

supported Riwallon of Dol against Conan, William later released Conan after his defeat, and the latter promptly imprisoned Riwallon. Having demonstrated his power, William had gained an ally and while a Breton contingent fought at Hastings in 1066, Conan attacked Anjou rather than taking advantage of William's absence from Normandy (Wilson 1985, 178-81), though it is interesting to note that it was the Bretons of all his army who failed him in the battle.

After the Conquest, several notable Bretons, among them Judhael of Totnes, Alan of Richmond, Eudo of Tattershall and Alfred of Lincoln, received lands in England from which they took their names; a small Breton colony was established in Richmondshire (Stenton 1971, 628-30). The problems caused by the imposition of feudalism on Breton society made them always something of an anachronism among William's subjects (they actually mounted a brief rebellion at Dol in 1076, see Stenton 1971, 608; feudal elements in earlier Breton society are considered by de la Borderie 1898, 210-44). Within decades of the Conquest they found themselves without an independent homeland and with no direction for development or expansion; this was especially true for those in England, 'alien among the invaders of an alien land' (Stenton 1961, 28). It is surely ironic that after more than a century of struggle for self-assertion and freedom from Scandinavian oppression, culminating in Alain's great victory of 939, within a hundred and fifty years the Bretons were reduced to second-rate vassals of a fifth-generation Viking.

### 3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Having reviewed the historical background we can now turn to the archaeological material as an independent record, comparing it with the theories put forward in the previous section. Of particular importance is the period 919-939, the duration of the Scandinavian occupation, and it is to this that archaeology can make the biggest contribution. Although meagre by comparison with the archaeology of Danelaw towns such as York, the material impact of the Scandinavians in Brittany is considerable and certainly more pronounced than in Wales or Cornwall. This is surprising considering both the relatively short period of known occupation and also the limited nature of Breton medieval archaeological investigation to date (see Sanquer 1976).

The Breton evidence falls into four categories, fortifications, place-names, burials and weapons, with additional study of indigenous monasteries, rural settlements and commerce. The excavated material from Normandy will be briefly reviewed and finally mention will be made of Frankish artefacts found in Scandinavia.

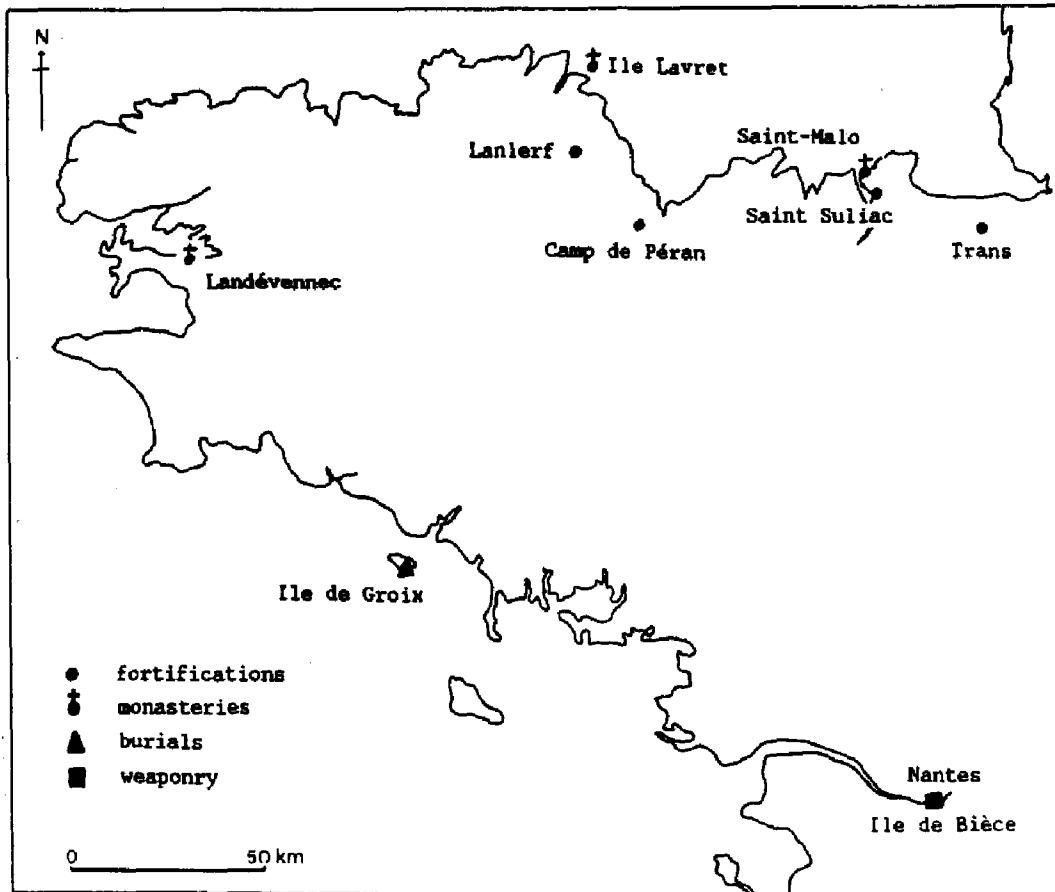


Fig. 15. Scandinavian sites and finds in Brittany

### *Fortifications*

The most impressive Scandinavian remains in Brittany are fortifications. Two of these have now been confirmed as dating to the Viking period, and more particularly to the early tenth-century occupation. The first is the Camp de Pérán, near Plédran and Saint-Brieuc in northern Brittany. The site comprises an irregularly circular earth-work with a single 3m high rampart and 4m wide ditch, dominating the valleys of the Urne and Gonet (the appearance of a double ditch is due to the removal of earth from the main ditch; see Nicolardot 1984, 3-4). Originally assigned to the Iron Age, the site has been redated following excavations which have been carried out there since 1983 and are still continuing. Sections

across the ramparts have revealed a composition of large stone blocks resting on a clay bank, with timber bracing on a vertical and horizontal lattice; the rampart has been preserved by vitrification as a result of a fire which has been found to have engulfed the whole site. This vitrification effect stops a metre from the base of the rampart which has been interpreted by the director as showing two phases of construction, though this has been disputed on the grounds of the intensity of the heat required to fuse the entire rampart (Anne Nissen-Jaubert, pers. comm.; see also Nicolardot, Nissen-Jaubert and Wimmers 1987, 230-31). The rampart is estimated to have been originally nearly 4m high and 5m thick. Although only a few trial trenches have been dug in the interior to date, some remarkable finds have been made. The most significant is a coin of Saint Peter minted at York c. 905-925, found in the burnt layers beneath the collapsed rampart in area 2 (see excavation plan, Fig. 16); nearby was found a small fragment of metal believed to be from a helmet; in area 3 the ferrule of a lance has been uncovered. Further dating is provided by considerable quantities of tenth-century pottery and a series of radiocarbon dates which cluster around 865-1045. While on current evidence it is perhaps premature to suggest that the site 'presents the typological characteristics appropriate to Viking fortified sites' (Nicolardot 1984, 10, comparing it with the Danish Trelleborg-type enclosures), the find of the York coin, although so far unique, does lend weight to the theory that the Camp de Péran was either constructed, reoccupied or attacked by Vikings in the early tenth century, a period when it was certainly in use. This hypothesis is further strengthened by the record of Alain Barbetorte's landing at Dol in 936 and subsequent battle with a Viking force near Saint-Brieuc (Flodoard *Ann.* 936; *CN* 89); this would certainly fit the picture of the destruction at Péran. Future excavations at the site over the coming years are sure to expand considerably our knowledge of the Viking occupation (the main published reports are Nicolardot 1984-7; Nicolardot, Nissen-Jaubert and Wimmers 1987, with additional notes in Chédeville and Tonnere 1987, 183).

The second major fortification relating to the Scandinavian occupation is at Trans, Ille et Vilaine, where two earthworks lie 500m apart. The first, known as Vieux M'Na, is an 80m by 90m trapezoid with double banks and multiple, very wide ditches. The enclosure is divided in two by a bank of granite blocks of exceptional size. Although unexcavated, the site has parallels in shape at Saint Suliac near La Rance and Lanlerf near Saint-Brieuc (where de la

CAMP de PÉRAN

Piédran, Côtes-du-Nord

Plan of Excavations

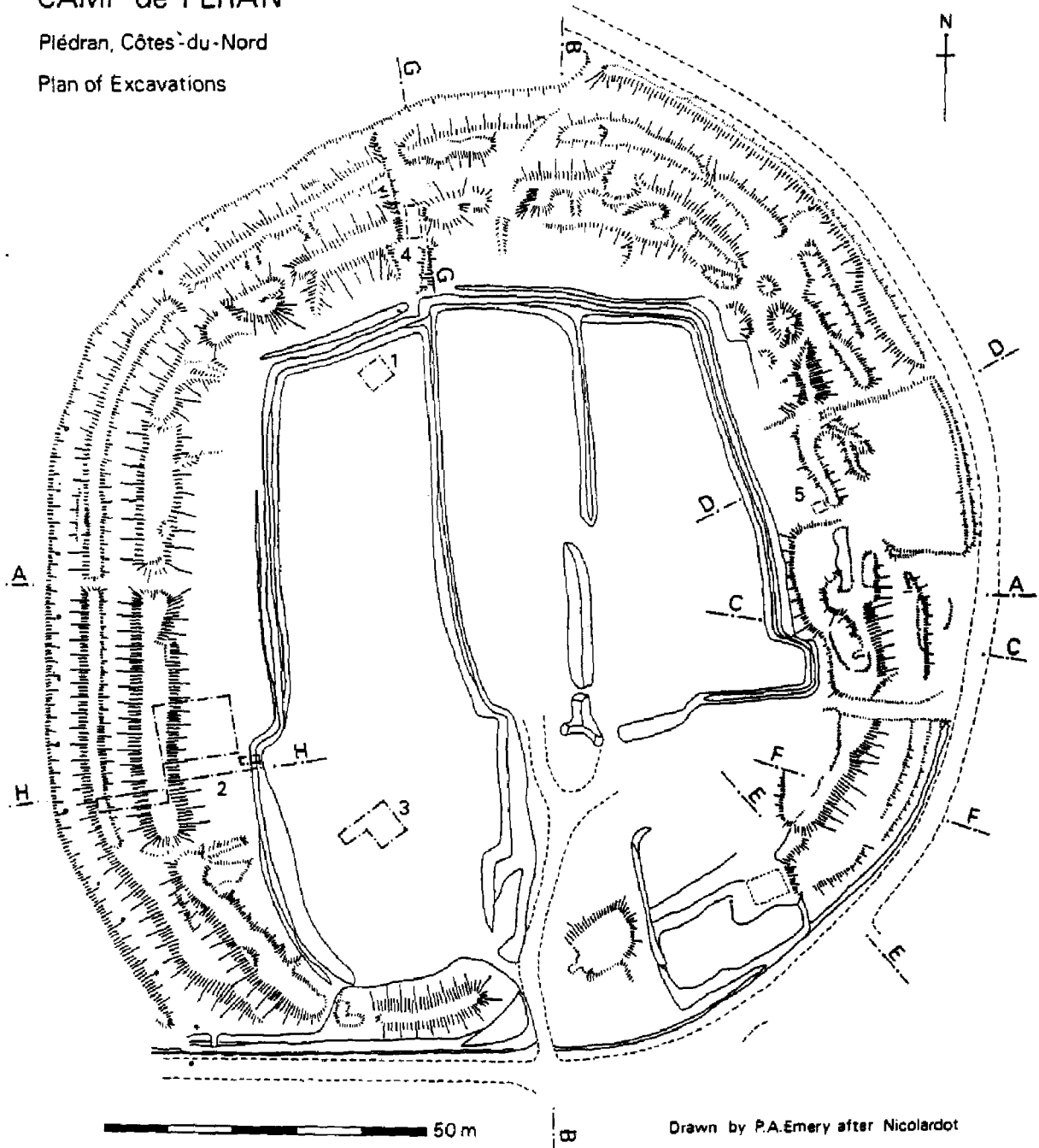


Fig. 16.

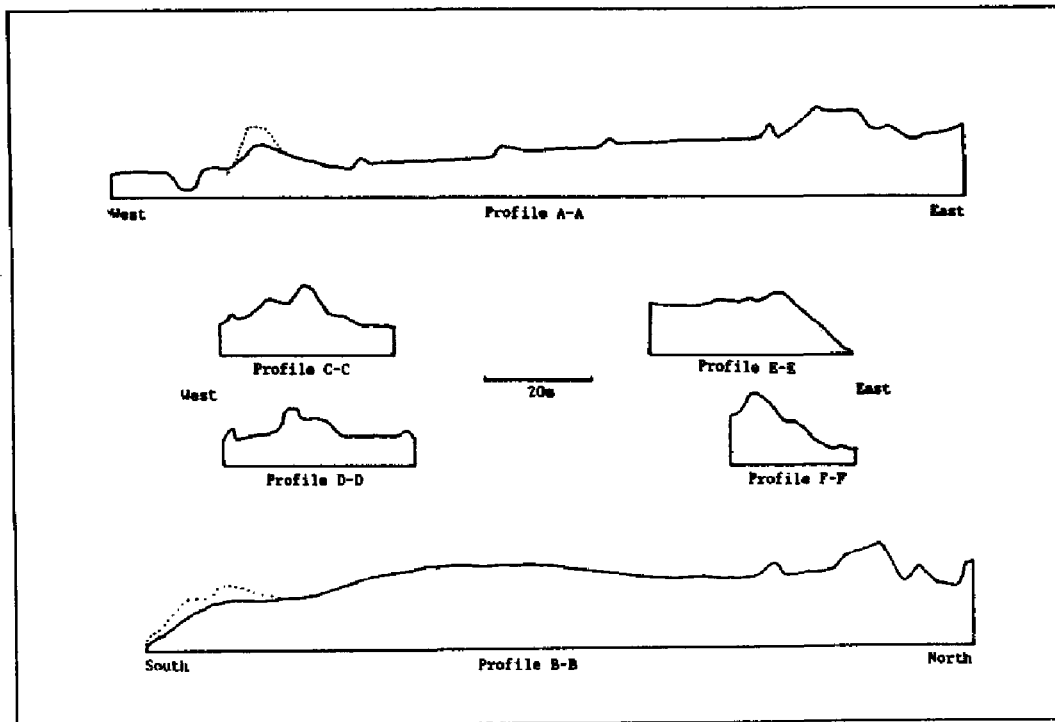


Fig. 17. Profiles across the ramparts of the Camp de Pérán – see main plan for locations (after Raboron in Nicolardot 1984).

Borderie 1898, 388 placed the 936 battle). Half a kilometre away on the crest of a hill is the Camp des Haies, a circular double-ditched enclosure which was excavated in 1979. Pottery found in the nineteenth century provides a firm date of 920-980 for the occupation, and the excavations showed the rock-cut ditches to be very rough and irregular; this is interpreted by the excavators as an indication of hasty construction. A few ephemeral traces of interior structures were observed, and finds of iron nails and a knife were made. It has been suggested that the enclosure at Vieux M'Na is that constructed by the Loire Vikings in 939 after their retreat from Nantes, and that the Camp des Haies is Alain Barbetorte's siege camp built shortly before the battle of Trans that year. While this interpretation does fit the pattern of the battle as described in the documentary sources, and the earthworks are certainly in the right location, the lack of evidence from Vieux M'Na means that any firm conclusion will have to wait until this site is excavated. (The excavations are published as Hamel-Simon, Langouet, Nourry-Denayer and Mouton 1979, from which the above interpretations are taken, with additional references in Guigon 1987a, 228 and Chédeville and Tonnere 1987, 184).

By way of brief comparison with the fortifications at Pérán and Trans, mention should be made of the 150m diameter circular earthwork at Oost-Souburg in Zeeland. Generally dated to the

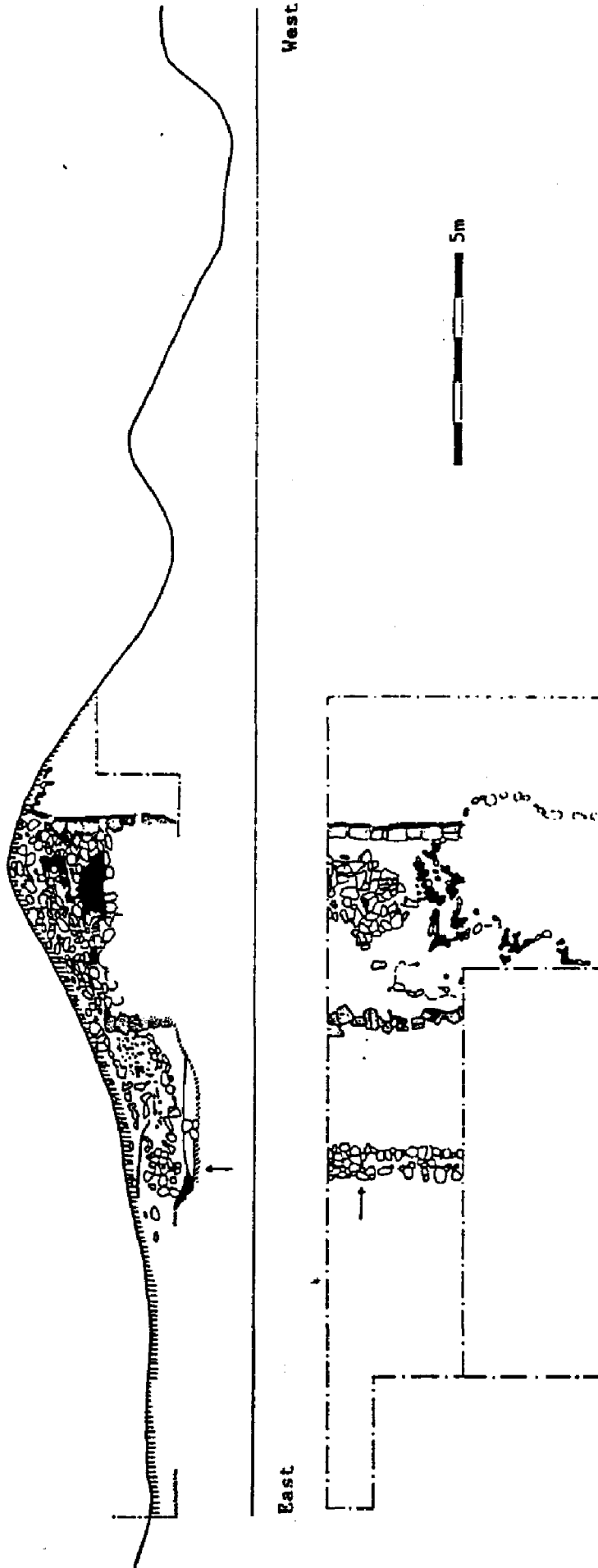


Fig. 18. Section H-H through the rampart and ditch at the Camp de Péran, with plan of excavated area. Position of St. Peter's coin from York indicated by arrow (P. A. Emery after Nicolardot and Tostivint in Nicolardot 1984).

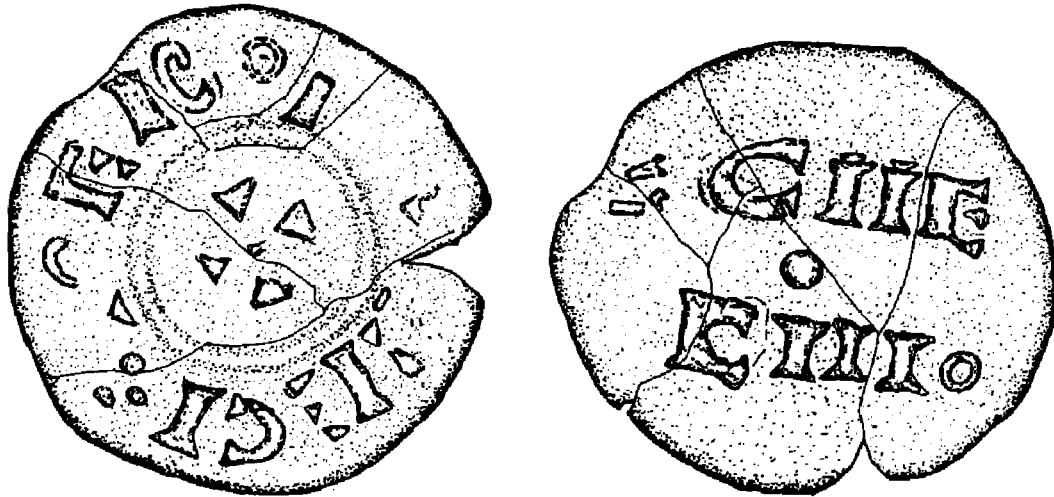


Fig. 19. Coin of St. Peter minted at York c. 905-925, found at the Camp de Péran. Legend reads EBORACE CI (heavily worn) and a corruption of SCI PETRINO. Diameter 2cm. (P. A. Emery after Nicolardot 1984).

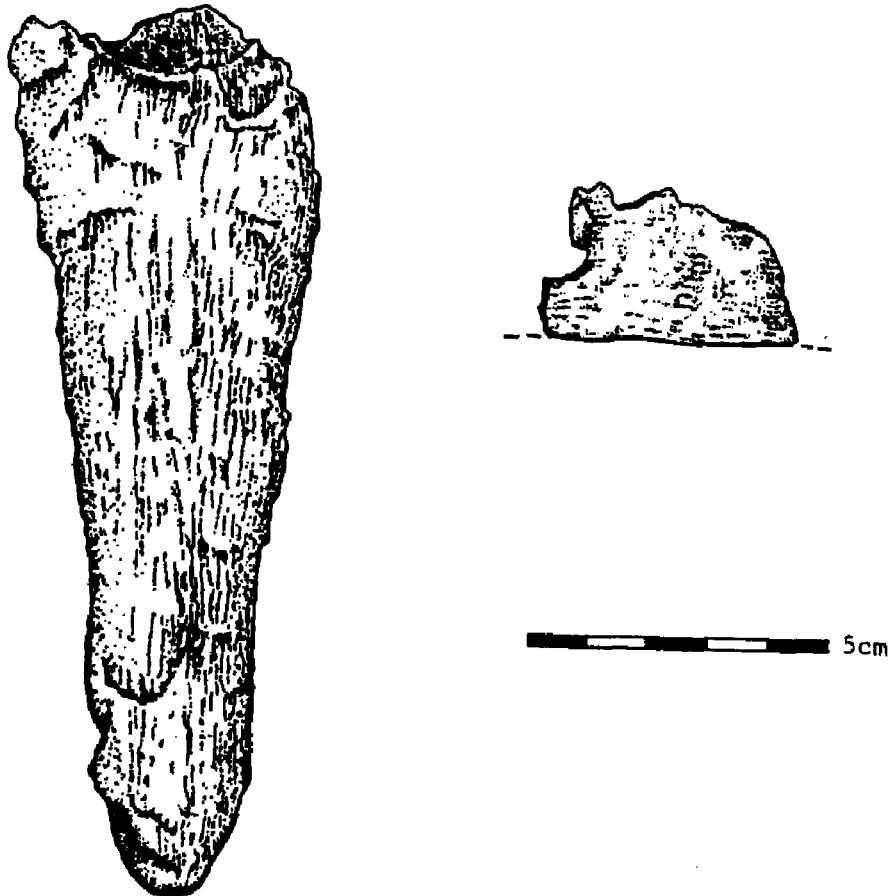


Fig. 20. Lance ferrule and possible helmet fragment found at the Camp de Péran. (P. A. Emery after Nicolardot 1984).

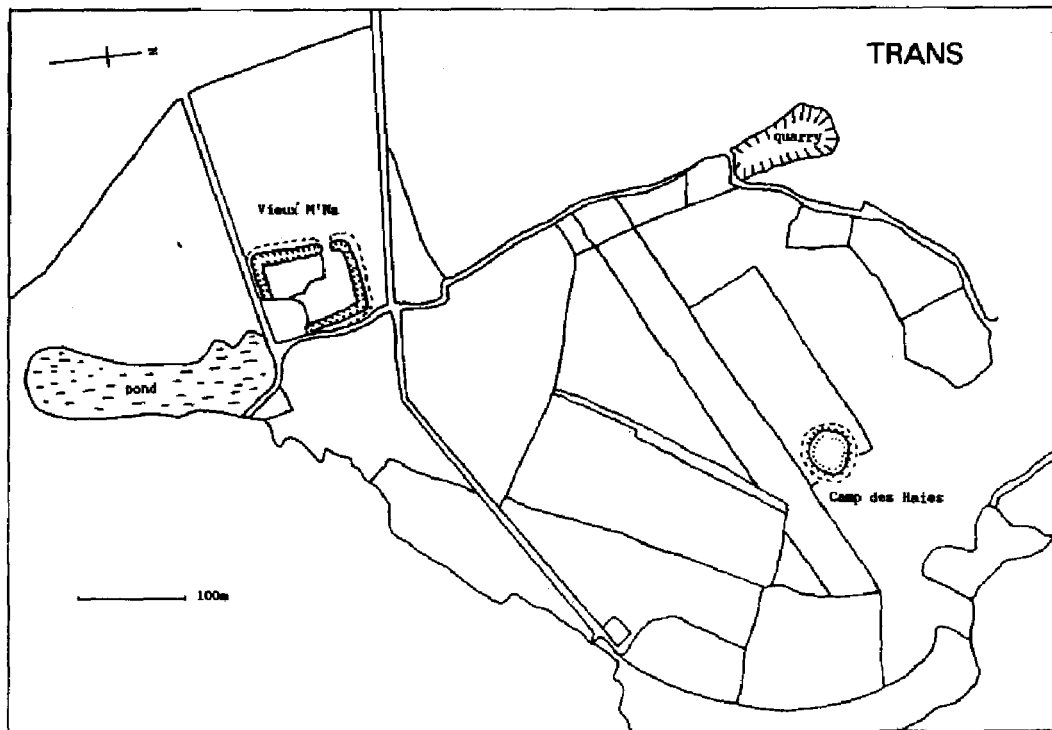


Fig. 21. Location plan of the earthworks at Trans (after Hamel-Simon et al 1979).

late ninth/early tenth centuries, though precise dating is as yet impossible, the site has been interpreted as one of the chain of forts built to defend Flanders against Viking attack (Sawyer 1982a, 82, 87), but might equally well be a Scandinavian base (Trimpe Burger 1973). It is possible that any Viking fortifications in Brittany were constructed under the influence of forts such as these or the burhs of Ælfred's Wessex, which may have also provided the idea for the Trelleborg-type enclosures of Denmark.

There are many other fortifications in Brittany dated to the Carolingian period; indeed Breton medieval archaeology has tended to concentrate on them (Sanquer 1976, 16-18). None, however, shows definite Scandinavian activity and they may well be Breton defences against Viking or Frankish attack. Documentary sources show a period of construction of fortifications around personal residences and at strategic sites like bridges by the Breton and Frankish aristocracy from c. 864 to 879, with a second period of fortification by royal command after 887 (Hodges 1981a, 224). Terminology is a problem with these sources; Alain the Great's residences at Rieux and Plessé are described as *castella* (Smith 1985) and the late twelfth-century *Song of Aiquin* uses similar terms to describe a fortification at Dorlet with a ditch, moat and high rampart occupied by Aiquin's Vikings in the reign of Charlemagne (Guigon 1987a, 228). The civil defences constructed during the aristocratic power struggles around Rennes and Nantes



are also referred to in several documents (see Chédeville and Tonnere 1987, 184).

Any attempt to take an overview of fortification types in Brittany, in order to put sites like Péran and Trans into context, is frustrated by problems with the dating of these features and their arrangement in a relative chronological sequence. Mottes are found in the tenth century in Brittany, but exist concurrently with circular camps as late as 1050 (cf. the excavations at Lou-du-Lac (Guigon 1987a, 228) and Lamber en Ploumoguier (Sanquer 1976, 18); see also Chédeville and Tonnere 1987, 184). Attempts have been made by de Boüard and Fournier (1977) to set the fortifications in a landscape context using documentary references, and Breton fortifications are now chronologically classified by *département* (see Chédeville and Tonnere 1987, 181-2). To confuse the issue, Iron Age earthworks are known to have been re-occupied in the eleventh century and there are also problems of recognition; several excavators have mistaken windmill mounds and even tumuli for mottes (Chédeville and Tonnere 1987, 181).

Carolingian earthworks excavated in Brittany include the ramparts and chapel sequence at Lezkelen en Plabennec (Irien 1976 and 1982), the tenth-century enclosure at Goarum ar Salud (Guigon 1987b) and the circular fortifications at Botalec and Kermestre en Baud (Chédeville and Tonnere 1987, 183). A particularly spectacular example is the promontory fort at Castel-Cran en Plélauff, 130m above the confluence of the Blavet and Cavern rivers in Côtes-du-Nord. Though the presently visible walls date to the eleventh century, finds show that a ninth-century enclosure preceded them (Chédeville and Tonnere 1987, 185). The site was deserted in the early tenth century on coin evidence and has been tentatively interpreted as a *machtiern's* residence (Jones 1981, 156). Breton defences seem to have relied extensively on inaccessibility and the local topography of marshes or rocky slopes.

The major towns allowed their walls to decay in the early ninth century, which is surprising when one considers the obvious strategic importance of the urban settlements evident in the Franks' Breton campaigns. Urban defence may have centred on cathedrals and ecclesiastical sites as refuges; several are known to have had fortifications, as at Nantes in 937 and possibly Saint-Paul-de-Léon (Smith 1985). Alain Barbetorte's wall at Nantes was excavated in 1913 and was found to have been largely built of re-used materials, including Roman tiles and Merovingian sarcophagi, its hasty construction an indication of the perceived threat from the Vikings

even after their 937 defeat (Guigon 1984, 36 and 1987a, 228; a similar contemporary wall, known as the Norman Gate, still stands in Perigeux). It is possible that the walls of Rennes and Vannes were re-fortified in the tenth century after the return of Alain II (Jones 1981, 153; see also Musset 1974 for urban growth in this period), but this rests on very tenuous source evidence (Wendy Davies, pers. comm.). The appearance of later fortifications may be recovered in part for Dinan, Dol and Rennes from the Bayeux Tapestry (Wilson 1985, though note his reservations 178-81).

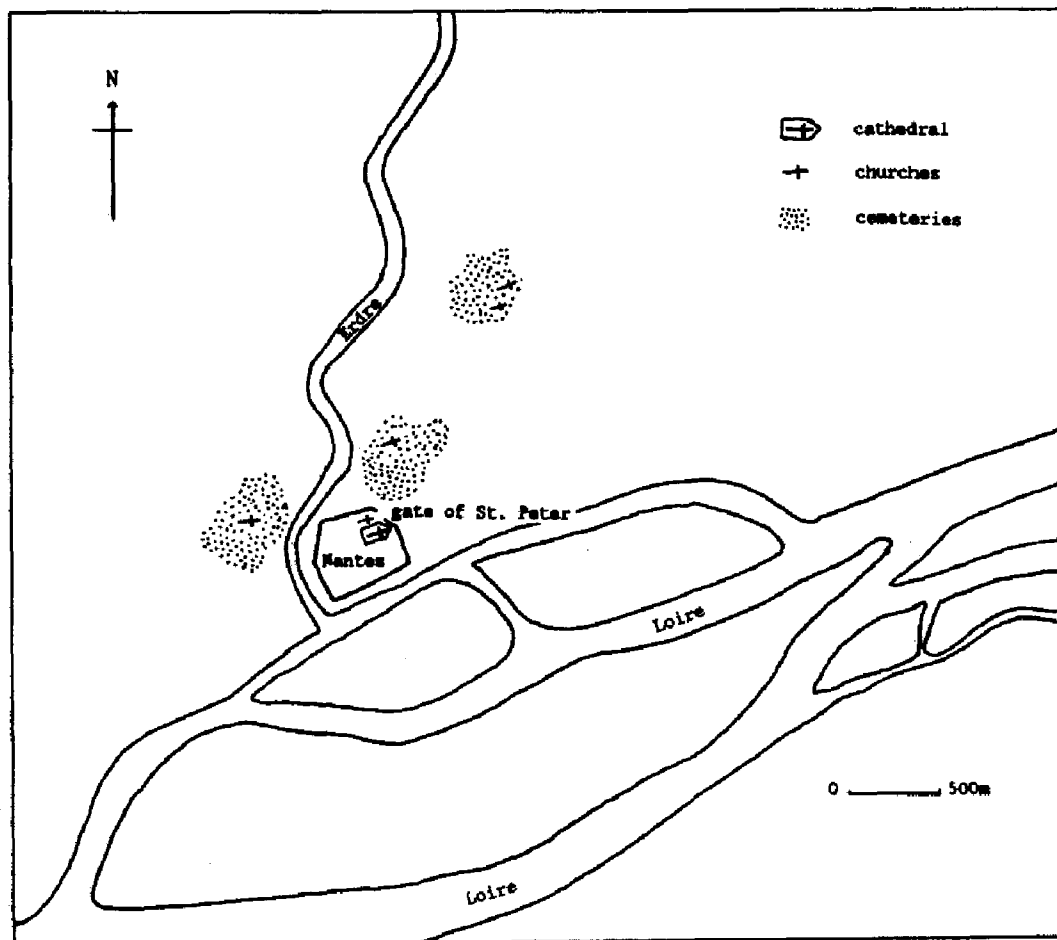


Fig. 22. The topography of early medieval Nantes (after Barral i Altet 1984).

### *Place-names*

Place-name studies neatly illustrate the problems associated with fortifications in Brittany: the *motte*, *roche* and *pléssis* names cluster thickly on the borders of Neustria, Maine and Anjou, and are very numerous: 115 in Loire Atlantique, 251 in Ille et Vilaine, 44 in Côtes-du-Nord, 37 in Morbihan and 17 in Finistère (Jones 1981, 157). Even the names do not always reflect the true situation, as graphically demonstrated by the known presence of 166 mottes

of all periods in Finistère alone, the majority of which are thought to have ninth- and tenth-century origins (Jones 1981, 156). Difficulties associated with Breton place-name studies are highlighted by Musset (1975a, 190-200), part of the problem being the low level of French place-name research compared to the intensity of investigation of, for example, Danelaw names (Fellows-Jensen 1988, 113).

The only place-names in Brittany which may have a Scandinavian origin are those containing the element *la Guerche*, from Old Norse *virki* or Frankish *werki*, meaning a fortification. Askeberg (1944, 181-5) found three examples in Brittany, near Vitré, Vannes and Saint-Brieuc (the latter offering another candidate for the location of Alain Barbetorte's 936 battle), in addition to twenty-nine others elsewhere in France. However, Quentel (1962) has located many more *la Guerche* names, not only in Brittany but with a widespread distribution all over France, thus strengthening the suggestion that the names may in fact be of Frankish origin. A valuable exercise regrettably beyond the scope of this paper would be to compare the Scandinavian personal-name elements cited by Adigard des Gautries (1954a) with the Breton names listed by Loth (1890), in the hope of revealing Scandinavian influence on the population itself (I am grateful to John Dodgson for this suggestion). The Breton place-names themselves are discussed in de Courson's introduction to the *Cartulaire de Redon* (1863, xc-xciv).

### *Burials*

In contrast to the other categories of archaeological material, the evidence for Scandinavian burials in Brittany is not only unequivocal but also without parallel in the whole of France. In 1906, two amateur archaeologists, du Chatellier and le Pontois, excavated a partially eroded mound on a cliff edge near Locmaria on the Ile de Groix, 6km from the southern Breton coast. The mound overlooked a small, sandy bay, the only suitable landing spot in that part of the island, and was easily visible from a great distance. Upon excavation, the mound was found to cover an extensive cremation deposit, recognised as the burnt remains of a longship. From the excavators' reports and Müller-Wille's 1978 publication of the finds it is possible to build up a sequence of events on the site.

First, the ship was dragged up to the headland: a vessel between

11m and 13m long, possibly with a smaller ship's boat as in the Gokstad burial (800 rivets survive but more than 1000 are mentioned; Müller-Wille 1978, 68 argues for a second boat on this basis). An area 17m in diameter was marked out by four vertical stone slabs and further slabs were arranged in a line leading off to the south-west (see plan, Fig. 24). These may have marked out the path by which the ship was brought up, or the route of a funeral procession. The mound seems to have been prepared before the ship was burnt judging by the condition of the turfs of which it was composed (du Chatellier and le Pontois 1908-9, 129).

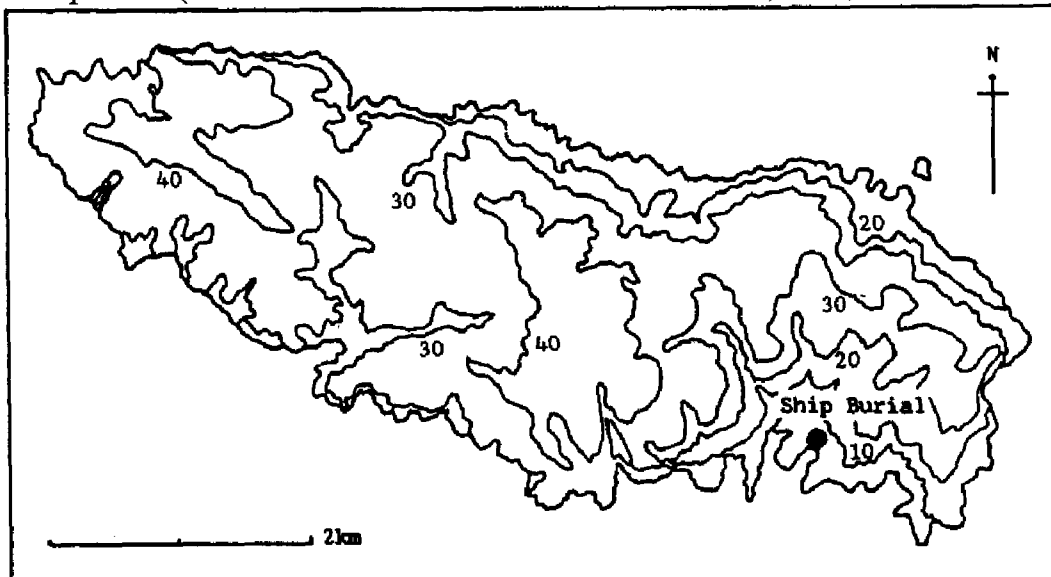
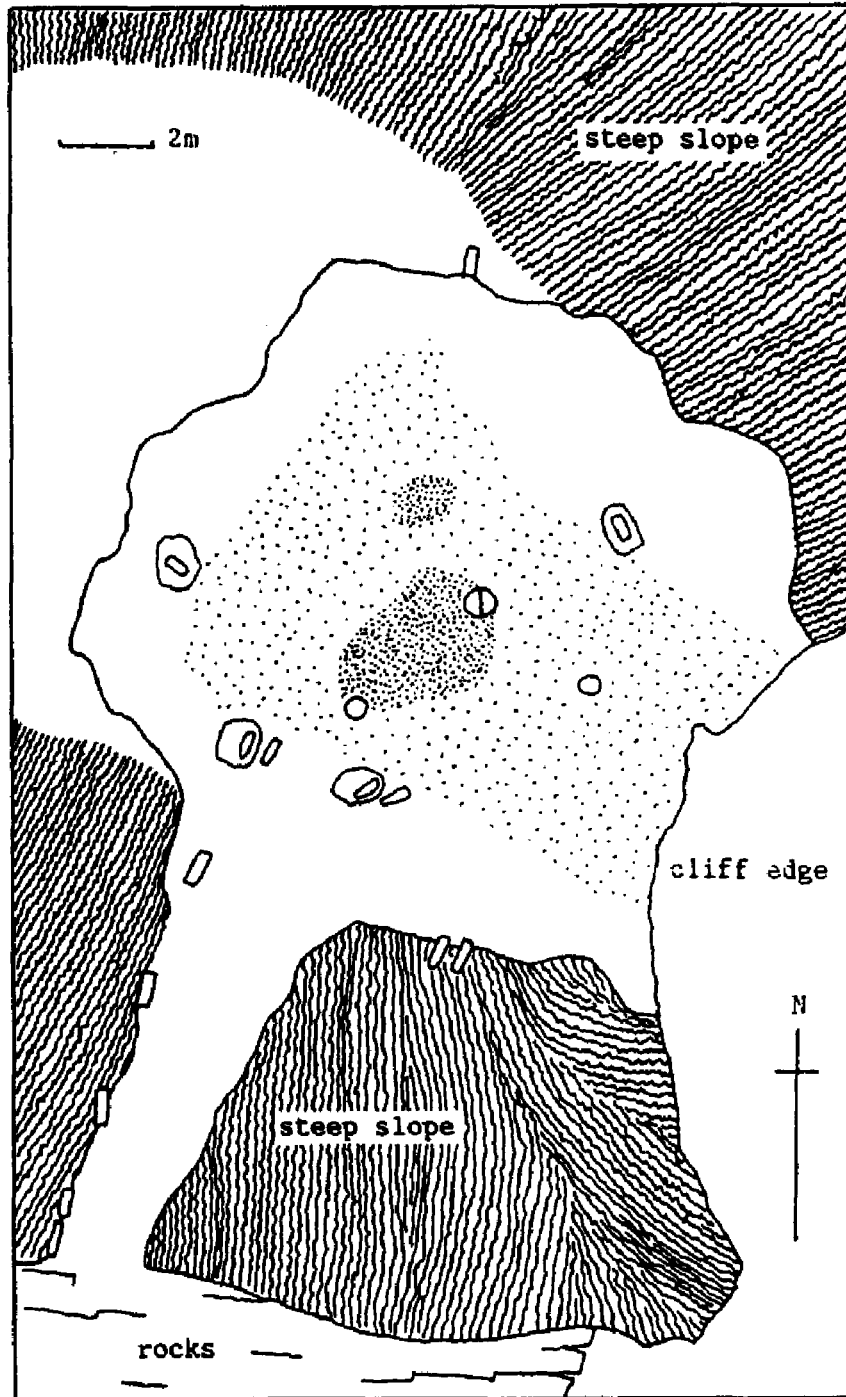


Fig. 23. The Ile de Groix, showing contours and location of the barrow (after Müller-Wille 1978).

The ship contained the remains of two people, one mature and one adolescent (possibly a weapon-bearer or slave, as at Balladoole and Ballateare on the Isle of Man, see Bersu and Wilson 1966), along with dogs and birds. Among the objects found in the 15cm thick burnt deposit, more than 6m × 5m in area, were weapons, riding gear, jewellery, tools, vessels, gaming pieces and agricultural implements (for full descriptions of the objects see Müller-Wille 1978, 51-8; a list is given in Appendix 1 below). After being burnt, the ship was closed in the mound after the area outside the vertical stones had been carefully swept. The barrow was composed of shingle, clay and sand, and raised over 5m high and 20m in diameter.

As to the date of the burial, Müller-Wille suggests the second half of the tenth century on the basis of the Mammen style decoration on one of the swords, though he does allow a 'Spielraum' (Müller-Wille 1978, 68). However, much of the material dates to the late ninth/early tenth century; sufficient perhaps to give a more










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|  | limits of mound                     |  | concentrations of objects |
|  | standing stones                     |  | iron cauldron             |
|  | standing stones on horizontal slabs |  | bronze vessels            |
|  | burnt area                          |  |                           |

Fig. 24. Plan of the Ile de Groix ship burial (after du Chatellier and le Pontois 1908-9, scale added).

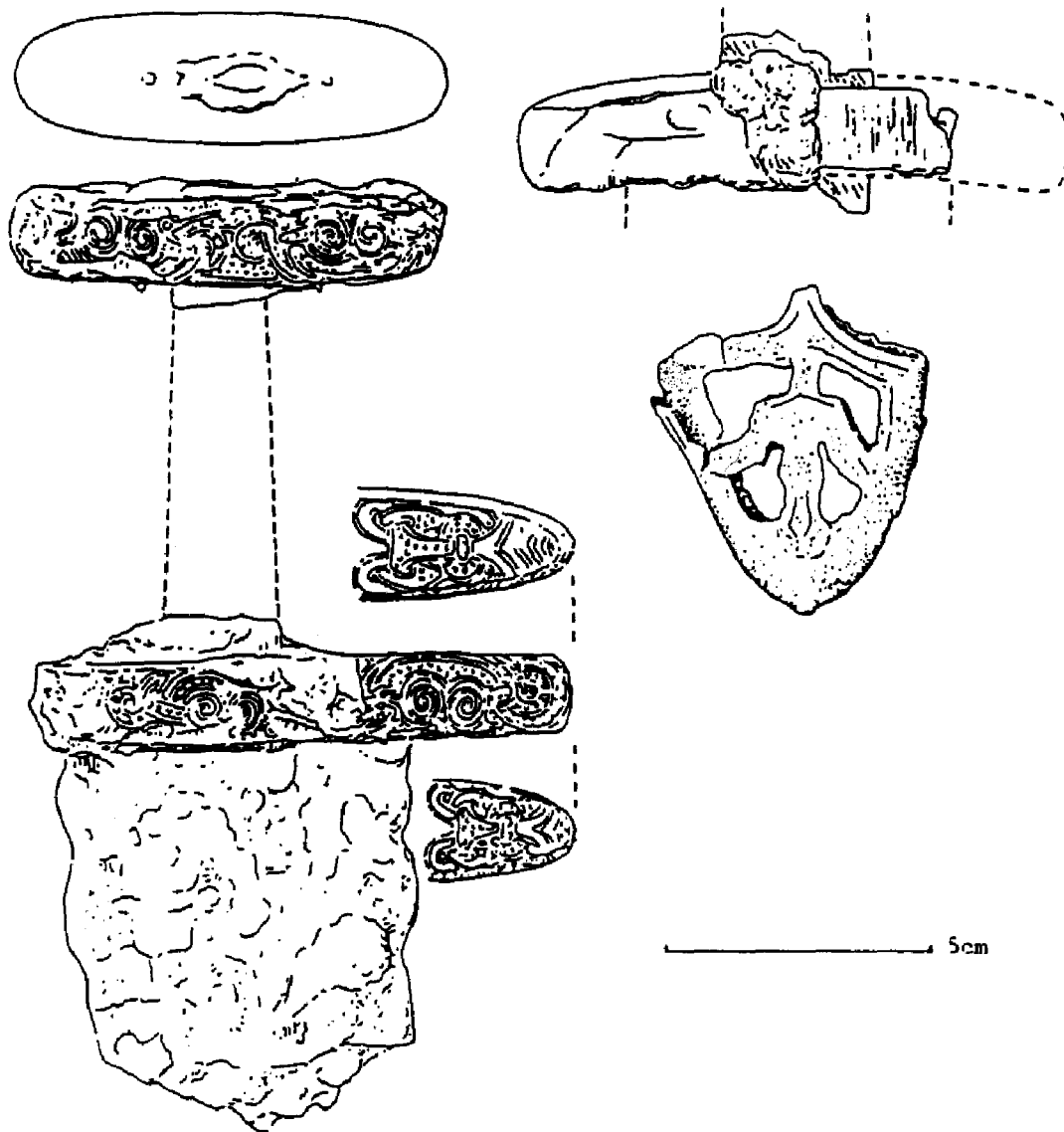


Fig. 25. The swords and scabbard chape from the Ile de Groix ship burial (P. A. Emery after Müller-Wille 1978).

general date for the cremation of 900-1000. (A detailed discussion of the dating is beyond the scope of this paper, but see the comprehensive listing of parallels with Arbman and Nilsson 1966-8, 184-92 in Müller-Wille 1978, 58-70. A date of *c.* 900 is favoured by Brøndsted 1965, 83 and Breese 1977, 48.7) Overall, the burial has a Norwegian cultural background in a rather older tradition (see Fell 1980), but the artefact assemblages indicate links with France and perhaps also Ireland (Müller-Wille 1978, 68-9; Arbman and Nilsson 1966-8, 192). In general, its closest parallel is to mounds one and three at Myklebost in Norway; its Norwegian affinities have been supported by Musset (1965, 124).

Is the Groix tomb that of a later sea raider, well after the period of occupation in the early tenth century (Sawyer 1982a, 98), or is

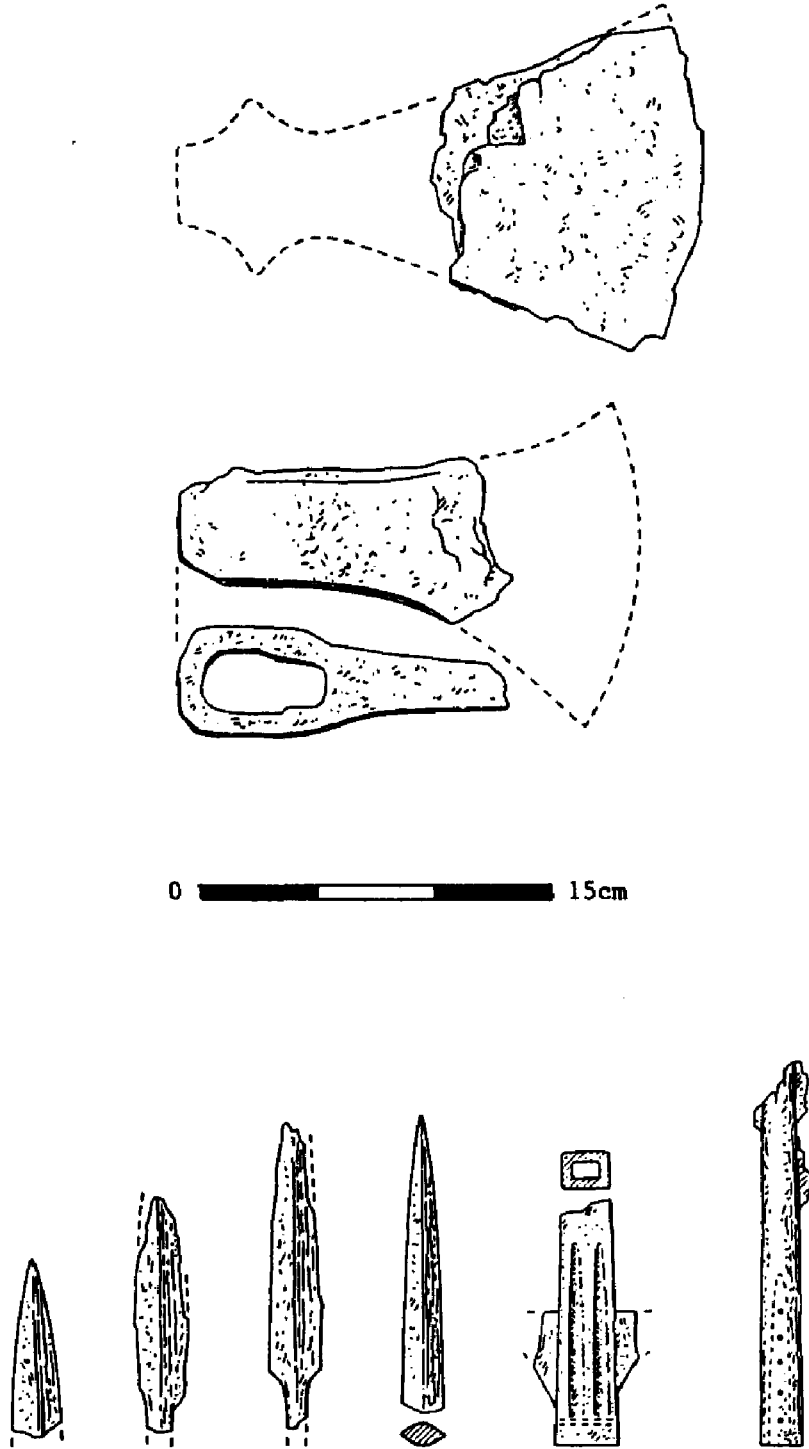
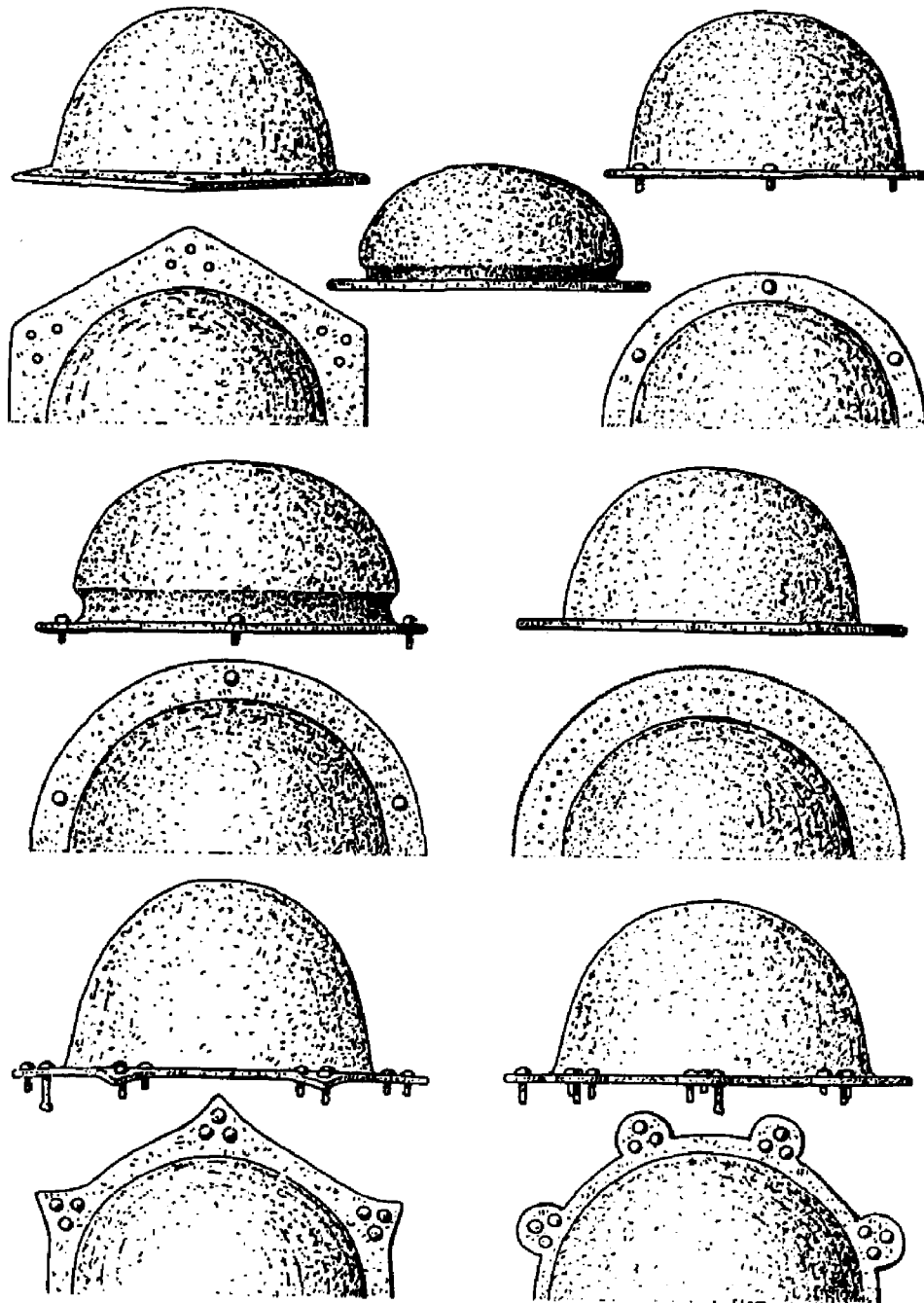


Fig. 26. Axes, arrowheads and lanceheads from the Ile de Groix ship burial (from Müller-Wille 1978; reprinted by kind permission).



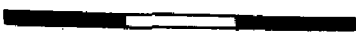
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Fig. 27. A selection of shield bosses from the Ile de Groix ship burial (from Müller-Wille 1978; reprinted by kind permission).



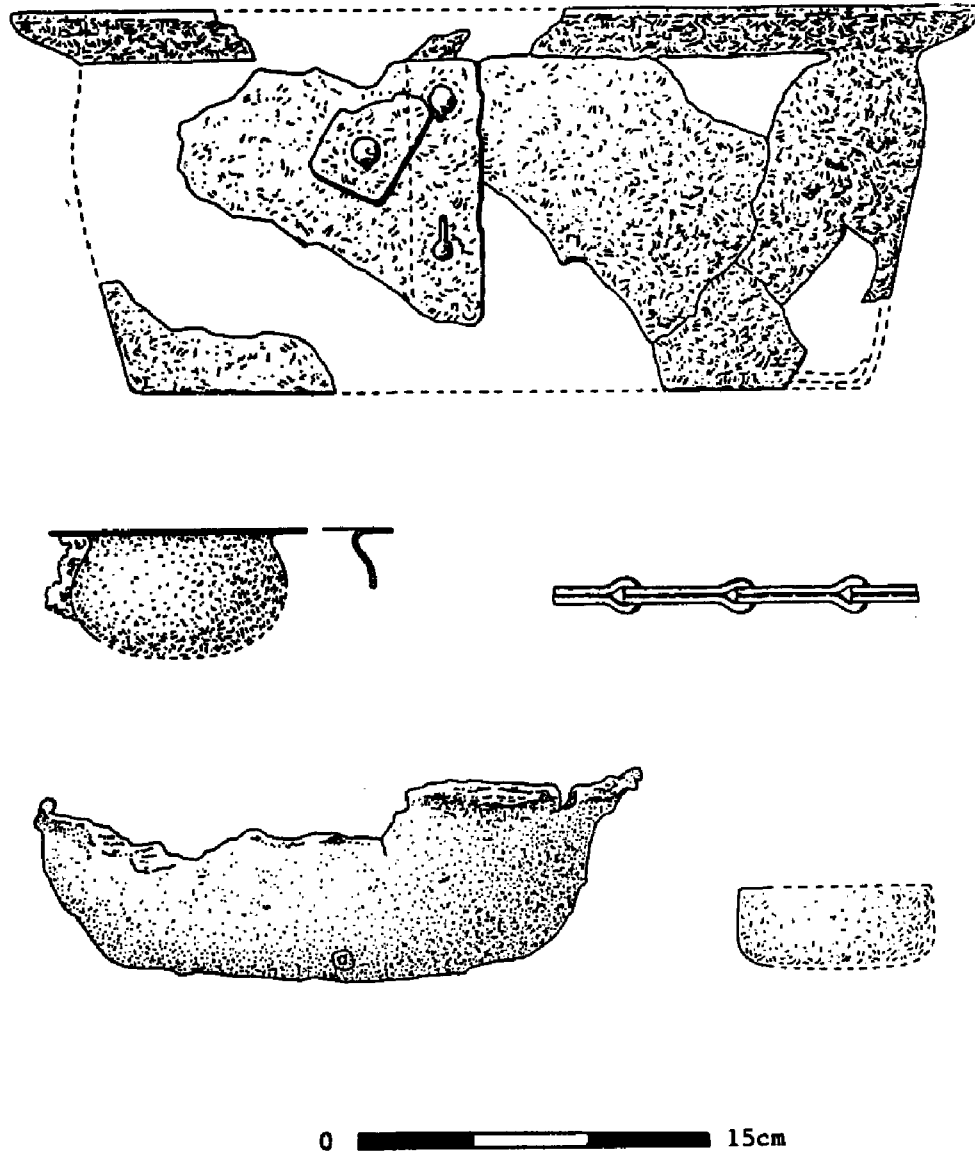


Fig. 28. Iron cauldron, bronze vessels and chain from the Ile de Groix ship burial (from Müller-Wille 1978; reprinted by kind permission).

it contemporary with the 919-937 invasion? There is no way to obtain a definite solution, but I would argue for contemporaneity for several reasons. Firstly, the Norwegian background, especially its militantly old-fashioned paganism, seems to fit well with the picture of the invaders as anachronistic Viking warriors at the time of settlement and conversion elsewhere as discussed in chapter 2. Secondly, the parallels with the Westfold ship burials are particularly striking given the probable origin of Rognvaldr and his followers; and finally the burial ritual seems far too elaborate to be the work of peripatetic sea raiders. The Groix burial is totally isolated in Europe; it is the only known Viking cremation outside Scandinavia (Foote and Wilson 1970, 407), with the possible exception of Ingleby. It is tempting to suggest that a burial of such

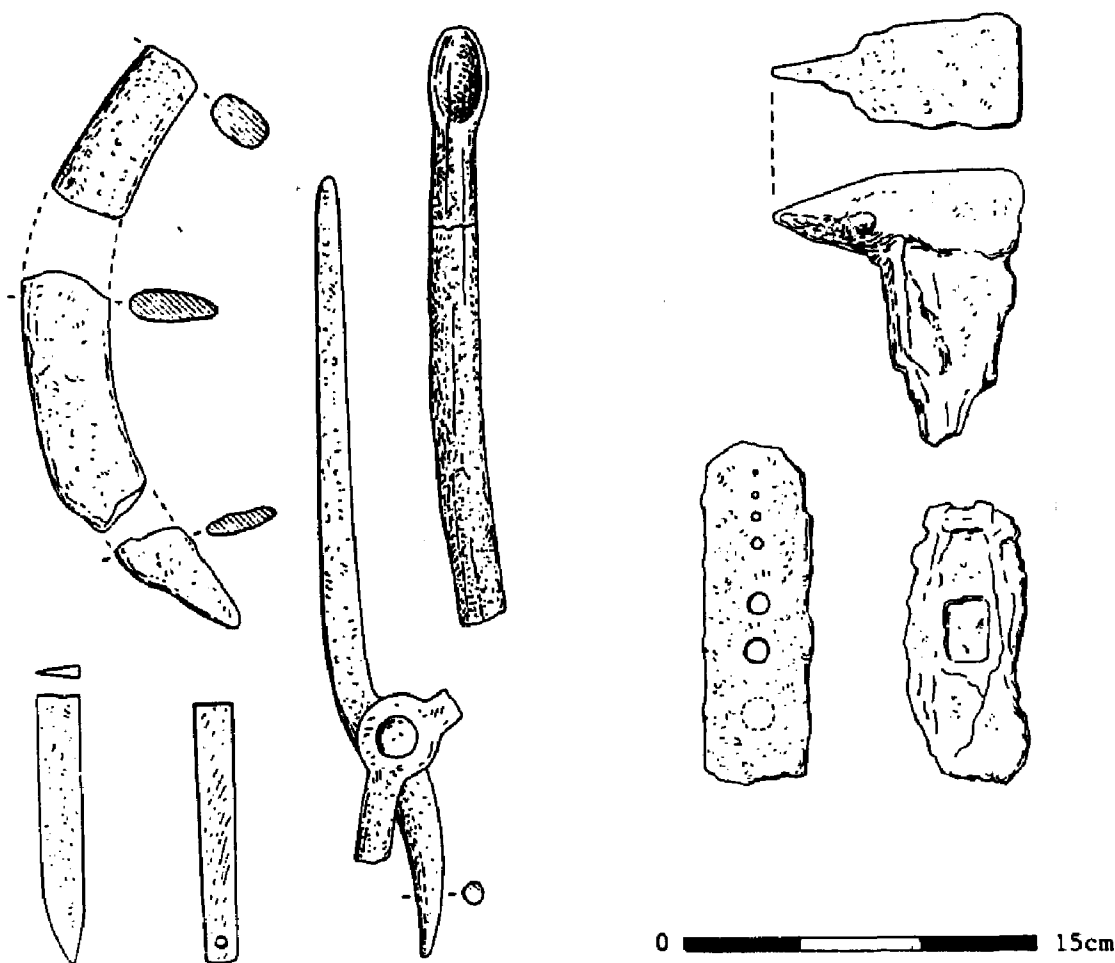


Fig. 29. Tools from the Ile de Groix ship burial (from Müller-Wille 1978; reprinted by kind permission).

magnificence could only have been for a chieftain of pre-eminent status. Is it possible that Groix was the last resting place of one of the Nantes leaders mentioned by Flodoard? Possible, but unfortunately not provable. One last point that could link the burial to the Nantes Vikings is Arbman and Nilsson's suggestion (1966-8, 191) that the unusual star-shaped shield bosses, with no known parallels, are in fact products of the Loire. It would certainly be natural for a mobile fighting force to maintain and manufacture its own weapons, and perhaps even unavoidable for the isolated Scandinavians in Brittany. Once again, this must remain hypothesis until further evidence is uncovered.

Two of the objects deserve special mention. The burial provided the only known example of a stern ornament from a Viking ship (several prow vanes have survived): a 60cm diameter circular band of metal with leaves and movable rings around its edge, probably a 'dragon's tail' like that depicted on a runestone from Smiss, Stenkyrka, on Gotland (see Arbman 1961, 82-4, pl. 21). The other unusual artefact was regarded as an object of unknown function



Fig. 30. Jewellery, fittings, belt equipment, gaming pieces and a clench nail from the Ile de Groix ship burial (from Müller-Wille 1978; reprinted by kind permission).

by the original excavators, but identified as a bent lancehead by Müller-Wille (1978, 53) and Arberman and Nilsson (1966-8, 188-9). Wilson has recently cited a parallel on the Bayeux Tapestry, where a man standing in the water next to a ship is depicted holding a curved rod (1985, 175). It is most likely however, that what the tapestry shows is a type of angled chisel used for working grooves on ship timbers (illustrated in McGrail 1980, 53).

### *Weapons*

The only other specifically Scandinavian objects from Brittany are weapons, found by chance. Two swords have been discovered

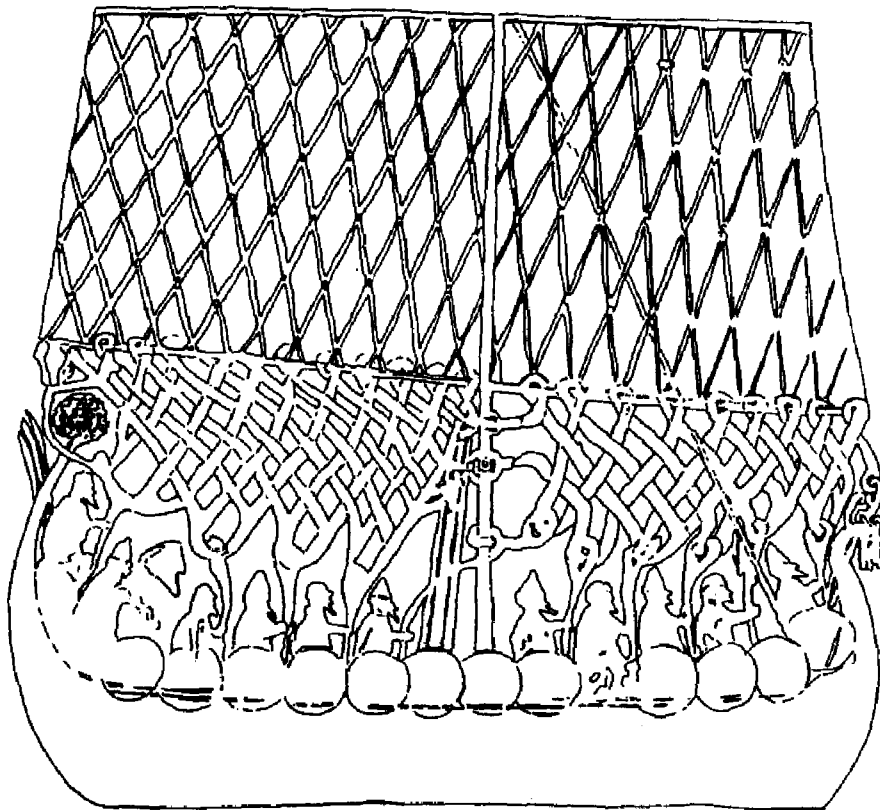
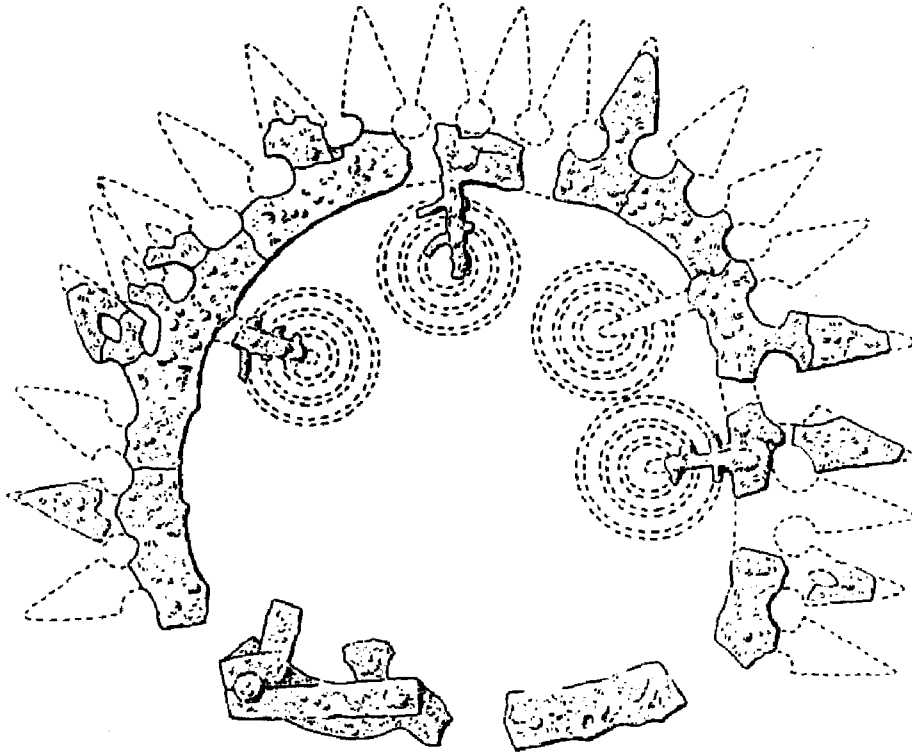


Fig. 31. The stern ornament from the Ile de Groix ship (above), diameter 60cm (from Müller-Wille 1978) and (below) the ship depicted on the stone from Smiss, Stenkyrka, on Gotland (P. A. Emery after photo in Arbman 1961).

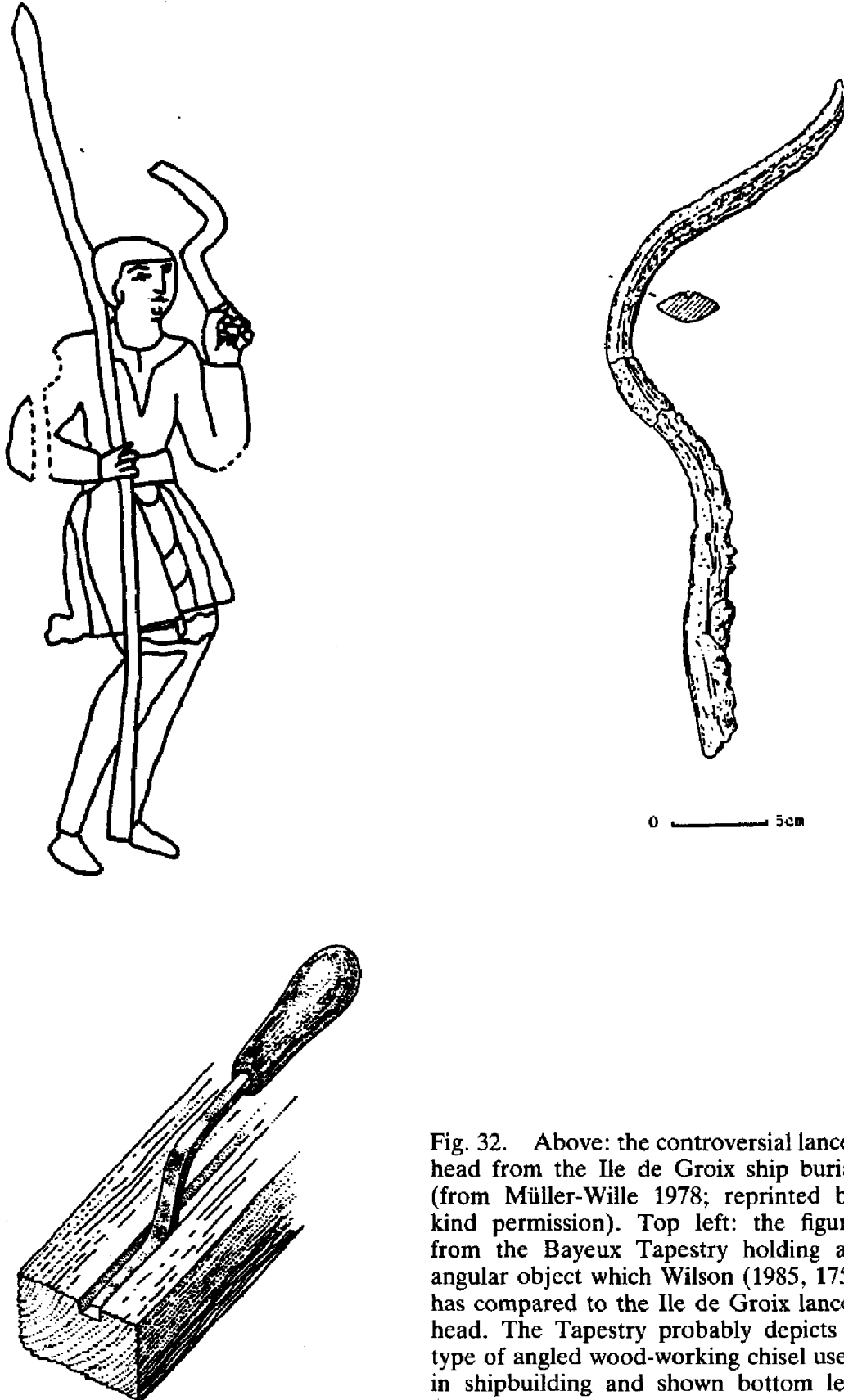


Fig. 32. Above: the controversial lance-head from the Ile de Groix ship burial (from Müller-Wille 1978; reprinted by kind permission). Top left: the figure from the Bayeux Tapestry holding an angular object which Wilson (1985, 175) has compared to the Ile de Groix lance-head. The Tapestry probably depicts a type of angled wood-working chisel used in shipbuilding and shown bottom left (from McGrail 1980).

on the Ile de Bièce where Godfred's Danes were besieged by Sidroc's fleet in alliance with Erispoe in 854, two more of type H have been found in the Sens and at the confluence of the Loire and Chezine, and another type H sword was reported from Nantes in the nineteenth century (all these weapons are described by Arbman and Nilsson 1966-8, 166-71). Considering the amount of Viking activity around the Loire, so few finds are surprising, but it is likely that many of the Frankish weapons that have been discovered were in fact used by Scandinavians (Arbman and Nilsson 1966-8, 192).

### *Monasteries, rural settlements and commerce*

Despite the dearth of recognisably Scandinavian finds in Brittany, the archaeological reflection of the Breton reaction to the raids is also of value. Of particular interest are the results of excavations at ecclesiastical centres. At Landévennec work has revealed the reconstruction of the church after it was destroyed by the Vikings in 913, including a superb tile floor, *c.* 950 on archaeomagnetic dating (Bardel, Barral i Altet and Caziot 1984, 81-2). Wooden remains from the late ninth-century church have been located below the burnt levels of the Scandinavian attack, as have re-used pieces of worked stone from the church built into the later tenth-century structure. Carolingian coins of the early tenth century have also been found (for the latest reports see Bardel 1985-7). Viking destruction debris has been excavated at Saint-Malo (Langouet 1976 and 1979) and at the monastery on the Ile Lavret, attacked in 884, along with finds of Carolingian pottery and jewellery (Giot 1983-5; 1987).

Several more monasteries and churches occupied at the time of the Scandinavian raids have been located, such as the crypt and relics found at Lanmeur along with gold pendants datable to the early tenth century (Guigon 1986). The Breton clergy favoured isolated hermitages as well as churches, following the example of Saint Samson. Some were attacked by the Vikings, including Locoal (*CR* 326); this site has not been excavated but it probably followed the Irish model as found elsewhere in Brittany, at Saint-Hervé-en-Lanrivoaré (Cleac'h and Letissier 1976) and Saint-Saturnin-en-Plomeur, where several oratories have been recorded (Giot 1975 and 1976; Giot and Monnier 1978). A contemporary cemetery with ninth-century burials at Salle des Fêtes, Corseul has

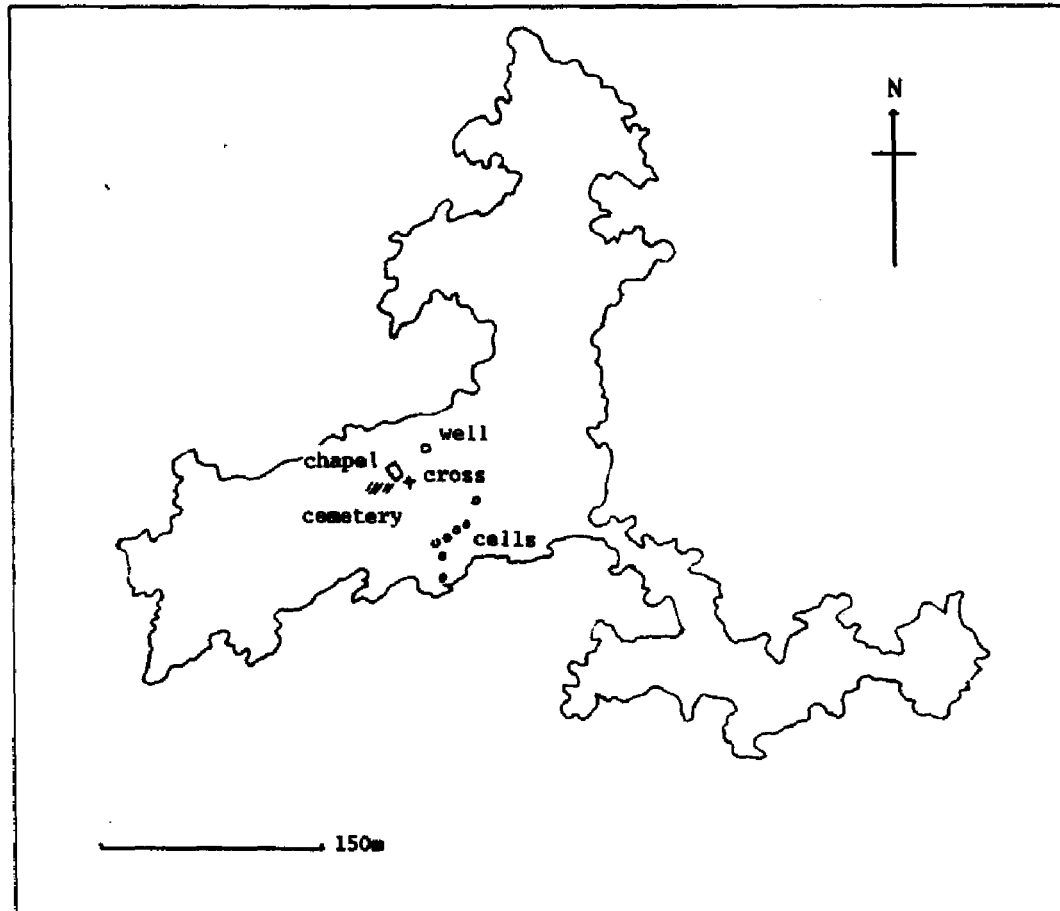


Fig. 33. The excavated remains of the monastery on the Ile Lavret raided by the Vikings in 884 (after Privat 1971).

also been excavated (Fichet de Clairfontaine 1986); the Breton cemetery evidence is reviewed by Guigon, Bardel and Batt (1987). Several coin hoards have been found as well, which may indicate attempts to hide wealth from Viking attack; notable examples are the hoard of *c.* 920-923 excavated at the church of Saint-Melaine at Rennes (Chédeville and Guillotel 1984, 384) and the Priziac hoard of more than 2000 coins (Davies 1988, 56).

Little is known about the rural settlements of this period, but they may have been similar to the eleventh-century village uncovered at Lann-Gouh Melrand, with its cluster of rectangular stone houses (André 1982; compare with Meirion-Jones 1982, chapter 8). The study of rural life in Brittany and its landscape context will be considerably advanced with the publication of the Oust-Vilaine watershed surveys that have been carried out by Astill and Davies since 1982 (see their 1982 and 1985 reports).

The nature of Breton commerce has been briefly referred to in chapter 2 but the archaeological evidence can add a little to the picture. The pottery industry appears to have been quite advanced,

with distinctive forms produced at Meudon, near Vannes (André, Barrère, Batt and Clément 1984 and Triste 1985-7) and Trans (Hodges 1981b, 74-5), examples of which have been found at Pledeliac, dated 920-980 (Henry 1983, 313). A possible additional kiln has been identified at Guipel (Lanos 1983). It is not possible to say at present whether these industries were maintained during the Scandinavian occupation, but no pottery has been found in definite association with Viking artefacts at the Camp de Péran. Full ceramic chronologies have not yet been developed for this period (see Hodges 1981b, 74-5) which would enable a definite statement to be made. As to other industries, the presence of quern quarries in eastern Brittany has been suggested (Hodges 1982, 124), and some local production of linen smoothers is likely, as the examples from Treguennec show (see Hodges 1982, 122 and Haevernick 1963, 130-8).

Before turning to the Norman material, which may be used to fill gaps in the archaeology of Brittany, the Breton evidence should be briefly reviewed. The finds at the Camp de Péran would seem to support the argument made in chapter 2 for Scandinavian occupation outside the Nantes area, and together with the Trans excavations serve to confirm aspects of the historical record of Alain Barbetorte's return. The scattered pattern of fortifications throughout the Breton countryside emphasises the preoccupation with local defence rather than organised resistance, and it is not hard to see how such a system would collapse under pressure from a large military force. Finds of Scandinavian weapons also corroborate the documentary sources, as do the destruction levels at the monasteries. The Ile de Groix burial remains slightly problematic due to its ambiguous date, but it does not contradict the ideas set out in chapter 2 and can considerably support them if it is interpreted as a territorial statement, like the Manx examples. Only the commercial evidence remains a serious problem; while the Vikings do not seem to have had recognisable mercantile interests in Brittany, much more work is required before we can be sure.

### *Normandy*

Given Normandy's origins of Viking settlement it is not surprising that the region has produced more Scandinavian artefacts than Brittany; what is remarkable is the relative lack of material



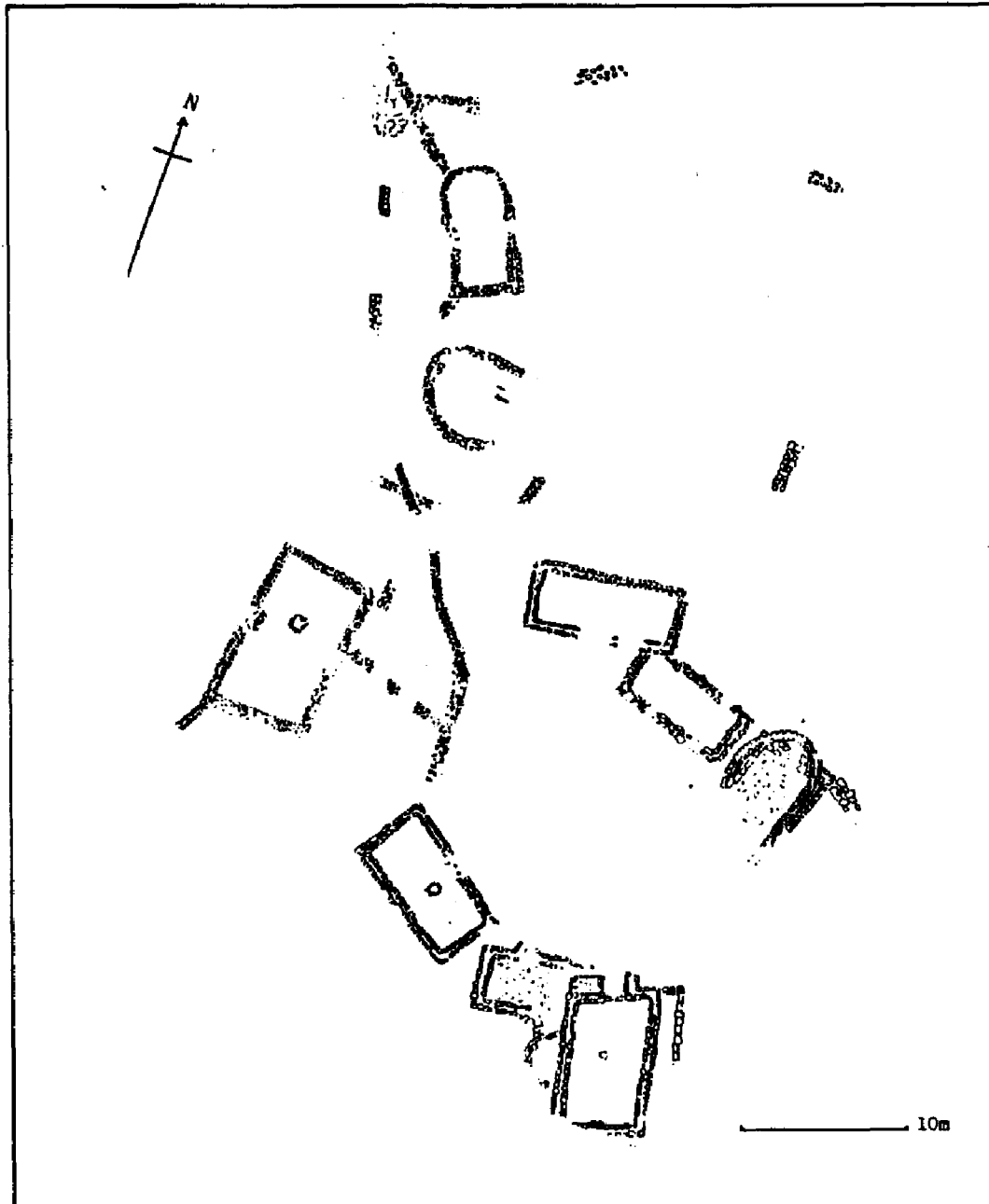


Fig. 34. Part of the eleventh-century Breton village at Lann-Gouh Melrand (after Mauny in André 1982).

compared to areas like the Danelaw. As in Brittany, the most impressive remains are fortifications. At La Hague, at the tip of the Cherbourg peninsula, a great dyke encloses more than five square miles of land including two deep-water bays and the only natural harbour on this stretch of coast. Originally thought to date to 900-800 B.C., the earthwork has been shown by excavation to be a two-phase construction, with the prehistoric ramparts being refortified in the ninth or tenth century (de Boüard 1964b). It seems likely that the defences were elaborated to protect the natural landing stage and that the dyke was of Viking construction

(the name La Hague is of Scandinavian origin, one of only three *pagi* names to change to a Norse word; see Fellows-Jensen 1988, 119-20). The Scandinavians may have needed protection against Breton raids (the Cotentin had been ceded to Brittany in the mid-ninth century) and it is possible that during the early years of the 919-937 occupation the La Hague occupants were allied to the Breton Vikings; it is certainly recorded that the Scandinavians of this area were hostile to the Seine Vikings. Local tradition tells of a Viking called Moeren operating from La Hague around 960, folklore which may contain some truth (see de Boüard 1953 and Arbman's 1953 excavation report). Gillian Fellows-Jensen has suggested that the name may indicate a man from Mæren in Norway (pers. comm.), an interesting possibility considering that the name as we have it is almost certainly corrupt. Scandinavian burials are reported to have been found in the vicinity of the dyke (Bates 1982, 19).

A female Scandinavian grave has been excavated at Pîtres, with grave goods of pottery and two type P41 oval brooches. Their late ninth-century date implies that the woman was a camp follower of the Great Army on its rampages around Rouen (the find is published by Elmquist 1966-8, who discusses the dating and parallels 209-23). The most enigmatic burials in Normandy may not be Scandinavian at all; at Réville, on the Cotentin coast, slab-constructed graves of several types were exposed by shifting sand in the early 1960s. Hasty excavation recorded stone settings in the shape of ship outlines, low cairns and rectangular lintel graves. The cairns contained decomposed vegetal matter and cremated bone, while the ship settings, 3.65m to 2.15m at the beam, preserved a few crumbling bone fragments covered by peat and flint. The lintels contained skeletons with carefully placed stone slabs covering them, with a crude quartz-tempered pot in one grave. All the graves were at the same level, the rectangular lintels oriented E/W or NW/SE and the ships broadly E/W. No dating processes have been applied to the bones, so all dating must rely on the typology of the only artefact, the pot. This has close parallels with the vessels found in graves 24 and 151 at Birka (Arbman 1940-43, 9, 66; see Fig. 36), and de Boüard argues for a parallel with a pot from Jarlshof (1964a; Hamilton 1956, 82 number 2); the Jarlshof example does not seem sufficiently close but the Réville pot shows definite affinities with the Slav-inspired flat-bottomed vessels of Sjælland and Øresund, as found at Trelleborg (Helen Clarke, pers. comm.; the pottery is illustrated by Roesdahl 1982, 122-3).

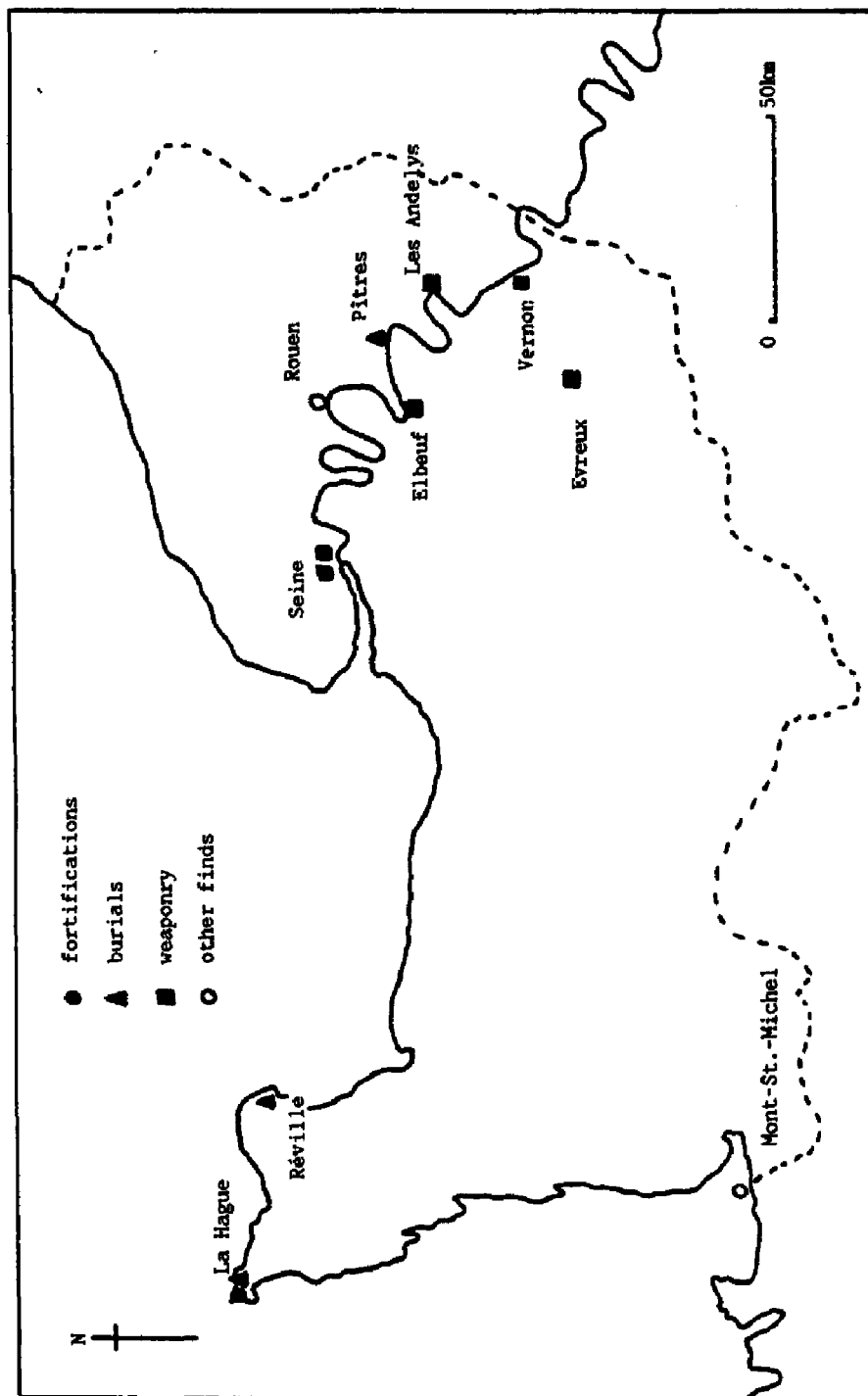
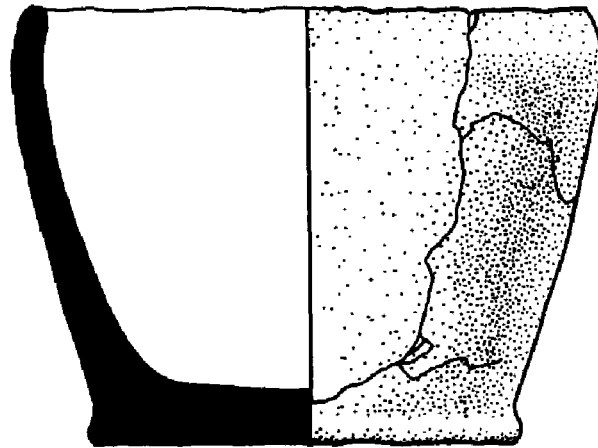


Fig. 35. Scandinavian sites and finds in Normandy.

While the burials seem initially like Scandinavian ship settings (as found at Lindholm Høje) superimposed on Frankish lintel graves, the lack of inter-cutting features and the pseudo-Scandinavian pot in a lintel grave make the hypothesis tenuous; in addition, we have insufficient knowledge of prehistoric burial types in this area to rule out an earlier date. The Réville graves must remain problematic until either the bones are dated or further comparative work is done.



5cm

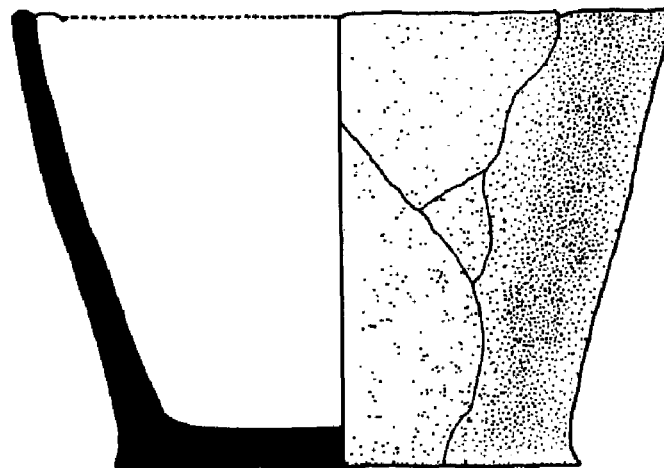


Fig. 36. Pots from Birka graves 24 (below) and 151 (above), comparable to the vessel from the Réville burial (P. A. Emery after Arbman 1940-43).

Scandinavian place-names can provide much information as to the settlement patterns in early Normandy, but only the data

relating to Brittany will be discussed here (for place-name studies in general, see the references in the second section of this chapter above). Fellows-Jensen (1988, 115-16) has noted that the *Bretteville* names on the Normandy coast may signify ninth-century settlement of Bretons as a deliberate policy of the Frankish kings to provide a buffer against Viking attack, but could equally relate to Bretons who came with the Scandinavian settlers in the tenth century. In Bessin and Maine, the lack of Scandinavian place-names may indicate that the cession of 924 recorded by Flodoard may have failed as a colony and was exposed to more limited Scandinavian influence (Fellows-Jensen 1988, 115). This latter point could well affect our perception of Rognvaldr's career during his campaigns with Hrólfr's army after the 919 occupation of Brittany, as discussed in chapter 2 at the end of the 4th section (but see Bates 1982, 9-10).

Turning to the finds of Scandinavian weaponry discovered accidentally over the years, we find a picture similar to that in Brittany. Many weapons must have been lost during the Viking raids of the ninth century and the Norman power struggles of the tenth; Neustria saw the most concentrated fighting of the entire Viking Age in France (see Werner 1985). Swords have been found at Vernon and Elbeuf, and a type G axe has been dredged from the Seine at les Andelys. The Seine has also produced swords of types M and Y. The only other Scandinavian weapon known from Normandy is a type H lance-head found at Evreux (see Arbman and Nilsson 1966-8, 163-75 for descriptions of all these weapons). In addition a horse bit of a type found in Scandinavian tenth-century graves was discovered in the vicinity of Rouen (Arbman 1961, 201).

Normandy has also produced two major coin hoards. In 1963, the largest hoard ever found in France was uncovered within the *castrum* area at Fécamp, dated 970-990 and containing 4400 pieces (see de Boüard 1963; Yver 1969, 341). However, from the Breton viewpoint the most important hoard is that found at Mont-Saint-Michel (Dolley and Yvon 1971). Among its contents was a coin bearing in corrupt form the legend VVILEIM DU(X?) BRI. Does this mean that William Longsword was issuing coins as Duke of the Bretons? If so, the substance of Dudo of Saint-Quentin's claims for Norman rule in Brittany may not be complete fiction (Bates 1982, 9; Dolley and Yvon 1971, 7-11).

By studying the late Neustrian and early Norman settlements we may find a reflection of a similar pattern in Brittany where the

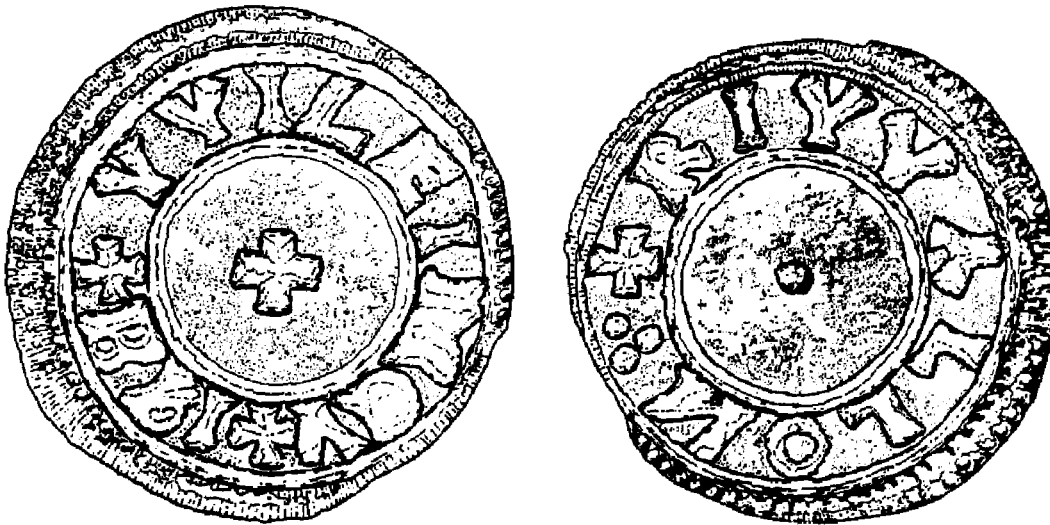


Fig. 37 Coin of William Longsword (reigned c. 925-942) found in the Mont-Saint-Michel hoard. Legend reads: Obverse: + VVILEIM D(reversed)VX (or +) IRB(reversed) for VVILEIM DUX BRI(TONUM) Reverse: + RIVVALLON (probably the name of the moneyer). Diameter 2 cm (P. A. Emery after photo by Pilet-Lemière).

archaeology is lacking. For fortified residences, le Maho (1980) has published several studies of early earthworks at Saint-Lô, Radicatel, Beaubec-la-Rosière and Quettehon along with his work on earlier timber structures in Normandy (Halbout and le Maho 1984). The excavations at Mirville show the range of buildings constructed in the eleventh century, with a complex of longhouse, stables and outbuildings which has remarkable pictorial parallels on the Bayeux Tapestry (Halbout and le Maho 1984, 57-61). These may be applied to slightly earlier settlements in eastern Brittany. More relevant still are the late ninth-century houses found at Saint-Martin de Mondeville, with finds of pottery, jewellery and carved memorial stones (Lorren 1985), and the Carolingian domestic buildings at Les Rues-des-Vignes and Brebières (Florin 1985). A complete landscape study has been carried out at Plessis Grimoult, with a survey of all known place-names, settlements, parish records and archaeology in the region of a fortified enclosure which was then excavated to reveal the internal structures (see Zadora-Rio 1974 for the full report).

Turning to higher-status sites, a massive contrast with the Breton material is seen. Annie Renoux's long-running excavations at Fécamp have produced an occupation sequence at the château site dating back to the eighth century. An eighth- to ninth-century monastery with two successive chapels developed into a luxury residence in the late ninth century with finds of fine-quality metalwork, coins and pottery (see Renoux 1987, 15-20). By the early

tenth century the structures had been abandoned and the land converted to agricultural use by a small farming community. Very little effect of the Viking raids is apparent, an observation echoed on many other sites (Renoux 1987, 14). Between 927 and 932 William Longsword built his first residence at Fécamp, a modest building but well-placed for access to water and trade routes. From then on the site was developed with more elaborate ducal palaces and a castle, ultimately becoming a fortified abbey in the thirteenth century (see Renoux 1975; 1979; 1985; and 1987 for full reports). Similar residences that might have been expected in Brittany have not appeared; even considering the limited nature of Breton medieval archaeology to date, the contrast seems to reinforce the conclusions of chapter 2 about the tendency to isolationism in the area.

Finally, we must seek a parallel for the Viking capital at Nantes. Almost nothing is known about the city in the early medieval period (the archaeology is reviewed by Barral i Altet 1984, and see Verhulst 1985, 336), but a rough comparison may be made with Tours. Both cities contained similar numbers of churches, suffered equally at Viking hands and experienced much the same expansionist boom after the removal of the Scandinavian threat (Galinié 1978; see Audin 1987 for the Touraine region). However, Galinié's excavations in Tours have demonstrated that the dislocation in occupation was not nearly as great as might have been expected from the documentary sources. At Saint-Martin's, for example, despite the recorded removal of relics in 853, the community obviously continued to function (Galinié 1978, 44). Part of the reason may be the sheer difficulty involved in evacuation; for a farming community such a move would mean economic suicide. Perhaps the total invasion of Brittany provided an exception to this, unforeseen circumstances which really did result in devastation. While the picture of Brittany laid waste is not significantly altered, in the light of Galinié's work we must have reservations about the actual conditions in early tenth-century Nantes until more excavations have been completed.

#### *Frankish finds in Scandinavia*

Turning lastly to Frankish artefacts found in Scandinavia, we see that the ninth-century raiding is certainly reflected in Carolingian loot (though not so much in hoarded coinage; see Musset

1954a, 33 for his theory that the Danegeld payments were melted down). A full discussion is obviously beyond the range of this paper, but if we take Birka and Hedeby as representative of the grave goods material, fibulae and mounts of Carolingian workmanship have been found in many burials (the finest are graves 507, 526, 550 and 649 at Birka and 269 at Hedeby; for full lists of Carolingian material in Scandinavian graves see Arbmänn 1937; Callmer 1977, 12–32, 230; Wamers 1985; the earlier Merovingian evidence is discussed in Bendixen 1974). Even allowing for the presence of some Frankish merchants in Scandinavia, the amount of Carolingian wealth that was taken back to the Viking homelands was obviously considerable.

As to future archaeological strategy in Brittany, a problem-orientation approach would clearly serve best for extending our understanding of the Viking occupation. While most excavation obviously relies primarily on opportunity and finance, investigation of more rural settlements and monasteries needs to be carried out to examine the effects of dislocation resulting from the occupation.<sup>8</sup> An extensive open-area excavation in a large fortress would surely illuminate the nature of the Scandinavian presence itself, with the Camp de Péran being ideally suited for a research programme. Above all, excavations are needed in Nantes, the heart of Scandinavian Brittany, as it is in this city that the answers to our questions lie.

#### 4. CONCLUSION: BRITTANY IN THE VIKING WORLD

In the two preceding chapters the historical and archaeological evidence for the Scandinavians in early medieval Brittany has been assessed against the general background of western European politics. It has become apparent that after the raiding of the ninth century Brittany underwent a profound change from the Scandinavian viewpoint, a familiar pattern echoed elsewhere and similarly reflected in the excavated material. In order to understand this more fully, in addition to reviewing the Bretons' changing relationships with the Carolingians and Anglo-Saxons, we must compare the history of Scandinavian contact with Brittany with that in the other Scandinavian settlements and areas of operations in the west. Such a comparison is particularly valuable for assessing