Caesar* describes him as Mercury in Roman terms (Pope, 2019, p. 6).

Such deity that was worshipped across the continental Celtic world was the god '*Cernunnos*' or the "horned one". He is considered the ancestral god of all Celts. He appears in many iconographic forms across the Celtic world. Often depicted in a seated position, three-faced, with a torque, deer antlers or 'horns', a serpent and a cornucopia sometimes depicted as a bag. The god symbolises the cult of the dead, the underworld and fertility (MacCulloch, 2005, pp. 32-34). The figure below depicts an altar found in Reims, where the god *Cerunnos* is depicted seated with a serpent in his lap. Horned animals are depicted under his feet, and the person on the right appears to hold a torque:



Figure 2.1: Cernunnos on an altar. Cernunnos depicted on an altar found in Reims. He is in seated position with a serpent on his lap. C. 30 CE–100 CE. Musée Saint-Remi, museum number: 978.20189. <https://musees-reims.fr/oeuvre/autel-de-cernunnos>.

The depiction of Cernunnos can also be seen on the 'Gundestrup Cauldron' as seen below. The cauldron dates from 150 BC – 0 AD. And was likely made by the Thracians, whom lived around the modern-day area of Bulgaria and Romania. The cauldron was found in Denmark (*The Dating and Origin of the Silver Cauldron*, n.d.)



Figure 1.2: The Gundestrup cauldron. Depiction of *Cernunnos* on the Gundestrup cauldron in a seated position. National museum of Denmark. <https://en.natmus.dk/historical-knowledge/denmark/prehistoric-period-until-1050-ad/the-early-iron-age/the-gundestrup-cauldron/a-foreign-costume/>.

The seated form is important for the iconography of *Cernunnos*, moreover, the position is reminiscent of the seated burials. One of the suggested reasons for *Cernunnos* seated depiction is that the ancient Celts did not use furniture. Instead, it was common to sit on straw (MacCulloch, 2005, pp. 33-34). In other words, the position of the deity reflected the Celtic culture.

1.4 Burial Practices

There are some generalizations about Celtic burial rituals. In order to do so, material culture from burials is used within archaeology to create typo-chronologies and mortuary treatment as a ritual indication (Roymans, 1990, p. 217). As stated before, the Ancient Celts did not record their religious practices. However, second-hand contemporary sources are known to describe the funerary rites (Cunliffe, 2018, pp. 273-274). Due to these sources, we know that the Celts believed in an afterlife. The Celtic afterlife appeared the same as in life but without harmful components, a mirror of the current world. In addition, burials often contained grave goods, indicating that they had used these objects when they passed (Cartwright, 2021).

Burial rites are varied and occur alongside one another and can differ regionally. The practice of cremation, mummification, deposition in storage pits, shafts, and water deposition occur in Northern France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Southern Germany and Luxembourg (O'Brien, 2014, p. 25). In Britain, there is a distinct gap in knowledge of burials during the Iron Age compared to the evidence from The Bronze Age and the early Medieval period. Furthermore, there is a lack of bodies and evidence in the La Tène period. Exhumation and deposition in water were likely the cause; therefore, evidence disappeared from archaeological records (O'Brien, 2014, p. 26). Inhumation often occurs within tombs and mounds. Cremation was a common rite that regularly increased from the 2nd century BCE onwards (Cartwright, 2021). Cremation and flat graves are the most common funerary practice in Northern Gaul during the La Tène period (Roymans, 1990, p. 220). In Britain, however, the method of exhumation was standard, meaning the body was exposed to the elements; after the bones remained, some were collected and kept or buried.

Furthermore, an account of human sacrifice was described by Julius Caesar in the Gallic Wars. Julius Caesar describes the funeral of a chief; at the funeral, the chief's enslaved attendants were sacrificed to join him. However, the funeral practice of human sacrifice was abandoned after 100 AD. Funerary practices tend to differ regionally and change over time (Cartwright, 2021).

Seated burials are uncommon; there are a few examples on the continent and in Britain (O'Brien, 2014, p. 38). Moreover, it is one of the most poorly understood burial rites (Lamb, 2018, p. 429).

2. Methodology

Burials are one of the most encountered cultural features found by archaeologists. Binford had already noted this in the '70s (Binford, 1971, p. 6). However, the body was often excluded from the discourse of funerary ritual (Duday, 2012, pp. 62-63). To solve this, Bruno Boulestin and Henri Duday suggested the “archaeoethanatology” methodology in 2005 (Duday, 2012, p. 62).

2.1 Archaeoethanatology

“Archaeoethanatology” is based on the taphonomy of human remains, but it also considers the body in its biological and social aspects and funerary treatment. Therefore, the assumption is that skeletal remains, when discovered, are not representative of their placement during burial. Moreover, the original position must be reconstructed by observing the remains in situ and considering taphonomy and anatomical studies (Knüsel, 2014, p. 27).

Studying funerary material and practices primarily depends on specific terminology for accurate description and interpretation (Knüsel, 2014, p.p.29-30). Due to this lack of a systematic approach to burials within archaeology created a problem for the interpretation and use of funerary data (Duday & Guillon, 2006, p. 118).

In English, there is no accepted standard terminology to describe the position of the remains (Knüsel, 2014, p. 27). For example, ‘crouched’ comes from the French terminology *‘accroupie’*, which describes human remains with a vertically orientated vertebral column. In other words, a person in a sitting or squatting position. ‘Crouched’, is used in English publications, which means a body that stoops or cowers with limbs close to the body. This position can be seen below in Figure. 2.1 (Knüsel, 2014, pp. 39-40).

However, the term ‘crouched’ in English terminology is used for both seated and supine positions. Instead, the word ‘foetal position’ would describe this position more precisely. Therefore, to remain consistent, the burials will be referred to as ‘seated burials’ within this thesis.



Figure 2.1: Illustration of the body in a ‘crouched’ position. Also described as the ‘seated’ burial. From “Crouching in fear: Terms of engagement for funerary remains,” by C.J. Knüsel, 2014. *Journal of Social Archaeology*, 1, p. 40. Model by Sean Goddard, Department of Archaeology, University of Exeter.

3. Research Area

The research will cover North-West Europe during the La Tène period from 450 BC to 50 BC. The area covers Gaul in modern-day France and Britain. The research will cover thirteen burial sites in these areas containing seated burials. Several tribes of the Gauls inhabited the area in France. They were powerful warlords. Britain had remained in contact through trade with the mainland and was inhabited by Celtic Britons consisting of several different tribes. Through the Atlantic trade route active between 1400 and 700 BC, the areas likely saw a mutual migration. They showed signs of cultural exchange, such as hillforts and deposition in water which appeared in areas along the route. After 700 BC, the Atlantic trade route began to decline. They still exchanged goods but not with their previous intensity (Cunliffe, 2018, pp. 82-83). The Atlantic trade route was interrupted by Caesar's conquest of Gaul in 58 – 50 BC and the subsequent invasion of Britain. The two areas have been in contact with one another for centuries, and the exchange of ideas, people, goods and culture has shaped the people on both sides of the water (Cunliffe, 2004, pp. 754-755).



Figure 3.1: Map of the research area. Depicting thirteen known sites with seated burials in France, Britain and Switzerland used for this research. Figure by Jackie Dubbeldam using ArcGIS.

3.1 Data

I have collected data about seated burials from 13 different sites as seen in Figure 3.1. The one thing all these burials have in common is their seated position. However, within this, their positions are still varied. In addition, the documentation of the burials differs per site, ranging from very poor to being well documented.

01. Acy-Romance, France



Figure 3.2: Map of Acy-Romance and the excavated area. Scale 1:50 km. Figure by Jackie Dubbeldam using google maps.

Out of all burial sites, Acy-Romance is the best known and researched. The area can be seen in Figure 3.2. On the site, three seated burials were discovered in the middle of the Acy-Romance village square, and a further nineteen were outside the village near a contemporary temple (Kerouanton, 2020, p. 128). The site is located on a plateau above the valley of Aisne. Main excavations of the site began in 1979. Between 1980 and 1988, several funerary, religious monuments and tombs were discovered dating between 1100 BC and 450 BC. After 1988 excavations of the Gallic village and its cemeteries began and would occur every summer over the next 15 years (*20 Ans de Recherches Archéologiques | Les Gaulois d'Acy-Romance*, n.d.).

The nineteen individuals near the temple were all male and aged between 18-30. The current consensus on their cause of death is that the individuals were ritually sacrificed. Most of the bodies are damaged or incomplete due to agricultural processes. However, on one of the individual's skulls, clear marks of an axe blow were found, implying a violent death (Lambot, 1998, p. 78). After death, the body was placed in a wooden crate. The crate was then placed in a well located inside the temple. After some time, the body was taken out and left to dry, after which they were buried in small circular pits. The process mummified the bodies, and they remained in the position as they were put in the crate, legs folded, body tilted forward with the head between the feet (Lambot, 1999, p. 46). The ritual was likely performed in December and the beginning of January. The weather conditions during these months are also favourable for drying the body. However, if the ritual occurred in regular intervals is uncertain (Lambot, 1998, p. 78). The three bodies in the town square are orientated towards the rising sun in the east. Their torsos leaned against the wall of the pit. Their knees bent and crossed,

the left hand on the thigh and their right on the ground with their head bent forward. The bodies did not undergo the same treatment as the ones at the temple. Their bodies likely decomposed naturally within the constraints of their more shallow graves (Lambot, 1999, p. 46).

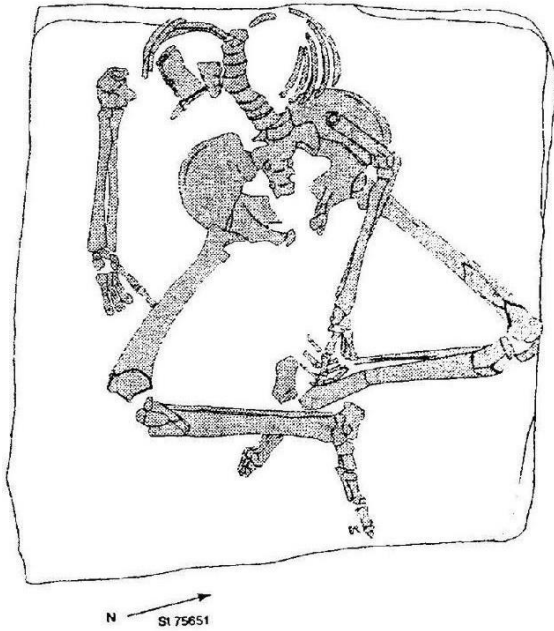


Figure 3.3: An illustrations of the burial position in the square of Acy-Romance published From “De nouveaux individus en position assise à Acy-Romance (Ardennes),” by B. Lambot, 1999. *Bulletin de l’Association Française Pour l’étude de l’âge Du Fer*, 17, p. 47.

02. Avenches Switzerland



Figure 3.4: Map of Avenches and the excavated area. . Scale 1:50 km. Figure by Jackie Dubbeldam using google maps.

Two seated burials were found during rescue excavation in Avenches between 1994 and 2009, as seen in Figure 3.4. The likely burials dated between the 2nd century BC and were found beneath a non-contemporary Roman temple. Between 1984 and 2009, 144 excavations were performed in Avenches and its surrounding area (de Pury-Gysel, 2011, p. 9).

Both bodies were interred with their backs leaning against the pit's edge, the skull facing west. The lower limbs are flexed, and the arms are located alongside the torso (Moinat, 1993, p. 7). The individual in tomb 1 is considered a male, between 25-35 years old. However, for the individual in tomb 2, sex estimation was not possible due to poor preservation but was estimated at 35-45 years of age (Moinat 1993, pp. 7-9).

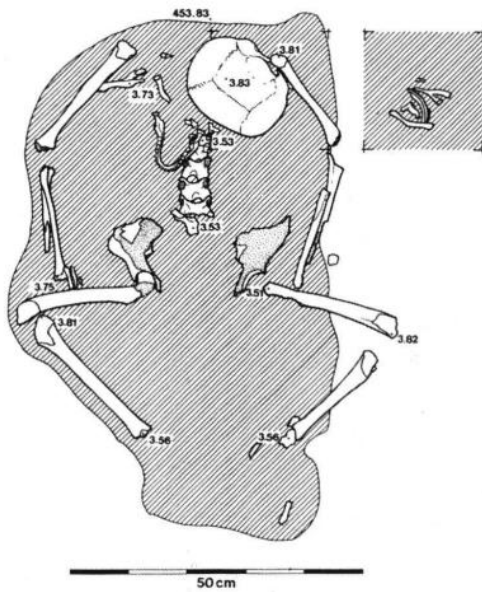


Figure 3.5: Illustration body found in tomb 1. From "Deux inhumations en position assise à Avenches," by P. Moinat, 1993. *Bulletin de l'Association Pro Aventico*, 35, p.7.

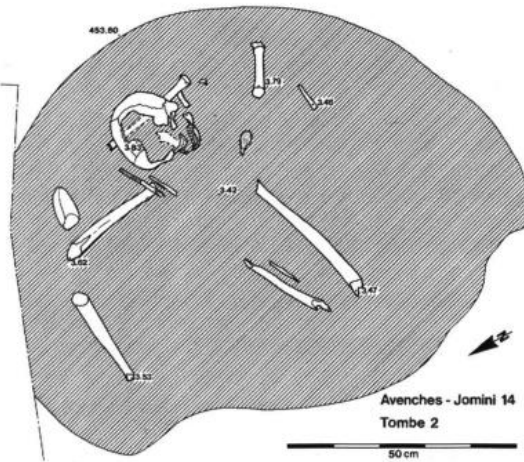


Figure 3.6: Illustration body found in tomb From "Deux inhumations en position assise à Avenches," by P. Moinat, 1993. *Bulletin de l'Association Pro Aventico*, 35, p.7.



Figure 3.7: Photo of the body found in tomb 1. From "Deux inhumations en position assise à Avenches," by P. Moinat, 1993. *Bulletin de l'Association Pro Aventico*, 35, p.7.



Figure 3.8: Photo of the body found in tomb 2. From "Deux inhumations en position assise à Avenches," by P. Moinat, 1993. *Bulletin de l'Association Pro Aventico*, 35, p.9.

03. Camp de Recoux, le Champ des Rochers, Soyaux, France



Figure 3.9: Map of le Champ des Rochers and the excavated area Scale 1:50 km. Figure by Jackie Dubbeldam using google maps.

At Camp de Recoux in 2007, excavations were carried out at the bottom of the eastern slope as seen in Figure 3.9. The excavation showed a site that was occupied during the Late Neolithic, located on the banks of the Font Noire River, near twenty-two ring ditches from the Late Bronze and Iron Age. Moreover, three burials containing skeletal remains from the Iron Age were discovered. Other than these three, none of the monuments contained tombs (Kerouanton, 2020, p.103).

The three bodies found at Soyaux are very well recorded. In both description as well as illustration (see fig 2.6). While the bodies are found in different forms of preservation, the lower part of the bodies is reconstructed to a certain degree. Moreover, they are comparable to one another. The sex or age of death of all three individuals cannot be determined. However, the body in structure 26 is considered adult, and the body in structures 24 and 25 is considered adult-sized (Kerouanton, 2020, p.128).

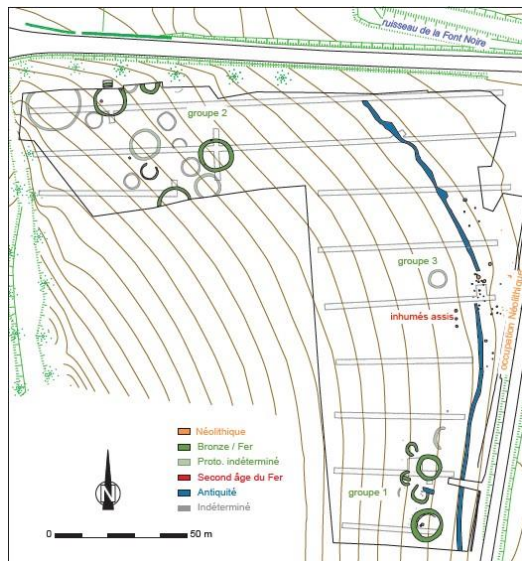


Figure 3.10: The site of Champs des Rochers, in Soyaux, showing several different occupational periods with the seated burials to the centre right. From "Au pied du Camp de Recoux, le Champ des Rochers à Soyaux (Charente) : de l'occupation néolithique au complexe funéraire et/ou culturel de la fin de l'âge du Bronze et de l'âge du Fer" by I. Kerouanton, 2020. *Bulletin de la Société préhistorique française*, 117, 1, p. 106.

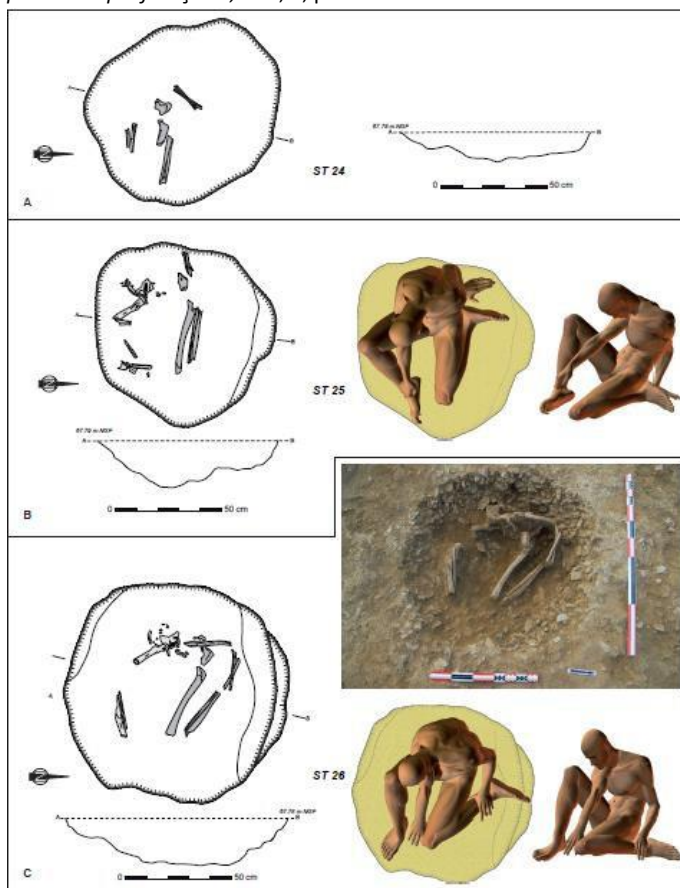


Figure 3.11: Burials in seated position discovered at Champs des rochers a Recoux. Concerning burial pits, 24, 25 and 26. Including a reconstruction of their positions. From "Au pied du Camp de Recoux, le Champ des Rochers à Soyaux (Charente) : de l'occupation néolithique au complexe funéraire et/ou culturel de la fin de l'âge du Bronze et de l'âge du Fer" by I. Kerouanton, 2020. *Bulletin de la Société préhistorique française*, 117, 1, p. 127.

04.Chronicle Hills barrow group, Britain



Figure 3.12: Map of Chronicle Hills, and the excavated area. Figure by Jackie Dubbeldam using google maps.

Three barrows and two mounds containing human remains were excavated c. 1820 at Chronicle hills. The site encompasses around 30 hectares of land. Moreover, it is located along the western edge of Whittlesford Parish, the area can be seen in Figure 3.12 (Taylor & Arbon, 2007, pp. 21-6).

Both of the mounts contained a pit which was lined with flint and pebbles. The pits are 1.2m by 1.5 m squares and 2.4m deep. Both of the chambers contained the inhumations of 2 persons. In one mound, a burial is described as '*a skeleton in a sitting position*' with an iron spearhead and another skeleton placed on top. The burial contained iron nails but no wood. The site was considered 'Celtic' (Taylor & Arbon, 2007, pp. 24-6).

Due to the site being recorded in the 1800s, a lot of the recorded materials are unfortunately lost. Moreover, it was excavated during the antiquarian period. Therefore, more attention was paid to the material surrounding the bodies rather than the remains themselves. Due to this, even their location is uncertain, let alone their interpretation (Taylor & Arbon, 2007, p. 35).

05. Crosskirk, Britain



Figure 3.13: Map of Crosskirk and the excavated area. Figure by Jackie Dubbeldam using google maps.

Rescue excavations at Crosskirk broch began in 1966, lasting until 1972. The site is located on the cliffs on the northern coast of Caithness as show in Figure 3.13. The chapel of St.Mary the Crosskirk and its cemetery is on its southern side. The remaining walls of the Broch were visible on the seaward side, as seen in Figures 3.14 and 3.15. However, due to the erosion of the cliff, preservation was deemed impossible (Fairhurst, 1984, p.14).

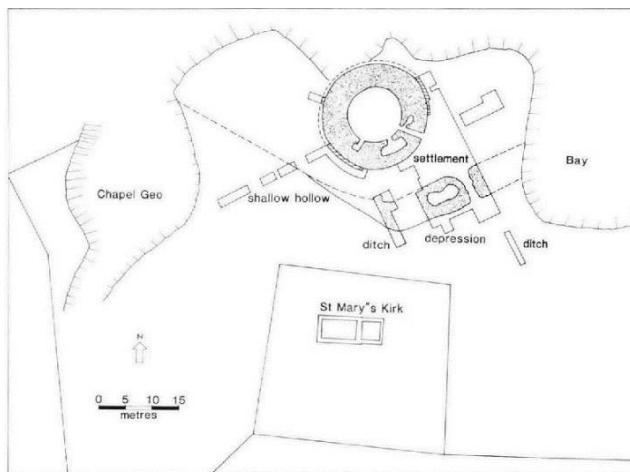


Figure 3.14: Overview of the excavated site. From "Excavations at Crosskirk Broch" by H. Fairhurst, 1984. *Caithness: Monograph series number 3*, p. 26.

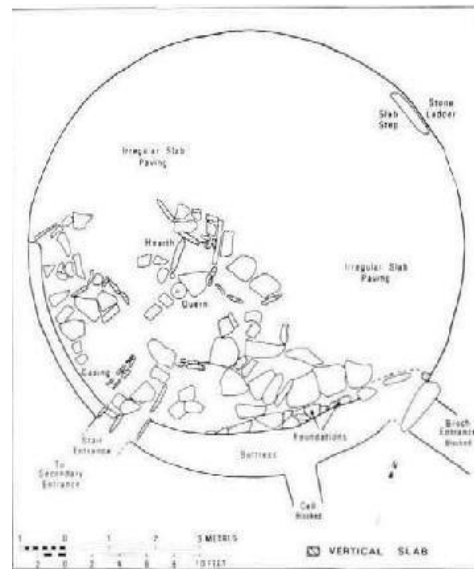


Figure 3.15: Interior of the Broch during phase 3 From "Excavations at Crosskirk Broch" by H. Fairhurst, 1984. *Caithness: Monograph series number 3*, p. 67.

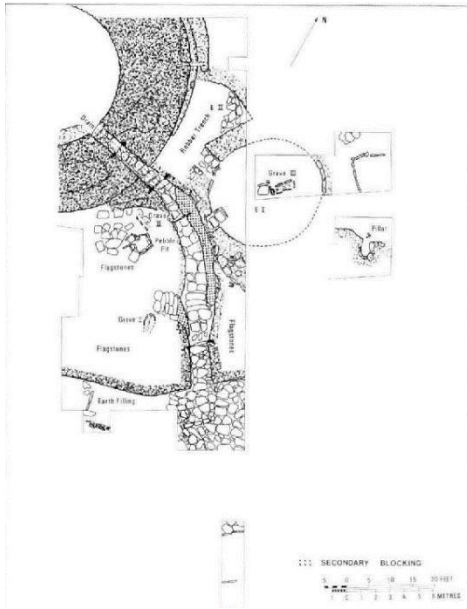


Figure 3.16: Showing the location of burial III, containing the 'seated' burial. From "Excavations at Crosskirk Broch" by H. Fairhurst, 1984. *Caithness: Monograph series number 3*, p. 82.

In 1972, inside an oval enclosure, burial in a 'seated' position was discovered against the hearth underneath the floor of Enclosure I as seen in Figure 3.16 (Fairhurst 1984, p. 29; Fairhurst 1984, p. 157). The seated burial dates from 330 – 540 AD (Tucker, 2010, p. 73). The body is relatively well preserved and belonged to an elderly Male (Fairhurst, 1984, p. 157). The burial can be seen in Figure 3.17.



Figure 3.17: Photo seated burial at Crosskirk. A long cist, the vertical slab beside the scale is the one adjacent to the hearth From "Excavations at Crosskirk Broch" by H. Fairhurst, 1984. *Caithness: Monograph series number 3*, p. 87.

06. Dunbar, Britain

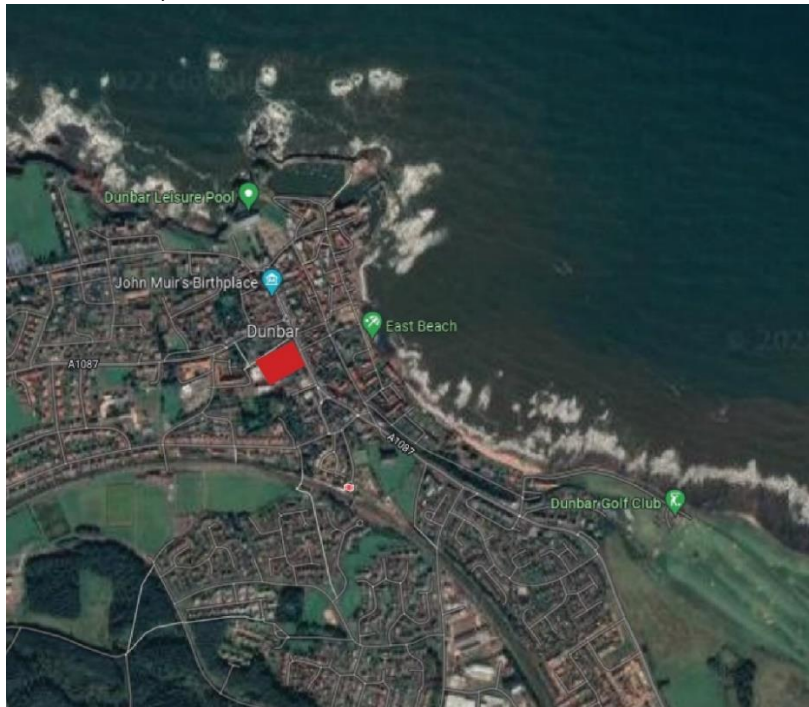


Figure 3.18: Map of Dunbar, and the excavated area. Figure by Jackie Dubbeldam using google maps.

Excavations of the site took place in 2005 on the former Empire Cinema on Dunbar High street (Roy, 2015, p. 177). The location can be seen in Figure 3.18. During excavations, an iron age cist was found. The cist contained two bodies, one in a flexed position on its side, the other in what seemed like a seated position, as seen in Figure 3.19. However, it is not ruled out that the body was moved to accommodate the second body (Roy, 2015, p.195). Both individuals were male between the age of 26-35 (Roy, 2015, p.187). They died between 100 BC – 100 AD (Roy, 2015, pp. 180-181). Both bodies were found with grave goods; the seated body was found with a brooch from the La Tène period with remains of the coarse woollen textile and a shank or pin containing traces of linen textile. The flexed body with a ring-headed pin made of Iron, a spearhead, and a sword (Roy 2015, p. 181; p.185). Other human bones not associated with the burial were found in the cist, possibly indicating a secondary deposition (Roy, 2015, p. 193).

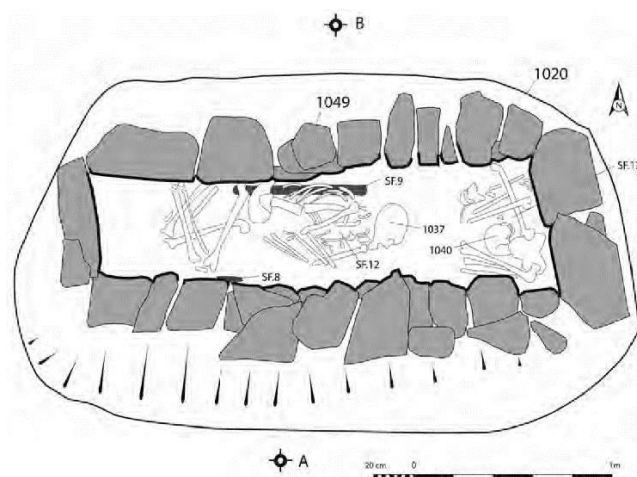


Figure 3.19: Illustration of the cist and the two inhumations. One flexed one seated. From "An Iron Age burial with weapons, on a site with evidence of medieval and post-medieval occupation from Dunbar, East Lothian," by M. Roy, 2015. *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 145, p. 182.



Figure 3.20: Picture the remains of a possible seated burial from the west. From "An Iron Age burial with weapons, on a site with evidence of medieval and post-medieval occupation from Dunbar, East Lothian," by M. Roy, 2015. *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 145, p. 185.

Figure 3.21: Picture showing the burial, containing the skeleton in a flexed position, from the west. From "An Iron Age burial with weapons, on a site with evidence of medieval and post-medieval occupation from Dunbar, East Lothian," by M. Roy, 2015. *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 145, p. 184.

Due to the nature of the grave goods, it is suspected that these men had a good position within their community (Roy, 2015, p. 186). Not many other interpretations are considered for either their seated position or the communal burial.

07. Granton Pier, Britain



Figure 3.22: Map of Granton Pier and the excavated area. Figure by Jackie Dubbeldam using google maps.

The inhumation at Granton Pier was discovered while constructing a new road to Edinburgh c. 1851. The area of the excavation can be seen in Figure 3.22. It uncovered a small stone cist about 18 meters from the coast. The burial contained two individuals who were interred in seated positions. It was considered that the seated positions were likely due to the cramped nature of the cist and considered to have no further significance (Wilson, 1851, p. 327, Fairhurst 1984, p. 88). However, there was no further documentation about the inhumations at Granton Pier.

08. Mormont Hill



Figure 3.23: Map of Mormont Hill, and the excavated area. Figure by Jackie Dubbeldam using google maps.

The site of Mormont hill is located on the Swiss plateau. It lies close to the summit at 604m in a slightly sunken hill section. As seen in Figure 3.23. A rescue excavation commenced in 2006. (Dietrich et al., 2007, pp. 2-4).

It was discovered that Mormont Hill was a sanctuary with one of the highest concentrations of offering pits and wells in Celtic Europe. The site was in use by Helveti roughly between 120 and 80 BC (Dietrich et al., 2007, pp. 12-13). Some 300 structures were found at the site, including pits, postholes, hearths, signal blocks, and small ditches. Moreover, 260 of these have been interpreted as offering wells. In addition, several of the pits have uncovered human remains. These include single bones, a dozen inhumations, and single skulls. Human and animal remains were often found mixed. Three of the burials contained individuals buried in a seated position; they were buried together with grave goods (Dietrich et al., 2007, pp. 6-7).

The remains of people buried in a seated position were discovered within three of these burials.



Figure 3.24: Pit 257 contains an older man in a 'kneeling' position. From "Le sanctuaire helvète du Mormont" by E. Dietrich, G. Kaenel & D. Weidmann, 2007. *Archäologie Schweiz : Mitteilungsblatt von Archäologie Schweiz*, 30, p.7.

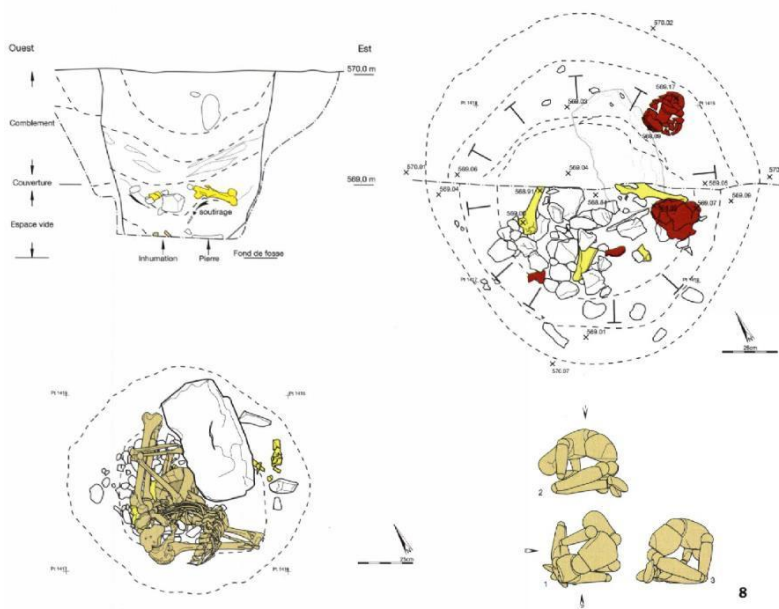


Figure 3.25: Left is the illustration of Grave 257, containing the older male in a 'kneeling' position. From "Le sanctuaire helvète du Mormont" by E. Dietrich, G. Kaenel & D. Weidmann, 2007. *Archäologie Schweiz : Mitteilungsblatt von Archäologie Schweiz*, 30, p. 8.

09. Pierrières, Batilly-en-Gâtinais, Loiret, France



Figure 3.26: Map Pierrières, and the excavated area. Figure by Jackie Dubbeldam using google maps.

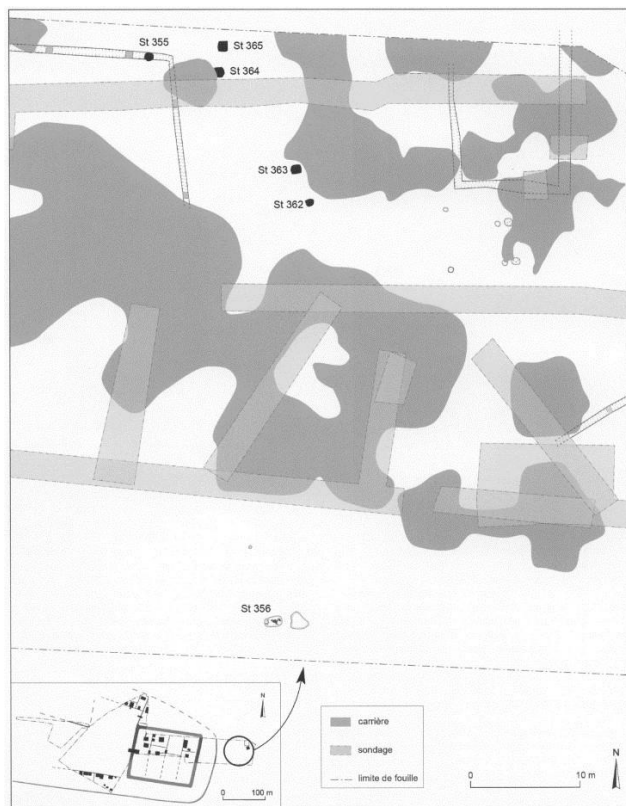


Figure 3.27 Site showing the locations of the seated burials. From “Les inhumés assis laténiens des Pierrières à Batilly-en-Gâtinais (Loiret)” by S. Liegard & L. Pecqueur, 2014. *Gallia*, Vol. 71 (2), p. 92.

The site is located in the Gâtinais region as shown in Figure 3.26. Since 2005 several excavations and campaigns have been conducted (Liegard & Pecqueur, 2014, p.89). During this time, five burials containing individuals inhumed in a seated position have been discovered, numbered 355, 362, 363, 364, and 365 as depicted in Figure 3.28. The burials are located outside of the trench enclosure as can be seen in Figure 3.27. Unfortunately, due to poor preservation, only three subjects could be used to determine sex and maturation. The subjects that could be determined are adults and males (Liegard & Pecqueur, 2014, pp. 91-94). Documentation of the burials can be seen in Figures 3.29 up to 3.35. An illustration of the proposed original deposition of the bodies can be seen in Figure 3.36.

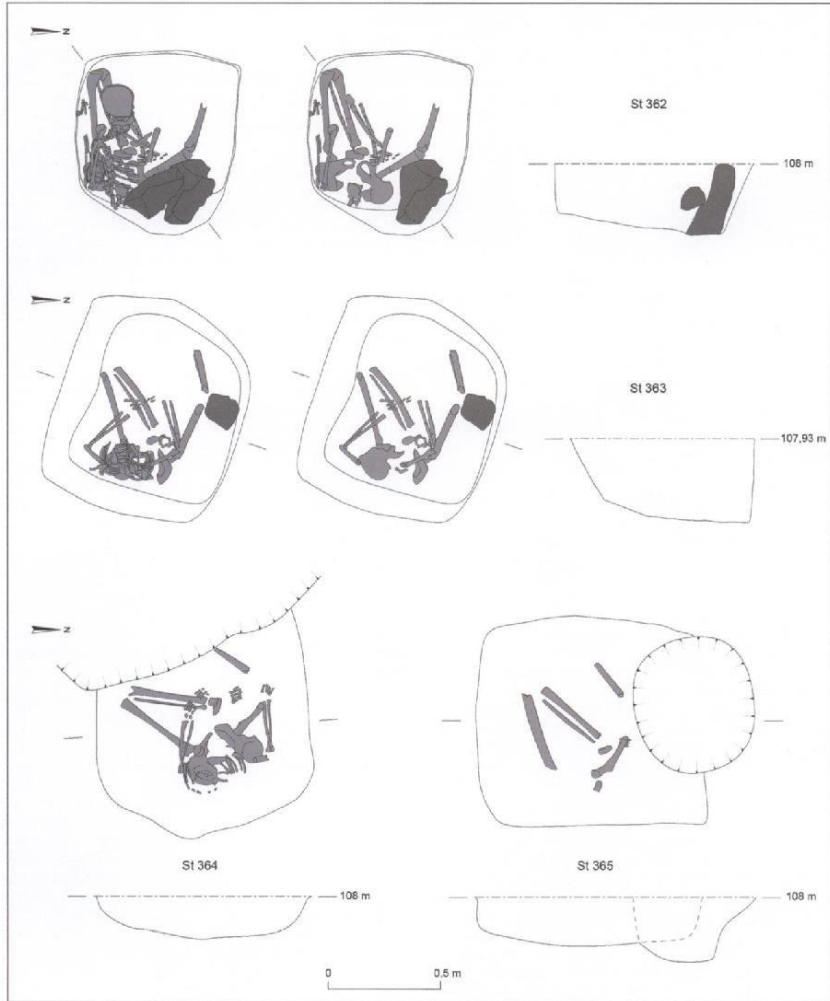


Figure 3.28: Illustration of burial pits and the positions of the body 362 to 365. From “Les inhumés assis laténiens des Pierrières à Batilly-en-Gâtinais (Loiret)” by S. Liegard & L. Pecqueur, 2014. *Gallia*, Vol. 71 (2), p. 93.



Figure 3.29: Photo showing pit 362. From “Les inhumés assis laténiens des Pierrières à Batilly-en-Gâtinais (Loiret)” by S. Liegard & L. Pecqueur, 2014. *Gallia*, Vol. 71 (2), p. 95. Photographed by G. Bayle.

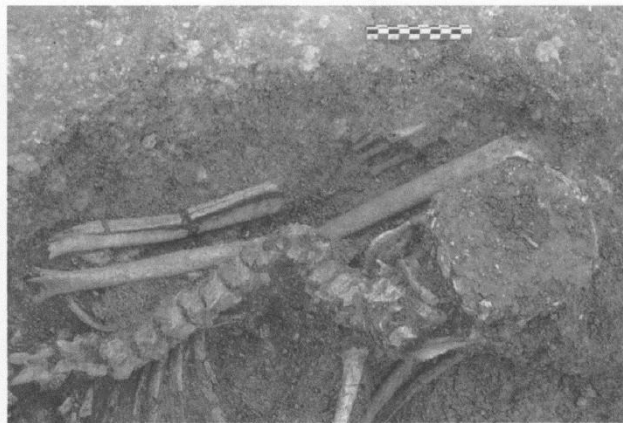


Figure 3.30: Photo showing detail of the left upper limb of remains in pit 362. From “Les inhumés assis laténiens des Pierrières à Batilly-en-Gâtinais (Loiret)” by S. Liegard & L. Pecqueur, 2014. *Gallia*, Vol. 71 (2), p. 95. Photographed by G. Bayle.

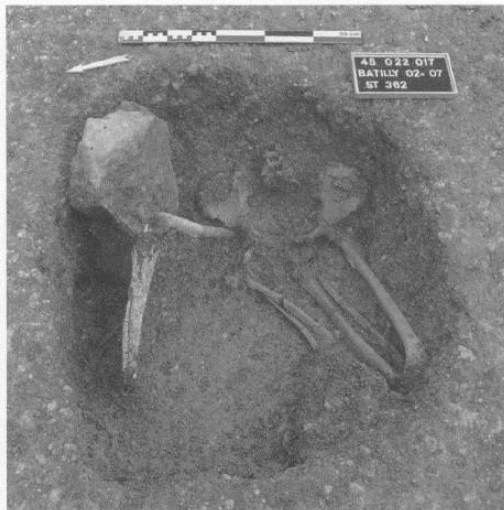


Figure 3.31: Photo showing detail of the lower body of the remains in pit 362. From “Les inhumés assis laténiens des Pierrières à Batilly-en-Gâtinais (Loiret)” by S. Liegard & L. Pecqueur, 2014. *Gallia*, Vol. 71 (2), p. 95. Photographed by G. Bayle.

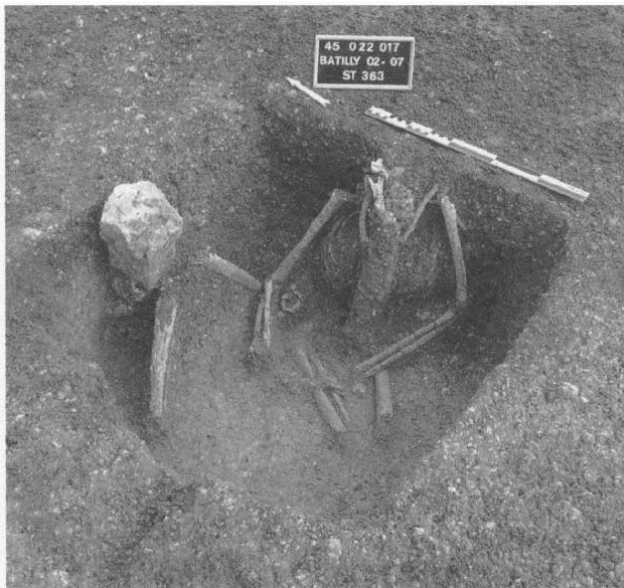


Figure 3.32: Photo showing the remains in pit 363. From “Les inhumés assis laténiens des Pierrières à Batilly-en-Gâtinais (Loiret)” by S. Liegard & L. Pecqueur, 2014. *Gallia*, Vol. 71 (2), p. 95. Photographed by G. Bayle.



Figure 3.33: – Photo showing detailed view of the vertebral column of individual 363. From “Les inhumés assis laténiens des Pierrières à Batilly-en-Gâtinais (Loiret)” by S. Liegard & L. Pecqueur, 2014. *Gallia*, Vol. 71 (2), p. 96. Photographed by G. Bayle.

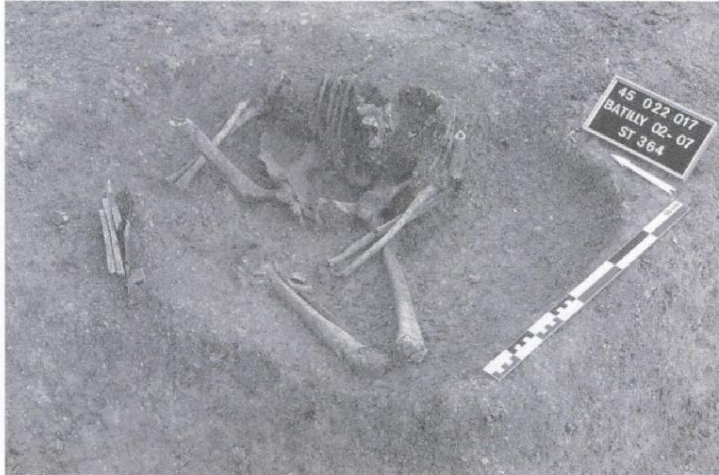


Figure 3.34: Photo of pit 364. From “Les inhumés assis laténiens des Pierrières à Batilly-en-Gâtinais (Loiret)” by S. Liegard & L. Pecqueur, 2014. *Gallia*, Vol. 71 (2), p. 96. Photographed by G. Bayle.



Figure 3.35: Detail view of the lower limbs of pit 364. From “Les inhumés assis laténiens des Pierrières à Batilly-en-Gâtinais (Loiret)” by S. Liegard & L. Pecqueur, 2014. *Gallia*, Vol. 71 (2), p. 96. Photographed by G. Bayle.

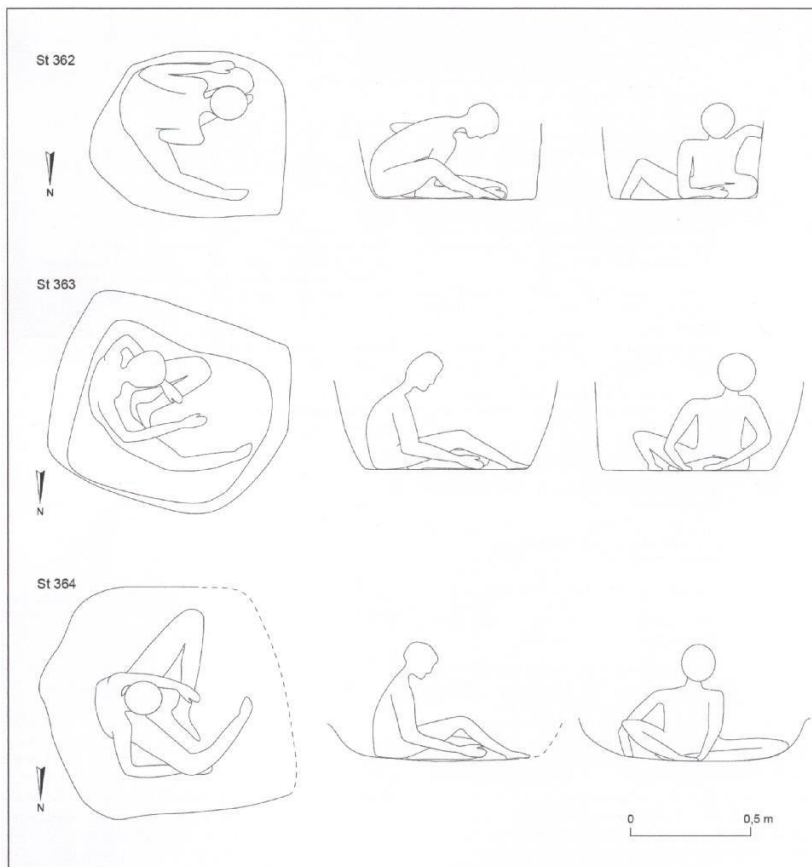


Figure 3.36: Illustration showing the proposed position of the body during inhumation. From “Les inhumés assis laténiens des Pierrières à Batilly-en-Gâtinais (Loiret)” by S. Liegard & L. Pecqueur, 2014. *Gallia*, Vol. 71 (2), p. 97. Photographed by G. Bayle.

10. Reviers, Champ de Bény, Calvados, France



Figure 3.37: Map Reviers, and the excavated area. Figure by Jackie Dubbeldam using google maps.

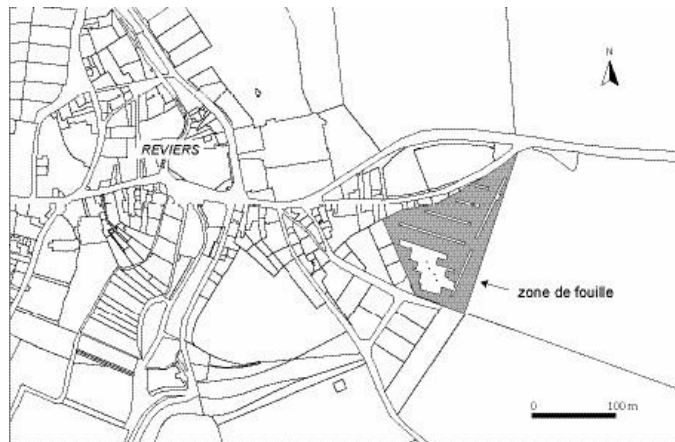


Figure 3.38: Location of site Champ de Bény in Reviers. From "Trois sépultures atypiques du Second âge du Fer à Reviers (Calvados)" by S. Oudry-Braillon & C. Billard, 2009. *Revue Archéologique de l'Ouest (En Ligne)*, 26, p. 106.

Champ de Bény's site is located in Reviers, Calvados, northwest of the Plain of Caen as shown in Figure 3.37. In the eastern part of the town as seen in Figure 3.38. The site was discovered during an area survey in 2000 (Oudry-Braillon & Billard, 2009, p. 105). Five burials were found in the excavated area, three of which, st. 1, 2 and 5, are buried in a seated position, as can be seen in Figures 3.39 to 3.41. The burials are approximately 25m apart along a north-northwest/south-southeast axis. Aside from the other two burials, little is known about the area. There are no known settlements or sanctuaries dating from the Iron Age. The bone material from st. 5 and other objects recovered from the site are dated c. 349 – 2 BC (Oudry-Braillon & Billard, 2009, pp. 108-9).

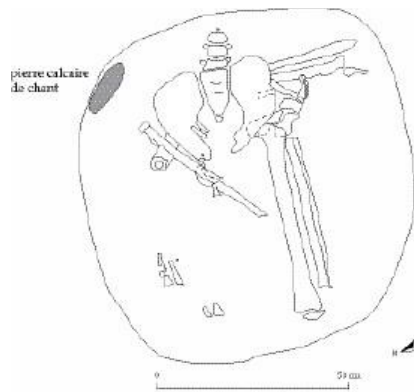


Figure 3 : Reviers, plan de la sépulture 1.
 Figure 3: Plan of Burial 1.

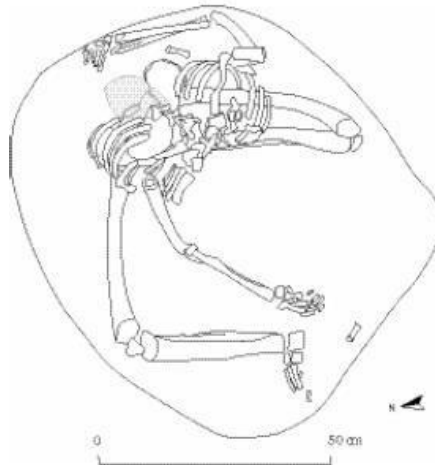


Figure 3.40: Illustration of burial pit 2. From "Trois sépultures atypiques du Second âge du Fer à Reviers (Calvados)" by S. Oudry-Braillon & C. Billard, 2009. *Revue Archéologique de l'Ouest (En Ligne)*, 26, p.109.

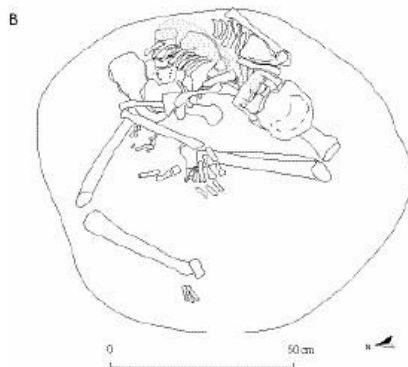
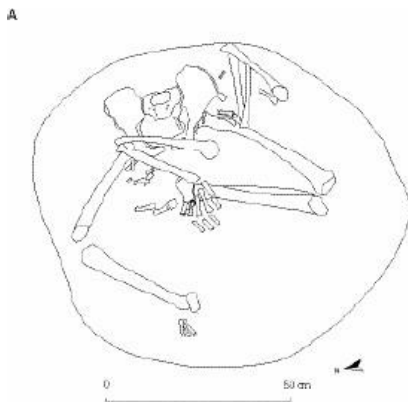


Figure 3.41: Illustration of burial pit 5, showing the actual remains above (A) and a reconstruction below (B). From "Trois sépultures atypiques du Second âge du Fer à Reviers (Calvados)" by S. Oudry-Braillon & C. Billard, 2009. *Revue Archéologique de l'Ouest (En Ligne)*, 26, p. 110.

11. Saint-Antoine, Geneva, Switzerland



Figure 3.42: Map of Saint-Antoine and the excavated area. Figure by Jackie Dubbeldam using google maps.

Between 1981-1997 the old prison of St. Antoine was excavated. The site is located in Geneva, Switzerland, near where the rivers Rhine and Ave meet as is shown in Figure 3.42. During excavations between 1987-1990 relating to a Domus, a residence of Roman origins was uncovered as can be seen in Figure 3.43. Within the residence they discovered a seated burial depicted in Figure 3.44. The burial dates between 400- 200 BC (Haldimann & Moinat, 1999, pp. 170-171)

The site was possibly a ritual center or sanctuary as ceramics were discovered, including black-glazed Campanian ware. The handling of the ceramics is consistent with its use in other sanctuaries in western Gaul. However, the later settlement phases have erased much evidence. Therefore, the burials relation with a sanctuary remains unclear (Haldimann & Moinat, 1999, p.176).

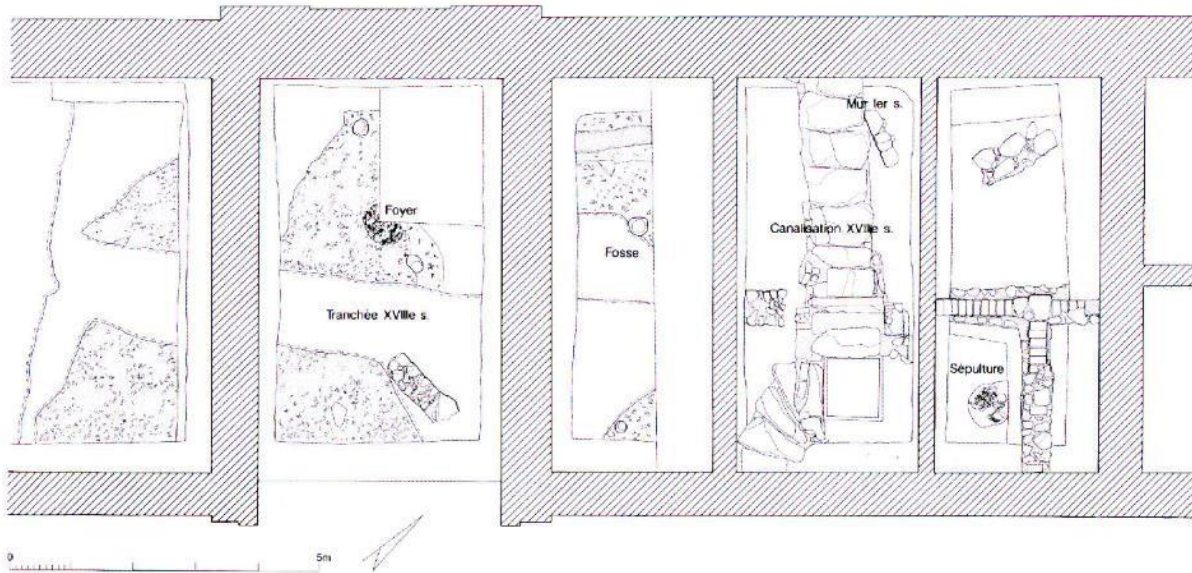


Figure 3.43: Map of the excavation of St. Anthony. 1 menhir with cupules; 2 fireplace; 3 pit. From "Des hommes et des sacrifices : aux origines celtiques de Genève" by M. A. Haldimann & P. Moinat, 1999. *Archéologie Suisse : Bulletin de La Société Suisse de Préhistoire et d'archéologie*, p. 173. Drawing D. Burnand. Cantonal Archaeological Service.



Figure 3.44: Photo seated burial st. Antoine. . From "Des hommes et des sacrifices : aux origines celtiques de Genève" by M. A. Haldimann & P. Moinat, 1999. *Archéologie Suisse : Bulletin de La Société Suisse de Préhistoire et d'archéologie*, p. 174. Photo J.-B. Sevette.

12. Saint-Juste-en Chausee, France.



Figure 3.45: Map of Saint-Juste-en Chausee, and the excavated area. Figure by Jackie Dubbeldam using google maps.

The site Saint-Just-en-Chaussée is located in the department of the Oise des Hauts-de-France. The area of the site of Saint-Just-en-Chaussée is shown in Figure 3.46. In 1994/95, excavations uncovered a sanctuary built on a silty slope of the Picardy Plateau. It was occupied from the final La Tène period to the Late empire. The sanctuary faced northeast. It looked over the entire plain. At the beginning of the slope is an enclosure with houses, each used for rituals, which is clearly seen in the deposition. The site has a very structured spatial distribution of material (Malrain et al., 2019, p. 177). In total eight seated burials were discovered (Malrain & Pinard, 2011, p. 21).



Figure 3.46: The eight burials. From "Géographie des dépôts du sanctuaire de Saint-Just-en-Chaussée (Hauts-de-France, Oise)" by F. Malrain, P. Méniel, E. Pinard & G. Bataille, 2019. *Actes Du 41e Colloque International de l'Association Française Pour l'étude de l'âge Du Fer*, 1, p. 182.



Figure 3.47: Body found at site Saint-Just-en-Chaussée. From "Saint-Just-en-Chaussée (Oise) Sanctuaire gaulois et gallo-romain" by F. Malrain & E. Pinard, 2011. *Les Dossiers d'Archéologie*, p. 21.

13. White Horse Stone, Britain



Figure 3.48: Map of White Horse Stone, and the excavated area. Figure by Jackie Dubbeldam using google maps.

As part of an extensive programme of archaeological investigations carried out at the White Horse Stone, Pilgrim's Way, and West of Boarley Farm, on the boundary between Boxley and Aylesford parishes, the studies were carried out between October 1998 and March 1999 (Hayden & Stafford, 2006, p. 9). White Horse Stone was occupied from the early Neolithic to Medieval times. However, during the Late Iron Age, it was associated with a settlement surrounded by pits. Including human burials (Hayden & Stafford, 2006, p. IX-X). Within one of these pits, namely, burial 2184, the body of a child between the age of 9-11 was discovered. The burial was made up of a large pit with the body leaning against the side of the pit. The body was possibly initially placed in a seated or squatted position (Hayden & Stafford, 2006, p. 158). The pit has been dated to the Late Iron Age between 510-330 BC (Hayden & Stafford, 2006, p. 133).

However, no further information or documentation details the burial.

4. Analysis

Several comparisons can be made using the data collected from the different sites using literary means. Below is the table with an overview of all the collected data. In total, forty burials are considered in the data analysis.

Table 4.1: Table showing relevant data from all thirteen sites, including source material. Describing the site, location, country, date of burial. Sex, age estimation, number of burials, context, year of excavation and the source material. Table by Jackie Dubbeldam.

| | Sites | Date | Sex | Age | Nr. | Burial context | Exc. Year | Reference |
|-----------|---|---|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----|--|-----------|---|
| 01 | Acy-Romance, France | 180 -20 BC | M | Y. Adult | 19 | Pit, near temple | 1995(?) | Lamb 2018 Delattre & Pecqueur, 2017 |
| | | 180 -20 BC | M | | 3 | Pit, middle of square, settlement | 1996 | Delattre & Pecqueur, 2017 |
| 02 | Avenches, Switzerland | 260 -30 BC | M | O. Adult | 2 | Pit | 1992 | Lamb 2018 Delattre & Pecqueur, 2017 |
| 03 | Champs des rochers a Recoux, Soyaux, France | 341 - 51 BC 346 - 54 BC 346 - 54 BC | N.A | Adult | 3 | Pit, underneath later temple | 2007 | Lamb 2018; Delattre & Pecqueur, 2017; Kerouanton 2020 |
| 04 | Chronicle Hills, Britain | N/A | N.A | N/A | 1 | Grave, barrow. Iron nails and weapons, possible coffin | c.1820 | Lamb 2018; Taylor & Arbon 2007 |
| 05 | Crosskirk, Britain | 150 - 100 BC | M | O. Adult | 1 | Cist, inside Broch, next to hearth | 1972 | Ghetta 2016; Lamb 2018; Fairhurst 1984 |
| 06 | Dunbar, Britain | 100 BC - 100 AD | M | Y. Adult | 1 | Cist, double burial, weapons | 2005 | Lamb 2018; Roy 2015 |
| 07 | Granton Pier, Britain | 300 - 100 BC | N.A | N/A | 2 | Cist, double burial | | Lamb 2018; Wilson, Sir. 2015. |
| 08 | Mormont Hill, Vaud, Switzerland | 120 - 80 BC | M | O. Adult | 3 | Pit, sanctuary | 2006 | Lamb 2018; Delattre & Pecqueur, 2017 |
| 09 | Pierrières, Batilly-en-Gâtinais, Loiret, France | 200 - 100 BC | N.A | N/A | 5 | N.A | 2007 | Lamb 2018 Delattre & Pecqueur, 2017 |
| 10 | Reviere, Champ de Bény, | 349 - 2 BC | N.A, N.A, M | Adult/ Adult/Y. Adult | 3 | Pit | 2000 | Lamb 2018 Delattre & Pecqueur, 2017 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|---------------|-----|----------|---|--|-----|---|
| | Calvados, France | | | | | | | |
| 11 | Saint-Antoine-Geneva, Switzerland | 400 - 180 BC | M | Y. Adult | 1 | | Pit | 1992 Lamb 2018 Delattre & Pecqueur, 2017 Gergova, 2006 |
| 12 | Saint-Juste-en-Chausee, France | 100 BC - 0 AD | N/A | N/A | 8 | | Pit | 2008 Lamb 2018 Delattre & Pecqueur, 2017 |
| 13 | White Horse Stone, Britain | 510 - 330 BC | N/A | N/A | 1 | | Pit | 1998 Lamb 2018 |

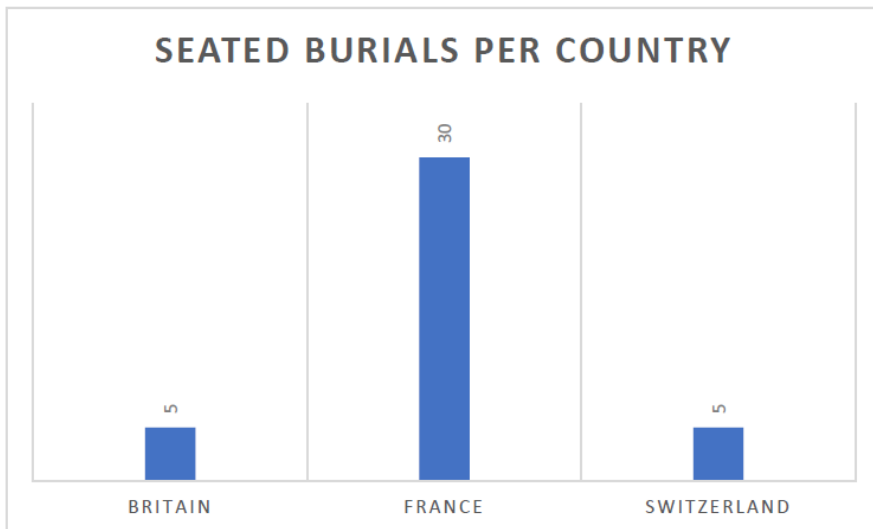


Figure 4.1: Showing seated burials recorded at the sites per country. Figure by Jackie Dubbeldam.

As seen in figure 4.1, most of the seated burials are discovered in France. With 30 of the 40 recorded burials.

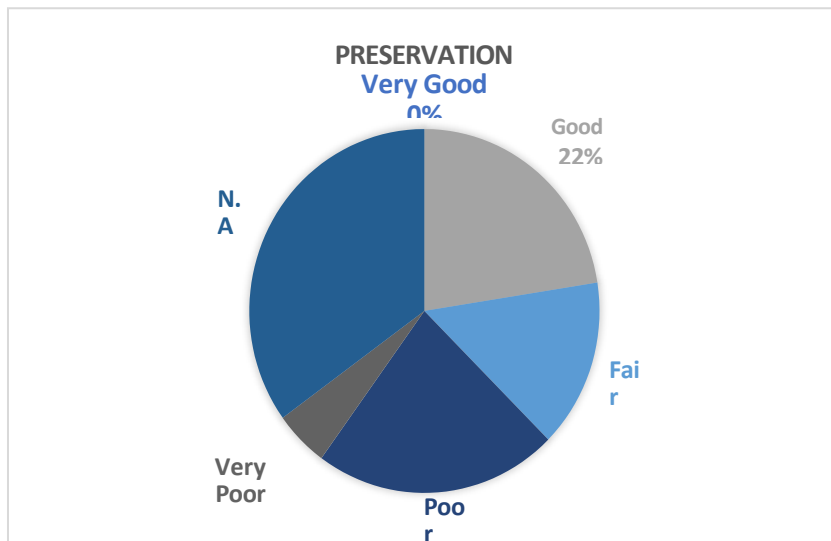
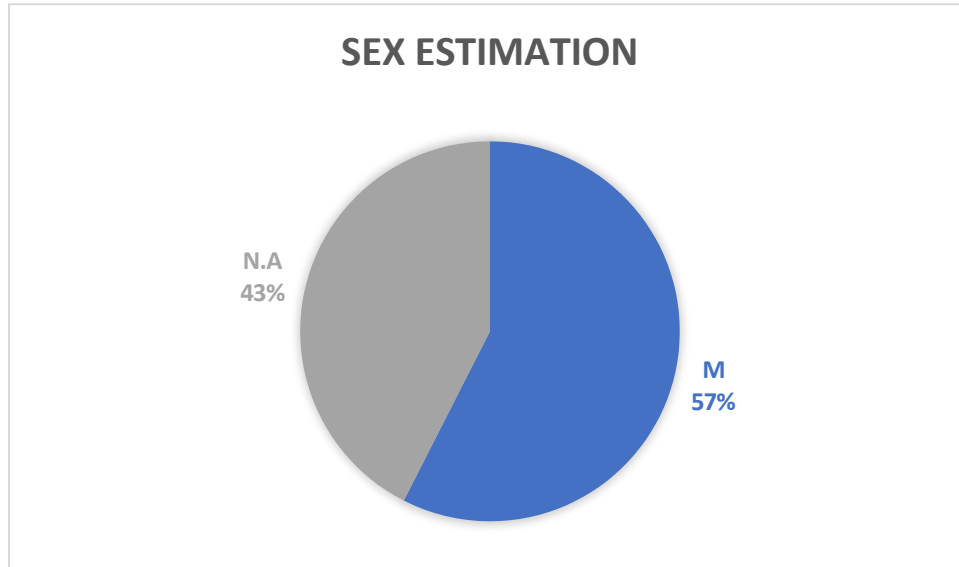


Figure 4.2: Observed preservation of the body. Figure by Jackie Dubbeldam.

The general preservation of the bodies is seen on the graph. Which ranges from, Very good, Good, Fair, Poor and very poor. Most sites do not mention the state of preservation; for some others, the available pictures were used for assessment. The general conditions of preservation are mainly poor or less. The bodies are often interred in pits less than 20 centimeters from the surface. Therefore, farming in the area often damaged the material.



c

As seen in Figure 4.3, all of the bodies discovered where the body was preserved enough for sex estimation are determined to be male. However, the estimation was impossible for most of the bodies due to poor preservation. Alternatively, in some cases, such as Chronicle Hill, sex was not considered during research

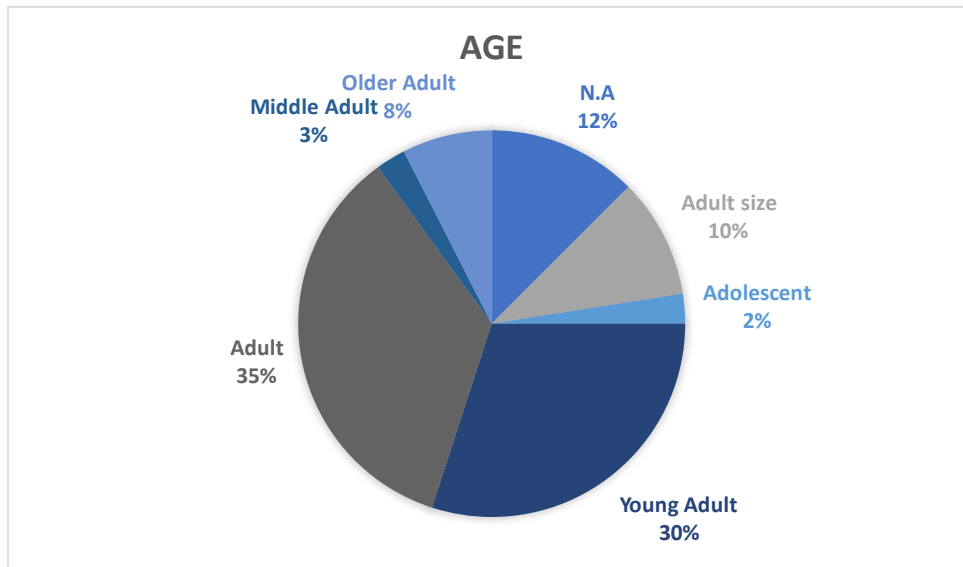


Fig 4.4: Average age of the individuals. Figure by Jackie Dubbeldam.

The majority of seated burials contain individuals between the age ranges of young adult to adult as seen in fig 4.4.

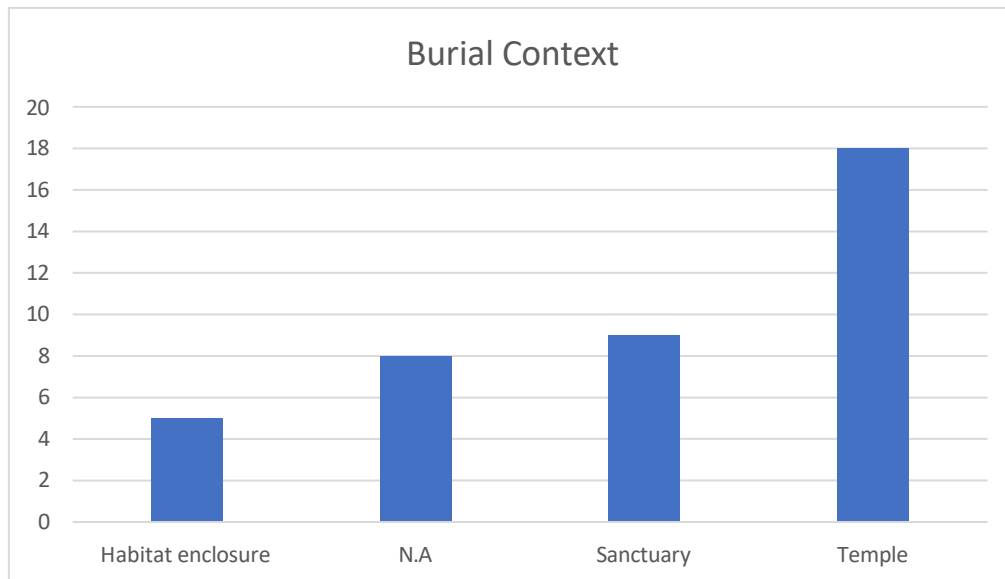


Figure 4.5: Burial context pertaining to the surrounding area. Figure by Jackie Dubbeldam.

Most of the bodies found are discovered in a sanctuary or temple complex. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume they are buried in a ritual context.

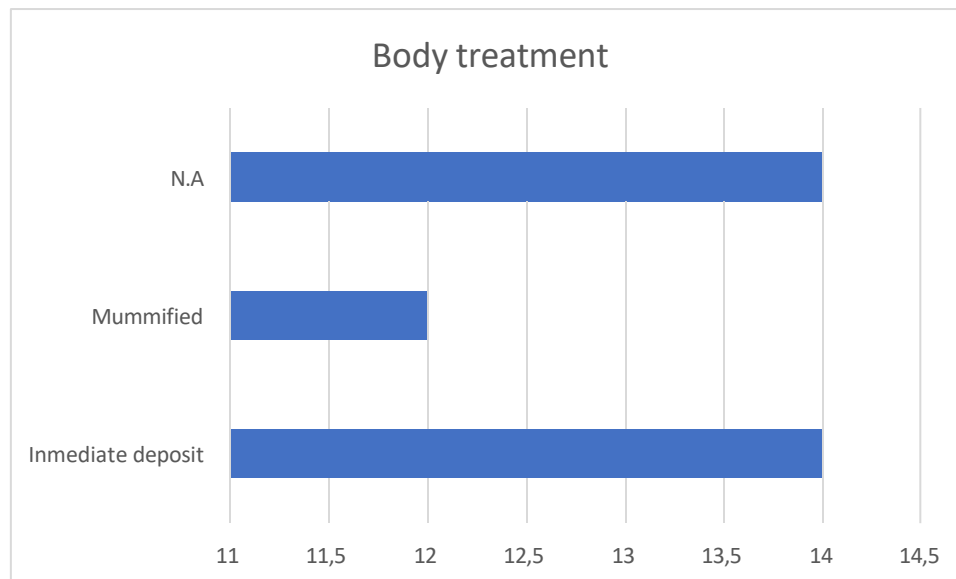


Figure 4.6: Body treatment before deposition Figure by Jackie Dubbeldam.

Where body treatment could be considered, several sites indicate that the body underwent a form of mummification before being placed in the pit. The mummification process is demonstrated through the preservation of the body. For example, connections of body parts are lost through decomposition when the body is placed immediately in the pit. However, when these connections are preserved, the body was likely in this position before it was inhumated. In the second graph, it is shown which sites are recorded to use the mummification process. As stated before, this information needed to be considered in some of the documentation. These mainly refer to sites documented in Britain.

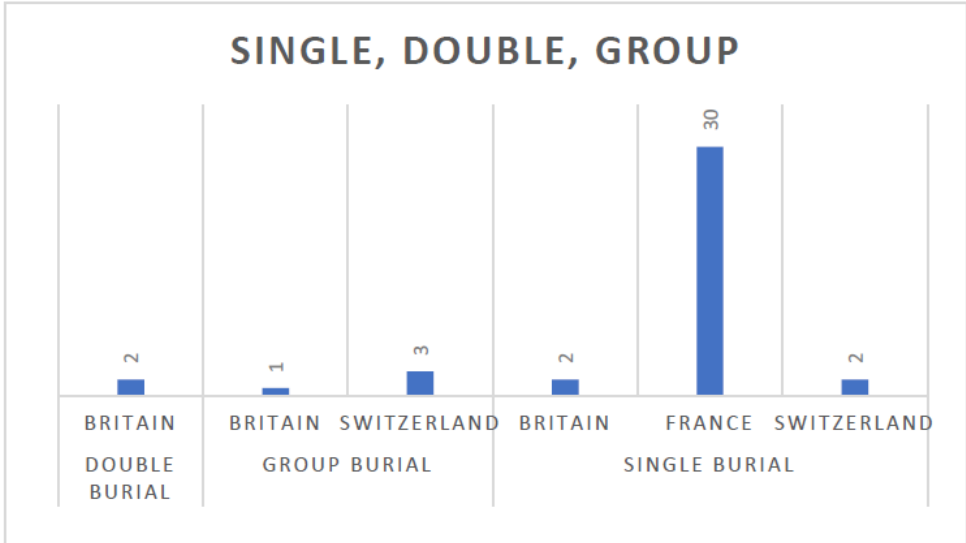


Figure 4.7: Type of burial and its occurrence per country. Figure by Jackie Dubbeldam.

Most of the burials are found in a single burial context which makes up 34 of the burials. Only a few, 4 and 2 graves relate to either group or double burials. Both the group burials are found in a British context.

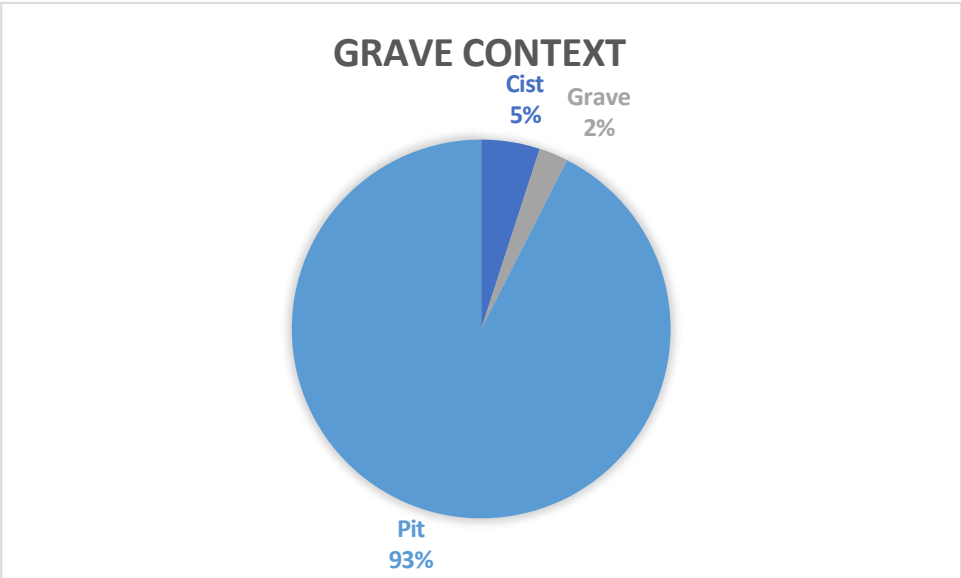


Figure 4.8: Graph showing the frequency of different grave context. Figure by Jackie Dubbeldam.

Of the burials analysed, 37 are described as "Pits". With only one as a grave due to the fact, the burial was found in a mound and container. And two in a cist. Both the grave and 2 Cists are found in Brita

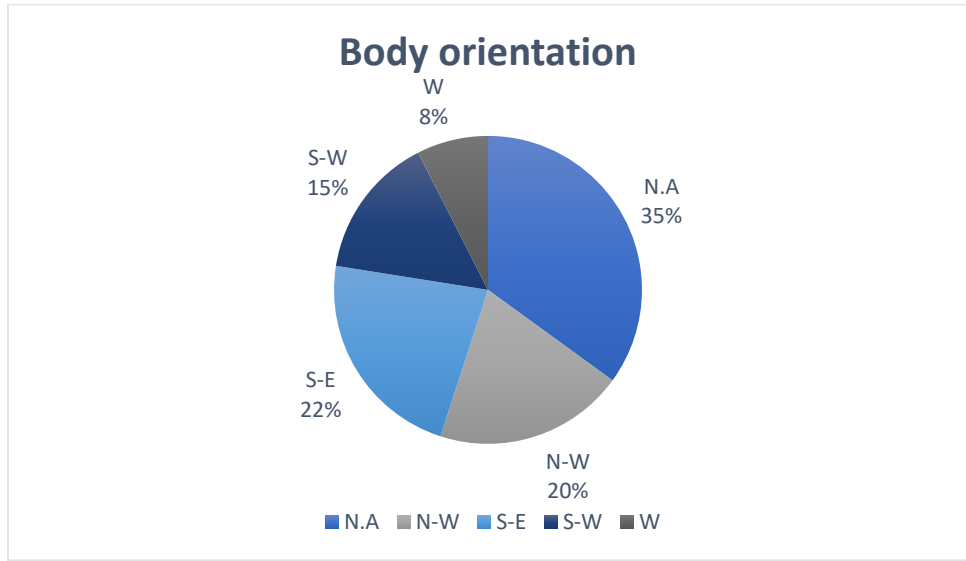


Figure 4.9: Graph showing body orientation, concerning the direction the body faces when inhumed. Figure by Jackie Dubbeldam.

In several sources, the position that the body faces when buried was recorded. This can be useful in understanding the ritual behind these burials. Therefore it is taken into consideration.

In order to make comparisons of the seated position, some generalisation is needed. Therefore, the comparison is accomplished using the same system as Delattre & Pecqueur (2017) with some additions. First, the seated position is categorized into types, as seen in Table 3.2. The complete table can be found in Appendix 2.

Table 4.2: Positions of the lower body standardized into types. Figure by Jackie Dubbeldam.

| Asymmetrical lower limbs | | | | | | Symmetrical lower limbs, raised knees | | | Symmetrical lower limbs, lowered knees |
|--|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|--|------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------|---|
| Right lower limb flexed with the knee elevated, left lower limb hyper flexed on the bottom | | | left lower limb flexed with the knee elevated, right lower limb flexed on the bottom | | | uncrossed lower limbs | | crossed lower limbs | uncrossed lower limbs, flexed underneath body |
| Left foot in front of the pelvis | Left foot underneath pelvis | Left foot laterally to the body | Right foot in front of the pelvis | Right foot underneath pelvis | Right foot laterally to the body | Feet apart | Feet together | | feet together, touching pelvis |
| TYPE 1 | TYPE 2 | TYPE 3 | TYPE 4 | TYPE 5 | TYPE 6 | TYPE 7 | TYPE 8 | TYPE 9 | TYPE 10 |

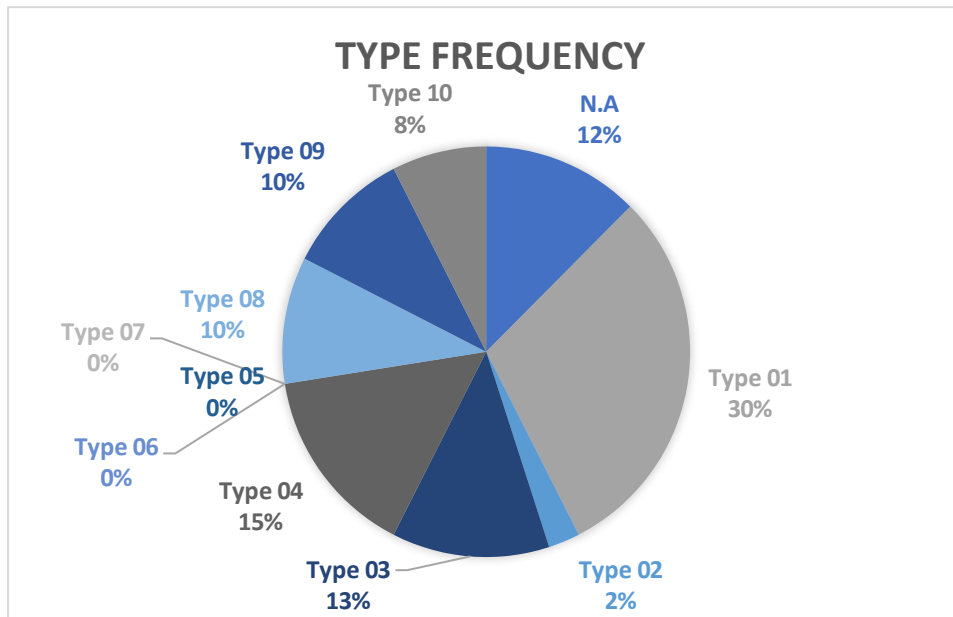


Figure 4.10: Graph showing the type of position. Figure by Jackie Dubbeldam.

As you can see in figure 4.10 the majority of the body positions are categorized under Type 01 with 30%.

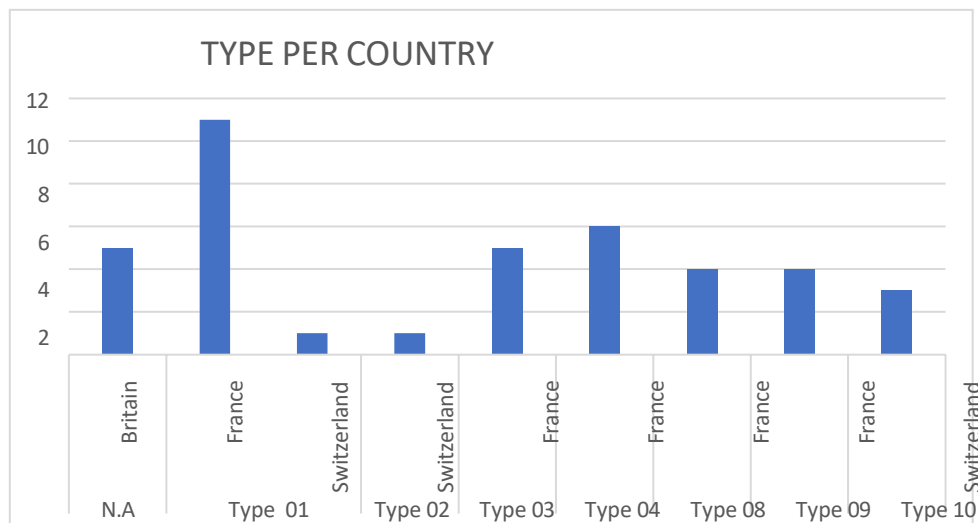


Figure 4.11: Graph showing the position of the body in relation to the country. Figure by Jackie Dubbeldam.

5. Discussion

The resulting research has shown some similarities across the research area. For example, all the seated graves of which the sex could be identified were male, as seen in figure 4.4. Furthermore, the average age of the individual ranged between young adult and adult, except for the pit burial at the site of White Horse in Kent, where the seated burial concerns an adolescent.

Most burials concern single, pit burials with immediate deposition, as seen in figures 4.7, 4.6 and 4.8. The result of the study shows a connection between seated burials and religious practices, as the majority of the seated burials are found within the proximity of a contemporary sanctuary or temple, as seen in figure 4.8. Furthermore, the cardinal orientation of the seated burials does not show uniformity with a slight majority-orientated southeast, as seen in figure 4.9.

In addition, most of the bodies are buried in position type 1, as seen in figure 4.10. Type 1 mainly appears on the continent. As shown in figure 4.11, type 1 is seen in France and Switzerland but not in Britain.

6. Conclusion

The main research question at the beginning of this thesis was *'What is the religious significance of the seated burials across North-Western Europe from the La Tène period?'*.

Even if we cannot make decisive statements due to the relatively small amount of data, the current data seems to indicate that seated burials are more widespread on the continent. The religious practice of seated burials is supported by the fact that many are discovered near temple complexes or sanctuaries. Such is the case at Acy-Romance, Saint-Just-Chaussée and Mormont. Furthermore, the seated position could relate to the Celtic deity *Cernunnos* as the iconography of the deity depicts him in a seated position. However, the absence of votives or inscriptions makes it impossible to identify deities relating to the seated burials.

Another thing to consider is that seated burials are more labour-intensive in comparison to other contemporary methods of burial. For example, at Acy-Romance, the bodies were mummified before their deposition.

Current hypotheses concerning seated burials argue that the practice was a type of banishment, symbolic punishment or relegation. Moreover, the possibility is considered that the individuals were ritually sacrificed. These hypotheses do have merit when concerning the seated burials on the continent as they are often found in connection to a temple or sanctuary and isolation. Furthermore, possible evidence of sacrifice can be found at the site of Acy-Romance in France, where an individual was discovered who showed signs of blunt force trauma. However, these theories do not apply to all seated burials. Notably, none of the seated burials in Britain is seemingly related to a sanctuary or temple.

Furthermore, three cases concerned double burials, including grave goods, at Granton Pier, Dunbar and Chronicle Hills. They indicated that the individuals were of a higher status and were buried accordingly. Furthermore, Mormont Hill grave 257 concerned an older adult with expensive grave goods in a single grave burial. He, too, was considered to be buried according to his status.

Therefore, it seems that a seated burial could be considered an esteemed form of burial; alternatively, it has a versatile cultural significance.

To address the following sub-questions, namely *'What comparisons can be made between the seated burials across north-western Europe from the La Tène period?'* and *'What problems does one encounter when analysing documentation on seated burials across different countries and methodologies?'*

As stated, the research has shown similarities between the La Tène seated burials across the research area. The main similarity is that the individuals are all male and have reached adulthood before their deaths. However, comparisons can be made between seated burials on the continent and seated burials within Britain separately. The current data do not indicate much overlap between seated burials on the continent and in Britain outside their gender and age. This could be due to the current data being insufficient to analyse with relevant conclusions due to several factors:

For one, there is an uneven distribution of seated burials across the research area. With most of the burials located in France and Switzerland. Compared to 6 burials across Britain. The variance could be attributed to seated burials being a more common practice on the continent. However, the discrepancy could also reflect the amount of fieldwork and the need for cursory documentation in Britain.

In order to address such problems in the future, excavation reports and other relevant literature and data need to become more accessible. For example, much research on Acy-Romance was never published. Furthermore, the language barrier creates a challenge. This can be overcome by publishing in multiple languages or translations would overcome these issues. Communication and sharing knowledge are imperative to understand our cultural heritage locally and globally.

In conclusion, due to the lack of data, one cannot make conclusive statements or comparisons between seated burials from the La Tène period across North-Western Europe. However, this will be possible going forward using available methods to document inhumations. In the future, when more seated burials are discovered, it will hopefully create a deeper understanding of the practice on a local and intra-regional level.

6. Abstract

Our understanding of past societies is completely or partly based on how they buried their dead. However, more attention is paid to the burial objects rather than the body. Therefore, understanding positions and what they could mean within a society and religion could help us better understand how these societies operated and what they valued. However, there is a lack of standardization and consistent, approach of intentional body positions during burial. This lack of standardization makes it difficult to compare data, especially concerning data across continents and scholarly methods.

In this thesis, I will compare data from several seated burials from the La Tène period ranging from 450 to 100 BC in France and Britain. In order to understand their cultural significance and create a better understanding of seated burials on an intra-regional level.

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Appendix 1: Database Burials

Collected data from the sites pertaining to the seated burials

| ID | Site | Country | Year | Date | Grave context | Burial context | Sex | Age | Body treatment | Body orientator | Preservation | Type | Description |
|----------|------------------------------|-------------|------|-----------------|---------------|------------------------|------|-------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|---------|--|
| AC433 | Ay-Bornance | France | 1995 | 180-20 BC | PK | Temple | M | Young Adult | Mummified | south-east | N.A. | Type 01 | Asymmetrical lower limbs, Right lower limb flexed with the knee elevated, left lower limb hyperflexed at the bottom. Left foot in front of the pelvis |
| AC43302 | Ay-Bornance | France | 1995 | 180-20 BC | PK | Temple | M | Young Adult | Mummified | south-east | N.A. | Type 01 | Asymmetrical lower limbs, left lower limb flexed with the knee elevated, right lower limb hyperflexed at the bottom. Right foot in front of the pelvis |
| AC43304 | Ay-Bornance | France | 1995 | 180-20 BC | PK | Temple | M | Young Adult | Mummified | south-east | N.A. | Type 08 | Symmetrical lower limbs, raised knees, uncrossed lower limbs, feet together |
| AC43305 | Ay-Bornance | France | 1995 | 180-20 BC | PK | Temple | M | Young Adult | Mummified | south-east | N.A. | Type 08 | Symmetrical lower limbs, raised knees, uncrossed lower limbs, feet together |
| AC43306 | Ay-Bornance | France | 1995 | 180-20 BC | PK | Temple | M | Young Adult | Mummified | south-east | N.A. | Type 08 | Symmetrical lower limbs, raised knees, uncrossed lower limbs, feet together |
| AC43308 | Ay-Bornance | France | 1995 | 180-20 BC | PK | Temple | M | Young Adult | Mummified | south-east | N.A. | Type 09 | Symmetrical lower limbs, raised knees, uncrossed lower limbs, feet together |
| AC43322 | Ay-Bornance | France | 1995 | 180-20 BC | PK | Temple | M | Young Adult | Mummified | south-east | N.A. | Type 09 | Symmetrical lower limbs, raised knees, uncrossed lower limbs |
| AVE1 | Avesches | France | 1996 | 260-30 BC | PK | Temple | M | Old Adult | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. | Type 09 | Asymmetrical lower limbs, raised knees, uncrossed lower limbs, feet together |
| AVE2 | Avesches | France | 1996 | 260-30 BC | PK | Temple | M | Old Adult | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. | Type 01 | Asymmetrical lower limbs, raised knees, uncrossed lower limbs, feet together |
| CHAMP 24 | Champs des roches | France | 2007 | 341-51 BC | PK | Later temple | N.A. | Adult | N.A. | N.A. | Poor | Type 03 | Asymmetrical lower limbs, right lower limb flexed with the knee elevated, left lower limb hyperflexed at the bottom. Left foot laterally to the body |
| CHAMP 25 | Champs des roches | France | 2007 | 346-54 BC | PK | Later temple | N.A. | Adult | N.A. | N.A. | Poor | Type 03 | Asymmetrical lower limbs, right lower limb flexed with the knee elevated, left lower limb hyperflexed at the bottom. Left foot laterally to the body |
| CHAMP 26 | Champs des roches | France | 2007 | 346-54 BC | PK | Later temple | N.A. | Adult | N.A. | N.A. | Poor | Type 03 | Asymmetrical lower limbs, right lower limb flexed with the knee elevated, left lower limb hyperflexed at the bottom. Left foot laterally to the body |
| CH1 | Chronicle Hills | Britain | 1820 | N.A. | Grave | Coffin | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. |
| CK1 | Crosskirk | Britain | 1972 | 150-100 BC | Cst | Broch | M | Older Adult | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. |
| D1 | Dunbar | Britain | 2005 | 100 BC - 100 AD | Cst | Double burial | M | Young Adult | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. |
| GP1 | Granton Pier | Britain | 1851 | 300-100 BC | PK | Double burial | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. | West | N.A. | N.A. | Symmetrical lower limbs, lowered knees, uncrossed lower limbs, feet together, touching pelvis |
| M57 | Mormont Hill | Switzerland | 2006 | 120-80 BC | PK | Sanctuary, Temp N.A. | N.A. | Older Adult | N.A. | N.A. | Good | Type 10 | Symmetrical lower limbs, Right lower limb flexed with the knee elevated, left lower limb hyperflexed at the bottom. Left foot in front of the pelvis |
| M1A | Mormont Hill | Switzerland | 2006 | 120-80 BC | PK | Sanctuary, Temp N.A. | N.A. | Adult | N.A. | N.A. | Fair | Type 01 | Symmetrical lower limbs, lowered knees, uncrossed lower limbs, feet together |
| M2A | Mormont Hill | Switzerland | 2006 | 120-80 BC | PK | Sanctuary, Temp N.A. | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. | Fair | Type 10 | Symmetrical lower limbs, lowered knees, uncrossed lower limbs, feet together |
| M3A | Mormont Hill | Switzerland | 2006 | 120-80 BC | PK | Sanctuary, Temp N.A. | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. | Fair | Type 10 | Symmetrical lower limbs, lowered knees, uncrossed lower limbs, feet together |
| BAT82 | Perrières, Bailly France | France | 2007 | 200-100 BC | PK | Habitat enclosure M | N.A. | Adult | Immediate depositions west-southwest | N.A. | Good | Type 01 | Asymmetrical lower limbs, Right lower limb flexed with the knee elevated, left lower limb hyperflexed at the bottom. Left foot in front of the pelvis |
| BAT83 | Perrières, Bailly France | France | 2007 | 200-100 BC | PK | Habitat enclosure M | N.A. | Adult | Immediate depositions west-southwest | N.A. | Fair | Type 01 | Asymmetrical lower limbs, Right lower limb flexed with the knee elevated, left lower limb hyperflexed at the bottom. Left foot in front of the pelvis |
| BAT84 | Perrières, Bailly France | France | 2007 | 200-100 BC | PK | Habitat enclosure M | N.A. | Adult | Immediate depositions west-southwest | N.A. | Fair | Type 01 | Asymmetrical lower limbs, Right lower limb flexed with the knee elevated, left lower limb hyperflexed at the bottom. Left foot in front of the pelvis |
| BAT85 | Perrières, Bailly France | France | 2007 | 200-100 BC | PK | Habitat enclosure N.A. | N.A. | Adult | Immediate depositions west-southwest | N.A. | Poor | Type 01 | Asymmetrical lower limbs, Right lower limb flexed with the knee elevated, left lower limb hyperflexed at the bottom. Left foot in front of the pelvis |
| BAT855 | Perrières, Bailly France | France | 2007 | 200-100 BC | PK | Habitat enclosure N.A. | N.A. | Adult | Immediate depositions west-southwest | N.A. | Poor | Type 03 | Asymmetrical lower limbs, right lower limb flexed with the knee elevated, left lower limb hyperflexed at the bottom. Left foot laterally to the body |
| REV1 | Revers, Champ - France | France | 2000 | 349 - 2 BC | PK | N.A. | N.A. | Adult | Immediate depositions west | N.A. | Good | Type 03 | Asymmetrical lower limbs, right lower limb flexed with the knee elevated, left lower limb hyperflexed at the bottom. Left foot laterally to the body |
| REV2 | Revers, Champ - France | France | 2000 | 349 - 2 BC | PK | N.A. | N.A. | Adult | Immediate depositions west | N.A. | Good | Type 01 | Asymmetrical lower limbs, Right lower limb flexed with the knee elevated, left lower limb hyperflexed at the bottom. Left foot in front of the pelvis |
| REV3 | Revers, Champ - France | France | 2000 | 349 - 2 BC | PK | N.A. | N.A. | Adult | Immediate depositions west | N.A. | Good | Type 01 | Asymmetrical lower limbs, Right lower limb flexed with the knee elevated, left lower limb hyperflexed at the bottom. Left foot in front of the pelvis |
| SA1 | Saint-Antoine, G Switzerland | Switzerland | 1990 | 400-200 BC | PK | Sanctuary | M | Young Adult | Mummified | N.A. | Good | Type 01 | Asymmetrical lower limbs, Right lower limb flexed with the knee elevated, left lower limb hyperflexed at the bottom. Left foot underneath the pelvis |
| SK6 | Saint-Juste-en-Champ | France | 1994 | 352-57 BC | PK | Sanctuary | M | Adult | Immediate depositions north-west | N.A. | Good | Type 01 | Asymmetrical lower limbs, Right lower limb flexed with the knee elevated, left lower limb hyperflexed at the bottom. Left foot in front of the pelvis |
| SK355 | Saint-Juste-en-Champ | France | 1994 | 351-107 BC | PK | Sanctuary | N.A. | Adult | Mummified | north-west | Good | Type 01 | Asymmetrical lower limbs, Right lower limb flexed with the knee elevated, left lower limb hyperflexed at the bottom. Left foot in front of the pelvis |
| SK450 | Saint-Juste-en-Champ | France | 1994 | 350-95 BC | PK | Sanctuary | N.A. | Adult | Immediate depositions north-west | N.A. | Poor | Type 04 | Asymmetrical lower limbs, left lower limb flexed with the knee elevated, right lower limb flexed on the bottom, right foot in front of the pelvis |
| SK358 | Saint-Juste-en-Champ | France | 1994 | 163-18 BC | PK | Sanctuary | N.A. | Old Adult | Immediate depositions north-west | N.A. | Good | Type 04 | Asymmetrical lower limbs, left lower limb flexed with the knee elevated, right lower limb flexed on the bottom, right foot in front of the pelvis |
| SK364 | Saint-Juste-en-Champ | France | 1994 | 169-1 BC | PK | Sanctuary | N.A. | Adult | Mummified | north-west | Good | Type 04 | Asymmetrical lower limbs, left lower limb flexed with the knee elevated, right lower limb flexed on the bottom, right foot in front of the pelvis |
| SK687 | Saint-Juste-en-Champ | France | 1994 | 200-47 BC | PK | Sanctuary | N.A. | Adult | Immediate depositions north-west | N.A. | Good | Type 04 | Asymmetrical lower limbs, left lower limb flexed with the knee elevated, right lower limb flexed on the bottom, right foot in front of the pelvis |
| SK688 | Saint-Juste-en-Champ | France | 1994 | 174-2 BC | PK | Sanctuary | N.A. | Adult | Immediate depositions north-west | N.A. | Poor | Type 04 | Asymmetrical lower limbs, left lower limb flexed with the knee elevated, right lower limb flexed on the bottom, right foot in front of the pelvis |
| SK692 | Saint-Juste-en-Champ | France | 1994 | 174-2 BC | PK | Sanctuary | N.A. | Adult | Immediate depositions north-west | N.A. | Poor | Type 04 | Asymmetrical lower limbs, left lower limb flexed with the knee elevated, right lower limb flexed on the bottom, right foot in front of the pelvis |
| WH5184 | White Horse Stn Britain | Britain | 1998 | 510-330 BC | PK | Group burial | N.A. | Adolescent | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. | Type 01 | Asymmetrical lower limbs, Right lower limb flexed with the knee elevated, left lower limb hyperflexed at the bottom. Left foot in front of the pelvis |

Appendix 2: Table Burials

Complete table containing the typology of the positions

| Asymmetrical lower limbs | | | | | | Symmetrical lower limbs, raised knees | | | Symmetrical lower limbs, lowered knees |
|--|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|--|------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------|---|
| Right lower limb flexed with the knee elevated, left lower limb hyper flexed on the bottom | | | left lower limb flexed with the knee elevated, right lower limb flexed on the bottom | | | uncrossed lower limbs | | crossed lower limbs | uncrossed lower limbs, flexed underneath body |
| Left foot in front of the pelvis | Left foot underneath pelvis | Left foot laterally to the body | Right foot in front of the pelvis | Right foot underneath pelvis | Right foot laterally to the body | Feet apart | Feet together | | feet together, touching pelvis |
| TYPE 1 | TYPE 2 | TYPE 3 | TYPE 4 | TYPE 5 | TYPE 6 | TYPE 7 | TYPE 8 | TYPE 9 | TYPE 10 |
| ACY453 | SA1 | CHAMP 24 | ACY330 2 | | | | ACY3304 | ACY330 8 | M257 |
| AVE 2 | | CHAMP 25 | SJC450 | | | | ACY3305 | ACY342 2 | M2A |
| M1A | | CHAMP 26 | SJC358 | | | | ACY3306 | ACY2-1 | M3A |
| BAT362 | | BAT355 | SJC364 | | | | ACY3410 | AVE 1 | |
| BAT363 | | REV1 | SJC687 | | | | | | |
| BAT364 | | REV2 | SJC688 | | | | | | |
| BAT365 | | REV5 | | | | | | | |
| SJC6 | | | | | | | | | |
| SJC355 | | | | | | | | | |
| SJC692 | | | | | | | | | |
| 30% | 2% | 13% | 15% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 10% | 10% | 8% |