

**Civitas
Mediomatricorum:
Settlement and Social
Organisation in the
Merovingian Region of
Metz, c. 450-c. 750.**

2 Volumes (Vol. 1: Text).

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Declaration.

A brief discussion of some of the preliminary findings of this thesis (those contained in chapters 10 and 11) appeared in French in *Bulletin de Liaison de l'Association Française d'Archéologie Mérovingienne*, 12, 1988, pp.50-52 (Halsall 1988).

Civitas Mediomatricorum. Settlement and Social Organisation in the Merovingian Region of Metz: Abstract.

This thesis is an attempt to write a social history of the region around Metz (now chef-lieu of the modern département of Moselle, France) between the end of the Roman empire and the usurpation of the Carolingians in the mid-eighth century.

Part 1 of the thesis will describe the kinds of evidence upon which the thesis is based and the problems involved in their use. It will then move on to a critique of past work on the subjects encompassed by this thesis and to theoretical discussions of some central key concepts; social organisation, urbanism and settlement hierarchy.

Part 2, 'Settlement', opens with an analysis of the varying forms of evidence for the rural settlement network and examines the problems of how and why this changed between the mid-fourth century and the end of the eighth century. There follows a discussion of 'intermediate-order' settlements; the villages of the Roman period. The fate of these settlements is discussed, and the reasons for this, and a brief account is given of the rise of new forms of 'middle-order' settlement in the Merovingian period in the form of palaces and monasteries. The focus of the *civitas*, Metz itself, is the subject of three chapters dealing, in turn, with the decline of the late Roman town, with the hiatus of the fifth and early sixth centuries when the settlement appears to have stagnated, and with the resurgence of Metz in the late sixth and seventh centuries and its character under the later Merovingians.

Part 3 addresses the problems of 'social organisation', beginning with an account of the documentary evidence for this and what it can say about 'vertical' (social ranks and classes, and ties of lordship), 'horizontal' (gender and age differences) and 'diagonal' (fictive kinship systems) links and barriers which go to make up the organisation of society. From there it proceeds to analyse the archaeological cemetery sites of the *civitas* of Metz (especially the site at Ennery, Moselle) to shed light on these problems. Models proposed from these sites are then tested on four selected cemeteries from beyond the *civitas* of Metz but within the general region.

Finally, in Part 4, the various strands of thought are tied together to form an explanation of the transition from Roman to Medieval society. Previous explanations of the mortuary data of the late fifth and sixth centuries are assessed and an alternative model is proposed, which takes account of both the archaeological evidence and the written data discussed in chapter 9. This lays great stress on social instability. The evidence from Metz and the rural settlement network is then discussed, and it is proposed that this too can be explained in terms of the model of social instability put forward from the other forms of data. The thesis concludes with a discussion of the major social changes which are shown to have occurred in the important decades around 600 AD, and which affected not only burial customs but also the rural settlement pattern and the nature of occupation in Metz itself.

Abbreviations.

Primary Sources.

- G. D. R. F.* *Gesta Dagoberti Regis Francorum*
Ep. Aust. *Epistolae Austrasicae.*
Gorze + No. Charter in the cartulary of Gorze abbey. Number refers to its number in Herbomez 1899.
Lex Ribv. *Lex Ribvaria.*
L. H. Gregory of Tours *Decem Libri Historiarum*
Lib. Ep. Mett. *Liber de Episcopis Mettensibus.* (chapter nos. refer to those inserted into the translation given in appendix 1. a).
Lib. virt. s. Mart. Gregory of Tours *Liber de virtutibus sancti Martini.*
Pertz, royal+ No. Royal charter in Pertz.
Pertz, mayoral + No. Mayoral charter in Pertz.
Pertz, spuria + No. Charter reckoned to be spurious and so included in section of *spuria* by Pertz.
Reg. Can. Chrodegang *Regula Canonorum*
S. L. C. Stational List of Churches.
St. M. + No. Charter in the cartulary of St. Mihiel abbey, number refers to its number in Lesort 1909-12.
Wiss. + No. Charter in the cartulary of Wissembourg abbey. Number refers to its number in Glöckner & Doll, 1979.
V. A. *Vita Arnulfi.*
V. R. A. H. *Vita Romarici Abbatis Habbandensis.*
V. S. E. *Vita Sancti Eligii.*
- ### Archaeological.
- C. J. + No.* Artefact catalogued in Clermont-Joly 1978.
D. A. H. L. Direction des Antiquités Historiques de Lorraine.
M. L. Musée Historique Lorrain, Nancy.
M. L. + No. An artefact in the collection of the Musée Historique Lorrain, Nancy. The inventory of these objects is not published and I am indebted to Mme. Claire Aptel, Conservateur of the Musée for giving me a copy of the museum's inventories. Numbers prefixed by a single capital letter (from M to Q) refer to an older catalogue of the museum's collection, arranged by display-cases (vitrines). Whilst some of these artefacts can be matched up to those in the more recent inventory of the collection (numbers prefixed with ML), some cannot, and so where this is the case, the two systems have been used.
M. M. Musées de Metz.
M. S. Musée du Pays de Sarrebourg, Sarrebourg.
M. T. Musée de la Tour aux Pucés, Thionville.
M. V. F. S. Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Saarbrücken.
S. K. S. Staatliches Konservatoramt Saarbrücken.
S. T. A simple trench grave.
S. L. A stone-lined grave (*caisson* or *cist*).

Periodicals etc.

- Actes... *Actes des X^e Journées Internationales d'Archéologie Mérovingienne. Metz 20-23 Octobre 1988. Sarreguemines, 1989.*
- Arch. Méd. *Archéologie Médiévale.*
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- J. V. E. M. *Jahrbuch des Vereins für Erdkunde zu Metz.*
- K. W. Z. G. K. *Korrespondenzblatt der Westdeutschen Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kunst.*
- LB *Linckenheld 1933.*
- LFS *Linckenheld 1932a.*
- LT *Linckenheld 1934.*
- LS *Linckenheld 1931.*
- M. A. M. *Mémoires de l'Académie Nationale de Metz.*
- M. G. H. *Monumenta Germaniæ Historica.*
- M. S. A. H. M. *Mémoires de la Société d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de la Moselle.*
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- N. A. R. *Norwegian Archæological Review.*
- R. A. E. *Revue Archéologique de l'Est et de Centre-Est.*
- REL *REL 1901-1903, vol. III (Ortsbeschreibung).*
- R. Q. H. *Revue des Questions Historiques.*
- WG *Wolfram & Gley 1931.*
- W. Z. *Westdeutsche Zeitschrift (Museographie).*

A note on references.

References to yearly reports of acquisitions of local museums (eg. 'Dons faits au musée' in *J.S.A.L.*), annual summaries of discoveries in the region, to procès verbaux of society meetings, the annual 'chroniques' in *Archéologie Médiévale* or 'informations archéologiques' in *Gallia* are given simply as the journal for the appropriate year followed by a page number. References to the *B.S.C.M.H.A.* in which the page number is preceded by (S.C.) refer to procès verbaux of the séances du comité, which frequently, if not always, have a separate pagination. Only separate articles on individual cemeteries, or small groups of cemeteries, are given as a Harvard-system reference.

A note on diagrams.

The diagrams accompanying the text have been bound together in a separate section, forming part of volume 2, rather than being positioned as near as possible to the relevant portion of text. This is because of the large number of diagrams, particularly accompanying chapter 11, which would make it very difficult to keep the diagrams close to the relevant text. It also results from the fact that frequent cross-reference to previous diagrams may well be necessary. To reduce the consequent 'flicking backwards and forwards' and to enable the reader to keep relevant diagrams in view in front of him or her, the diagrams have been removed to form a separate section, just before the bibliography.

Part 1. Introduction and Background.

Chapter 1. Introduction.

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1. Introduction.

This is an attempt to write a social history of one region of Gaul during the transformation from the Roman to the medieval era. It uses all the available forms of evidence from this region, not only the written records which its people left, or in which they appeared, but also the settlements in which they lived and, probably most importantly, the cemeteries in which they were buried. Edward James (1989, p.40) says of the latter:

'We may yet be able to write social history from the huge quantity of mortuary evidence; we have as yet hardly begun.'

It is to be hoped that this survey will contribute something to this beginning, but if it is true that the writing of social history from funerary evidence is in its infancy, then it is equally true that the production of such histories from settlement evidence, urban or, still more so, rural, is neo- or even pre-natal. The evaluation of the written sources from such an historical perspective cannot be said to be very much more advanced, having been hindered by a paucity of

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documents, when compared with later periods, by concentration on only a few areas and frequently by the lack of a clear theoretical starting-point.

In the past, as will be seen below in chapter 2, the written and excavated material has been merged in an uncritical fashion or not at all. This is true even of different branches of the same discipline. For example, models concerning the evolution of the early medieval world from its Roman foundations have been proposed from both the settlement evidence and from cemeteries, but when placed alongside each other they appear contradictory. Even the developments in the rural settlement network have not, in Gaul, been related to what we can say of the fate of towns. How can we square, for example, hypotheses about the creation of the medieval settlement pattern, which place an emphasis upon nucleation around important people (cp. for example, Percival 1976, ch. 8), with those explaining the cemetery data, which stress social instability and competition for community leadership (cp. Samson 1987a)? Further problems have emerged as a result of thematic studies treating the whole of Merovingian Gaul as a single entity, and the whole Merovingian 'period' as a uniform chronological division.

This study aims to deal with these problems. The different forms of evidence will each be evaluated separately and merged only at a higher level in the concluding chapter, such an approach taking account of all the particular problems involved in the study of each body of data (ch.2, section 2 outlines the methodology involved).

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The chronological problem has also been confronted. The period under study remains the comparatively long one from c.450 to c.750. This can be justified as being a period of transformation, from the mid-fifth century, which saw the final collapse of any pretence of Roman imperial authority in north-eastern Gaul, to the emergence of the new political order of the Carolingians in the mid-eighth. In the field of social organisation, the middle of the fifth century saw the breakdown of the late Roman social system, whilst the mid-eighth century was important in witnessing the final emergence of the feudal order from the social confusion of the sixth and earlier seventh centuries (cp. Ganshof 1964, ch.1). The date-brackets can also be justified in a regional sense, spanning the period between the Hunnish sack of Metz in 451, an event of major importance (ch.7, section 2), and the elevation of the Bishop of Metz, Chrodegang, to archiepiscopal dignity in the 750s. Even so, within this 300-year time-span, chronological changes have become apparent, particularly those around 600 AD, but also more subtle ones, for example in contemporary settlement-terminology. Consequently, full account has been taken of the date of documentary and archaeological evidence, and, most of all, sixth-century data have generally been treated separately from seventh-century.

The study concentrates on the Merovingian *civitas* of *Mettis*, which we might see as being important because of its position in the heart of the kingdom of Austrasia, around its 'capital' of Metz, and lying in an area which was colonised by incoming Germanic settlers, Franks and Alamans. The *civitas* preserved the Roman *Civitas*

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Mediomatricorum, a name used in the sources as late as Carolingian times, the bounds of which were later crystallised in the ecclesiastical diocese of Metz. The definition of the exact limits of the *civitas* comes from the *Atlas du Diocèse de Metz* (Bourgeat & Dorvaux 1907), and is presumably based upon eighteenth- and nineteenth-century documents, if not earlier ones. In the areas of the *civitas* which now form part of France, this border is still preserved in commune boundaries.

Though one advantage of the regional study is that it circumvents the problems mentioned above, of treating the Merovingian realms as a monolithic whole, the evidence from within the *civitas* was frequently insufficient for the establishment and testing of models of social organisation. The area under study was therefore widened to include selected evidence from between the upper Meuse valley and the Vosges mountains - the region of Metz referred to in the title of the thesis. It may be noticed that this comparative data has generally only been sought to the south and west. This was for several reasons. Firstly, to have taken in evidence from all around the diocese of Metz would have made the volume of evidence far too large to be studied here. Secondly, the region seems to make a cohesive whole when combined with the areas to the east and south - there were no strong natural, political or cultural boundaries in these directions. This leads to the third reason. To the east of the diocese lie the Vosges. As well as providing a formidable natural obstacle, they also mark a cultural one. Whatever truth there is in the traditional ethnic argument that Alsace was an 'Alamannic' area, the cemeteries

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there do seem to be significantly different to those in the region of Metz. One reason for this - the difficulty which the Frankish kings had in making their writ run beyond the Vosges - will emerge from the present study. Similar arguments can be adduced for the northern frontier of the region of Metz, where the Pfalzerwald forms much of the boundary between the diocese and those of Mainz, Speyer and Trier.

The final problem, mentioned above, in many previous works on Merovingian social history, particularly those written from an archaeological standpoint, is the lack of any preliminary theoretical considerations. The existence below of two sections giving some theorisation of, and a provisional vocabulary for use in the discussion of, the problems of status and social organisation and of settlement hierarchy (ch.2, sections 4 and 5), is an attempt to confront this.

2. The Historical Evidence.

Before passing on to examine these theoretical aspects and to give a critique of past archaeological work on the topics covered here, a brief survey of the evidence will be of use. The written evidence upon which this thesis is based forms a representative cross-section of the types of documentary evidence available to the social historian of the Merovingian era.

Metz and its region figure in the narrative histories of the earlier Merovingian period, Gregory of Tours' *Libri Historiarum* and 'Fredegar's' *Chronicle*, and useful information can also be gleaned

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from the later *Liber Historiae Francorum*. Metz also has, of course, its own narrative history in Paul the Deacon's *Liber de Episcopis Mettensibus*. Written in the 780s, this is one of the earliest, most stylistic and influential examples of the genre of episcopal biographical collections (a translation is given in appendix 1.a). Its value for the history of Merovingian Metz and its region is more limited, however.

In the sphere of hagiography, Gregory of Tours' *Liber de virtutibus sancti Martini* and *Liber in Gloria Martyrum*, Venantius Fortunatus' *Vita Radegundis* and several other saints' lives contain references to Metz. At a more specifically local level, a reasonably large corpus of hagiographical writing exists. First among these is the mid-seventh-century *Vita Sancti Arnulfi*, written by a contemporary of the saint. Carolingian lives of two founders of religious houses also exist, those of Waldrada and of Glodesindis. No use has been made of the later *vitae* of Merovingian Bishops of Metz, most of which date to the tenth century or later and are reckoned by Gauthier (1980, ch.16 *passim*) to have no historical worth, or of the dubious *Gesta Episcoporum Mettensium*. However, some central medieval Messin ecclesiastical compilations, particularly the 'Petit Cartulaire de St. Arnoul' provide useful insights into the questions examined here.

Some snippets of information of relevance to the topics discussed here can be gained from the handful of letters to bishops of Metz preserved in the *Epistulae Austrasicae*. The survival of these somewhat unimportant letters in what is otherwise a collection of

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Austrasian diplomatic material points to a Messin origin for the collection, probably in the royal archives in Metz.

Wissembourg abbey in Alsace possessed widespread estates in the east of the diocese of Metz and an unusually complete series of charters dating from 661 to 864 (including thirty-five Merovingian documents) survives in relation to these (Glöckner & Doll 1979). Gorze abbey, south-west of Metz, was founded at the end of the period covered by this study, but was granted numerous estates which had hitherto belonged to Metz cathedral. The foundation grants and the other charters in the Gorze cartulary (Herbomez 1898), including some which contain valuable topographical information on Metz itself, provide useful retrospective evidence. To keep in line with the Wissembourg evidence the mid-ninth century was generally used as a cut-off point in the study of Gorze documents. A handful of other charters, either from other monasteries, such as St. Mihiel, or the three authentic charters relating to Metz emanating from the courts of the Merovingian Kings or their Mayors of the Palace merit attention, as do an additional three tenth-century forgeries claiming to represent donations by the Arnulfings.

Valuable information about Metz itself can be obtained from a miscellany of other sources. Venantius Fortunatus visited the city and talks of it in several of his poems. Almost two centuries later, under Chrodegang, a stational list of the churches of Metz was written (Klauser/Bour 1929; Leclercq, 1933, cols. 850-851). The bishop also drew up a canonical rule (Pelt 1937) for the churches in Metz, as part

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of the reform of his see - which he regarded as the unavoidable prologue to his intended reform of the Frankish church. These two works are invaluable for the study of Merovingian Metz and the role of the church in the city. Finally, mention must be made of the laws of the various peoples in the *civitas* of Metz - *Lex Salica*, *Lex Ribvaria* (Rivers (trans.) 1986) and the *Leges Alemannorum* (Rivers (trans.) 1977). *Lex Ribvaria* was probably the law code most used in the *civitas* of Metz.

3. The Archaeological Evidence.

The main corpus of archaeological evidence is provided by cemeteries. In 1949 Salin knew well over 100 within the diocese of Metz (Salin 1949, map III). He had omitted a substantial number and today the number of possible Merovingian cemeteries stands at 305. The bulk of these are known only from bald notices of chance finds over the last two hundred years (appendix 2.a). Only the excavations at Ennery (Moselle) recovered enough intact graves and have been published to a standard sufficient to allow detailed analysis to be performed (Delort 1947; Heuertz 1957; Clermont-Joly 1978).

The other sites which could be consulted were those of Berthelming (above all Lutz 1950) and Bettborn (Laumon 1977) on the upper Sarre, Hayange and Moyeuvre-Grande (the most useful publications on both of these sites are Clermont-Joly 1978, and Simmer 1987) to the north-west of Metz, and Güdingen (Stein 1989a), Walsheim (Schähle 1965) and Wittersheim (Klein 1932) in the Saarland. They unfortunately contained too few graves to be significant, and in some cases were not

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excavated to modern standards. The unusually complete observations made by P. Schenker on the cemetery at Bouzonville (Schenker 1899) can be added to this list. These sites nevertheless provided some interesting hypotheses which could be tested elsewhere. The other sites of the *civitas* were used as their quality allowed - as background noise, as dots on distribution maps, as further individual grave assemblages, or as instances of certain observed customs. The publication of the sites of the middle Seille valley, recently excavated by Pierre Cuvelier (Raucourt, Eply and other smaller sites), and of that at Altheim in the Saarland, had not appeared in time for these sites to be analysed in this thesis. The important excavations at Châtel-St.-Germain, just west of Metz, will not be complete until well into the 1990s. Unfortunately, given the quality of Claude Lefebvre's excavations and observations of such things as grave construction, the extent of reuse and disturbance of graves there will probably render its data unsuitable for the kinds of analyses carried out here, as these require intact grave assemblages. Similarly, Lefebvre's excavations at the potentially more useful site of Orny to the south-west of Metz, are not yet published.

It should be possible to perform widespread testing of the ideas expressed in this thesis in the fairly near future but since these data are not yet available it was necessary to look outside the boundaries of the *civitas*. The sites chosen to test the hypotheses put forward from analysis of cemeteries within the diocese of Metz were Chaouilley (Meurthe-et-Moselle: Voinot 1904), Lavoye (Meuse: Joffroy 1974), Dieue-sur-Meuse (Meuse: Guillaume 1974-5), and Audun-

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le-Tiche (Moselle: Simmer 1988). These were chosen for the large number of graves and the quality (and availability) of the published observations. Again in the wider area of this study, publication of the sites at Cutry (Meurthe-et-Moselle; Legoux & Liéger 1989), Montenach (Moselle; see Guillaume & Gambs 1988), Dugny (Meuse) and Bislée (Meuse) will allow further examination of the ideas expressed here (see Guillaume *et al* 1988 for brief accounts of all these sites).

Unfortunately, all of these published sites (except Bettborn, which alas contained only twelve graves) suffer from certain common problems. None of them have really been published to the standard expected in the 1980s, even Audun-le-Tiche, the most recent (published in 1988). Only selected grave plans are given, leaving us with vague written descriptions of skeletal layout, artefact position, and grave construction, and no information on grave shape. Further, the areas around the graves are not planned in detail, and where pits and similar features are found, these are not properly described or illustrated. The only features which are deemed noteworthy are earlier Roman buildings and occasionally later medieval structures - these too are not published to the standard expected today. The conclusion must be drawn that these sites are excavated and published according to some very outmoded precepts:

1: That the grave is the only thing worth recording on a cemetery site (because burial is assumed to be the only thing which went on there), and

2: that within the grave the only important variable is the nature of the grave goods.

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These assumptions are even reflected in the methods of excavation, which sometimes involved the digging of parallel trenches a metre or so wide and a metre or so apart. This method is relatively quick and almost certainly discovers all the graves on a site, but it is not particularly useful if the possibility of other structures on a cemetery site is accepted. Nevertheless this method, used by Salin in the 1920s to 1940s, was used at Altheim in the 1970s (Hackler 1989, fig.3). It can be said that the things which interest the excavator of a Merovingian cemetery, the things which he or she records and the way in which he or she does so, have hardly changed since the Voinots excavated Chaouilley (the earliest of the above excavations) in 1902. These limitations in the quality of observations reflect the limited analyses performed by French archaeologists upon their data, to which we will return.

In addition to cemetery evidence a number of excavations have taken place in Metz which shed a dim light on the fate of the town between 300 and 800. The publication of these is abysmal, far worse than that of the cemetery sites. This is, needless to say, a much more serious problem, since urban sites are more complex than cemeteries. The vast majority of site reports from Metz are well under ten pages long. There is no detailed discussion of the stratification, and no description of the layers involved, the relationships between features, or the precise location and nature of the material recovered. A few sites have section drawings (not labelled!) and most site reports make do with one more or less vague general site plan. The photographs of sections and so on from the mid-1980s

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excavations at St.-Pierre-aux-Nonnains (Delestre 1988a, pp. 33-35) have neither scales nor accompanying explanation. An archaeologist attempting to unravel the complex problems associated with this site (see ch. 6) can derive little meaningful information from them. Again, this site has been the subject of no detailed publication of data (the 1943 excavations were more scientifically published; Reusch 1943). The inevitable result is that we are forced to read between the lines, or accept uncritically the interpretation put forward by the excavator. Obviously, even where it is possible to consult the unprocessed records from a site, one is governed by the preconceptions of the excavators - what they thought was worth recording, how well they excavated the site and so on - but at Metz there is not even the possibility of any kind of independent reassessment of the observations made during an excavation. This is hardly conducive to detailed, modern, scientific work, even when, as now, the techniques of excavation have reached modern standards.

The same holds true for the other excavations of settlements, such as the Roman *vici*, *villae*, shrines and so on. At Sarrebourg, Marcel Lutz did not deem it necessary even to describe the nine post-Roman levels which he found on one site (Hatt & Lutz 1960). Excavations there still apparently ignore the periods after the latest Roman occupation (D. Heckenbenner, verb. comm. July, 1988). All this leads naturally to a certain amount of scepticism about the quality of forthcoming reports on the early medieval settlements in the Seille valley. Sadly, it is likely that we will lose the opportunity to use

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these settlement-sites to test and clarify some dimensions of the models of Frankish society proposed from cemetery data.

4. The Toponymic Evidence.

Place-names have long been used in looking at certain historical problems, above all the extent of Germanic settlement. Lorraine has been no exception to this and consequently the distribution of places with the suffixes *-ange*, *-ing*, *-ham* and its derivatives, and other Germanic geographical elements (*-bach* or *-berg* for example) have been used to plot areas of Frankish settlement, whilst those with the suffixes *-y*, *-ey*, *-ay*, *-ic(h)* or *-ac(h)* are used to map the areas where Romans remained the dominant element. Places with the suffixes *-court* and *-ville* have usually been assumed to be hybrids or transitional names, resulting from the fusion of the two ethnic groups.

However, most of the conclusions drawn from this evidence in Lorraine seem to have been rather simplistic. Toponymic records are not frequent until after the Merovingian period, giving us little to work from for the actual period of settlement. In the west of the region of Metz, the suffix *-ing* is not common until the later eighth and ninth centuries, but this results from the fact that here charter evidence does not become common until after 750 and the foundation of Gorze, rather than a late start to Germanic settlement in the area. In other areas, as will be seen, Germanic suffixes are not commonly attested before 750, but can we really argue that this relates directly to the date of Germanic settlement? We have no idea of the

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amount of time it would take, a) to change the dominant language of an area, or b) to alter the usually-accepted form of a place-name. For instance, Colonia Agrippina on the Rhine became a city in a Germanic-speaking region in the fifth century. Fifteen centuries later it is still called Köln, preserving its Latin name. The names of many places in the region of Metz were changing back and forth between 'Roman' and 'German' forms as late as the early modern period. We can reasonably suppose that whether a settlement was given an -y or an -ing suffix in a document was at least as dependent upon whether the scribe was a Romance- or a German-speaker, as upon the ethnicity of the inhabitants. Though the precise original meanings of these suffixes were different, the extent to which they were interchangeable suggests that in practice they meant more or less the same thing. The two forms also seem to have coexisted happily, so that in 713 Weroald (or Werald), an influential landowner in the western Vosges and middle Sarre valley, could grant to Wissembourg 'our villa of Chagambah [modern Waldhambach - a Germanic place-name] which is called Distiagus [a Roman place-name; spelt Disciacum in most other charters]' (*villa nostra Chagambah qui vocatur Distiagus*; Wiss.256).

The construction of place-names is moreover more complex than has often been supposed. Bellange in Moselle is usually explained as the German personal name Bella plus the suffix -ing, (Dauzat & Rostaing 1963, p.69). However, if Heidrich's (1974, p.84) identification is correct, as seems likely, the seventh-century form of this name, as attested on coins, is *Bellacum*, a typical Roman place-name. It would seem that Roman place-names could be 'rationalised' into German ones,

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the Romano-Gallic personal name being quietly changed to a Germanic one in the process. One possible explanation of the name Chagambah could be that it was originally a hybrid Disciacum-bach (the wood by Disciacum), which became 'Ciacumbach' and then Chagambach. It seems, furthermore, often to have taken a very long time for place-names to change. Thus in the western foothills of the Vosges, where geographical elements such as hills and streams were referred to in Germanic terms by the eighth century, the names of settlements often retained Roman forms. The modern Hilbesheim was still referred to as *Cilbociaga marca* in 714 (Wiss. 244) and Rimsdorf remained *Rimeniuillare* in 798 (Wiss. 211). A final problem is the identification of many of the places named in the charters. There are frequently two or more places with names which could easily derive from the form given in a charter within a small geographical zone, let alone across the wider area.

A settlement might move within a small area, as with the sites to the south of Nomeny, leaving us to wonder whether a site called, for example, Ennery, really lies on the early medieval site of 'Huneriacum'. At first sight it can be proposed that this point may be behind some startling discrepancies in the Wissembourg cartulary. This source repeatedly mentions estates 'on the river Isch' (*super fluuio Isca*; cp. Wiss. 237, dated Wissembourg, 30 June, 712) such as *Machoneuillare* and *villa Rimoni* (*ibid.*). It would not seem unreasonable to see these settlements as the modern Mackwiller and Rimsdorf, which lie close together. However, these villages lie some way from the Isch. Either Macco's villa and Rimo's villa moved

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across a couple of valleys between the eighth century and the present day, the identification is wrong, or the term *super fluuio [iam dicta]* Isca is to be taken as being rather more general than is often thought. Though there is a Rauwiler (which Glöckner and Doll identify as *villa Rimoni*) on the Isch, the proximity of Rimsdorf and Mackwiler makes the identification with them plausible, and taking into account the frequency of possibly similar cases in charters, it seems that the final explanation is the most satisfactory.

Study of the location of modern settlements with the suffixes denoting early medieval habitation or estate (*-ing, -ange, -y, -ville, or -court*) begs questions concerning the distinct groupings of these place-names. The general distribution of 'Germanic' toponyms may give a very rough extent of the area where Germanic languages came to predominate, but little more (see below, chapter 3). The idea that *-ville* and *-court* names are hybrid is questioned by the fact that these do not lie between areas of 'Germanic' and 'Roman' place names, as might be expected, but are rather separated from the former by the latter. Lot's idea that these place-names indicated the lands of Frankish *leudes* is insusceptible of proof (Lot 1933, p.222), and the idea that the *-y* names mark a kind of 'island' of Roman ethnicity around Metz is implausible. The survival of Latin place-names around Metz may instead be the result of the use of Latin by the numerous churches in Metz, who owned estates in the region and, furthermore, whose clerics will have served the area's need for written documents. On the whole the distribution of place-names seems to argue for micro-

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regional place-name 'dialects', since even the 'Germanic' place names show different groupings (fig. 1.5).

Given all the problems involved in the use of toponymic evidence, this form of data will be largely avoided in this study.

5. Other Evidence.

a. Numismatic and Epigraphic.

A large number of mints existed within the *civitas* of Metz and the coins from these form a useful corpus of evidence for the social and economic organisation of the region (Stahl 1982 is a very interesting discussion). Other coins from this period are comparatively rare in the region but make possible some general suggestions. A large number of Roman inscriptions have been uncovered in Metz but these are mostly pre-fourth-century. Nevertheless there are several 'palaeochristian' inscriptions (Collot *et al.* 1979, 1st and 2nd unnumbered pages of text), which, despite the problems involved in dating them, shed some light upon the history of Metz in the fifth century.

b. Geographical.

An original aim of this project was to apply the methodology of English local historians such as Della Hooke and Mick Aston to the region. This would have been especially valuable as such methods have not been used widely in French history.

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Commune boundaries were examined to see if they could be used to help understand this period of history, studying the way in which the region of Metz was divided up. Information on old parish boundaries is not easily available for France and less so for what is now West Germany. France is, of course, divided up into thousands of communes (37,954 in 1962; Pinchemel 1969, p.190). The problem was to establish whether or not we could see these units as representing old blocks of land, as has been done implicitly by some researchers (Percival 1976; Wightman 1985). If this were so useful conclusions could be drawn about settlement in the region. However, problems arise. Firstly, it can be seen with reference to the parish of Hayange (Moselle) that this parish has now been divided up into four or five communes and though its boundary (as established by M. Parisse, 1978) is preserved over much of its length in those of the communes certain portions have been lost. Secondly, since the Revolution the number of communes has fluctuated. Such fluctuation has perhaps not been very significant but still casts reasonable doubt upon the assumption, from 1980s administrative boundaries alone, that certain settlements or areas were grouped together in the same land unit. The first of these problems means that some twelfth-century bounds are no longer preserved in the administrative divisions of France. This does not mean that the boundaries used today are not of considerable antiquity but it does mean that the units now preserved may well not equate with the medieval ones. The second problem underlines this. Though the bounds of a commune may well all be very old we cannot be sure that the constituent elements of that commune have been united as a single land unit for longer than 200 or even 50 years.

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On the other hand, the communes, as they are today, show certain features which are also manifest in English parish boundaries, such as 'tails' thrown out to areas rich in, for example, woodland. In some areas the communes radiate from an area of woodland or perhaps pasture which possibly, if not probably, indicates that this was a shared resource as in England. Charles Tilly (1964) shows that the communes in the Vendée, though created at the Revolution, were based upon earlier villages and that the drawing up of commune boundaries caused no friction - probably an indicator that these bounds were already in existence. The stream of the Mittelbach and the river Eichel were used as boundaries in Wissembourg charters of the eighth century relating to Waldhambach, and these, rather than other streams in the area, still form some bounds of the commune of Waldhambach. Communes frequently contain only one toponym with the suffix *-y*, *-ing*, *-court* or *-ville*, apparently more or less interchangeable suffixes meaning settlement, which may be significant. Another point is that several Merovingian cemeteries are found on or near modern commune boundaries. This can mean one of three things: firstly, that cemeteries were deliberately sited near borders between two communities to show a claim to the land; secondly that this shows that a once larger settlement fissioned into two smaller ones, the two leaving the original site on the border between them; or thirdly that cemeteries were shared by several communities and were therefore positioned on the boundaries between them. Whichever of these was the case with an individual cemetery - no general rule is likely to be applicable - they can all argue for a certain antiquity of the boundary in question. The idea that the modern communes can represent quite old

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territorial units has been retained as a working hypothesis in places in this thesis but there are many problems and more work still needs to be done.

Chapter 2. Theory and Methodology.

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1. The Study of Merovingian Archaeology in Lorraine: A Critique.

Jacques Guillaume begins his lengthy and in many ways unsatisfactory report on the cemeteries of Dieue-sur-Meuse with a quote from Patrick Périn ('Les Ardennes à l'époque mérovingienne.' *Études Ardennaises*, 1967) to the effect that now, thanks to archaeology, we can go beyond the old-fashioned institutional and narrative forms of history permitted by documentary sources:

'Il est donc possible, aujourd'hui, grâce à l'archéologie, de dépasser la connaissance événementielle et institutionnelle de la Gaule Mérovingienne qu'apportent les textes pour aborder l'étude du peuplement, de l'habitat, des techniques, de l'art, des croyances tel qu'ils apparaissent dans les rites funéraires.' (Guillaume 1974-5, p. 211).

At the end of the report, can we really be said to have progressed very far? We may indeed have been offered an alternative to traditional descriptive and narrative history but what is this alternative? It is simply a description of artefacts and techniques instead of institutions, and a bald chronicle of minor events (the burials of the *minor populi*) to replace one of major happenings.

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Hardly an advance. Archaeology has far greater potential than that, but this has not been realised in the work carried out so far on Merovingian archaeology in Lorraine.

A more detailed discussion of the work carried out on Merovingian cemeteries in Lorraine is given in section 3, below. It will suffice to say now that it has largely been channelled into fruitless fields of study such as religion, ethnicity, and 'rites funéraires'. Even the other areas of research to which Périn (quoted above) directed Merovingian archaeologists in 1967, and to which the latter have, since then, devoted their attention, are rather limiting. Descriptive studies of art and manufacturing techniques, such as have appeared so far, must remain a very restricted form of archaeology as long as they remain divorced from wider concerns. How was the manufacture of these items organised and controlled? How did artistic motifs reflect the beliefs, perceptions and indeed the very nature of contemporary society? That they did so is a natural conclusion from the fact that, as has long been known, the forms and decoration of items of material culture changed dramatically around 600 AD, at precisely the same time as this study will argue that a profound social change took place. Until such questions begin to be considered, the contribution of archaeology to the study of the Merovingian world will remain ancillary and even marginal.

The final chapter of the lacklustre and carelessly compiled catalogue *La Lorraine Mérovingienne* (Delestre (ed) 1988), suggests a series of areas to which future archaeologists should turn their

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attention (Burnouf 1988). It is a good sign that researchers in Lorraine have begun to realise that the long-standing obsession with cemetery archaeology will not tell us everything about Merovingian society, and work on settlements is beginning to take place (Cuvelier 1988a; 1988b; 1988c; Cuvelier & Delestre 1986; Cuvelier, Delestre and Heber-Suffrin 1988 [unpublished]; 1988). Doubts about the quality of eventual publication (see above, pp.12-13) should not hinder the encouragement of such work.

Nonetheless, Burnouf's suggestions for future research represent only a change in direction, not a methodological or theoretical advance. She suggests that the questions which should attract future archaeologists are the size of rural communities, the state of health of the population, its diet, continuity or otherwise in the occupation of sites, the environment, studies of social hierarchy in settlements as well as cemeteries and comparisons between the two, and so on (Burnouf 1988, p.114). Laudable though this list is in many ways, especially the exhortation to study social organisation on settlement-sites, it is still somewhat depressing to see the study of ethnicity through physical anthropological remains, something long discredited in Britain, put forward as a valuable direction for future work (*ibid*; see below, section 3). More importantly, although it would be highly desirable to see published the kind of data which Burnouf suggests be gathered, or to see studies appear on the topics she proposes, it must be said that such archaeology would still be primarily descriptive. It would represent only an extension of the present situation:

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archaeology used as a limited, descriptive form of historical anthropology.

Important though it is to turn to data gathering and description in other fields, Burnouf gives the impression that we have progressed as far as is possible in the interpretation of such data as has been gathered so far, that is to say cemetery data, for the most part. Even Burnouf's praiseworthy suggestion that old cemetery excavations be reassessed seems in fact only to be arguing that old interpretations be brought into line with those of more recently excavated sites. As will be seen below, for cemetery archaeology, this idea that the study of archaeological data has progressed as far as it can is patently false, and it is equally so of the study of urban archaeology in Metz.

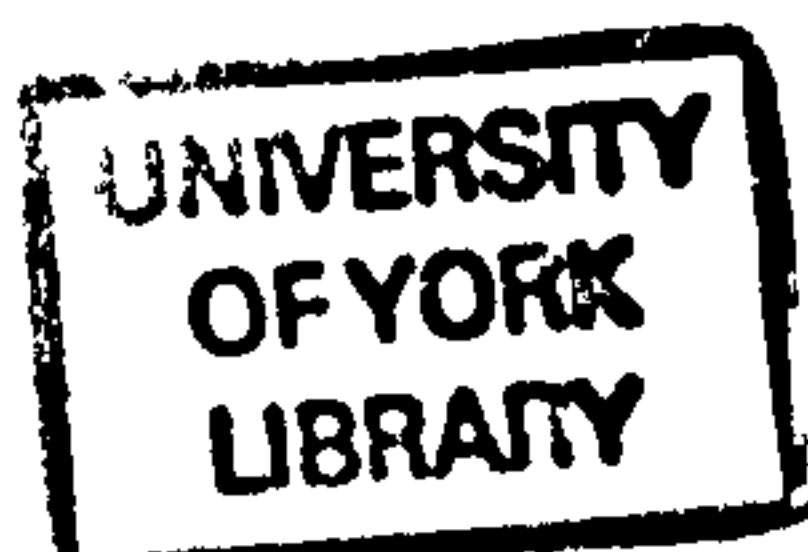
As far as concerns specific areas of study, this will become clear below (sections 3 to 5). The sad fact remains that Merovingian archaeology is, in terms of theory and interpretation, about twenty years out of date. Even the 'New Archaeology' has yet to make itself felt in the archaeology of this period. There has in general been too little, or at worst no, consideration given to theory. This is in part understandable given that most of the developments in theoretical archaeology over the past twenty years have taken place in Britain, the United States and Scandinavia, and published, often in quite obscure journals, in very dense, often excessively jargonistic, English. When one considers that the bulk of Merovingian archaeology is carried out by amateurs, the difficulties posed by this become even

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more apparent. However, in Lorraine many local archaeologists have taken the trouble to familiarise themselves with German work on Merovingian archaeology. Archaeological theory in the region tends to be German archaeological theory at one remove; hence the obsession with chronology. The reason why the much more advanced work carried out upon Anglo-Saxon cemeteries has not been consulted, or has been only rarely, is probably the facile one that England lay outside the Merovingian Empire. Nevertheless, Anglo-Saxon and early medieval Scandinavian archaeology has much to offer Merovingian archaeology; in fact Albert Namur argued in 1850 that Frankish archaeologists should take note of developments on the other side of the channel (Périn 1980, p.26). It is one of the great losses of Merovingian archaeology that his advice has so rarely been followed.

2. Interrelation and Integration of Different Disciplines.

One problem with past work on the subjects with which this thesis is concerned has arisen from a lack of attention given to how one should integrate the data from different disciplines. In a period like this, where written evidence is reasonably plentiful and archaeological data abundant, this is a major problem. Archaeological evidence has, in the past, too often been used to 'prove' history, or has been examined with the intention of examining problems overtly based upon the documentary evidence. The question of social rank and status, to which we will return, is a case in point. The data from cemeteries have frequently been looked at with the expressed intention of finding evidence of a form of social organisation based upon rank, such as certain forms of documentary



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evidence imply existed in this period. Variability in mortuary data has then been interpreted in such a way as to 'prove' the existence of the series of social classes suggested in the written evidence (see Samson 1987a, for a recent critical summary of such work). No preliminary questions ever seem to have been asked as to whether social class or rank need be the determining factor behind this variability, or whether there are alternative forms of social organisation which could leave the same archaeological traces. The question is similarly left unconsidered as to whether the written and archaeological data relate to the same aspects of the problem, though if they do not, as seems to be the case quite often, there is no point in looking for the kind of one-to-one correlation between them that has hitherto been sought. Yet it is clearly possible that the two forms of evidence might reveal two dimensions of social organisation, which existed concurrently. Archaeological material has rarely been allowed to speak for itself, and some quite obvious possibilities have consequently been ignored (for which see Parts 3 and 4).

Where these problems have been noticed, a frequent reaction has been to deny all possibility of the integration of these forms of evidence. This is equally simplistic, and in fact based upon identical premises:

1. If we can study a given problem through the use of written and archaeological data, we should be able to make a one-to-one correlation between the two.

2. Hence only one aspect of a given problem relating to a past society is likely to be revealed by its material remains (written or

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otherwise).

3. Ultimately if we cannot make the one-to-one correlation expected then one form of evidence must be unreliable, or the two forms of evidence relate to different problems altogether. All too often there is no consideration of even these possibilities and the problem of why the two kinds of data do not correspond is pushed neatly away by a bland denial that there was any chance of a correspondance in the first place.

To take an example, the study of religion through cemetery evidence has now, it seems, led to scepticism about the possibility of the integration of written and archaeological sources:

'La confrontation des données écrites et archéologiques est toujours délicat et parfois il y a peu de rencontres, comme j'ai pu le vérifier, avec des autres, pour les questions de paganisme et de christianisme'; P. Périn, *pers. comm.*, (14.6.88).

Originally, attempts were made to use archaeological evidence to map the spread of Christianity, and the decline of paganism. Obviously, the ideas that there were rival religious forms, that there was conflict between the two, and that one was expanding and triumphing over the other came from knowledge of the written evidence. It was assumed that archaeological material from cemeteries would reflect this, and consequently a one-to-one relationship was proposed between certain burial rites and either Christianity or paganism. No consideration was given to the problems of whether there were other aspects of religious life to which these excavated data might refer,

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whether indeed religion was the determining factor behind the aspects of burial revealed archaeologically, or ultimately even to whether the contemporary written evidence gave any support to the claim that there were differences between Christianity and paganism in terms of inhumation rite.

Sure enough, the flaws of this hypothesis were swiftly revealed (supposedly pagan rites being carried on in churches, and so on). The reaction to this has either been to try to find other equally implausible one-to-one relationships (cp. Simmer 1987, for which see below, section 3), or to use this as a cautionary tale of how history and archaeology cannot be integrated. But this scepticism is still based upon assumptions that if they could have been integrated with regard to religion the two bodies of data would have related to the same aspect of the problem (the Christian/pagan dichotomy) and a one-to-one correspondence would have been possible. It seems to be believed that if archaeological evidence cannot answer one particular problem concerned with the religious history of the era (one framed from documentary historical notions), then (generally) all attempts at integration of disciplines are to be viewed with caution, and (specifically) the archaeological evidence has no value in looking at the religious life of Merovingian people.

However, more critical correlations between the two forms of data are possible. The way forward must be to examine evidence from each discipline on its own merits. Wherever possible, preconceptions based upon a knowledge of historical sources should not be allowed to

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impinge upon the interpretation of the archaeological data, and vice versa. Each body of evidence should be analysed separately and only integrated at a higher level. Thus it can be argued that what might be termed an 'inter-disciplinary' approach, hopping from one body of evidence to the other to tackle questions framed from only one discipline, has caused more confusion than clarity. What we might instead term a 'multi-disciplinary' method, studying different bodies of data as independently as possible and merging only at a higher, more critical level, can bear potentially far greater fruit. Where the different forms of evidence do not correlate, the question should be asked why they do not. Rather than blandly trying to discredit either one form of data or attempts to use the two together, as great a contribution can be made by actually studying the discrepancies between different kinds of evidence as by studying the far fewer genuine correlations. It is this 'multi-disciplinary' approach which it has been attempted to follow here.

It is never possible to study a subject without preconceptions. That this study has been carried out in the later 1980s by a British university-trained historian and archaeologist clearly means that questions have been given prominence which would not have figured at all in the reasonings of, for example, a pre-war French amateur archaeologist. 'There is no real object 'history', only a philosophy of history; the historian's work reduces to its ideological positions' (Wordsworth 1987, p.116). Thus gender and forms of social status based upon position in the life-cycle have been studied at the expense of artefact-description, chronology, ethnicity, religion and,

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to a certain extent, the identification of social rank; the subjects which have exercised the minds of practically all previous students of Merovingian archaeology.

Since this work is the product of a single researcher, it has not been entirely possible to avoid the interference of the results of analysis of one kind of data in the study of the other. In this work, however, the interference has tended to come from archaeology rather than history, and this is, in itself, sufficiently different from past approaches to be potentially interesting!

3. A Critique of Past Archaeological Work on Cemeteries.

The study of Merovingian cemeteries in Lorraine has been categorised as being concerned with three main areas: the study of Christianity, ethnicity and that, somewhat vague, of 'rites funéraires' (Halsall 1988, p.50), areas which Périn (quoted above, section 1) listed among those which archaeologists could study in 'going beyond' traditional history. The first of these has, since the appearance of Bailey Young's PhD thesis (Young 1975; 1977), been shown to be fruitless. Furnished burial was thought to be 'pagan' but the deposition of grave-goods with a burial seems to have had no religious significance. We know of richly furnished burials taking place in churches, both from history (cp. Gregory of Tours *L.H.* VIII.21) and archaeology (the celebrated graves under Cologne cathedral, for instance). The church, moreover, in quite a sizeable corpus of legislation on burial, passed no laws against the deposition of grave-goods, except where these were church ornaments or the

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consecrated host (cp. the synod of the diocese of Auxerre, dated 561-605, ch. 12).

Even were the placing of artefacts with the dead mentioned as a pagan practice, closer study of the documentary sources would not permit us to use it as an index of non-Christian religion. The essential lesson of most late antique and early medieval Gaulish references to pagan practices is that they are being carried on by Christians. These rites seem not to have been thought of, at least by their practitioners, as involving any contradiction with professed Christianity. They were carried out because of the strength of tradition; they were 'done because they were done' (cp. the celebrated passage in the Life of Saint Eligius [II.20], where the saint attempts to stop 'pagan' dancing). Young points out eloquently that the archaeologist cannot determine when something ceases to be done because of specific beliefs and begins to be a customary act involving no statement of belief or philosophy (Young 1975).

The religious element in a funeral is likely to be that which leaves no archaeological trace, such as what was said over a grave or as part of the funerary feast. The latter incidentally is one practice condemned as 'pagan' by Christian writers which is archaeologically visible (see below, Part 3), but, again, is something which is, in most cases, being carried out by confessed Christians.

With these points in mind trying to trace the spread of Christianity in Merovingian cemeteries must be seen to be a fruitless

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exercise. The most recent attempt to do so has been to argue that sarcophagus burials are Christian (Simmer 1987; 1988), because they are, allegedly, conscious imitations of things urban and Roman, like Christianity itself. This is clearly a highly flawed argument, though perhaps more interesting than previous efforts at identifying Christianity. The distribution of sarcophagus burials is highly uneven and governed, obviously, by the availability of suitable stone, or at least the ability to transport such stone to the cemetery (Cuvelier and Guillaume 1988 [unpublished.]). If we accept Simmer's arguments we must also accept that this manifestation of Christianity is only found in geographically suitable areas, and thus that no argument can be made from the absence of sarcophagi. Except where a local quarry makes sarcophagus production easy and the use of stone coffins a viable proposition for the bulk of the community, sarcophagi are expensive items and usually rare within individual cemeteries. They are therefore surely more likely to be manifestations of the wealth and prestige of the deceased's family than a sign that within a cemetery of two hundred burials five or six people were Christians. Simmer does in fact pay lip-service to this point (Simmer 1988) but does not allow it to interfere with his rather implausible idea that one area within the cemetery of Audun-le-Tiche was reserved for Christians. This is something to which we will return in chapter 11. Where the stone was locally available for sarcophagi, and such containers were therefore inexpensive, the very availability of sarcophagi must argue against a single specific religious symbolism for them.

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Nevertheless, the fact that archaeological remains tell us little about the Christian/pagan dichotomy is revealing. It is surely worth studying why religion appears to have played so little part in the archaeologically-revealed aspects of the disposal of the dead. This study will demonstrate for the Merovingian region of Metz the (in Britain) now commonly held belief that the material remains of funerary practices are governed by social rather than religious considerations. We do not know how such considerations were justified by the people of the times, however, and it is surely likely that religion played some part in this. The lack of a religious element in the archaeological remains of Merovingian burials, or the fact that any such element remains ambiguous, is also worthy of note, not least for the fact that it coincides so well with the testimony of the written sources, which likewise appear to attest the perpetuation of apparently non-Christian practices by people who held Christian beliefs, the fact that what seem superficially to be religious acts could be kept separate from religious creeds, and finally that the church appears to have taken very little interest in 'rites of passage' such as marriage and burial in this period.

The study of ethnicity is the second major concern of cemetery archaeology in Lorraine. Here again, questions were framed from historical evidence. It was known from written sources that Germanic Franks and Alamans were moving into Gaul in this period. A contrast between 'Frank' and 'Roman' was therefore sought in the archaeological record. Early in the study of Merovingian cemeteries it was proposed that lavishly-furnished burials with grave-goods were those of

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Germans, whilst those with fewer or no such artefacts were those of Romans. This in fact represents the last bastion of Germanism in late antique/early medieval studies. Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century researchers were apt to search for any trace they could find of 'Germans' in the late Roman Empire. Thus when it was discovered that a new burial rite began to appear in northern Gaul in the late fourth century, characterised by the deposition of weaponry and jewellery in graves, this was eagerly seized upon as an indicator of 'Germans'. There are hardly any sound archaeological reasons for this supposition (Halsall forthcoming); yet it remains one of the most firmly entrenched of the many constructs in early medieval Gaulish archaeology.

In the context of Lorraine, the work of Frauke Stein (Stein 1974), may be said to represent the extreme form of this traditional argument. Stein took a number of criteria to represent 'Franks': following on from the idea that such burial styles were introduced into Gaul by the Germans, these included frequent deposition of weaponry and jewellery, burial in neat rows and so on. A list of 'Roman' features was also provided: sarcophagi, disorderly arrangement of graves, few weapons or items of jewellery, etc. Plotting the relative distributions of cemeteries with these features, Stein concluded that there were certain distinct zones of Franks and of Romans, the latter being particularly clustered around Metz itself, a point to which we will return. The essential drawbacks of this argument were swiftly pointed out by Ament (1975), James (1979) and Périn (1981). Stein failed to take account of chronological changes,

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so that many of her 'Roman' cemeteries were in fact seventh-century sites, whilst sixth-century sites were identified as 'Frankish'. Nor was sufficient consideration given to other complicating factors in the relationship between ethnicity and mortuary practice, even those as basic as fashion set by a dominant group. Like all previous students, and most writers since, Stein did not devote any thought to preliminary questions such as why grave-goods should be deposited with the dead, or why ethnicity should play any part in this.

The key article appeared in 1979, when Edward James made the essential point that there was no reason why a 'Germanic' rite could not be used, in the Merovingian period, by people of Gallo-Roman stock, in imitation of their Frankish overlords (James 1979). There was thus little value in using burial customs as markers of Frankish settlement after the beginning of the sixth century at the latest. This article has proved in many ways to be 'too good', as it has effectively killed all debate upon Merovingian burial customs since then. Even Ross Samson's interesting article on the subject (Samson 1987a) barely adds to the essential points made in 1979.

As now seems likely, furnished burial has more to do with social conditions than ethnicity even in origin (Halsall forthcoming). It is very plausible that the Frankish kings, beginning with Clovis, who buried his father, Childeric I, in a well-known sumptuously-furnished grave in Tournai in 481-2, adopted the extravagant use of this rite as a means of cementing their power. To encourage their followers to make conspicuous wasteful displays of wealth by burying it with their

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dead would enhance their dependence upon the king, their lord, as a source of prestige items. As will become clear in Part 4 this mechanism for strengthening dependence worked at all levels in Frankish society. Though the association of this rite with the Frankish monarchy and aristocracy may have led to its association with, and use by, 'Germans' in some areas (such as Visigothic Spain and Lombard Italy), within Gaul the conclusion must now be drawn that burial-style has absolutely no worth as an ethnic indicator.

It took eight years for the message of James' article to penetrate as far as Lorraine, and then only via Patrick Périn's review article (Périn 1981; see Simmer 1987). However, the attempt to study ethnicity goes on, through a peculiar perversion of the argument by Alain Simmer (1987, p.392 ff.; 1988, p.155). Simmer takes the idea that someone buried in 'Germanic' style need not be a Frank, to argue that the region of Metz was largely uncolonised by the Franks in the Merovingian period. He uses this in conjunction with the fact that the immediate area around Metz is poor in 'classic' 'Frankish'-style burials to claim that the population remained essentially Roman. The inconsistency of this reasoning is obvious. If a Roman could be buried in 'Frankish' style, then why could a Frank not be buried in 'Roman' fashion? Now that it is clear that we cannot even talk of 'Roman' and 'Frankish' burial rites in the first place, the fallaciousness of Simmer's argument becomes yet more evident. As will become clear in Part 4, below, there are much more satisfactory ways of explaining the lack of lavishly-furnished graves around Metz.

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Another aspect of the 'ethnicity problem' in Lorraine concerns the identification of another group within the Germanic population of early medieval Gaul: the Alamans. It has been argued (cp. Salin 1949), and still is (Guillaume *et al* 1988; Hackler 1989), that the Alamans are archaeologically visible from their material culture. The arguments for this range from the reasonable (the existence of certain brooch and pottery types) to the ridiculous (the absence or presence in sufficient quantities of certain weapons such as franciscas or swords). It seems clear that certain distinct forms of artefact originated in the areas east of the Vosges, which historical sources tell us were regarded as Alamannic. The Vosges are, however, a significant obstacle to east-west movement, and the Rhine yet more so. This area of the Frankish empire was always likely to be separated, and potentially separatist, from the heart of the kingdoms. In this light it is hardly surprising that distinctive artefact forms should have emerged. It is, however, as impossible to tell Alaman from Roman east of the Vosges as it is to tell Frank from Roman west of the mountains. How does one specifically tell Frank from Roman from Alaman on the frontier between these cultural, geographical and political zones? Certain artefacts could move about through trade or exchange, especially in this border area. Some crude forms of pottery are called 'Alamannic', but the very basic form of these 'cord-made' wares argues against a specific ethnic origin. It must be as likely that their presence refers to the unavailability of better-quality wheel-thrown pottery. As Hugh Elton has said, 'it cannot seriously be argued that members of two tribes used exclusively different shaped pots or styles of brooches' (Elton unpublished). In

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the early medieval period, there may be more to the argument that tribes used material culture to accentuate a fictive ethnic distinction than Elton admits, but when we are talking about frontier regions between two such 'tribes', as here, his point must be especially pertinent. This aspect of the 'ethnicity problem' is one which requires more attention.

One which certainly does not is the use, or rather misuse, of physical anthropology to distinguish ethnic groups. It is alarming to see such archaic practices as skull-measurement being used to indicate the extent to which the population which used a cemetery was 'Frankish' or 'Roman' (cp. *Gallia* 44, 1986, p.290; Simmer 1988), and it is, as stated, even more alarming to read a plea by no less a person than the Directrice des Antiquités de Lorraine that skeletal evidence from cemeteries be used to determine this (Burnouf 1988, p.114).

Even without the fact that physical anthropologists are now dismissive of such use of evidence, the problem, as with so many aspects of Merovingian archaeology, has suffered through an inability to consider the premises upon which it is based. Is it really likely that there were two separate and distinct ethnic groups within Merovingian Gaul in the first place? Clearly there were 'German' and 'Roman' elements, but in northern Gaul the two must have been inextricably mixed by the sixth century. In Lorraine, native Gallo-Romans were adopting Germanic names and language. Even Gregory of Tours, and there were few families more proudly 'Roman' than his, had

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a maternal great-uncle, from north-eastern Gaul significantly, called Gundulf (*L.H.* VI.11). By the seventh century it seems that, despite the fact that most of them spoke a form of Latin, everyone in northern Gaul thought of themselves as Franks; Romans were those people who lived south of the Loire (cp. *V.S.E.* II.20). By the early eighth century it was a problem, for the Neustrian authors of the *Liber Historiae Francorum* and the 'Long Prologue' of *Lex Salica*, to explain where the Gallo-Romans had gone. Their answer, like Bede's to the question of where the Romano-Britons had gone, was to assume that the incoming Germans must have killed them all, though they made the sensible modification that, before being killed, the Gallo-Romans had first taught the Franks Latin! It has been shown that when Gregory of Tours describes someone as a Frank he means that they were of the Frankish aristocracy (Irsigler 1979). With this point in mind it becomes exceedingly difficult to use the *Libri Historiarum* to argue for the existence of two distinctive ethnic groups in Gaul even by the late sixth century. It is depressing to note that, nine years later, and despite the existence of a readily-available précis by Patrick Périn, the essential message of James' 1979 article has still to make an impact on archaeology in Lorraine.

The third of the traditional obsessions of cemetery archaeologists in Lorraine is the study of 'rites funéraires'. This is for the most part a descriptive exercise. 'Deviant' rites such as face-down burial, headless burials (as at Audun-le-Tiche) or other kinds of 'immobilised' burials (where the deceased is prevented from rising again by the placing of a large rock on his or her chest or, by the

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construction of a wall across the torso, as at Audun-le-Tiche; the removal of the legs; or the nailing down of the corpse, as at Ottange) are simply described as oddities. As has been pointed out (Halsall 1988, p.50) no attempt is made to relate them to wider questions about the society of the times. The exception to this is again the work of Alain Simmer (above all 1982, but see also 1988). Simmer deserves praise for attempting to account for the presence of these rites, but his analyses are flawed. His proposed link between the absence of skulls in graves and the cult of the saints (Simmer 1988) is perhaps the most striking example of the misuse of historical data to explain archaeological evidence yet to appear in the Merovingian archaeology of Lorraine. Simmer has also (1982) connected these headless burials, and, even less plausibly, the many later medieval ossuaries in Lorraine which contain only skulls, with the Celtic head-cult to argue for a tradition of head-veneration in Lorraine spanning two millennia, despite the hiatus of several centuries between the Merovingian burials and either of these supposed analogies!

Simmer has at least tried to explain his data, and, as a German teacher rather than an archaeologist by profession, he should not be too harshly judged. Far more irritating is the repeated failure to account for the presence of ashes or burnt layers in graves. The vacuous, blanket attribution to 'feux rituels', even by full-time archaeologists (cp. Guillaume 1974-5), is convenient but hardly satisfactory. This French example of archaeology's hoariest old joke, that anything you cannot understand is best called 'ritual', is yet another case of Merovingian archaeology's refusal to theorise; its

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contentment with bland description. Yet, as will be discussed in Part 4, these scraps of evidence may well be amongst the most valuable we have for the social and economic purpose of the Merovingian funeral, taking us beyond, and helping to explain, the message of the grave-goods alone.

Outside these three areas the most important topic to which Merovingian archaeologists have devoted themselves is of course chronology; an obsession inherited from German archaeology. The dating of artefacts is of course a very important aspect of archaeology. Researchers too often ignore chronological factors in their work on social structures and so on in early medieval cemeteries (the example of Stein 1974 has already been mentioned; see ch.12 below for the perhaps less excusable case of Young 1984).

However, the study of chronology must not be regarded as an end in itself. The work above all of Patrick Périn (1980) in refining the chronology of Merovingian artefacts is extremely useful but some alarming trends appear to be manifesting themselves in Merovingian archaeology. One review of Périn's book (Guillaume 1981) argued that whilst Périn's work was helpful we should not be content with it but should continue to refine chronologies and narrow down the chronological sub-divisions within the Merovingian period. This is potentially a very dangerous approach since it assumes that chronology is the only important variable in explaining the difference between any two given forms of an artefact type. Yet there may be all kinds of other variables involved. The work of Miller on Indian ceramic

types (discussed in Shanks and Tilley 1987, p.109 ff.) reveals that chronology might be a very unimportant factor. Twenty-two types of Dangwara pottery have distinct associations with status, gender, colour, caste, connotation, content, exchange, heat and rights (*ibid*, pp.110-111). Content is perhaps the only one of these variables which has even been considered in studies of Merovingian pottery to date. Richards (1987) makes the point for Anglo-Saxon cremation urns, that these have very little chronological worth, differences in form and decoration being very plausibly related to gender and status. Similar possibilities for Merovingian ceramics in a funerary context will be discussed in Part 3.

What is true of ceramics might as easily be true for other artefact types, and certain possibilities in this direction will also be examined in Part 3. Size, shape, decoration and material of objects might have clear relationships with, for example, the gender of the dead. Other potential distortions of the present cozy schemes of linear chronological artefactual development will also emerge below. Some of these even find support in the written sources. As long as chronological study continues to be treated as an end in itself, divorced from other aspects of the study of Merovingian society, and without theorisation of alternative possibilities, it will continue not only to divert attention away from other more analytical fields of study, but quite probably to distort our picture of Merovingian society as manifested in its funerary remains.

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Finally, some thought has been given to Merovingian social structure. In Lorraine this has not received very much attention at all, and most work on this topic continues to be carried out by German researchers looking at the German areas of the Merovingian empire. It is perhaps significant that, with the important exception of Haiko Steuer's work, almost all attempts to apply more developed archaeological methods of analysis to Merovingian social structure have been carried out by American and British researchers (Burnell, James, Samson and Young). Work on the cemeteries of Lorraine has, apart from Young's analyses of Dieue-sur-Meuse and Lavoye (Young 1984), generally consisted of 'off-the-shelf' application of what are now, in Britain and elsewhere, considered to be outmoded theories. Whilst the attempts to correlate specific artefact types with particular historically-attested social classes has thankfully not found popularity in this region, considerations of social organisation remain basic. Such as exist are characterised by the same drawbacks as Pader (1980; 1982) pointed out for early Anglo-Saxon England: assumptions that the number of artefacts in a grave directly reflect the wealth of the deceased, that the grave-goods are the only important variable in manifesting the social position of the deceased (this, as mentioned above, p.10, is reflected in the very recording and publication of cemetery sites), and that social status is exclusively based upon a single low-to-high scale of social rank, in turn based upon wealth. The archaeologist makes a simple subjective value-judgement of what constitutes a 'rich' burial, either in terms of the quantity or the quality of the grave-goods, and the subject of the burial is duly stated as being of high rank or 'riche'. It is

not then surprising that the only work on the social organisation of the communities of Merovingian Lorraine yet published has been sterile and simplistic, exclusively concerned with the identification of 'rich' or 'aristocratic' 'tombes de chef' (cp. Young 1986, and cemetery reports *passim*). The theory and methodology of studies of social organisation now needs to be considered in more detail.

4. Social Organisation.

What is society? What is social history; is it really a meaningful subdivision of the study of the past? The *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* defines 'society' as 'social mode of life, the customs and organization of an ordered community'; 'social' as 1. 'living in companies or ordered communities, gregarious; not fitted for or practising solitary life, interdependent, ...existing only as a member of a compound organism', and 2. 'concerned with mutual relations of (classes of) human beings'; and finally 'social history' as 'history of social behaviour'. In the wider sense of 'the customs and organisation of an ordered community', social history could include the study of just about anything. In this sense we could not really talk of an action being motivated by social rather than religious concerns (cp. above, p.33): religion evidently constitutes a major part of the 'customs of an ordered community', so that religious considerations are also social ones.

It is difficult to escape this problem but it is something which needs consideration, as for so long 'social history' and 'society' have been regarded as well-defined 'boxes' in the compartmentalization

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of the study of the past, and indeed of the study of particular periods or cultures, along with 'economic history', 'political history', 'religious history', 'military history' and the rest. Yet clearly any one of the latter could be classed as part of 'social history': people, and classes of people, have economic, religious, political and military relationships with each other. Political actions and so on are then merely dimensions of social behaviour. Seen thus the existence of 'social history' as a clearly-defined 'box' comes into question.

What we will be concerned with is the 'ordering' of communities, and the mutual relations of people within such communities which go to make up this ordering. The basis of such ordering will also be examined. This means considering economics, religion and military affairs (or at least violence) insofar as these affect this, but the detailed study of these areas in their own right will be left outside this survey. Thus, whilst no claim will be made that the subject matter of this work constitutes an area of study distinct and clearly separated from the others, it is hoped that a study of this element of Merovingian society (in the wider sense) will be useful for the light it casts upon the others to which it is related.

So how are communities ordered? Here we have to come to grips with the question of social status. In past insufficient attention has been given to what constitutes status, and status has been equated, erroneously, with rank. As is so often the case we need to

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refine our terminology in order to erase this kind of vagueness and confusion.

Status means standing; the term for status, as used by Weber (1982), is *ständische Lage*. There are many forms of status, and both the forms of status possessed by a person and the amount of status he or she has in any one of these will change from one relationship with another human being to another. Thus a member of the lesser aristocracy will have positive status based upon his power and wealth in his relationships with his slaves and other tenants. In relations with another member of the lesser aristocracy his power-based status will be less, since he will be treated as an equal. He may however have greater ability as a warrior which earns him higher status in this area, and thus affects his relationships with his peers, whereas another lesser aristocrat may be renowned for his wisdom in law-cases, and another for his religious piety, earning them a form of positive status in their dealings with their equals. Should any one of these local 'squires' ever have to deal with the king, however, their power will count for little. Face-to-face with a monarch, they will only have lesser status in this sphere, though again their value as soldiers, lawmen or priests may earn them some right to attention.

If we are concerned with the relationships between people which go to make up the ordering of a community then status is clearly the central concept. For future clarity in this survey, a vocabulary will now be proposed which relates to this.

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Status: The standing of any individual in any sphere with relationship to any other individual.

Rank: A form of status based upon a position in a legally-defined social hierarchy. Thus slave, semi-free, and free are examples of rank.

Class: Class will be used to describe groups of people who occupy a recognised position in a social hierarchy but not one which is necessarily legally-defined. Since it is difficult to find evidence of them as existing as distinct groups in this period, the term 'class' has been used to include both Weber's terms 'class' and 'status group' (the latter clearly being an unhelpful phrase here).

Weber's (1982, p.69) definition of class:

'"Class situation" means the typical probability of

1. procuring goods
2. gaining a position in life and
3. finding inner satisfactions,

a probability which derives from the relative control of goods and skills and from their income-producing uses within a given economic order.

'"Class" means all persons in the same class situation.'

Weber's (1982, p.73) definition of status group:

'A "status group" means a plurality of persons who, within a larger group, successfully claim

- a) a special social esteem, and possibly also
- b) status monopolies.'

This esteem is founded on style of life, formal education (either ' α) empirical training or β) rational instruction and the corresponding forms of behaviour'; Weber 1982, p.72) and hereditary or occupational prestige (*ibid*).

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In early medieval Gaul it seems that the economically-defined 'class' (in Weber's terms) was generally founded upon and commensurate with, the socially-defined 'status-group'. Here, though a 'rank' may constitute a general 'class', there will frequently be several 'classes' within each 'rank'.

Value: This is status based upon the value to others of an individual. This will frequently imply no right to prestige (q. v.) on the part of the individual. A highly skilled slave, or perhaps a marriageable daughter, will have value but no right to prestige. In effect where he or she has no other claim to prestige, the status of a 'valuable' individual is passed to whoever controls his or her actions; the slave-owner in the case of the slave, or the family in the case of the daughter, mentioned above.

Worth: This is similar to value but because of the worth of the individual to the community, he or she acquires a right to prestige. The distinction between value and worth will often be related to the freedom to make one's own decisions; the freedom to capitalize upon whatever asset makes the individual useful to the community. Thus a free blacksmith has worth, an unfree blacksmith has value. The former can make the most of his skill since he has, theoretically, the right to move elsewhere, or to refuse to make implements for people if the price is not right or indeed if he dislikes them. The latter has none of these. His master can force him to make goods whenever, and for whoever, he pleases. It is in fact the master who has 'worth' to the community, in owning such a 'valuable' slave.

Power: The ability to achieve aims, vis-à-vis other individuals, either in the fulfilment of desires or the acquisition of goods.

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Prestige: Positive status, giving possible power to the individual.

Privilege: The right to power over certain, usually defined, individuals. Prestige may lead people to expect others to conform with their wishes; those with privilege have an accepted right to expect this.

Gender and age are other forms of status, and prestige may be accorded to individuals of particular sexes and/or certain age-groups.

It can be seen that status can only be used in a broad sense to define certain relationships between individuals. The frequent use, by archaeologists, of status to mean rank is erroneous and misleading. Rank is not even implicit in the term status. A working distinction in the terminology for ruling classes must also be proposed:

Aristocracy. Rule 'by the best', that is to say the most powerful, people of the region. Such power has no legal or constitutional base and may be acquired or lost from one generation to another, or even within one lifetime.

Nobility. Rule by, in our terms, a rank, acquired by birth, and thus transmitted from one generation to another. The privilege of being a noble can only be lost in exceptional circumstances. The aim of most 'aristocracies' is to transform themselves into a 'nobility'.

These two types of ruling group can be distinguished by a number of binary oppositions:

Aristocracy : Nobility

Class : Rank

Prestige : Privilege

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Whether or not the above terms find general favour, it is to be hoped that the use of more explicitly defined terms will result in greater clarity and precision. They are, in Hodder's phrase (1986, p.18) 'provisional but precise'.

Turning at last to archaeology, especially the study of cemeteries, the deposition of grave-goods would be interpreted as being 'motivated by social rather than religious concerns' if it could be shown that it related to the creation, development or maintenance of the relationships between people. If so, the question remains as to whether the deposition of grave-goods is exclusively a mirror of rank, as has generally been assumed. We must look at all the variables involved in the disposal of the dead, the construction of the grave, the choice and layout of grave-goods, the position of the skeleton, position of the grave within the cemetery, and so on, and the relationships between these variables and those of sex, age and family (if this latter is at all possible) as well as wealth and rank. Having done this we must propose alternative models explaining such correlations as appear, and finally choose that which appears to fit the data the best.

5. Urbanism and Settlement Hierarchy.

Another central area of this thesis will be the settlement pattern and hierarchy within the diocese of Metz, something closely linked to the study of the structure of the individual communities. Allied to this will be a study of town life in Metz itself. Here we once again

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run up against the problem of a lack of theorisation. We need to decide what makes a town. Archaeologists have tended to follow geographers in attempts to establish lists of criteria (*Kriterienbündels*) which define a town (Hodges 1982, ch.1, gives a useful list of past attempts). These are helpful in part, but in practice they have sometimes clouded the issue. Archaeologists must, in the first instance, work with only the physical remains. Testing such remains against preconceived ideas of what constitutes a town is likely to produce misleading results. For example, if we think a town is defined by a certain high quality of dwelling, or the presence of monumental vernacular architecture, we may well dismiss most early medieval Gallic towns as non-urban settlements. Ideas such as these are of course modelled upon what made a Roman town; well-kept roads, *fora*, baths and other monumental civic architecture, well-built houses, and so on. But such an approach is to ignore the mentalities of the people of the time. If what people expected from a town was no longer the provision of entertainments in a theatre, or of baths or public meeting-places, then it is not very helpful to say that town life ceased on a site when the forum, baths and theatre were abandoned or covered by lesser buildings. People's expectations of a town need to be taken into account. Making this statement does not involve 'moving the goalposts'.

For the moment we need to consider the idea of settlement hierarchy in general, and work up to a theory of what constitutes a town which takes into account such culture-related variables. Here we need to examine the status of settlements. The term status will be used in a

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similar way as in the discussion of social organisation - simply to refer to the standing of any settlement with regard to any other, in any sphere. The archaeological use of the term status to imply ranking has been implicit in settlement studies too and so in this study settlements will not be referred to as of 'high' or 'low' status, but in terms of the *order* of the services which they provide, following common geographical practice. In examining this concept, we need to consider a number of things.

Firstly the nature of the settlement must be examined. Is it nucleated or dispersed? If dispersed, can it be considered as one settlement rather than a cluster of smaller habitations? How are the settlements organised?

We also need to discuss the concept of 'service'. As stated, settlement hierarchies are often discussed in terms of the services provided by each order of habitation. Here a service will imply a non-subsistence commodity. Thus, for example, the provision by one farming settlement of cattle in return for grain from another will not be considered as a service. On the other hand, economic (such as market or mint), religious, legal, defensive and industrial provision for an area will be held to constitute services. To serve an area also implies a dominant position in relationship to the other settlements, and a one-to-many ratio between serving and served.

Related to this is the question of what kind of area a settlement served. How far does the 'zone of influence' of a 'serving'

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settlement extend before lesser habitations begin to turn to another settlement of the same order for such services? Physical geographical factors obviously need to be taken into account here. This is in a way linked with the 'order' of the service in question. A higher order service is one which cannot be provided by other settlements in the region which would otherwise occupy a similar place in the hierarchy.

Another factor which requires attention is social differentiation between settlements. This not only means whether or not distinct contemporary vocabulary distinguished certain settlements from others, it also comprises wider cultural conceptual differentiations. Certain forms of habitation might be considered as different in legal sources, for example, or the physical forms of dwelling and allotment of land might differ from one kind of settlement to another. Then there would be the question of whether people of distinct social groups were associated with certain kinds of settlement. Finally, conceptual social considerations need to be taken into account in determining what constitutes a unit of settlement. Did, for example, people living in a cluster of individual farmsteads, separated by a mile or more from each other, regard themselves as a single community? Would such a cluster be referred to as one settlement? Such factors are essential (in a historical period, when such conceptions can be evaluated) in relating archaeological data to theories of settlement hierarchy.

Taking such features into account we can propose a typology of settlement types as follows:

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Farm: A subsistence farming settlement comprising a single family unit and its dependents.

Homestead: A settlement again based upon a single family unit and its dependents, subsisting on something other than farming alone, such as milling, perhaps, or small-scale manufacture or processing.

Hamlet: A group of farms or homesteads, again subsisting mainly on farming, although some small manufacture and processing of material may take place. Low-level services may be provided for surrounding farms. A hamlet may be dispersed or nucleated.

Village: A village will again consist of a number of farms and homesteads, frequently more than comprise a hamlet. Subsistence farming will again be a major feature of the economy of such a site, but manufacture, processing of raw materials will usually be more important. Such activities will also usually be of a higher, more specialised nature than those carried out in hamlets and homesteads. Other higher level services will be provided too, many of which cannot be found in lower level settlements. A village will usually serve a geographically fairly restricted area and, again, they may be nucleated or dispersed.

Other variables, besides nucleation, will help to categorise settlements, such as fortification or privilege. A privileged settlement may in most respects be no different from, or even appear, from its size and the activities which are carried on there, to be inferior to other settlements. However, the presence there of some form of privileged person or institution will give it a higher status

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with relationship to the other habitations of the area. Thus a rural monastery would be a privileged settlement, as would be the dwelling place of the lord of an estate. The occupants, or at least the owners, of privileged settlements will rarely be involved in subsistence farming, existing instead on gifts presented by neighbouring settlements in return for, for example, religious services (in the case of the monastery), or on the surplus exacted from socially dependent settlements (in the case of the estate centre).

With this in mind, a town can be defined as a settlement differentiated from other concentrations of human habitation by possession of the following features:

1. A larger population than in other settlements, and one largely not engaged in subsistence farming.
2. Provision of 'highest order' services, and more such services than are provided by other settlements. The area served by a town will also be larger than that served by other orders of settlement.
3. Social differentiation from other settlements.

The first condition means that the inhabitants of towns must subsist on produce extracted elsewhere in the region to a greater extent than in other forms of habitation. This can be brought about either by the appropriation of such produce or by the exchange of goods or services provided by the urban population for food supplies produced elsewhere. The provision of a town's population is then either a) compulsory, or b) voluntary. One form of provision may lead to another. For example, if a town ceases to be able to provide

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goods and services which it can exchange for food and so on, its existence will of course be threatened. The town may then die out or the élites who control the town may instead try to enforce the compulsory supply of the town. Where ideals lead to the upper social strata being expected to dwell in towns, 'compulsory supply' may take the form of the surplus produce of rural estates being gathered at an urban centre in the form of food-renders. A town's existence may then depend upon agriculture but at one remove.

The advantage of such a definition is that contemporary ideology and changes therein can be taken into account. Most other *Kriterienbündels* can also be explained in these terms. Let us take as an example that of *The Erosion of History* (quoted in Hodges 1982, p.21):

Criterion.	Can be explained as falling into category:
1. Defences.	2.
2. A planned street-system.	*
3. A market(s).	1 or 2.
4. A mint.	2.
5. Legal autonomy.	3.
6. A role as a central place.	2.
7. A relatively large and dense population.	1, 2 or 3.
8. A diversified economic base.	1.
9. Plots and houses of urban types.	*
10. Social differentiation.	3.

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11. Complex religious organisation. 2.
12. A judicial centre. 2.

The criteria marked * are too subjective and culture-specific to be of use. Kennedy's discussion of the towns of Syria in the late Byzantine and early Arab periods (Kennedy 1985) shows that the breakdown of centrally-imposed planning was a factor which led to urban resurgence. '*Plots and houses of urban type*' (my italics) is also too ethnocentric. What constitutes an 'urban type'? This is something which will change from one culture and period to another. The specification that population be 'relatively dense' is problematic. A town population need be no more densely concentrated than that within, say, a village. If that population is many times larger, and engaged in the production of goods and services to supply the region, to a higher level than that in any other settlement in the region, then surely the settlement which houses it can be called a town.

A further advantage of such a loose definition is that it compels us to consider the regional context of the town, for it demands comparison with other forms of habitation within the area. It also enables us to examine the extent to which a settlement could be called a town, and perhaps ultimately even to establish a typology of different types of town (though this will not be done in this survey).

Having established these criteria for the discussion of settlement patterns it should be possible to examine that within the Merovingian

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diocese of Metz (Part 2), beginning with the lowest order rural settlements and working up through the *vici* to Metz itself. First, however, the geographical and historical context of these settlements needs to be sketched.

Chapter 3. Background.

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1. The geographical background.

It may be argued that any human action or series of actions is a response not to actual needs but to a perception of needs. Nevertheless, geography, geology and climate have played important parts in the shaping of European history. A brief survey of the geographical background - natural features and resources, geology and climate is therefore now included. A useful introduction to the subject can also be found on pages 6-8 of *Histoire de la Lorraine* (Parisse (ed) 1978).

The physical geography of the region of Metz is somewhat diverse. A relief map of the region is provided in diagram 3.1. The region of Metz forms the easternmost zone of the Parisian basin, and, as has been outlined, the region is bordered to the north and east by the Hunsrück, Pfalzerwald and the Vosges respectively. The Vosges,

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sandstone mountain ranges reaching up to 1420m. above sea level at their highest, drop very gradually to the Plateau Lorrain (in marked contrast to the spectacular drop to the Alsatian plain to the east), the foothills reaching down to the Sarre valley. In the region of Metz, the highest peak is Le Donon (1009m.), traditionally seen as the boundary between the *civitates* of the Leuci, the Tribocci and the Mediomatrici. The Plateau Lorrain is formed of Jurassic limestone and is gently rolling country generally above 200m. but below 300m. above sea level. It descends gradually to the Moselle valley in the west and the Seille valley to the south. Around the Seille valley lies the *Saulnois*, roughly corresponding to the Merovingian *Pagus Salininsis*, an area which has specialised in the production of salt since prehistory. The border between the *civitas* of Metz and that of Toul to the south appears to run along a series of low hills, but this political division does not represent any strong geographical boundary.

The Seille valley is broad and shallow and, to the north of Metz, the Moselle valley appears to be a continuation of this older feature. South of Metz, the Moselle valley is narrow and relatively steep-sided, the slopes being heavily wooded. Whereas the ascent from Metz eastwards to the Plateau Lorrain is relatively gradual, moving west from the city, one is immediately confronted with a steep climb up the *Côte de Moselle*, wooded and difficult to cross. To the west of the *Côte de Moselle* is the plateau of the Woëvre, the Merovingian *Pagus Wabrinsis*, broken up by *étangs* of varying sizes and meandering water-

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courses. Here the boundary between the *civitas* of Metz and those of Toul and Verdun is not particularly well marked geographically.

The climate of the region is generally moderate, with a hot-point in July-August and the coldest point being in January-February. Summers are long and warm, and prolonged by a gentle autumn lasting to November. Winter sees heavy snow-falls but the passes over the Vosges are rarely blocked (Parisse (ed) 1978, pp.6-8). The region allows easy practice of agriculture, as it is generally well-watered (diag.3.2 gives the main water-courses of the area); wine and fruit as well as corn and cereals can all be produced.

2. The Gallo-Roman background.

a. Metz (fig. 3.3).

The first occupation at Metz is neolithic, and later Bronze Age 'Urnfield Culture' and Iron Age Hallstatt evidence has been unearthed. In the La Tène period Metz became an important settlement and was the capital of the possibly Belgic tribe of the Mediomatrici, whose name has yet to be explained in an entirely satisfactory manner. It is likely that the name Mediomatrici dates from a period only a short time before the Roman conquest. The area originally settled by the tribe extended to the Rhine in the east and past Verdun in the west. The Rhineland territories were taken from the tribe by the invasion of the Celto-Germanic Tribocci, and in the last period of Gaulish independence, Verdun was issuing its own coinage, apparently independantly. With this in mind, we can see that by the time the Romans arrived on the scene the people still dependent upon Metz might

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be called 'the Middle Matrici'. The capital of these Mediomatrici was known as *Divodurum* and these elements led to the Roman name for the city - *Divodurum Mediomatricorum*. This name seems to have been something of a mouthful even for the Gallo-Romans, and by the end of the Roman period the name had been contracted, by an unclear phonetic or philological process, to *Mettis*, from which the modern Metz is easily derived.

Like its Gallic predecessor, Roman Metz was originally concentrated on the Hauts-de-Sainte-Croix in the angle formed by the Seille-Moselle confluence, but quickly spread across to the second of the city's two high-points, usually referred to, from its later function, as the citadel. A street-plan, was apparently laid out by the Augustan period (Vigneron 1986, p.72), as now seems typical for the towns of Gaul. The trace of this, *pace* many general books on Roman Gaul, is unknown except for the *cardo maximus* and *decumanus maximus*. Within a short time the city had most of the attributes of a Roman provincial town. A splendid aqueduct brought water from Gorze, eighteen kilometres upriver; some of the arches by which this system crossed the Moselle are still visible at Ars-sur-Moselle and Jouy-aux-Arches. Baths have been located under the present Musées de Metz and the Centre Commercial St. Jacques, and an amphitheatre lay to the south of the city, the fourth largest such building in all of Roman Gaul (*ibid*, p.236). A smaller amphitheatre lay between the river Moselle and the rest of the city. Other buildings have been traced - wealthy houses, temples, merchants' stalls, etc.. The city's

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cemeteries stretched away to the east, north and especially to the south.

Early imperial Metz was sacked a couple of times in various political and military disturbances of the first century but seems to have prospered. It lay at a vital junction of Roman roads, and on the Moselle, part of the lifeline between northern Gaul and the Mediterranean. The aqueduct could apparently have brought water to over 40,000 people and the amphitheatre could have seated over 20,000. Attempts to estimate the town's population from these figures have been made (cp. Vigneron 1986, p.68), but this methodology mistakes the purpose of such public works, which were designed at least partly to impress or compete rather than to meet precise requirements. It is a neat coincidence that the late medieval population of 30,000 falls half way between these estimates, but coincidence is probably all it is. Lefebvre and Demarolle more plausibly suggest a population of 10,000 from an estimation of population-density at >100 people per hectare (Lefebvre & Demarolle 1986, p.40). The fact remains though that Metz was an important and fairly populous place in the first to third centuries.

b. *Vici* and *castra*.

The *civitas* of Metz was, like any other, furnished with intermediate-order settlements, or *vici* in the contemporary terminology. Throughout the *civitas*, a large number have been recognised archaeologically (see diagrams 3.4 and 3.5). The most extensively excavated are Bliesbruck-Reinheim (Schaub & Petit 1984;

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Schaub & Petit in Bertemes *et al* 1988, pp. 163-171) and Schwarzenacker (Schumacher in Bertemes *et al* 1988, pp. 126-133), largely because these sites are not occupied by any later habitation.

The fortified hill-top site of Le Héracle or Le Hérapel lies in the north of the *civitas* of Metz, near the modern Forbach, dominating the Roman road from Metz to Worms. The name has been plausibly derived from an antique *Hieropolis*, so that Beaujard (1976) calls it Hiéracle. It is worth mentioning, however, that in the 1850s one M. Gerhard, despite arguing that Hieropolis was the original name, called the site *Heerapfel*, suggesting a totally different, Germanic etymology (*B. S. C. M. H. A.* 1st ser., 1, 1856-7, p.239).

The site was an Iron Age hill-fort, reoccupied after the troubles of the late third century. Excavations were carried out there around the start of the century, conducted by Émile Huber, and were extensively published, probably to a better standard than would be the case today (cp. Huber 1907). Publication of the recent exploration by R. Hoffmann, even to the standard of an interim report, has yet to see the light of day. The finds from Huber's excavations indicated settlement within the enclosure, backed onto the walls, and weaponry and other Roman artefacts were uncovered. As has recently been pointed out, the site served religious, commercial and production roles, as well as being a valuable staging-post (Georges 1988). The site, as will be further discussed in chapter 5, was abandoned some time around 400 (Georges 1988, p.170).

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Saarbrücken, possibly the *Vicus Saravi* of the Roman itineraries (Kolling 1965), lies on the Metz-Worms road about ten kilometres north-east of Le Héraple. It was given a small circuit of walls probably quite late in the fourth century, perhaps in the period of recovery immediately following the Alemannic wars of the mid-century. A house demolished for the construction of the wall contained a coin of Magnentius (Schindler 1962, p.16). It is not impossible that the fortification is even later and connected with the frontier reforms of Theodosius I, and thus perhaps to be associated with modifications to the walls at Metz itself (see chapter 6, below). The coin sequence only extends as far as the late fourth century, however.

Sarrebourg, known as *Pons Saravi* or possibly *Vicus Saravi* in the Roman era, occupies a site of strategic importance controlling a crossing of the upper Sarre and thus the entrance into the *civitas* of Metz. Once again the *vicus* was fortified in the late third or fourth century. Epigraphic evidence of a probable carpenter has been located (Wightman 1985, p.141). Archaeological investigation has revealed that the *castrum* fell into disuse some time during the later fourth century (Lutz 1960). The *cardo* between the Rue Napoléon and the Rue du Musée was last resurfaced in the fourth century (Hatt & Lutz 1960, p.49). Laumon (1973, p.19ff. & pp.189-91) provides a summary of archaeological findings up to 1973, though her interpretations are somewhat dated.

The only *castrum* in the western diocese of Metz, Scarponne, lies on the frontier between this *civitas* and that of Verdun (in later

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periods, when the course of the Moselle changed, Scarponne became part of the bishopric of Verdun; Beaujard 1976, p.298). Like Sarrebourg it thus guards an important river-crossing and the entrance into the *civitas*. A large fourth-century cemetery has been located and excavated, although never published (*Gallia* 1968, pp.374-6; 1970, pp.281-3; 1972, p.349; 1974, pp.38-9; 1976, p.356; 1978, pp. 335-6; Masson 1975 contains the only accessible inventory, although, since the work is a physical anthropological study, there are hardly any illustrations of finds). The site was fortified in the late Roman period, probably in the fourth century, using, like the walls of Metz and Tarquimpol, much reused material (*Gallia* 1972, pp.349-54).

Tarquimpol, almost certainly the *Decem Pagi* of the texts, lies on the Metz-Strasbourg road, the present village occupying a peninsula surrounded by an *étang* created in the modern era. Tarquimpol also had its own amphitheatre (*Gallia* 1982, pp.331-2). The site was fortified in the fourth century, enclosing eight hectares and thus joining the group of abnormally large *castra* in the *civitas* of Metz (cp. Wightman 1985, p.227).

Marsal, the Roman Marosalum, together with Vic and Moyenvic, lies on the upper Seille, in the heart of the Saulnois. Little detailed evidence is available on their history in the Roman period (but cp. *Gallia* 1976, p.370; 1978, p.332), although evidence of the continuing production of salt has been found (Wightman 1985, p.94, p.141). A famous inscription set up by the *vicani* of Marsal has been discovered (*ibid.*, p.66).

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c. Rural settlement.

A map of the archaeological traces of Roman rural settlement in the *civitas* of Metz shows a high density of sites right across the region (diag. 3.9). The Moselle, Seille and upper Sarre valleys seem to be the most heavily settled areas. There was apparently a very diversified economic base ranging from agriculture and pastoral farming, through wine-production (although the soils of the Moselle valley in the region do not produce wines 'de grands crus' like those further north) to lead-mining around Metz and in the Saarland. As for settlement types, *villae* are very common in the territory of the *Mediomatrici*, unlike the rest of Lorraine. Those areas without *villae* are those where 'native' settlements are to be found; it has been suggested that a reason for the absence of villas was that these areas were imperial estates (Percival 1976, p.79). As for the *villae* themselves, they fall into two types; small working villas and large palatial villas (such as St. Ulrich, dép. Moselle) (*ibid.* p.80).

As elsewhere in Gaul the third century saw a radical change in the settlement pattern. The rural *villae* were severely affected, with, at best, only one in two sites surviving into the fourth century (Wightman 1985, p.259; Lefebvre & Demarolle 1986, p.39). Lefebvre and Demarolle claim that the eastern half of the *civitas* was less badly hit (*ibid.*). Stein (1989b, Abb. 5, p.103) supports this to some extent, showing concentrations of fourth-century settlements in the north-east of the *civitas*, around Sarrebourg and along the Moselle and, to a lesser degree, Seille valleys. The central areas of the *civitas* appear to be largely devoid of settlement.

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d. Social Organisation.

Early Roman Lorraine mirrored the diversity of its rural settlements in the flexibility of social organisation. This, as elsewhere in the empire, comprised the unfree, small peasant farmers, those who worked in other forms of rural manufacture and production, and an urban middle class, and, presumably, similar people living in the *vici*, made up of artisans and merchants. There were also the local élites, either of native Gallic or Roman descent. As in the field of settlements, the third-century crisis led to profound changes. The policy of the government of supporting the very wealthy, who were able to absorb smaller land-owners to create large *latifundia*, and imperial legislation attempting to stratify yet more rigidly the social hierarchy, opened up a huge gulf between the aristocracy and the rest of the population. It will be argued in chapter 6 that these developments were instrumental in bringing about the decline of Metz itself, as an urban centre. Hoerner has put forward a similar argument, with regard to Grostenquin, to explain the demise of the *vici* in the later third and fourth centuries (Hoerner 1986, p. 323).

3. Historical background.

A brief sketch of the historical background to the study of social history in the Merovingian region of Metz is necessary to place the latter in context. Reference will be made to historical events and institutions, which must be outlined here. This section need, however, only be summary. Valuable introductions to Merovingian history are now easily available (above all James 1982 & 1988; the

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less satisfactory Geary 1988; the essays in Wallace-Hadrill 1962 and 1975 retain their great value; Ian Wood's forthcoming book on Merovingian political history is awaited with great interest). Works on the Merovingian history of Lorraine and Austrasia also exist in some numbers (cp. Cardot 1987; Picard 1988). Nevertheless, some problems of the history of Metz in this region require more detailed consideration.

a. Political History.

As will become clear below, the first century of the Merovingian era in Lorraine is a dark period. The barbarians who invaded Gaul in 407 doubtless left their mark on the region; Fredegar claims that the Vandals sacked Metz in 407 (*Chronicle* II.60). The imperial presence at Trier was definitively removed by the 420s, probably earlier, and the writ of the Roman central government ceased to run in the north-east; with the exception of Salvian's gloomy descriptions of the devastation of Trier and the hardships experienced by the rural population (*Governance* 5.21-22, 5.38, 6.13), contemporary sources are almost silent about Belgica Prima.

In 451 the area was ravaged by Attila's Huns, who sacked Metz itself (this event receives fuller treatment in chapter 7). In the later fifth century a Count Arbogast ruled at Trier and received praise from Sidonius Apollinaris (*Ep.* IV.17). A letter to Arbogast from Bishop Auspicius of Toul (*Ep. Aust.*, 22) makes it clear that Auspicius' *civitas* lay outside his jurisdiction, but we can never know

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whether or not the intervening *civitas* of Metz was under Arbogast's rule.

The date of the incorporation of the Moselle valley regions into the Frankish realms is difficult to establish. The *Liber Historiae Francorum* (ch.8) tells us how in (presumably) the early 460s the Franks of Childeric I drove Aegidius out of Cologne and took Trier. Metz may have fallen to them, however permanently, at the same time. The *civitas* probably formed part of the Ripuarian Frankish kingdom of Cologne in c.500; it was certainly under Frankish control by the end of Clovis' reign.

In the sixth century the Merovingian kings of Austrasia transferred their principal seat from Reims to Metz. The date of this needs fuller consideration. Fredegar (III.29) tells us that Metz was a 'capital' of one of the Frankish kingdoms from the death of Clovis I in 511. His evidence may not be entirely reliable, however, as he could well have based it upon his knowledge that Metz was the chief Austrasian royal residence in his own day (the early seventh century). Gregory states that in the division of the kingdom in 561, Sigibert I of Austrasia had his seat at Reims (*L.H.* IV.22). By 565, however, he had moved to Metz, where he was married to Brunehildis (*Venantius, Carmina*, 6.1). Gregory, however, demonstrates that Metz had royal connections before this. In 551 King Theudebald I called a synod there for the election of the Bishop of Clermont (*L.H.* IV.7). Twenty years later, when the successful claimant, Cautinus, died, King Sigibert I had his successor, Avitus, brought to Metz and consecrated

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in the royal presence (*L.H.* IV.35), by then well established in the city. In the 560s Venantius (*Carmina*, 3.13) referred to Metz as *patriae ducis*, which indicates its supremacy within the realm. The establishment of the royal seat at Metz must be placed around the middle of the century.

From then on the *civitas* remained in the *Teilreich* of Austrasia and town's importance grew rapidly. Church councils were held there in 551 and 590 (*L.H.* IV.7 & X.19), the latter called to try bishop Egidius of Reims, and we can snatch glimpses of life in the area from Gregory of Tours. An outbreak of dysentery swept the area in 587 (*L.H.* IX.13) but when Gregory tells us that Frankish troops from Champagne, on their way to join an invasion of Italy, sacked the city (*L.H.* X.3), he was probably using the ambiguous terms for city in their wider, regional sense. It is unlikely that the troops would have sacked their king's chief seat of government. In 595, when Childebert II died, his elder son Theodebert II received Austrasia 'with his seat at Metz' (Fredegar IV.16). When Theuderic II, about to attack Neustria, died at Metz (*Vita Columbani* I.29; Fredegar, IV.39), of dysentery according to Fredegar, Brunehildis was also at the 'capital' (*ibid.* IV.40) with Theuderic's sons. In 631 Dagobert collected his army for a Thuringian campaign at Metz (*ibid.* IV.74) and in the following year the importance of the city was underlined when Dagobert placed his young son Sigibert on the throne of Austrasia, with 'Metz as his headquarters' (*ibid.* IV.75).

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On the death of his father, Sigibert's share of the royal treasure was brought to Metz, presented to him and inventoried there (*ibid*, IV.85). The *Vita Goaris Confessoris Rhenani* (ch.9) refers to Sigibert's court at Metz, whilst the *Vita Galli auctore Wettino* (ch.22) tells us that the king was married there. Later tradition (Sigibert of Gembloux's mid-eleventh-century *Vita S. Sigiberti regis*) claims that Sigibert was buried near Metz at the church of St. Martin, the modern St. Martin-lès-Metz (Sigibert describes the church as *sita ... ad radices qui plurimus imminet urbi adversasque aspectat desuper arces*). Sigibert of Gembloux would have us believe that the king built this church but, as Gauthier (1986, p.52) points out, the *Vita Romarici* also refers to a church of St. Martin outside the walls in 612. The church must have been situated away from the town since, after praying there, Romaric returned to the city (*regressus ad civitatem; V.R.A.H. ch.3*).

Though Metz undoubtedly remained the chief seat of the puppet-kings of Austrasia and was clearly very important to the rising Pippinid/Arnulfing dynasty (Oexle 1967), we have hardly any evidence for the narrative history of the town and region in the century between the death of Sigibert III and the end of the Merovingian dynasty.

b. Ecclesiastical history.

The ecclesiastical history of the Merovingian *civitas* of Metz is thoroughly covered by the work of Nancy Gauthier (1980). Here it suffices only to say that the city seems to have had an unbroken

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succession of bishops from c.300 on. Werner (1979, p.155, n.22) draws attention to one bishop apparently omitted from the episcopal lists, a certain Gundulf, whom the *vita Radegundis* (I.13) says became a bishop of Metz. This could, however, simply be the Petrus mentioned in a letter of Gogo, the *nutritor* of Childebert II (*Ep. Aust.* 21). Though Gundulf, an abbot, had kept his Frankish name on entering the church, it would not be unusual to adopt an ecclesiastical name such as Peter upon elevation to the episcopate.

Metz does not, between c.550 and c.614, appear to have been the seat of prelates of renowned sanctity. Almost all the records we have of these shadowy figures concern secular activities. Villicus was asked the price of pigs by Bishop Mapinius of Reims (*Ep. Aust.* 15) and asked to intercede with the king for a certain Dinamius (*ibid.* 17). Venantius (*Carmina* 3.13) credits him with restoring the roofs of churches and caring for the needy but also describes how he had rebuilt the city walls. Bishop Petrus received a letter commending an estate to his care from Gogo (*Ep. Aust.* 21). If he was the Gundulf mentioned in the *vita Radegundis*, as suggested above, then he may well have been related to Gregory of Tours' uncle, count Gundulf, who in turn was almost certainly Gundulf the *subregulus*, to whom the future bishop Arnulf was entrusted for his education (*V.A.* 3; Werner 1979, p.155, n.22). If Petrus and abbot (later bishop) Gundulf were not one and the same, then it is even possible that the latter could actually be identified with Gregory of Tours' uncle. Petrus cannot be the same person as Count Gundulf, however, as he was bishop before 581 (when Gogo died; *L.H.* VI.1) and Gundulf was still a count in 583

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(*L.H.* VI.11). Either way, this Gundulf, despite a reputation for piety, was probably a member of a family which prospered in the service of the Austrasian royal family. The next two prelates were possibly members of the royal family. Paul the Deacon (*Lib. Ep. Mett.* 15) alleges that Agiulf was descended from one of Clovis's daughters. Agiulf's successor was his nephew (or grandson), Arnoald. After him, Papolus, was, in turn, probably the same person as the count Papolus whom Venantius (*Carmina* 6.8) mentions in the train of Sigibert I and Brunehildis in the 560s. The indications are that the see based upon the royal capital was reserved for faithful servants of the king or members of their families.

In 616, Berthechramn of Le Mans bequeathed certain unidentifiable estates to Arnulf of Metz. These estates are said to have been held and ravaged 'with iniquity' by 'Egulf and Arnoald' and given to Berthechramn by Chlothar II (Gauthier 1980, pp.376-8 for a discussion of this section of the will). Given the poor state of spelling in the manuscript it is likely that these two are Agiulf and Arnoald, the two Bishops of Metz, and that the Bishop of Le Mans was being ordered by Clothar to return the confiscated lands to the see of Metz. The reigns of bishops Arnoald and Papolus have always had to be fitted into a short space of time between 601, when Agiulf is attested in a letter of Gregory the Great to Brunehildis, and Arnulf's election in 614 (for this date see Gauthier 1980, p.377). But this was a time of great political turmoil. Gauthier (*ibid.*) suggests that the see of Metz was vacant from the time of Chlothar's invasion until after the Council of Paris in 614. As outlined, both Arnoald and Papolus can

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be postulated as having been among Brunichildis' supporters. Perhaps Papolus was driven out, and possibly even killed, when Chlothar II of Neustria invaded Austrasia and wiped out Theoderic II's family in 613. We can then see Arnulf, one of the ringleaders in inviting Chlothar into Austrasia, eventually being rewarded with the diocese of Metz. In driving out Brunichildis' party, Chlothar confiscated certain of Agiulf's estates and gave them to another relative of his, Berthechramn of Le Mans. Arnulf's appointment continued the tradition of having a trusted supporter of the royal family as bishop of Metz, and Arnulf was soon appointed to be one of the *nutritores* to the young Dagobert I. It was Arnulf's transformation from loyal advisor to Columbanian ascetic which led to so much tension between him and his former protégé, as recorded in his *vita*.

The tradition of political appointment to the see lasted even longer. Arnulf's successor, Goeric-Abbo, was one of the famous circle of mid-seventh-century churchmen who served their apprenticeship at the court of Dagobert I, of which Desiderius of Cahors was the most celebrated. Abbo was also one of the three recipients of copies of the testament of Dagobert I (*G.D.R.F.* 39). The next bishop, Godo, may have been an adviser to Sigibert III (cp. Gauthier 1980, p.390). Gauthier doubts the identification, seeing the Godo in question rather as the contemporary bishop of Verdun. However, it is as plausible that a bishop of Metz advised a king with such strong connections with the city as Sigibert III. Chlodulf, Arnulf's son, later became Bishop of Metz, despite a reputation for impiety in his youth (*Lib. Ep. Mett.* 16). He too was of the circle of

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Desiderius of Cahors and Goeric-Abbo (Gauthier 1980, p.391), and was of course a relative of the now ascendant Pippinids. Finally, at the very end of the period under review, Chrodegang, later, of course, to play a prominent part in the usurpation of Pippin III, had earlier served as a referendary to Pippin's father, Charles Martel (*Lib. Ep. Mett.* 27).

c. Administration (fig. 3.10).

The *civitas* of Metz was, like any other *civitas*, organised into *pagi*. From written sources, mainly charters, we know of the *Pagus Salininsis* (the Seille valley), the *Pagus Sarroinsis* (the Sarre valley), the *Pagus Mosellinsis* (the Moselle valley, north of Metz) and the *Pagus Scarponinsis* (the area to the north and west of Scarponne). In later sources a *Pagus Mettensis* around Metz itself is mentioned. In at least one case, however, this seems to be an error for *Pagus Mosellensis*. An eighth-century charter refers to a *Pagus Aquilensis* around the river Eichel in the far east of the *civitas*, but this does not appear to have become established as an administrative division in the Merovingian period. Similarly, the *Bliesgau* (the Blies valley, in the modern Saarland) is not attested in Merovingian documents. As will be mentioned in chapter 5, a duke of the *Pagus Salininsis* is mentioned in 682-3 (Wiss.213) and a Count Willichar is mentioned in the *Pagus Sarroinsis* in the early eighth century. The *pagi* were further divided into hundreds, administered by *centenarii* (hundredsmen); Chardoin the *centenarius*, apparently one of Willichar's officials, is a frequent witness to early eighth-century Wissembourg charters. These *pagi* can be shown to spread across later diocesan

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boundaries, thus calling into question the conventional belief that the latter equated with *civitas*-boundaries. Others, such as the *Pagus Wabrinsis* do appear to have bounds contiguous with those of the *civitates* and, given that we know for certain that the *civitates* of Metz and Trier both contained a *Pagus Mosellinsis*, this objection is not too serious.

c. The problem of Frankish settlement.

One feature, notable by its general absence from the discussion in this thesis, is the settlement of the Franks and Alamans in the region. It must be made clear that this is not because the author feels that this was not an important process or even that it never took place. It will become clear below that this upheaval was at the root of much of the social stress which characterised the period. The bizarre arguments recently put forward by Alain Simmer (1987, p.392 ff.; 1988, p.155), that there was no Germanic settlement in the region, are simply untenable. His spurious archaeological arguments were dismissed in chapter two; his claims that the Germanic place-names of the region and 'Mosellan' dialect are pre-Roman, do not stand up to analysis of the documents. Despite the late date of the earliest charters in the region of Metz, these clearly show a progression from Latin to German forms (see above, ch. 1, section 4; and below ch. 4, section 2).

The reason for this omission rather concerns the difficulties involved in studying the problem. As has been outlined in chapter 1, place-names are far too problematic for any valid conclusions to be

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drawn from this body of source-material about the Frankish-Alamannic settlement, the areas which were colonised and the routes taken by the settlers. As was made equally clear in chapter 2, section 3, archaeological cemetery evidence is just as useless in examining this problem. Since historical sources are scarce in the period of colonisation, and since, from narrative sources we hardly even know when the region came under the political sway of the Franks, it seems sadly most prudent to leave this critically important issue as a 'great unknown' factor. Suffice it to say that Germanic settlement took place in northern Gaul between the end of the Roman Empire and the Carolingian period, and was sufficiently intense to change the dominant language from Romance to German in a substantial part of the area studied.

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Chapter 4. Rural Settlement.

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1. The problem.

When examining rural settlement in the region of Metz, the most noticeable feature is the striking difference in settlement-density between the Roman and early medieval periods, as attested archaeologically. Finds indicating Roman occupation are distributed densely throughout the *civitas* (fig. 3.9). A map of villas alone shows many more settlements than are revealed by the map of Merovingian cemeteries, even allowing a settlement to cemetery ratio greater than 1:1. In the middle Seille valley, the region of the *civitas* most recently and thoroughly surveyed, twenty-five Gallo-Roman settlements are known to nine early medieval, though this ratio is reversed in the case of cemeteries: six Merovingian to three Roman (Cuvelier 1988c, p.54, fig.25). While it is true that the Gallo-Roman settlements could date to any time between the first and the fourth centuries and were probably not all occupied simultaneously,

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the date-range of early medieval settlements similarly spans 300-400 years and again all may well not have been in use at the same time. Of the two 'early medieval' settlements plotted at Nomeny, one is seventh- and eighth-century, and the other is its eighth- or ninth-century successor. From this survey, using evidence more thoroughly gathered and thus less subject to chance than usual within the region, it would seem safe to say that settlement was far less dense in the Merovingian than in the Gallo-Roman period. The contraction of the settlement pattern is supported by examination of Stein's maps of fourth and fifth-century settlement, and of Merovingian cemeteries (Stein 1989b, Abb. 5 & 6), which show very similar distributions.

This difference in density clearly requires explanation and has long vexed researchers. Almost all Roman settlements known to archaeologists were abandoned by 400 (see ch. 3). This fact, together with the rarity of Merovingian settlements, or indications thereof, suggests a massive change in the structure of rural Gaul between the Roman and Merovingian periods, in this region apparently in the later third to late fourth century. This chapter will attempt to account for this hiatus. Factors which could explain it might be as follows:

1. A dramatic fall in population.
 2. Flight to the towns or *vici*.
 3. Nucleation of settlements.
 4. Archaeological failure to locate settlements.
 5. Merovingian settlement underlying modern settlement.
- Or some combination of these.

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In examining this problem, such evidence as we have comes in a variety of forms and it will help to examine each separately, beginning with the written sources.

2. Historical evidence 1. The Wissembourg charters.

Historical records are vague about the rural settlements in this region at this time. Our best sources are the charters. These come essentially from two cartularies, those of Wissembourg and Gorze abbeys, though there are one or two other isolated documents. These two cartularies reveal numerous differences in their information on this subject so it will be useful to examine them in turn.

Eighty-two Wissembourg charters date to the period 681-864 and relate to the lands west of the Vosges. The charters seem to be authentic, though minor problems arise here and there. The lands referred to range from the middle Seille and middle Sânon valleys to the western foothills of the Vosges.

Description of lands in these documents is usually given in terms of estates. The following donation by Weroald, son of Audoin, will serve as a useful example from the Merovingian period:

'That is in the villa of Haganbah which is called Disciacu[m] which my former [deceased] father, Audoin, gave me; whatever he was seen to hold there at that time, between the Aculia [the river Eichel] and the Mittilibrunn [the Mittelbach] wholly and integrally from the present day, as we said above, together with farms [*mansis*], dwellings [*domibus*], serfs and slaves [*mancipiis vel accolis*] commanded there, and fields

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[*campis*], meadows [*pratis*], pasture [*pascuis*], woods [*silvis*] and half a forest [*forastis medietatem*], and in the Vosges the fourth part of my share which belongs to that villa between the Aculia and the Mittilibrunn and the via Bassoniaca or the lata Petra or Deubaci, waters and water courses, mobile or immobile [*aquis aquarumque decursibus mobilis et immobilis*], wholly to the above-said monastery of Wissembourg ...' (Wiss. 192, dated Sarrebourg, 1 Feb. 713)

A typical late seventh- or eighth-century donation, it grants a large self-sufficient estate. The list of appurtenances, farms, dwellings, serfs and slaves, fields, meadows, pasture, woods, waters and water-courses, is generic. This list, or a similar variant of it, occurs in the majority of charters of the seventh and eighth centuries. Yet we know that Weroald, was not the only landholder in this area:

'I [Chrodoin son of Petrus] give ... in the villa of Chaganbach half of my share, in farms, houses [*casis*], churches [*ecclesiis* [*sic*]], buildings [*ædificiis*], fields, meadows, mills [*farinariis*], waters and water courses, and a wood there. Of this wood on one side is the river Aquila, on the other runs the Mittilibrun, and this side is the limit of Chaganbach which Weroald confirmed ... to the above-named monastery ...' (Wiss. 227, dated Asswiller, 3 Feb. 718).

From these documents the first point to be made concerns the use of the word *villa*. Within the *villa* of [C]Haganbach there were at least two landowners holding large self-sufficient estates. On this basis, the meaning of *villa* has changed somewhat since Roman times, when it meant farm-estate. Ross Samson, discussing the sixth- and seventh-

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century villa, has said that in examining previous interpretations of the post-Roman villa we have a choice between three alternatives: ① A continuation of the Roman-style villa; ② A nucleated settlement or village; or ③ a 'proto-castle' (Samson 1987b, p.287). Clearly none of these applies here. *Villa* appears to denote a small region, within which several people might hold estates. Perhaps these *villae* were originally single estates but had since been broken up into smaller units. Divided inheritance and the need to provide land as dowry could lead to this. This regional sense of the word *villa* is underlined by its use as a synonym for the word *finis* (limits; boundaries) and its Germanic equivalent *marca*. Thus Guermange (départ. Moselle) is variously described as a *villa* and a *marca* in different charters (Wiss.258, 249 [216], 208). In Wiss.258 the estate is described as *in villa vel in fine que dicitur Grimanga marca*, thus incorporating all three terms. In earlier (pre-750) Wissembourg charters the terms *villa*, and *marca* occur in the same description of an estate only twice.

Villa is not often used in a sense which corresponds to its modern archaeological usage, as an estate centre. 'With that villa which I built recently [*de novo*] within those bounds [*finis*] where the Theotbach flows into the Aquila' (Tieffenbach, départ. Bas Rhin; Wiss.195, dated Rimsdorf, 18 May, 718) is a rare instance. Another might be Wiss.256 (dated Wissembourg, 22 April, 713) where Weroald refers to 'our villa of Waldhambach which is called Distiacus [*sic*]'. This, besides being a valuable indication of the coexistence of Roman and German toponyms, might mean that within the (wider) *villa* of

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Waldhambach, Weroald's *villa* (in the narrower sense) was called Disciacum.

In later (post-750) Wissembourg charters, *villa* is less frequently used to describe the location of a grant; the word *marca* is used more frequently. Although *villa* never loses its meaning as a synonym for *marca* or *finis* it may be significant that it is now used less frequently in a regional sense; it is perhaps narrowing in meaning. Thus in Wiss.263 (dated Gærlingen, 2 Nov. 763) the phrase used is *infra fine Hilbodiaga in villa Gerboldinga* and in Wiss.238 (dated ?, 8 Oct. 812) land is given *in villa et in marca Rimuwillare*. In these later charters, *villa* occurs more often with *finis* or *marca* in the same description of land, thus 'in the villa or marca of X'. This too may indicate that the words were beginning to have different connotations, though the fact that the phrase 'in the marca or finis of X' occurs twice (albeit in relation to the same gift) argues against this. This is something to which we will return in looking at the Gorze charters.

Having established that the word *villa* is rarely used in a specific way to describe one settlement, what can these charters tell us about rural settlement? The impression given is, first of all, of settlement organised in terms of large estates. Grants of single fields and woods, common in the Gorze charters, are rare. We will consider the reasons for this later.

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Boundary clauses are uncommon in the Wissembourg charters. Apart from the charters relating to Waldhambach which repeatedly mention that the *villa* lies between Eichel and Mittelbach, there are only seven such clauses. Two of these refer to lands at the *vicus* of Marsal (Wiss.213 and 215), where we might expect that settlement was dense and that boundaries had to be defined. Four of the others relate to the rare grants of single fields or woods ((Wiss.212, 230, 244 and 263). The last refers to a grant of *jornales* (days' work) and so probably, here too, to the land where this work was to be done. However, it may still be significant that the grants of single houses and farms are not measured and given bounds as they are in the Gorze cartulary. Two of the boundary clauses relate to lands in the *Pagus Salininsis* (Cutting, Wiss.230; Guéblange, Wiss.206), in the west of the area covered by the cartulary and thus closest to the region of the Gorze estates.

There is little or no mention of anything which sounds like a nucleated settlement. Churches are mentioned quite frequently, and in a charter of 783 (Wiss.217, dated Wissembourg, 11 June) the church in the *marca Horone* (?) is given together with the 'villa where the church is', perhaps another of the rare instances of the use of *villa* in its 'archaeological' sense, but possibly in the sense of nucleated settlement, which, it will be argued below, the word adopts in the Gorze charters at about this time. The churches mentioned may well have provided the foci for the dispersed settlements of an estate.

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The basic unit of these dispersed settlements was the individual farm. The term *mansus*, or its German synonym *hoba* (cp. Wiss.248, Wissembourg, 6 March, 737; Wiss.236, Wissembourg, 8 April, 801) was used for such farms. These *mansí* correspond closely to the archaeological meaning of the word *villa*. A *hoba* could be given with a long generic list of appurtenances, such as described above (cp. Wiss 228, dated Wissembourg, ?18 Aug. 705-6; Wiss.248, dated Wissembourg, 6 March 737). Such *hobae* were thus apparently self-sufficient farms, frequently, in the Wissembourg documents, run by *mancipii*. The population of such establishments was generally small, one or two families in most instances, but could be larger. Three longer lists of *mancipii* exist (Wiss.227, dated Asswiller, 3 Feb. 718; Wiss.241, dated Wissembourg, 18 June 737; and Wiss.193, dated Ungstein 19 Nov. 764). The first of these names twenty-five *mancipii* and three unnamed sets of children, the second lists twenty-six *mancipii* with fifteen sets of unnamed children, and the third gives twenty-seven named *mancipii* and one unnamed child. However, Wiss.241 is clearly giving a series of unfree families which are being transferred to populate and work the Wissembourg estates; they are associated with no specific land-grant. We do not know how many farms they originally came from. This is true of the serfs named in Wiss.227, though these all came from the wider villa of Waldhambach. Wiss.193 mentions no *mansí*, only houses and buildings (*domibus et edificiiis*) so these serfs might have come from the same (?demesne) farm. That estates were divided into demesne and dependent farms is shown by a reference in Wiss.212 which mentions demesne land (*dominica*). The

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churches mentioned above were probably associated with demesne farms. In Wiss.212 the church land is by the demesne.

Smaller settlements are mentioned. In addition to mills and so on, there are isolated references to houses (*casae*; Wiss.258, dated Wissembourg, 13 Jan. 787; Wiss.249 [216], Wissembourg 15 Oct. 787). These could be the foci of farms (hence *manso et casa superstabilita*; Wiss.249) but could equally be lesser settlements. The latter is supported by the fact that Wiss.258 is a gift of a house, a granary and all that pertains to the house.

The overall impression given by the Wissembourg cartulary is then one of dispersed settlement organised in terms of estates, comprising demesne and dependant farms (*mansu* or *hobae*), sometimes with churches at their foci, and with lesser farmsteads and homesteads such as mills, scattered around them. These estates were grouped within *villae*, which possibly correspond to modern communes. The terms *finis* and *marca* were later used to describe these small geographical zones.

3. The historical evidence 2. The Gorze charters.

The Gorze cartulary (Herbomez 1898) contains forty-eight authentic charters relating to lands east of the middle Meuse valley between 745 and 864. The foundation charter Gorze 1 (dated Andernach, 20 May, 745) has been included in these, despite the problems associated with its authenticity. Whilst the charter clearly does not exist in its original form, and may well be a creation of the eleventh century or

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later (probably the thirteenth century), it is not unreasonable to suppose that it was compiled from a series of original charters, as D'Herbomez suggested (*ibid.*, pp.366-7). Certainly the language used in the individual grants is consistent with such a supposition.

The charters discussed here range from the area of Verdun in the west to the middle Seille valley in the east, where, in Vic, Gorze held lands only six kilometres or so from Marsal and the westernmost reaches of Wissembourg's estates in Lorraine. These charters thus relate to both a different geographical zone and often to a different period to the Wissembourg documents.

The use of the word *villa* in the Gorze charters is particularly interesting. In the early documents it has the same sense as in the Wissembourg cartulary, that is as a unit of land within which a person or institution (most of the early grants to Gorze were made of the estates of St. Stephen's cathedral, Metz) could hold estates. Thus:

'... we give our possessions ... in Daulfi villa [?Hadonville] ... farms, dwellings, buildings built there, houses, small houses [*casulis*], courtyards [*curtilis*], gardens [*ortilis*], cultivated infield [*olcis*], fields, meadows, pasture, rights of passage [? entrances?; *perviisil*] and arable land, cultivated or uncultivated, little woods [*silvulis*], waters and water courses, whether of paternal or maternal [inheritance] or share, or that which Primigenia my wife obtained through her dowry.' (Gorze 7, dated ?, 1 Jan. 761)

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However, in 770 occurs one of the very few uses of the word *villa* to mean an estate in the old Roman sense. This document gives a precious insight into the running of an eighth-century villa:

'Let it then be known by all the faithful of God's holy church that I gave to St. Gorgonius a villa called Quinciacum within the Woëvre (*in finem Wavrinsel*) above the river Azenna [Quincy on the river Loison, *dép.* Meusel], in exchange for a *precaria* in Warangisi villa [Varangéville, *dép.* Meurthe-et-Moselle] and Wasatico. Of which these are the aspects of the aforesaid villa of Quinciacum:

One demesne farm [*mansus unus indominicatus*] with all buildings, meadows, woods, waters and water courses, and one church in honour of St. Martin, which pays 10 solidi per year.

Demesne vines from which 40 modii of wine can be collected.

Other demesne lands with 250 modii per sown field.

Similarly on other [lands; demesne lands?], 2 malshouses [*cambas*] which pay 200 modii of grain.

Two millers. One pays 42 modii of flour and 10 of cereals for brewing [*brasio*]; the other 20 modii of flour and 10 of cereals for brewing. To one of these millers [belongs] one fatted pig.

In the third place [*? in tercio loco*] is one miller who yields two thirds to the lord and keeps one third for himself [*qui duas partes reddit seniori et unam secum retinet*] concerning the wood where there can be 7800 [*cccc cccc*; scribal error for 400?] fatted pigs.

There are 33 free farms [*mansi ingenuiles*; or it could perhaps mean free men of the farm]. Each pays 10 denarii of victuals in May. Similarly each woman pays 3 denarii at Martinmas.

And 30 of flax from each farm. Each farm pays 3 cartloads of wood, and one pig at Christmas and 3 chickens and 15 eggs. Each farm is responsible for 10 perches of enclosure wall [*et unusquisque mansus ad clausuram faciendam perticas X*], and in

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May each farm pays 100 shingles.' (Gorze 19, dated Quincy, 770)

This document confirms many of the suppositions made from the Wissembourg cartulary: a demesne farm with its church, surrounded by dependent farms and lesser settlements (the millers). The fact that all this is called a villa is unusual, as stated, but is perhaps explicable if we argue that this particular villa had remained undivided, unlike most others in the region, where the term was now used to describe a small geographical region.

An interesting change in the use of the word villa comes about soon after the issue of Gorze 19. From the 770s the villa is repeatedly distinguished from the *fines*. The former is usually referred to as 'X's villa' or court whilst the latter has a similar stem but a regional suffix, either *-acum*, the old Roman estate suffix, or the regional suffix *-ensis* or *-insis* (as in *Pagus Scarponinsis*). Thus 'in Ragnulfiaga fine or in that villa [of] Ragnulf's villa' (Gorze 26, dated 'Igmara Curte' [?], 11 Aug. 786); 'in the fine Lagbriacensi [-*acum* plus *-ensis* here] or in Labrigia villa' (Gorze 28, dated Conflans, 788); 'in the fine Ingariunse or in the villa called Hingarigo curte' (Gorze 37, dated ?Landrecourt, 795); 'in fine Raginbertiaga or in that villa [of] Raginber curte' (Gorze 51, dated Gorze 848). The examples could be multiplied up to the 850s but thereafter the distinction continues in the formula 'in the villa called 'X' or in those *fines*' or something similar (*in villa cujus vocabulum est Retingas seu in ipsa fine* - in the villa of which the

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name is Retingas [probably Kédange, dép. Moselle] or in those fines; Gorze 85, dated Metz, 898).

This seems to indicate that *villa* now meant a sort of nucleated settlement as opposed to the small area within which it lay (the latter possibly equating with a modern commune; the ratio of villas or *fines* to communes is usually one-to-one). Such a conclusion would confirm strikingly the trend suggested in the Wissembourg cartulary.

In other Gorze charters the grants relate to much smaller areas of land, as far as can be ascertained. Instead of vague grants of 'all I possess', there are specific grants of meadows, fields and so on. These are usually defined as having two 'sides' (*lateres*) and two 'fronts' (*frontes*), these being measured in perches. A typical example is as follows:

'This meadow is six perches long on one side and six on the other and is seven perches across the middle. The meadow is measured in legal perches with twelve feet to the perch, On one side Sevirus holds [land]; on the other side Dodo holds [land]. On both 'fronts' forest defines the meadow.' (Gorze 23, dated 775)

The great majority of documents in the Gorze cartulary contain such a clause after 771.

This increased concern with clearly defined, smaller land-units is underlined by a change in the use of the word *mansus*. It still means

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farm, hence continued grants of *mansi* plus appurtenances, but it can now also mean a small piece of land, presumably with a house and lesser buildings. Thus we have an instance of a *mansus* 40 perches (480 ft.) by 3½ to 4 perches (42 to 48 ft.) and the use of the word *mansus* to describe plots of land within towns and *vici*. This latter usage suggests that other cases of 'measured' *mansi* could be plots within nucleated settlements. Grants of individual houses (*casae*) also point to the nucleation of settlements suggested by the change in the use of the word *villa*. One example of a grant of a house is Gorze 33; 'I give my house with all the ?surroundings pertaining to it in Warbodi villa at St. Julian's' [*et dono casam meam cum omni acinctu ad ipsam casam pertinentam in Warbodi Villa ad Sanctum Julianum* dated St.-Julien-lès-Gorze, 21 Dec. 795]. *Acinctus* here could mean boundary wall. The translation as 'surroundings' is suggested by the companion charter (Gorze 34) wherein the donor, Deodatus, receives back the usufruct of his gift as benefice. In this charter the phrase is 'the house with all its buildings' (*casam cum omnibus edificiis suis*).

4. The historical evidence 3. Other evidence.

Other written sources for the rural settlement pattern are scarce. The handful of royal and mayoral charters confirm the impression given by the Gorze and Wissembourg documents. The charter issued to St. Arnulf's, Metz by Chilperic II (Pertz Royal 89, dated Compiègne, 8 June 717) refers to Mars-la-Tour as *villam nostram nuncupante Marte* (our villa called Marte), one of the few cases of a villa being described as a single property. Even here, though, it is not clear

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that the Merovingians owned the whole villa. The grant is *quantumcumque fiscus noster ibidem esse videtur*: in as much as our fisc is seen to be there. Later it is *quicquid de rebus [fiscus] noster ibidem tenetur*: whatever of our [fiscal] possessions are held there. The implication is surely that part of Mars-la-Tour was not held by the fisc. This grant also mentions a church (lit. churches: *æclesias*). Since *mansi* are omitted from the list of appurtenances this might be a grant of a single estate.

We have at least one authentic charter of St. Arnulf's issued by the Pippinids (Pertz mayoral 2, of Pippin II, dated Nivelles, 20 Feb. 691). Some others may be genuine; many more have surely been lost - this was one of the most important Carolingian family shrines. This charter is a donation of Norroy-le-Sec in the Woëvre, again described as a single entity (*villam proprietatis nomine vocabulo Nugaretum sitam in pago Wabrinse*). The villa comprises, as with Gorze 19, a demesne farm and appurtenances - fields, meadows, woods, cultivated and uncultivated land, *mancipii* of both sexes - and 'whatever else I am seen to possess in the aforesaid villa'. Here again it is eventually implied that there are other possessions in the villa, despite its description as 'of our property' (lit. 'of the property'). The charter provides further confirmation of the division of estates into demesne and dependencies.

Other forms of evidence add little. *Lex Ribvaria* stresses the importance of boundary fences around houses and of markers between lands but there is hardly any indication of whether these houses were

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grouped together in nucleated settlements or were the foci of isolated farms. However, it is perhaps very significant that no distinction is drawn, in Frankish law, between types of settlement (cp. also chs. 5 & 8).

Almost nothing can be gleaned from hagiographical sources. The *Vita Arnulfi* (9; 15) says that Metz cathedral had estates in the Vosges but that is all. The *Vita Waldradae*, clearly written from a foundation charter, mentions the grant of estates by Waldrada's relative Duke Eleutherius, but neither locates nor describes these estates. One potentially interesting piece of information is contained in the *Life of Romaric* (*V.R.A.H.*, 3) where *villa* denotes a single possession. Having defeated his brother Theodebert II, and killed him and his supporters, Theoderic II added their *villae* to the royal fisc (*villae eorum fisci dicionibus redacte sunt*). This usage significantly predates most charters, which use *villa* in a more regional sense.

Bishop Mapinius' letter to Bishop Villicus of Metz (*Ep. Aust.*, 15) deals essentially with the price of pigs in the region of Metz; underlining the importance of pig-farming, often mentioned in the charters (cp. Gorze 19).

5. The historical evidence 4. Problems and conclusions.

The first problem which demands our attention in making sense of the written data is the difference between the picture of rural settlement given in the Wissembourg cartulary and that presented by

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the Gorze documents. The former talks in terms of large grants, of self-sufficient estates, with few or no boundary clauses, whereas the latter describe small parcels of land, carefully measured and bounded. The latter too give more indication of the existence of nucleated settlements. There are several possible reasons for this difference.

1. A straight-forward difference in formulae used in the different scriptoria. No significance in terms of settlement geography can then be attached to the difference between the two cartularies.

2. A chronological difference, with which the above might be associated. Gorze was founded some eighty years after Wissembourg.

3. A geographical difference, based upon the fact that the Gorze charters deal with lands west of the middle Seille valley, whereas the Wissembourg charters often deal with lands in the Vosges foothills, where we might expect settlement to be less dense.

4. A difference in social class between the benefactors of Gorze and those of Wissembourg, with the latter being more powerful.

It must be stated at the outset that the choice of formula would be governed by the need to describe adequately the gift made. Thus even if the Wissembourg scribes never changed their formulae then we could at least suggest that the situation when Wissembourg was founded was different to that when Chrodegang created Gorze and different formulae were soon found to be necessary (as stated, early Gorze

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charters are very similar in form to earlier eighth- and seventh-century charters). This points to the second factor listed above. This cannot be an entirely satisfactory explanation, since fifty or so Wissembourg charters are contemporary with the Gorze donations examined. Further support for it might, however, be found in the fact that, as outlined, the later eighth-century Wissembourg charters give some indications of the same trends as are manifest in the Gorze documents. The third possibility should not be overlooked. It may be significant that the few boundary clauses in the Wissembourg cartulary deal with estates in the west of the region covered; closest to Gorze's lands. The final explanation cannot be pushed very far. Although, as will be suggested in chapter 9, many of the Wissembourg donations were made by one very powerful extended family, the Gorze charters similarly reveal donors with possessions in widespread *villae*.

A conclusion can be drawn which incorporates the first three of these explanations. Changes in the organisation of settlement did come about in the late Merovingian or early Carolingian period, and resulted in the difference in formulae used at Gorze and Wissembourg, but these changes affected the western foothills of the Vosges less than the probably more densely settled region between the middle Moselle and Meuse valleys.

The conclusions we can draw from the written sources will be discussed in the final section of this chapter, along with those reached from other data. But to return to the problem with which

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this chapter began, can we propose any answers to the question of the difference between the density of Roman settlement and the sparsity of Merovingian? The indications of the historical evidence must be that the answer is to be sought in the inadequacy of the archaeological record. Whichever form of evidence is consulted the picture obtained is not one of exclusively nucleated settlements, which would be what we were seeking if we were to argue that all Merovingian habitations underlay modern villages. Instead the picture is of dispersed farms and homesteads as well as hamlets. From such an impression we would conclude that Merovingian cemeteries are fewer than Roman settlements because they served a number of small settlements, and that the latter are either archaeologically invisible, insusceptible to chance discovery, or searched for inadequately. Other forms of evidence need to be examined to determine the extent to which this conclusion is justified.

6. Archaeological evidence.

Archaeological data are the most abundant and thus probably the best place to start. These can in turn be divided into traces of the settlements themselves, and more indirect evidence such as cemeteries. The first of these two groups is as yet comparatively small, though if survey work of the type carried out in the Seille valley by Pierre Cuvelier is extended to other areas of the region - and there are some indications that this may be the case - then the corpus of this type of material should grow substantially in the near future.

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Cuvelier's work is a convenient place to begin. Although hardly anything was published on this survey before 1988 beyond a bald notice in *Gallia* (1980, p.426), a cursory piece on Nomeny (Cuvelier & Delestre 1986) and a longer report on Mousson (Cuvelier 1988d), the congress of the A.F.A.M. in Metz occasioned a rash of publications on the subject (Cuvelier 1988a; 1988b; 1988c; Cuvelier, Delestre & Heber-Suffrin 1988). Unfortunately several of these short papers repeat the same information, and the quality of presentation is not high. This may not be irreparable given that none of these works represents the final publication of the survey, but it is worrying to think that the plan of the settlement found at Eply-Raucourt 'Haut de Villers' published in *La Lorraine Mérovingienne* (Cuvelier 1988c, p.56, fig.26; cp. also Cuvelier 1988a, p.73) might well be that intended for the final publication.

The Seille valley survey reveals some very interesting points. It confirms the abandonment of late-Roman sites but suggests that settlements frequently did not move very far. At Nomeny the seventh-century site was located only 100m. or so from the Roman *vicus*, which became the site of one or two cemeteries (Cuvelier & Delestre 1986; Cuvelier 1988a, p.68; 1988c, p.57, p.58, fig.27). At Clémery too Merovingian buildings were sited close by the large villa of 'Terres Noires' and two other sites, at 'Quatorze Jours' and Bénicourt were similarly found near Gallo-Roman habitations, albeit smaller ones (Cuvelier 1988a, p.68; 1988c, p.57). However, several Roman sites were completely abandoned; at least fifteen sites in the area surveyed showed no corresponding trace of Merovingian occupation.

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At Nomeny the seventh-century site was in turn abandoned when the settlement moved again, only a couple of hundred metres, and a larger, perhaps more nucleated, settlement was created in the ninth century. Cuvelier claims that this site too was deserted when a château was built in the twelfth century near the modern village of Nomeny. This seems plausible but no consideration has been given to the possibility that the site of the modern settlement was occupied in the Merovingian or Carolingian periods. This idea of continuity is one to which we will return. Here it is particularly important. Why should the château of the bishops of Metz have been established a good kilometre and a half away from an existing settlement? The possibility must be retained that the bishops built their castle on the site of an already extant settlement, perhaps a demesne farm.

Recently other early medieval settlements have been discovered at Yutz and Woippy (both *dép.* Moselle; N. Dautremont *verb. comm.*, 17.7.89). These are both apparently Carolingian but occupation could have begun in the eighth century.

The sites revealed by aerial photography and, in some cases, excavation tell us something about the nature of these settlements. The only site plan so far published is that of Eply-Raucourt 'Haut de Villers' (see *diag.* 4.4). Gallo-Roman materials were used for the 'blocage des poteaux de bois' of the main house. Whether this means that they were used to steady the posts in their post-holes or that they were used for the walls or wall-footings between the wooden posts is unclear, and will remain so until a satisfactory site plan is

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published. The only finds published are seventh-century buckles, including a plaque-buckle (Cuvelier 1988c, p.56, fig.26; cp. also Cuvelier 1988a, p.73). The excavation has probably revealed a single 'modular building unit', to borrow the phrase used by David Clarke in his discussion of Glastonbury Lake Village (Clarke 1972); a main dwelling place with adjacent workshops and/or storage huts. Cuvelier (1988a p.68; 1988c, p.57) suggests that although the excavation was limited in extent the settlement did not comprise more than three or four such units, though without more detailed excavation we cannot tell how many of these were in use at the same time.

Sunken-featured buildings have been located elsewhere in the region of Metz. Several Ottonian examples overlay part of the cemetery at Dieue-sur-Meuse 'La Potence' (Guillaume 1974-5), though these were not properly published. Similarly Ottonian SFBs have recently been found at Corny-sur-Moselle (*Gallia* 44, 1986, p.291). Huts were also found at Pont-à-Mousson in 1980 (Hurstel 1984, vol.2, pp.261-3) but no dating evidence was adduced beyond the fact that they were 'early medieval', and the site remains unpublished. Unusually, the recently excavated site at Yutz revealed no 'SFBs', all buildings were of 'post-built' type.

The handful of other known Merovingian settlement sites show similar features. As is well-known, the excavations at Brebières (dép. Pas-de-Calais; Demolon 1972) uncovered only sunken-featured buildings, but, as James pointed out (1979, p.57), it is more than likely that more ephemeral post-built structures were missed. The

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classic, though still unpublished, site of Gladbach, is based upon units of large houses with ancillary huts (cp. James 1988, p.214; Périn & Feffer 1987, vol.2, pp.205-7), and more recently, the settlement at Juvincourt-et-Damary (dép. Aisne; cp. James 1988, p.214) shows a similar pattern, as does Claude Lorren's site of Mondeville (dép. Calvados; Lorren 1985). The settlements of the region of Metz do not seem to have differed dramatically from the norms (as far as we can determine these) within the north-Gallic and German regions of the Merovingian realms. Perhaps building materials and, in detail, building styles were different but the general characteristics were the same.

Archaeology has also revealed traces of early churches in the diocese of Metz. The existence of a church on the site at Châtel-St.-Germain is not impossible, but the excavations there have so far revealed no plausible evidence for it (Guillaume, Lefebvre & Wieczorek 1988, p.97)¹. Better evidence has been unearthed at Mousson (above all Cuvelier 1988d, but also Cuvelier 1988b; Cuvelier, Delestre & Heber-Suffrin 1988), where structural evidence of the stone church associated with seventh-century burials was found, and at St.-Avoild, where excavations have found stone walls, perhaps associated with Bishop Sigibald's (707/8-741) cell of St. Paul, later refounded by Chrodegang as St. Nabor's (Cuvelier, Delestre & Heber-Suffrin 1988, pp.45-46, with plan).

¹ The debate centres on several Merovingian sarcophagi which radiate out from the apse of the thirteenth-century church; these sarcophagi were however reused in the later middle ages as Lefebvre pointed out at the Conference of the A.F.A.M. in Metz, October, 1988.

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Another form of evidence is comprised by the architectural fragments found at Cheminot (Morhain 1953). Originally thought to be part of a sarcophagus (cp. Salin 1952, p.153), they are clearly architectural, most recently interpreted as chancel fragments (Guillaume *et al.* 1988, p.76). The dating of these fragments, like that of those from Metz (see chapter 8) has been controversial with some authorities claiming them to be late Merovingian, and others arguing for a Carolingian date (cp. Collot 1980). The argument for the latter revolves around the fact that Cheminot church was granted to St. Arnulf's, Metz, in 783 (*Dipl. Karol. I*, p.146), but this assumes that the church did not exist before that date, an assumption for which there is no basis beyond the fact that the Cheminot fragments seem to originate from the same workshop that produced the stone fragments from Metz itself, including some at St. Arnulf's. The most recent analysis, that of François Heber-Suffrin, places these fragments in the middle of the eighth century and associates them with the reforms of Chrodegang (Cuvelier, Delestre & Heber-Suffrin 1988, p.51). This seems very plausible but we have to conclude that the question remains open until better quality data are found in context.

Other evidence of settlement within the diocese of Metz comprises the rubbish pits found at Florange, datable to the earlier sixth century (Legendre & Krausz 1989), and fragments of pottery found near the church at Salennes (Hurstel 1984, vol. 2, pp.291-2), which may have come from a settlement site rather than a cemetery; no typical grave goods were found in association with them (but see chapter 5,

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section 4.c for reservations about this). The Florange evidence appears to suggest the existence of a homestead involved in tanning.

Another interesting trace of settlement was found at Erfweiler (Saar-Pfalz-Kreis). Here, on a Roman villa-site, which otherwise appeared to have been abandoned in the late fourth century (Schumacher in Bertemes *et al* 1988 p.151 ff), a bracteate brooch was found as a stray find (*Ber. S.D.S.* 6, 1953, p.24), as was a Merovingian coin, a gold triens possibly struck at Mainz (*F.M.R.D.*, p.251-2). These were certainly not grave-finds but the existence of a cemetery on the site of the villa, as is so common elsewhere in the region (see below) is not to be completely ruled out. It seems, however, more likely that these finds represent some ephemeral occupation of the villa, which could well be repeated on other sites. The well-known villa of Nennig in the diocese of Trier (Kr. Saarburg) revealed, in the area not occupied by the Merovingian cemetery, traces of irregular, roughly-built houses apparently dating to the early medieval period (Böhner 1958, II, 91).

The location of these settlements is worthy of consideration. The evidence of churches has all, to date, been found under modern villages. The new site of Yutz lies by the medieval village, the modern village of Yutz being an artificial creation associated with the eighteenth-century fortification of the Thionville bridge-head. The settlement of Woippy also underlies its modern successor. Recently discovered settlements of 'early medieval' (which can mean anything between the 9th and 12th centuries) date, at Corny-sur-

Moselle, Labry (*Arch. Méd.* 19, 1989, p.337) and Sainte-Ruffine (*Gallia* 44, 1986, p.392), were all located under modern villages. Those of the middle Seille valley survey, however, lie up to two kilometres (though generally about one kilometre) from modern villages. This is to be expected since settlements underneath modern villages would not be likely to be recovered. However, it is significant that they do not have the same geographical spread as the Roman settlements. Out of nine early medieval settlements (of which at least one is post-Merovingian), six lie within 500m of a modern commune boundary, three within 200m. This may be significant and argue that these bounds were drawn up when these settlements were abandoned or fissioned.

The idea that modern settlements often overlie Roman ones finds more support in Gallo-Roman archaeology. The only certain example of the continuation of villa occupation into the fifth century is at Berthelming 'Alt Schloss' where a coin of Theodosius II was found cemented into a wall (Percival 1976, p.169; possible fifth-century habitation is suggested by pottery at Morsbach [*Gallia* 44, 1986, pp.301-2]). This villa lies, significantly, close to the modern village (*Gallia* 6, 1948, p.239). The settlements at Labry and at Sainte-Ruffine both overlay Roman settlements, a villa in the latter case.

The evidence of the far more numerous cemetery sites adds to the information given by work on settlements *per se*. First of all, and most obviously, they can perhaps tell us something of the area which was settled in the Merovingian period. Obviously we have first to

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deal with certain preliminary questions. What was the ratio of settlements to cemeteries? Did cemeteries lie close by their accompanying settlement(s)? In the Seille valley survey, cemeteries were not always close to contemporary settlements. Those at Nomeny 'Malnoy A and B' and at Clémery 'Les Terres Noires' lay only a hundred metres away from the associated habitations but in several other cases either no attached settlement was revealed or this lay up to a kilometre away from the cemetery, as with Eply-Raucourt 'Haut de Villers' and the possibly associated cemetery of Raucourt 'Le Patural'.

Throughout the *civitas* of Metz there appears to be a close relationship between modern settlements and Merovingian cemeteries. Thirty-seven of the 292 cemeteries in the *civitas* (excluding those in Metz) were located within 500m. of a modern settlement and a further sixty underlie modern villages or châteaux. In total these represent over 33% of the sites, and given that no locational information is available for at least half of the cemeteries of the diocese, this must be significant. A similar link between cemeteries and modern settlements has been demonstrated statistically for the département of the Aisne (Durand 1988). Significantly, however, Durand does not address the problem of whether the settlement on the modern village-site was the only one to use the cemetery.

A related question which needs consideration is that of the difference between the sixth and seventh centuries. As is common throughout Merovingian Gaul, there are many more seventh- than sixth-

century sites in the diocese. The former outnumber the latter perhaps by as much as two to one. Even given the chance nature of most discoveries this difference must be significant, especially since, as will be seen, grave-goods are less numerous in the seventh century than in the sixth. Apart from being incorrectly interpreted as an indication of two ethnic groups (Stein 1974), this chronological change can be explained either as an expansion of settlement (cp. Simmer 1987) or in terms of a change in the settlement to cemetery ratio. There is little to choose between these alternatives at this stage but, to anticipate the conclusions of Parts 3 and 4, analysis of the cemeteries themselves suggests a social change around 600 AD which led to reduced need to demonstrate social status to a wide audience at a funeral. This in turn probably led to more numerous smaller cemeteries being created to serve individual settlements. The hypothesis that the change in the number of cemeteries relates to a social change leading to a settlement to cemetery ratio of closer to 1:1 is that which will be adopted here. An associated slight dispersion and thus expansion of settlements is not, however, to be discounted.

We can thus claim that the distribution of early medieval cemeteries gives a reasonable indication of where settlements existed, especially in the seventh century. A map of the distribution of cemeteries shows that there were certain quite large tracts of land which seem to have been abandoned in the late antique or early medieval periods. The Vosges remained unsettled until after the close of our period, though the Wissembourg charters indicate that the

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foothills were beginning to be recolonised by the end of the seventh century. Settlements do not seem to have been truly reestablished in the high Vosges until well into the Carolingian period (see Laumon 1973, for a discussion of the evidence from the Vosges communes).

Secondly there is a significant gap to the west of the Sarre valley between Sarre-Union and Sarreguemines. This is less easy to explain immediately. Except in the canton of Albestroff (Toussaint 1950, p.29) settlement here is not as scarce in the Roman period, and charter evidence indicates some settlement on the fringes of the area by the early eighth century. Geographically this area is in the *plateau lorrain* and so not immediately recognisable as a marginal zone. The documents too do not give any indication of difficult or marginal terrain or of recent colonisation, unlike those referring to the Vosges. Given the generally flat and relatively low-lying nature of this area (there is no land higher than 300m. above sea level), and taking into account the meandering water-courses which flow through it, it is likely that this area had become too marshy for permanent settlement (as witnessed by the presence of cemeteries) in the early middle ages. The problem of waterlogging led to the creation of the large *étangs* on the southern edge of this zone in the early modern period. Even in the twentieth century, the northern edge of this area formed a *zone inondable* of the Maginot Line.

Some further points about the location of Merovingian cemeteries need to be made. The first concerns the very frequent location of cemeteries on or by abandoned Roman sites. Nomeny 'Malnoy A & B'

lie, as mentioned, on the site of the old *vicus*, Ennery 'Les Trois Arbres' is close by a Roman settlement, as are Raucourt 'Le Patural', Eply 'Le Village', Clémery 'Les Terres Noires', Bettborn 'Bienenzaun', Berthelming 'Alt Schloss', and Wiesviller to name only a few. The reasons for this are complex. Leaving aside Marcel Lutz's argument that this was a 'geste de vainqueur', spurning the remains of the previous civilisation (Lutz 1950, p.184), it is frequently argued that these sites were chosen because of the impossibility of using them for agriculture. This argument is not entirely acceptable. Even when the argument is that protection from the plough was sought for the ancestral graves, rather than that no other land was free, it implies a competition for land that was far greater than the extent and general location of cemeteries and settlements suggests. More satisfactory is the idea that the choice of an abandoned settlement was associated with a veneration of past civilisations, as attested by the deposition of Gallo-Roman and, indeed, prehistoric objects with the dead and by the references to Roman ruins as 'the work of giants' in Anglo-Saxon verse (*The Ruin; Maxims II*; Bradley (ed and trans.) 1982). The siting of a cemetery by a visible monument may also have been an attempt to show a claim to the land; by connecting the present inhabitants with 'ancestors', real or fictive. The villa's ruins would also provide a focus for the communities which used the cemetery (Raucourt 'Le Patural' lies half way between the settlement of Eply-Raucourt 'Haut de Villers' and the modern site of Raucourt), as well as providing materials for the graves, where these were stone-lined, and perhaps giving shelter and a kind of proto-funerary chapel. The idea that cemeteries were used to strengthen claims to land could be

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supported by the location of many cemeteries near commune boundaries, though this is not the only possible explanation for this (above, p. 19).

Further clues in searching for a solution to the problem of Roman-post-Roman continuity in the rural landscape can be sought in the Gallo-Roman archaeology of the region. Villas and other forms of Roman evidence are often found under later settlements. Toussaint's archaeological *répertoire* of the department of the Moselle (Toussaint 1950) reveals over fifty cases of traces of Roman occupation very close to, or underlying, modern villages or deserted post-Roman settlements. In many cases the village church itself stands on the site of Roman habitation. At least eleven examples can be found in Toussaint's survey: Boulay (pp. 11-12), Vaxy (?) (p. 35), Altrippe (p. 79), Ars-sur-Moselle (p. 95), Plappeville (p. 112), Remilly (p. 118), Bettborn (p. 132; cp. also Laumon 1973, pp. 58-9), Brouviller (p. 154), Varize (p. 158), Biberkirch (p. 170; cp. also Laumon 1973, pp. 58-9), and Donnelay (p. 51). A further twelve modern settlements overlay evidence of Roman occupation: Boucheporn (p. 11), Guerstling (p. 18), Amélecourt (p. 30), Jallaucourt (p. 37), Cappel (p. 84), Corny (p. 100), Pange (p. 117), St.-Jean-de-Bassel (p. 141), Sarraltroff (p. 141), Fraquelfing (p. 145), Berling (p. 153), and Hoff (p. 176).

The picture is completed by a list of 'deserted village' sites which yielded evidence of Roman occupation: Coume 'Béring' (p. 12), Falck 'Helle' (p. 17), Ottonville 'Grafloch' (p. 14), Fresnes-en-Saulnois 'Psicourt' (p. 32), Puttigny 'Vertignécourt' (p. 34),

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Vannecourt 'Gossoncourt' (p.35), Wuisse 'Bride' (p.35), Donjeux 'Brucourt' (p.36), Oriocourt 'Bassoncourt' (p.38), Vaxy 'Domèvre' (p.35), Ste-Marie-aux-Chènes 'Harloncourt' (p.112), and Dabo 'Altdorf' (p.154). These sites are frequently said to have been destroyed in the Thirty Years' War, but this is perhaps as inaccurate as was the common British association of village-desertion with the Black Death. That these sites are not simply Roman settlements described as deserted villages in the popular imagination is shown by the fact that seven of them have toponyms with *-ing* or *-court* suffixes, and a further one has the slightly later *-dorf* suffix. The latter is perhaps mentioned in a Wissembourg charter of 718 (*in Althorfphe*; Wiss.194, dated Assweiler, 13 Feb.), though the reference here could be to Sarraltroff. Wuisse 'Bride' has also yielded a probable Merovingian cemetery (app. 2. a, no.305).

The association of Roman villa and later church needs further consideration. In addition to Toussaint's examples, Böckweiler in the Saarland (Schumacher in Bertemes *et al* 1988, p.147 ff) is the best documented case of this phenomenon. The presence of churches on villa-sites is occasionally explained as the result of the availability of building materials there but this is not completely acceptable. It fails to account for the fact that only a small proportion of villas were reused in this way. These generally lie in valleys. Many others on uplands or similar 'marginal' land, including major establishments such as Grémecey (dép. Moselle), were not chosen as church sites. The conclusion must be drawn that villa-sites occupied by later churches, if probably not continuously inhabited, at least

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lay close to early medieval settlements. Occasionally the sequence villa-cemetery-church is found, as, just outside the *civitas* of Metz, at Bouxières-aux-Dames (dép. Meurthe-et-Moselle; Salin 1937, p.210; *Gallia* 17, 1959, p.360; Percival 1976, p.192). Here we can suggest that the villa was used as a cemetery for the reasons outlined above and later used as the foundations for the church serving the nearby settlement. This again argues against seeing the connection between villas and churches simply in terms of the availability of building stone.

From the evidence just cited, and from the frequent association of Merovingian cemetery and modern settlement we can propose that modern settlements be taken into account when considering the Merovingian settlement pattern. Yet further support for this hypothesis can be found in the fact that across the Vosges in Alsace, at Furdenheim (dép. Bas-Rhin), an early medieval sunken-featured building was found between twenty and thirty metres from the village (Stieber 1954). This idea is not new (cp. Percival 1976, ch.8) but it does not appear to have featured in Cuvelier's considerations. He appears to have assumed a 1:1 settlement to cemetery ratio, and that only those sites revealed archaeologically were inhabited in the Merovingian period. In the case of Nomeny his suggestion that the settlement moved progressively from one site to another before ending up around the central medieval château seems plausible, but even here we must express reservations (see above). The essential point, often made, is that settlements located archaeologically in field survey or by aerial photography, away from modern habitation, are by their very

nature 'failed settlements'. In Edith Wightman's phrase, 'the fact of continuity can destroy the evidence for it' (Wightman 1977, p.303).

The conclusion must be drawn that at least a component of the early medieval settlement pattern underlies the network of modern villages. Given the close proximity of many cemeteries to these modern settlements we may propose that this particular element was of some importance within the settlement hierarchy.

With this in mind we can again return to the problem outlined at the start of this chapter. The archaeological data argue that whilst many more Merovingian settlements undoubtedly await discovery, the conclusion cannot be avoided that the settlement pattern underwent radical contraction in the late Roman period, and did not expand again until after the end of the period reviewed here. Other conclusions from this body of data will be left until after a brief survey of other forms of evidence.

7. Other Evidence: Toponymic and Numismatic.

Toponymic evidence is too fraught with problems to be of much use here (see above, pp.13-17). We need only say that, like Merovingian cemeteries, place-names with the early medieval suffixes *-ing*, *-ange*, *-y*, *-court* and *-ville* usually lie below 300m. above sea-level and are largely absent in the Vosges. The only important point to be made from the numismatic evidence is Stahl's very plausible suggestion that the names of certain 'mints' are not those of permanent settlements but of *malli* - Frankish legal gatherings (Stahl 1982 p.134). The

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names on the coins in question are *mallo materiaco*, *mallo campione* and *mallo sativivi*. Stahl suggests that the first of these is a corruption of the regional component of the Roman name of Metz - *Mediomatricorum* - and thus represents the *mallus* which met in the town. The other two are, on the other hand, the rural *malli*, with *campione* being a corruption of *campaneo* and *sativivi* an error for *sativo*. This suggests that there was some form of periodic settlement at which the people of the rural areas of the region of Metz gathered. That this was held at a permanent settlement is unlikely given that the name of a known village does not appear on these coins. We can suggest that the rural *malli* met at sites away from permanent habitation and were the occasion of a fair and exchange as well as of legal business.

8. Conclusions.

From this survey, we can propose a number of conclusions about the rural settlement pattern in the Merovingian region of Metz.

1. **Settlement terminology.** The first conclusion which we can reach from the written sources is that, contrary to an often-expressed belief (cp. Samson 1987b), the contemporary terminology for settlements was not always consistent. The discussion of the word *villa* demonstrates this. In the period covered by this survey *villa* could mean three things.
 1. A single estate.
 2. A small district within which might be several estates.
 3. A settlement, probably nucleated, distinguished from the district with which it was associated (the words *fines* or *marca* replace *villa* to describe the latter).

Though there is a discernible progression from the first to the third of these uses, there are no hard and fast rules and 'old' usages crop up in later charters. The word *mansus* too changes or varies its meaning between 'a farm' and 'a small parcel of land, perhaps containing a building'. These conclusions are not strikingly new (cp. Berry 1987, p.474) but it should be of value to have them clearly demonstrated, and the dates of terminological changes given with some precision, for one region.

2. Settlement population. There is, as will have become clear, very little exact information on this, except that the charters of both Gorze and Wissembourg agree in describing the population of dependent farms run by *mancipii* in terms of one or two families only, with few exceptions. It seems that the population of a dispersed group of farms and homesteads within a small district (such as a *marca*) should be reckoned at well under two hundred, and probably frequently under one hundred.

The archaeological evidence on this problem appears to support this idea. As stated, the settlements which have been discovered so far appear to be very small, perhaps only sheltering a family or two. This at least is the impression given by the site at Eply-Raucourt 'Haut de Villers' (Cuvelier 1988a; 1988c). The excavated cemetery sites of the region also indicate that the population which used a cemetery was around 200 souls or less, sometimes apparently quite substantially less.

3. Settlement economy. All the charters agree in describing estates and farms as generally self-sufficient, especially in the earlier part of the period. Subsistence farming involved agriculture and pastoral farming - herds and flocks are mentioned occasionally, meadows more frequently. Pigs are often mentioned in the documents, probably more commonly than other kinds of animal, and, as mentioned, Mapinius' letter to

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Villicus underlines this importance. Vineyards are mentioned frequently in the Gorze cartulary, and orchards less commonly; these resources feature less prominently in the *Traditiones Wizenburgenses*. Mills are mentioned commonly in both cartularies, and it is clear that such 'homesteads' were involved in farming (cp. the pig farming carried on by the two of the *farinarii* in Gorze 19) as well as in the processing of 'raw material'. Doubtless there was exchange of goods between estates, especially those with differing resources, but the impression given, especially in the early documents, is that estates were organised so as to have as many of these natural resources as possible; woods, meadows, arable, vineyards or orchards, and water-courses.

Archaeology has so far shed little light on this problem. The impression drawn from Raucourt 'Haut de Villers' is of a settlement existing on agriculture but evidence of manufacture or processing has also come to light. The rubbish pits at Florange, as stated, indicate specialised activity, perhaps tanning (Legendre & Krausz 1989, p.129), being carried on, and suggesting that the site was, in the terminology used here, a homestead. The site at Pont-à-Mousson yielded huts with traces of metal-working and cooking (Hurstel 1984, vol.2, pp.261-3). Whether or not the metal-working was for the use of this settlement only, or whether it had any more regional use will remain difficult to decide until the site is published, and requires better publication than has been the case with previous excavations in Lorraine.

4. The organisation of settlement. Within rural settlements, whether farms, homesteads or hamlets, a consistent picture emerges of organisation into central houses (*casae; domi*) and lesser buildings (*edificii*). The building unit at Raucourt 'Haut de Villers' with its dependent sunken-featured buildings and central post-built house fits exactly the written descriptions of *domi et edificii* in the charters, and

particularly the gift of *casa cum omnibus edificiis suis* in Gorze 34.

The corpus of written evidence can be used to draw up a series of models of the organisation and interrelation of rural settlement. The first of these (diag. 4.6) is derived from Gorze 19 and thus represents in diagramatic form the most detailed account we have of the working of a late Merovingian or early Carolingian estate. In the terminology outlined in chapter two, this represents a single privileged farm, or perhaps hamlet, with a series of dependent farms and homesteads. Diagram 4.7a is a representation of the settlement pattern as revealed by the Wissembourg charters and diagram 4.7b relates the impression of rural settlement given by the Gorze cartulary. As outlined above we can further argue that diagram 4.7a is a picture of the settlement pattern in the earlier part of the period covered by the charters (c.650-850) and of that in less densely populated areas such as the Vosges foothills, whereas 4.7b describes the settlement pattern in more heavily settled areas such as the region between the middle Meuse and Moselle valleys from the mid-eighth century onwards. The change to more nucleated forms of settlement from the later eighth century is perhaps supported archaeologically by the fact that at Nomeny the site which replaced the seventh-century hamlet was much larger and appears to have been founded in the ninth century. However, the archaeological evidence suggests that there were always what we might term 'focal' farms or hamlets; those associated with the cemeteries, possibly surviving villas and modern settlements. Diagram 4.8 therefore represents a synthesis of this information. Diagram 4.9 illustrates the changes in the terminology for settlements.

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The apparent change in the settlement pattern between the Roman and medieval periods can now be assessed. The evidence of archaeology and place-names suggests a much more limited spread of settlement. From this it seems reasonable to suppose a significant contraction in the settlement pattern from the late third to the late fourth or early fifth century. The written sources however, still give us an impression of scattered rural farms, homesteads and hamlets. Though a connection between Roman settlements which survived this contraction to become Frankish habitations can be plausibly suggested (cp. Stein 1989b, Abb. 5 & 6), it cannot, in view of the indications given by the charters and by the results of the middle Seille valley survey, be seriously suggested that all Frankish settlements underlie modern villages. That those which do formed foci for groups of farms or homesteads, which, furnished with churches, later became villages and parish centres is plausible, as mentioned above, but the idea of settlement contraction to, essentially, the network of modern sites with *-y*, *-ing*, *-ange*, *-ville* or *-court* suffixes, as has been suggested since the 1950s at least (cp. Werner, 1950) must now be seriously revised. It is far more likely that a significant number of hitherto unrecognised Merovingian rural settlements await discovery in between this 'skeleton' network, and the far denser network of Roman occupation.

This contraction is difficult to explain. Flight to the towns and *vici* has not been discussed here but, to anticipate the findings of chapters 5 to 8, this is implausible after the late fourth and early fifth century. That some people flocked to the 'focus' hamlets is

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likely, especially given the written evidence of 'clustering' around influential people (cp. Salvian *Governance*, 5.8). Clustering for mutual protection is also to be considered, and may fit the evidence of the cemeteries better. The idea of flocking to powerful landlords does not tally particularly well with the cemetery evidence which suggests that local power was insecure and open to fierce competition from the later fourth century onwards. Population decline is similarly not to be ignored, not only in the wake of invasions and natural calamities, but also as a symptom of general 'culture-collapse' as discussed by Hodges and Whitehouse (1983, p.53). Further discussion of these factors will be suspended until after examination of the evidence from the *vici*, the *castra*, the town of Metz and the region's cemeteries.

Chapter 5. Intermediate Settlement:
Castra, Vici, Palaces and Monasteries.

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1. Introduction.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the evidence for the settlements which occupied a position in the settlement hierarchy between the farms, homesteads and hamlets of the previous chapter and the urban focus of the diocese which will be dealt with in chapters 6 to 8. In the Roman period these settlements were the *vici*. There were more of these than is sometimes supposed, as was pointed out in chapter 3. There it was also mentioned that in the late third and fourth century many of the *vici* were fortified, becoming *castra* in contemporary terminology. Most of this chapter will be concerned with the fate of these *vici* and *castra*, particularly the most

important fortified sites; Sarrebourg, Scarponne and Tarquimpol; and the important salt-making centres on the upper Seille, Vic and Marsal. New sites such as the Pippinid/Arnulfing palaces at Thionville and Sarreguemines will also be examined. We need to consider whether or not there were any sites which were lifted above the general level of rural hamlet; if so, how many there were and what factors distinguished them, and finally whether any of these sites could be classed as towns.

2. Lesser *vici*.

Most of the lesser *vici* of the Roman period appear to have fallen into insignificance in the Merovingian period. Nomeny, as outlined in the previous chapter, was abandoned and replaced by a very much smaller Merovingian settlement, whilst the *vicus*-site was used for burials (Cuvelier & Delestre 1986; Cuvelier 1988a; 1988c). A similar picture emerges from almost all of the other lesser *vici*. That several possible Merovingian cemeteries were found around Mackwiller (app.2.a, nos.171-6) in the last century may hint at fission into a number of smaller settlements. At Bliesbruck the existence of Merovingian cemeteries at Bliesbruck 'Le ferme Ruppert' and at Reinheim (app.2.a, nos. 46 & 242), a small distance from, respectively, the *vicus*' southern and northern edges, suggests a similar fate. The commune of Delme has yielded traces of a singularly unremarkable Frankish cemetery (app.2.a, no.80) but nothing else. The same is true of Novéant (app.2.a, no.218). Though Hettange has yielded some traces of a Merovingian cemetery, information is vague (app. 2.a, no.140) and the site is not mentioned

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in written sources until the eleventh century (Hurstel 1984, II, pp.125-6). In all of these cases, however, a connection with the *vicus* is not certain and any conclusions about continuity or nature of occupation must be suspended until further data are gathered. Novéant and Mackwiller (if the identification with *Machonevillare* is correct) are, however, only described as *villae* in the charters and this may well be significant.

Basse-Yutz hints at something slightly different in that the Merovingian cemetery there is probably an extension of the earlier Roman one (app. 2.a, no.27) and it is not inconceivable that the site was used without any hiatus. No indication of the size of the cemetery was given, however. The previous chapter mentioned the recent discovery of a settlement dating to the ninth or possibly eighth century, consisting entirely of post-built structures, at Yutz, next to a Roman villa. This suggests that settlement was only slightly displaced during this period but sheds little light on the fate of the *vicus*. Daspich presents a similar problem. The Roman cemetery there was certainly still in use into the early fifth century, since a grave was found containing over 100 coins, of which the latest (of Arcadius and Honorius) dated to 400-425 (Clercx, Dufresne & D'Huart 1843-4). Certain writers (cp. Beaujard 1976, p.302) consider these graves to be those of late Roman *laeti*; more recent analysis would suggest that they were of local leaders (Halsall forthcoming). The cemetery appears (pace Simmer 1987, p.346) to have been used into the Merovingian era (app. 2.a, no.109). Some

settlement in or near these sites probably continued into the Frankish era, although we cannot know on what scale.

The identification of a mint at Augny from the mint-name AVANACO VICO (cp. Heidrich 1974) is far from impossible (Augny is referred to as *Auviniago* and *Aviniago* in the mid-ninth century; Gorze 51, dated Gorze, 848, and Gorze 58, dated Gorze, 857), although Stahl (1982) prudently considers the site to be unidentifiable. The name is probably too common for any identification to be absolutely certain. In the charter evidence the site is only described as a *villa*, and not as a *vicus*, unlike the known *vici* of Marsal and Vic. Apart from a possible Merovingian cemetery discovered in the 1840s (Simon 1834-5; app. 2. a, no. 20), Augny has left no archaeological trace of occupation in the Frankish era. Another possible mint-site is BILACO VICO, which Heidrich (1974, p. 84) identifies as Bellange, as was noted in chapter 1. Stahl again rejects this identification and Bellange is certainly not described as a *vicus* in any written source. Nor has it left any archaeological trace of Merovingian settlement. Nevertheless the possibility of mints in these places should not be completely excluded.

The other *vici* have given absolutely no trace of Merovingian occupation, not even a cemetery, and these sites include Schwarzenacker, Grostenquin and St. Marcel. St. Marcel is only referred to as a *villa* in 936 (Hurstel 1984, II, pp. 287-8). It seems safest, at present, to assume that these sites were completely abandoned, Schwarzenacker probably after the chaos of the late third

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century. As for the others, we cannot at present, except in the case of Nomeny, decide which of the following categories the fate of these *vici* fell into:

1. Complete abandonment of site and fragmentation of population into a number of smaller settlements throughout the area. As mentioned this is suggested at Mackwiller and Bliesbruck.

2. Abandonment of site but continuation of occupation on a smaller scale close by (as at Nomeny). This, of course, could be taken as part of 1.

3. Continuation of occupation of the old site on whatever scale.

No evidence can be accumulated at present about the position of such settlements within the hierarchy. The fact that none of these sites is referred to other than as a *villa* is strong evidence that they were no different from any other hamlet by the later Merovingian period. The possibility of mints at Augny and Bellange has been mentioned and would give these sites some higher-order function, but the identification of AVANACO VICO and BILACO VICO remains very problematic.

3. The *castra*.

a. Le Héracle.

The Roman coin sequence here ended with Arcadius and Honorius so occupation into the fifth century can be suggested. Huber suggested rebuilding after 414 (Huber 1894, p.303). Weapon graves were found there, suggesting that the local élite had some connection with the site. Fortified sites such as this are not uncommonly associated

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with these more military demonstrations of the competition for local authority (Halsall forthcoming); Scarponne revealed similar graves, as did the apparently unfortified site at Daspich. A Merovingian cemetery has been found at Le Héracle (app. 2. a, no. 69), but there is no evidence so far of actual settlement on the site. The chapel of St. Helen and its associated holy well have been claimed to date to late antiquity (Bergthol 1955), but there is little evidence to support this claim. The chapel, though certainly older (Beaujard 1976, p.300), is first mentioned in the fourteenth century. There is no written mention of this site, and no mint has been identified with it. At present it seems safe to assume that at some time in the fifth century the *castrum* at Le Héracle was abandoned for more low-lying sites and that it henceforth played no role in the Merovingian settlement pattern, except as a refuge and the site of a well with possibly religious connotations.

b. Saarbrücken.

Evidence of Merovingian cemeteries has been located in the modern city of Saarbrücken at Malstatt-Burbach, three kilometres to the west of the *castrum*, and at the Halberg industrial centre just to the south of *Vicus Saravi* (app. 2. a, nos. 256-6). Traces of Merovingian settlement were found in the market-place of St. Arnual. Remains of wells made from oak trunks were found, which contained pottery fragments (including two pitchers) dating to the end of the Merovingian period (*Germania* 1927, p.290). St. Arnual lies, however, to the south-west, just across the Saar from the Roman *castrum*. No mint has so far been identified with Saarbrücken and no Merovingian

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documentary evidence refers to the site. At present the archaeological evidence seems to point to abandonment of the walled site in the late fourth or, perhaps, fifth century and fragmentation into smaller habitations at St. Arnual, Halberg and Burbach. It is difficult to see the *castrum* continuing in use as any kind of higher order settlement.

c. Sarrebourg.

Here we have rather more information for the Merovingian period than has been gathered at Le Héraple or Saarbrücken. Firstly, the site is actually referred to as a *castrum* (*in castro Saraburgo*; Wiss. 192, 1 Feb. 713), and of course the *-burg* suffix is a translation of this. This in itself would seem to indicate that Sarrebourg was held to be different from the usual type of settlement in the region. Laumon (1973) draws attention to the fact that Wiss. 192 is witnessed by a Count Willibert to suggest that Sarrebourg was the centre of a county as early as the eighth century, rather than the ninth or tenth, as is sometimes supposed. This seems likely. We might suggest that Sarrebourg was the administrative centre of at least the southern part, if not all, of the *Pagus Sarroinsis* and that it thus had some administrative importance.

That this is the case is underlined by the existence of a mint in at least the mid-seventh century (around 620-640 according to Stahl's dating; Stahl 1982, p.156; chronological scheme, chs. VI & VII, & p.142). Stahl argues that the presence of this mint is connected with the site's status as a *pagus-capital* (*ibid.*, p.134), and this is

very plausible. However, Sarrebourg's role as an entry-point into the *civitas* should be considered. Stahl appears to have been at a loss to explain some of his mint-sites as *pagus*-capitals, even going so far as to identify the *Pagus Wabrensis* with Trier (*ibid.*, p.124), this despite the fact that the *Pagus Wabrensis* (very loosely the modern Woëvre) lies in the *civitas* of Verdun. However, as Stahl himself notes, several of his mint-sites come in pairs; Naix and *Cathirigi* (?Fains); Mouzon and Carignan. These pairs lie close by the frontiers between *civitates*, and it is not impossible that one lay on each side. The mint at Sarrebourg can also be seen as functioning as an entrance-point into the diocese of Metz. If other mints outside Stahl's region of Metz are considered, then we see that Saverne, the Roman *Tres Tabernae*, also had a mint in the Merovingian era. Saverne is east of the Vosges, and controls an important pass across the mountains. It lies, however, in the *civitas* of Strasbourg, and thus should perhaps be seen as the other half of a 'pair' with Sarrebourg.

Archaeologically, occupation into the fifth century can be plausibly suggested. The coin sequence of the *mithræum* ceases with Honorius, when the temple was destroyed, possibly in an act of Christian fervour; a burnt destruction layer covers the layer yielding the latest coin (395), and a body was found near the destroyed altar (von Fisenne 1896, p.161 & Tafel 1). Sarrebourg has not yet yielded any evidence of Merovingian settlement as such. This is at least partly the result of a lack of interest in the post-Roman phases (see above, chapter 1), as well as of a lack of technical expertise. A

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large cemetery has, however, been found in the centre of the town around the church and neighbouring streets (app. 2.a, no.263). Whether this means that the Roman site was abandoned to funerary use, as at Nomeny, or whether this is an indication of continuous occupation is at present unclear. That the first is more likely is suggested by the fact that a religious building, in this case a chapel, was also set up near the Nomeny 'Malnoy' cemeteries, despite the abandonment of the *vicus*. Certainly the existence of the cemetery will have rendered a large part of the central intramural area unavailable for habitation. Perhaps the walled area was abandoned except for use as a refuge, and the settlement moved to just outside the defences, as at Nomeny. It is certainly unlikely that settlement (whether within or without the walls) ceased completely at Sarrebourg. Whatever the precise form of this settlement, it also seems clear that it retained some higher rank within the settlement hierarchy of the Merovingian period.

It has occasionally been suggested (cp. Laumon 1973) that the Gallo-Roman rural population abandoned their countryside settlements to the incoming Germans and fled to the *castrum*, for shelter from the invasions. This is based on a very outmoded 'ethnic' interpretation of the cemetery evidence and need no longer be considered.

d. Scarponne.

The site's cemetery, as at Le Héracle and possibly Daspich, includes a late-Roman weapon-burial (again usually attributed erroneously to *laeti*; Masson 1975, p.151, suggests, on the basis of a

very bizarre argument from anthropological data, that the entire population may have been *laeti*) and so was sufficiently important for the local élites to choose to demonstrate their prestige there. As noted in chapter 3, the site was fortified in the fourth century.

Contemporary terminology distinguishes this site, like Sarrebourg, as a *castrum*, though the source here is Paul the Deacon's *Liber de Episcopis Mettensibus* (10). Scarponne was certainly the capital of a *pagus*, the *Pagus Scarponensis*, which extended into the *civitas* of Toul, and Fredegar (IV.52) describes one Frankish noble as *homo Scarponiensis*. By the Ottonian period there was a county of Scarponne (as attested by tenth-century forgeries, such as Pertz, *spuria*, 6). A charter of 912 also attests the presence of a *mallus* (Stahl 1982, p.34) and Scarponne was the site of a mint, between at least 620 and 660 (*ibid.* pp.156-7), with three known minters striking there (Fainulf, Waregisel and Fatl). As at Sarrebourg, the mint's presence was linked to the three-fold functions of river-crossing, *pagus*-capital and entry-point.

Archaeological evidence of Merovingian occupation, has been found, in the form of a sunken-featured hut (*Gallia* 1968, pp.373-6). There are indications that habitation continued without hiatus on this site, but here too this lies outside the walled area, to the east. The extra-mural cemetery also appears to have continued in use (app. 2.a, no.83).

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Here once again we have evidence which suggests that the actual walled area of a Roman *castrum* was abandoned. However, settlement continued just outside, and the presence at Scarponne of a mint and possibly a count, as well as the defences, add to the contemporary distinction of the site as a *castrum* to argue that Scarponne retained its higher rank in the settlement hierarchy throughout the Merovingian era. Thus we have here the clearest evidence yet discussed of a Roman *castrum* retaining its high status into the Merovingian period.

e. Tarquimpol.

Coins of Constantine III were found outside the walls of the *castrum*, in an uncertain context, suggesting, if not evidence of habitation, that at least a possible cemetery continued in use into the fifth century. Within the walls, the best-known archaeological evidence of the post-Roman fate of Tarquimpol was unearthed under St. Stephen's church. A cemetery of 39 stone coffins, but with about 200 skulls, was found (app. 2. a, no. 273, gives the published references to the site). The graves reused material from the Roman fortifications and were orientated on the same alignment as the church itself (see plans in Joly 1978, p. 40, and Delestre (ed) 1988, p. 104). One intact grave was that of a woman, buried with lavish grave-goods, dating the site firmly to the Merovingian period, although it certainly continued into the medieval era. This burial was possibly a founder's grave (appendix 2. a, no. 273). Beaujard's suggestion that many of these graves are of Christian Gallo-Romans is probably not now to be taken seriously (Beaujard 1976, p. 305). A long sax was also found, albeit out of context. Given the common orientation of graves (including

that of the Merovingian woman) and church it would seem almost certain that this religious building had some sort of predecessor on the same site perhaps as early as the sixth century. A horse's skull was also found, which may mean that a horse-burial once existed here. If so this would suggest that the church was erected on a site where prestige-burials were already taking place.

No mint is known to have existed at Tarquimpol, though one almost certainly did at nearby Dieuze (the mint-mark is DOSO; cp. Stahl 1982, p.33). Tarquimpol is referred to as an *oppidum* by Paul the Deacon (*Lib. Ep. Mett.*, 12), thus being differentiated from other settlements, at least by virtue of its walls. At present no other evidence can be adduced for this site.

It is difficult to draw many conclusions about the role of Tarquimpol from the evidence as it stands at the moment. Its classification as an *oppidum* underlines the fact that its walls gave it value as a refuge. It is difficult to make any judgement from the fact that Paul did not use the term *castrum* to describe this settlement. Perhaps he wished to avoid repetition of this term, already used in a preceding chapter to describe Scarponne, whilst still alluding to the site's fortified status and thus 'mirroring' that aspect of the Scarponne story. However, no other function can be attributed to Tarquimpol. No count is attested there and a mint functioned at nearby Dieuze. Perhaps Decempagi was reduced in importance and was in the process of transferring some of its functions to Dieuze, which is a far larger settlement today. On the other

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hand the existence, within the walls, of a probably Merovingian church makes continued occupation of the walled site possible, though the problems encountered at Sarrebourg apply here too.

4. The *vici*.

a. Marsal.

For the first time in this chapter we are now dealing with a site for which we have detailed written evidence. The Wissembourg cartulary contains three documents which relate to Marsal (Wiss.213, dated Marsal, 1 April, 682-3; Wiss.207, dated Wissembourg 8 April, 786; and Wiss.215, dated Marsal, June 840-841 [7833]). A charter of St. Mihiel dated to 709 (St.M. 1) also gives land there. Not surprisingly the two earlier Wissembourg charters and the St. Mihiel charter, relate to the production of salt, the earliest giving a more complete description of a salt-making workshop:

... for the making of salt, the holding [*sessol*], workshop [*officina constructa*] with a gateway [*portus*], canals [*canalis*], and grange [*estatili*, an error for *et stadile* [cp. Gorze 5]] and all the necessary utensils [*et omnibus utensilibus ad rationem necessitatis huiusmodi pertinentibus*]. The holding is bounded on one side by Bertram's land or property [lit. 'on one side holds Bertrammus'], and by Bobo's on the other; on one front the canal runs and on the other the gate to the public street [*ab alio fronte portus usque ad stratam publicam [sic]*]. (Wiss.213)

Wiss.207 is simply a grant of 200 pounds of the yield from two salt-pans, one of which belongs to Wissembourg, the other to St. Leodegar's and St. Maximin's, Trier. Finally, Wiss.215 gives what

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seems to be a deserted *mansus* (*et habet ipse mansus exterminacionem*). This is bounded on one side by Gaussalt's property, on another by St. Mary's, Salennes, property, on one front by the Seille and on the other by the public street. Marsal is referred to on the coins and in Wiss.213 and 215 as a *vicus* but is simply called Marsello in Wiss.207. Hurstel (1984, vol.2, pp.172-3) says that the site is referred to as *Marsalla villa* in 763 but gives no documentary reference, and if such exists it is surely a scribal error.

Marsal was the site of, outside the *civitas*-capitals, the most productive mint, with thirteen minters (Austroald, Theudulf, Muldulnus, Gisloald, Landoald, Garoald, Andoald, Ansoald, Fati, Fulculin, Theudemund, Totto and Luolframn) striking coins between 600 and 660 at least (Stahl 1982, pp.152-4). Marsal is one of only two of the Merovingian mints studied by Stahl to produce coins in the Carolingian era (*ibid.*, p.32), under Louis II or Louis III. This mint, like those of Vic and Moyenvic was certainly associated with the salt-making industry.

The only certain archaeological trace of Merovingian occupation consists of a cemetery found about a kilometre from Marsal itself in 1882 (app. 2.a, no.183). The unusual feature of this site was that, apparently, almost all the burials were face-down.

The descriptions of holdings in Marsal do not differ greatly from those in any other settlement (see above, chapter 4, sections 2 and 3) but the distinction of the site as a *vicus* is significant. The

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production of salt was widespread at Marsal, clearly a most valuable resource serving a wide area, and both this and the very active mint add to the terminological differentiation to distinguish the site from other settlements of the region. Theotchar, the donor in Wiss.213, is described as the *dux de pago Salininsis*. The *Pagus Salininsis* was that centred on the *vici* of Marsal, Moyenvic and Vic, but we do not know whether the administrative seat of the *pagus* and its duke was located at one of these specifically or whether it moved about between them.

b. Moyenvic

Less is known of Moyenvic, the *Mediano Vico* of the coins and documents, although it was the site of a monastery of St. Pient, which belonged to St. Stephen's, Toul (Stahl 1982, p.33). It is possibly the *alio vico* where Duke Theotchar gave things for the making of salt (*ad sal faciendum*) in Wiss.213. Six minters struck there (Walfchramn, Trasulf, Theudemund, Bertemund, Garoald and Germanus) between about 610 and 660 (Stahl, 1982, pp. 154-5).

A possibly Merovingian decorated sarcophagus was found in the village cemetery in 1901 (app. 2.a, no.213). Little more can be said about this site except that, again, salt-making, the associated mint, the contemporary distinction as *vicus* and the presence of the monastery almost certainly lift Moyenvic to a higher order of settlement.

c. Vic-sur-Seille.

Vic is frequently mentioned in the Gorze charters of the eighth and ninth centuries (cp. Gorze 2, 5, 53, 81 & 83), and, like Moyenvic, could be the 'other vicus' of Wiss.213. It is referred to as *Subterior Vicus* or *Bodesius Vicus* in these charters, sometimes both (*in vico Bodesio sive Subteriori*; Gorze 53, dated Varangéville, 849), and as BODESIO VICO on the coins.

Gorze 5 (dated ?Argancy, 757) grants a salt-making workshop very similar to that described in Wiss.213, and a similar workshop is implied in Gorze 2 (dated Metz, 25 May, 754). The other charters simply mention *mansi*, arable land and meadow with boundary clauses much like any other settlement. Gorze 53 and 81 also make it clear that, like other nucleated settlements of the period, in addition to the vicus itself, there were surrounding *fines*, the *fine Bodesiaga* (note the use of the *-acum* suffix once again to denote the surrounding district). St. Marianus' church at Vic, the lands of which are mentioned in several of the boundary clauses of these charters, was also a possession of Gorze, as is made clear in Gorze 99 (dated Aachen, 13 July, 943). St. Stephen's, Metz, also held land at Vic, as did churches of St. Martin and St. Maurice. The only other feature of interest in these charters is the fact that Gorze exacted a toll on the public street as it passed one of its *mansi* (Gorze 81, dated Gorze, 890).

Coins were struck at Vic by Walfechramn, Trasoald, Madelinus, Fainulf and Domnolen between about 600 and 660 (Stahl 1982, p.150).

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Archaeological evidence is scarce. The *Garde Champêtre* of Vic gave a scramasax found in or near Vic to an abbé Harter, who in turn gave it to the Musée de Sarrebourg (app. 2. a, no. 289). Near the modern church, rescue excavations in 1975 found eighth-century pottery, probably, given the abandonment of furnished burial in the late seventh century, indicating settlement on this site (Hurstel 1984, II, pp. 322-3). However, Hurstel's note is uncannily similar to that under Salottes, the next settlement down the Seille, where he similarly says that rescue excavations in 1975 by J.-P. Bertaux near the church found early medieval pottery. Without examination of the archives of the *Direction des Antiquités de Lorraine*, which was impossible, we cannot check Hurstel's statement. No publication of these excavations seems likely to appear.

As at Marsal, contemporary descriptions of the plots in Vic did not distinguish it from other settlements. The description as a *vicus* is important, though, and, if we accept Hurstel's account, evidence of occupation on the site continued in the Merovingian era. To this we can add yet another active mint, strong evidence of involvement in salt-making and probable involvement in the administration of the *Pagus Salinensis* to conclude that here too the settlement was of a higher order than a simple rural hamlet.

5. Palaces and Monasteries.

Two other forms of privileged settlement need to be considered in this chapter, the palaces of the Merovingian kings and Arnulfing-

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Pippinid mayors of the palace, and the monasteries established in the *civitas* in this period.

The first of these need not detain us long. Thionville, *Theodonis villa*, is mentioned as a palace in the later eighth century (Fredegar Continuation, 36; *Annals of the Kingdom of the Franks*, s. a. 773, 782; *Revised Annals*, s. a. 773, 782-3; *Annales Mettenses Priores*, s. a. 773; King (ed & trans) 1987 for all except Fredegar). Charlemagne issued two capitularies there in 806 (King (ed & trans) 1987, Cap. 17 & 18). Hurstel claims that it is mentioned as *Dieten Hoven* in 707 but again gives no documentary reference and such a blatantly German orthography is surely unlikely that early. We have no Merovingian mention of Thionville but a residence of the Arnulfings almost certainly existed there in the seventh and eighth centuries.

Merovingian occupation is attested by several finds (app. 2. a, nos. 276-9). Coins of Justin and Justinian were found under the town's fortifications in 1828 and 1873 respectively. Ceramics were found in a single grave under the Avenue Clemenceau in 1982. A third cemetery is known on the site of the 'Tour-aux-Puces', which now contains the Musée de Thionville. This, discovered in 1942, contained three or more stone-lined graves with mortar on the inside. No grave goods were reported and so it is not impossible that these burials are Carolingian. It has been suggested (Stiller 1986, pp. 5-6) that the Tour-aux-Puces originated as part of the Carolingian palace at Thionville. These graves might be connected with the palace church.

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Recently, an early medieval settlement has been found at Thionville, dating to the ninth, or possibly the eighth, centuries, and including sunken-featured buildings (Nathalie Dautremont, *verb. comm.*, 17.7.89) but no further information is yet available.

The fairly wide spread of these finds might argue that Thionville was a settlement of some size in the Merovingian period. Its importance in the later eighth century can certainly be postulated back into the Merovingian era. The presence there of officials of the Arnulfing-Pippinid, later Carolingian, family, the collection there of estate revenues and so on, and the presence of ancillary staff and craftsmen must have meant that the site attained hamlet size, and its connection with the most powerful family in the land certainly made it a privileged settlement. When the court of the mayors and later kings stayed there the population and prestige of the settlement would rise yet further. The site was a privileged hamlet which periodically became a privileged village.

Nothing can be said about the other possible palace site, Sarreguemines. It has been plausibly identified with the *Gaimundas* of the charters but it is unlikely that it ever reached the high rank attained by Thionville. We can simply suggest that the site was a privileged farm periodically reaching some higher rank. A single Merovingian artefact is recorded as coming from Sarreguemines in the *Musées de Metz* (C.-J. no.271; app. 2. a, no.264).

Outside Metz itself, monasteries were comparatively few within the *civitas* (Parisse 1981, pp. 11-20; see diagram 5.6). Gorze, founded at the very end of the period, was undoubtedly the most important, with a large population of monks. A site like this, with its ancillary staff, cooks, servants, craftsmen and so forth; its widespread estates which needed to be administrated and of which the surplus had to be collected and brought to the abbey; and its regional roles, social, economic and religious, cannot be classed as other than a higher rank settlement. In the terminology proposed in chapter two, Gorze was clearly a privileged village. As for the other abbeys, they all had privileged status but their size will have varied between that of a simple farm or homestead and that of hamlet.

6. Conclusions.

The most obvious conclusion to be drawn from this chapter is the clear reduction in the numbers of intermediate-order settlements after the Roman era. As has been outlined the majority, if not all, of the lesser *vici* were either abandoned or reduced to the status of simple farms or hamlets. Given that a significant contraction of the settlement pattern in the late Roman period was suggested in chapter four, this is hardly unexpected. If the overall number and distribution of settlements is seriously reduced then it is more than likely that the need for middle-order settlements will be correspondingly adversely affected.

Of the *castra*, some of these may have suffered similar fates. Le Héraple seems to have been abandoned some time in the fifth century,

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except for possible religious and defensive use. Saarbrücken shows little clear evidence of anything other than an ordinary rural settlement but with the advantage of defences, which may have given it regional value. The same is true of Tarquimpol. Sarrebourg and Scarponne, particularly the latter, are the only *castra* to present serious evidence of middle-order status. Their status as mint-sites, administrative centres, and crossing points (both of rivers and, effectively, of administrative boundaries), serving wide regions within the *civitas* make it probable that they retained their status as villages for the bulk of this period. However, at both of these sites abandonment of the Roman fortified area is not to be ruled out.

On the upper Seille, three *vici* continued to function as higher order settlements, though these too, as was made clear in the case of Vic, relied heavily on the usual agricultural economy. However, their involvement in salt-production gave them value throughout the region, as far as Trier and beyond, and will have enabled a substantial number of their populations to exist on other than subsistence farming, either in the production of salt, or its transport and exchange. Here too mints existed, and very active ones at that, though the fact that several of the minters operated at more than one of these sites underlines the idea that the three *vici* shared their regional roles. This is also suggested by the fact that none of them seems to have been the exclusive residence of the Duke of the *Pagus Salininsis* in the seventh century, or of the *pagus'* administration. All three sites can be classified as villages in our terminology. Population seems to have been larger than in other

rural settlements, and as stated was involved in specialised manufacture or processing serving a wide region. The kind of dwelling-unit in these sites is not distinguished by contemporaries from that in other rural hamlets, but social differentiation of these settlements in the Merovingian period may be suggested by the fact that Carolingian capitularies distinguish the inhabitants of the *vici* (*vicani*) from the other inhabitants of the *pagi*. It may not be unreasonable to see some, if not all, of these sites reaching the status of small towns by the Carolingian era. Marsal would be the most likely candidate.

This reduction in the number of intermediate settlements is in part compensated for by the creation of new kinds of settlement; palaces, which were in effect periodic villages, and monasteries, religious *vici*. These will have fulfilled many of the old sites' roles whilst at the same time providing graphic illustration of the change in mentalities and indeed in society as a whole between the Roman and the Merovingian periods, changes which will be stressed further in the study of the capital of the *civitas*, Metz itself.

Chapter 6. Urbanism in Metz (1). The Decline of the Roman
Town.

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1. Introduction.

The study of town life in Merovingian Metz, if it is to make sense, needs to be pushed back to the Barbarian attacks of the late third century. These brought to a head a catastrophic period for northern Gaul. Half of the rural sites of the *civitas* of Metz failed to survive the middle of the century, and the area is considered, archaeologically, to have survived the chaos reasonably well (Wightman 1985, p.259).

2. The Walls

The result of these disturbed years was most notably the construction of the city walls. Archaeological evidence for the date of these walls is furnished by a very large number of third-century funeral monuments included in their foundations. Whilst fourth-century steles are rare, it must be conceded that the total lack of fourth-century evidence in these foundations so far must be significant. The possibility of refurbishment under Theodosius I is discussed in section 4.

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We are still in the dark as to the exact trace of the fortifications (see diagram 6.1). One problem has been whether the walls ran along the top of the slope above the Moselle or along the river-banks. Vigneron (1986, p.231) champions the latter while the former is supported by Gauthier (1986) and Weidemann (1971, p.168). Vigneron gives archaeological reasons for his supposition, which are, superficially, convincing. The reason for supposing the circuit to have run along the foot of the hill (the dotted line in diagram 6.1) is a reference that Bishop Robert renovated the defences in the ninth century, and that his walls ran along the river, but the charter containing this does not make it clear whether or not Robert's restored walls ran on the old course. St. Victor's, nearby, is described as *infra muros Metis* in 926 but again this does not prove the case either way. The only earlier mention of St. Victor's (the Stational List of archbishop Chrodegang) makes no mention of whether it lay within the walls or outside them. Gauthier (1986, p.50) groups it with the extra-mural churches but, if anything, St. Victor's place in the list, grouped with the churches of the cathedral complex and those of the *xenodochium*, suggests an intra-mural location. The idea that the walls originally left most of this area outside is only made certain by the fact that in the tenth century the area retained the name of the *suburbium sancti Stephani*.

One objection to the 'hill-top' circuit is the small theatre, lying between this supposed course of the walls and the river. In many Gallic towns (eg. Tours and Trier) a feature such as this was incorporated into the late imperial circuit. It seems unlikely that

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a theatre lying within 100m of the town walls would be left outside them. Examination of an eighteenth-century print of the theatre's remains may be interpreted as showing that the building was used as a bastion in the new circuit of defences (diagram 6.2). We may object to the idea of a continuous circuit along the river bank, however, as this would scarcely be conducive to the trade which took place there (see ch. 8). It can be postulated that the circuit turned in towards the hill-top after the theatre. Pierre-Edouard Wagner (1987, pp.511-2) also draws this conclusion, although he suggests that the theatre was used as a bastion jutting west from the main line of the walls. There is some archaeological evidence to support this idea. Excavations in the Îlot des Roches suggested that the area was only walled in the Carolingian period or later (*Gallia* 40, 1982, pp.325-6), but the precise dating of the wall-section in question is uncertain. The excavation, needless to say, remains unpublished. The positioning of the cathedral, above this trading area, may also be significant (see below, ch. 7).

The construction of the walls resulted in the great amphitheatre being left well outside the defences. Several areas of the old town were also excluded, but the area enclosed by the fortifications bore a closer relationship to that covered by the early imperial city than was the case in many Gallic towns. Wagner (1987, p.511) assumes that this was because a sizeable population still resided in the city, but this is probably not to be too readily accepted. Perhaps Metz's location near the frontier simply meant that a larger number of troops was available for the construction work. Certainly, available

manpower seems to have affected the length of town walls. Trier, the imperial capital, close to the frontier and with a ready supply of troops for building-projects, had an extremely long circuit which even enclosed some large uninhabited areas. Within Metz, too, archaeology has suggested that a number of sites were derelict after the later third century (see diag. 6.4). As stated, the foundations for the new walls were made from funeral steles. The significance of this is difficult to determine. We may interpret it as an emergency measure, brought about by the threat of invasion and thus acquiesced in by the population, or we may suggest that the town's population was falling, leaving fewer people to care about the sacrilege wrought on their ancestral tombs. Possibly it was a mixture of both.

3. The Great Amphitheatre.

The great amphitheatre presents a further difficulty, connected with the city's size in this period. Paul the Deacon (*Lib. Ep. Mett.* 4) said that when Clemens, Metz's first, semi-legendary bishop, came to the city, probably in the late third century (Gauthier 1980, p.21 ff.), he made his home and set up an altar in the caverns of the amphitheatre. If there is any truth in the tale, it may be significant. It implies that no one objected to a public building being taken over as a church. This might then be used in conjunction with the decision to leave the area outside the walls to suggest that it was indeed abandoned in the late third century (perhaps only briefly, as will be seen) and that the city population fell accordingly.

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Some darkness was shed on the problem (to adapt Mark Twain's phrase) when the site was excavated in the early years of this century, because of the building of the present railway goods station. The site had fallen into disrepair by the end of the third century but there were traces of Constantinian renovation. Wagner (1987, p.514) mentions that Argonne ware found in the amphitheatre could date occupation there to 350-380. These traces have been variously interpreted. Edith Wightman (1985, p.293) aligned herself with those who saw them as nothing more than a restoration of the amphitheatre's machinery; Friedrich Oswald (1967) supported those who saw this as the first Christian sanctuary in Metz, the later St. Pierre-aux-Arènes; Nancy Gauthier (1980, pp.20-21), probably wisely, said there was nothing in the data which proved the case either way. Oswald's other examples of Christian sanctuaries in amphitheatres are worth consideration, however, and the tradition that the site was the first church in Metz seems fairly well grounded (Oswald 1967, pp.159-60). The church of St. Peter *in arenam* is attested in the eighth century and the site was in Christian use in the fifth. Artefacts were found which suggested a religious use in the early Christian period (depictions of the fish and the anchor). The Constantinian building was, moreover, in the sunken pit in the arena, which connects neatly with Paul's statement that the altar was erected *in cavernis amphitheatrici*. In the final analysis, then, though the question will always remain open, the interpretation of the site as a Christian sanctuary is the more probable.

4. St. Pierre-aux-Nonnains.

The other great monument of the fourth century is the basilica on the citadel, which, like the amphitheatre, later became a church dedicated to St. Peter - *Saint-Pierre-aux-Nonnains*, also known as St. Pierre-en-Citadelle. There are two major problems associated with this building, concerning its date and its function. Until recently the edifice was thought to be dated reasonably comfortably to the beginning of the fourth century, from the tiles stamped *adiutex* (or derivations thereof). These are also found in the *Aula Palatina* at Trier. The latter is thought to date from this period because of documentary sources and a find of a coin of Severus II dating to 305 in the wall of an adjacent building, apparently unitary with the wall containing the tiles.

Recently, however, after X. Delestre's excavations at St. Pierre, samples of the late Roman tiles were sent for archaeomagnetic intensity dating. The results suggested a date of around 400 AD (± 15 years) for the firing of these tiles (Delestre 1988a; 1988b). This would force us to consider St. Pierre as one of the last known pieces of monumental Roman architecture north of the Alps; a building on an enormous scale erected at a time when Imperial presence was fast in retreat for the south, when almost all other towns in northern Gaul had long lapsed into decay, and while the greatest of them all, Trier, was undergoing a period of catastrophe which led ultimately to Salvian's memorable description of the desolation of the city in the 430s (*Governance*, 6.13). Even the archaeological evidence from the rest of Metz (see below) would make this surprising. We may however

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raise a number of objections to this date:

1. Archaeomagnetic intensity dating is notoriously problematic. The accuracy of the method is very heavily dependent upon the quality of the sample, something which may well effect the reliability of material drawn from a site with the complex post-depositional history of St. Pierre. Moreover, one recent English survey of the method states that an accuracy of only ± 25 years is possible with the best samples. Another shorter piece, on a directional archaeomagnetic dating survey of historically attested lava flows, (Rolph *et al.* 1987, p.223) states clearly that intensity dating would have produced misleading results. The author points out that it is not possible to date a sample uniquely by measuring the changes in the density of the earth's magnetic field. Even directional archaeomagnetic dating, a more accurate method, can only exceptionally attain margins of error as narrow as ± 15 years.

2. No other dating elements to support this very late date, and so far no arguments to counter those supporting the conventional one have been adduced. The *ADIUTICE* tiles at the Trier *Aula Palatina*, a building very similar to St. Pierre in plan, are, as mentioned, probably (though not certainly) to be dated to the very early fourth century. The site where these tiles were manufactured, at Yutz, was excavated in the 1950s and there too there seemed to be no evidence of occupation later than the mid-fourth century (Toussaint 1950, p.227). This obviously poses a serious problem for Delestre's theory, for this would have us believe that these tiles were still being used almost fifty years after the latest corroborative dating evidence for their manufacture.

3. The buildings immediately adjacent to St. Pierre have been dated to the third quarter of the fourth century by a coin of

Valentinian I (364-75; Hatt 1961) found in a foundation trench, and a sample sent to the Rennes archaeomagnetic laboratory returned a date (somewhat suspiciously!) of 370 AD (± 15 years). The excavator of this site stated that these buildings were stratigraphically later than the St. Pierre Basilica. Clearly this cannot tally with a date of c. 400 for the latter.

4. Most conclusively, the archaeomagnetic results themselves cast doubt on Delestre's theory. These have been published, albeit not in great detail (Delestre 1988b). The diagram of the test's results shows clearly that the sample could as easily date to the years around 300 AD (the traditional date) as to c. 400 (diag. 6.3). Delestre's one-sentence-long refutation of this on the grounds that sigillated ware was found under the cement of the basilica is unconvincing, without more detailed discussion of this pottery. Sigillated ware dates to the late third and early fourth century as well as later. Even other archaeologists in the *Direction des Antiquités*, who have greater access to the records, are unconvinced by this (N. Dautremont, *verb. comm.*, 17.7.89).

These objections all deserve much greater attention and more convincing refutation than they have hitherto received. The doubts which they raise are further compounded by discussion of the building's function. In the past the edifice has been assumed to have been a civil basilica, in the same way as was the very similar *Aula Palatina* at Trier. Delestre now proposes that it was part of a public bath complex. This may well be the case, though Delestre supports his claim more by assertion than by proof:

'ces constructions... correspondent plus vraisemblablement à un ensemble thermal monumental, dont l'un des éléments majeurs est l'édifice à plan basilical (palestre?)' (1988a, p.27 - there is

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no more detailed discussion).

Bath complexes with similarly large palaestra are known (for example at Ste. Ruffine; Piechaud & Poinsignon 1988). It is the 'public' role of St. Pierre which needs consideration.

The building turns its principal doorway towards the generally accepted course of the city walls - only about ten metres separate the two. If both the late third/early fourth-century date for the walls and Delestre's date of c.400 AD for the basilica are correct, the former will already have been in place when the building was constructed. The basilica was thus built so as to turn its face against the city walls. No modern student of spatial analysis would accept that a building which so deliberately hindered access to its main entry could possibly be constructed as in any way public (at least in the modern sense of the word). The principal doorway of the *Aula Palatina* at Trier faces the centre of the Roman city, and the other thermal complexes in Metz itself are, as far as can be ascertained, oriented so as to present fairly easy access from the centre of the town. Were the Metz basilica constructed as a public building with the city walls already in place, it would be extremely unusual. We have seen that the accepted date of c.270-300 for the walls is probably sound, at least as far as the excavated sections of the walls are concerned. Unless we can propose some plausible reason for the walls in this area (not recently excavated) being built later than both St. Pierre and the rest of the defences, either the newly proposed date of the basilica, or its newly proposed function, must be wrong. Let us look at this in more detail.

The problem posed by this orientation away from the centre of early Roman Metz was in fact raised long ago by Édith Ennen (1959, p. 325, n. 9). Even if the basilica were constructed in the early fourth century the problem of the relative position of the walls remains. Some writers have claimed that the building was uncompleted, having been intended to serve the southern areas of the town, abandoned after the construction of the city wall. The evidence adduced for this incompleteness has never been satisfactory. Perhaps, however, the walls were not completed here until slightly later than elsewhere, allowing the basilica to be finished before the completion of the defences. This is one possibility but we cannot assume that this sector of Metz, let alone the whole town, was unprotected in the late fourth century. If we were to do so, to support Delestre's new dating, the walls of Metz would have to have been completed after 370 at the earliest (using two standard deviations). This would have Metz unfortified, at least in part, some seventy or more years after the fortification of the other, less important towns of northern Gaul (and later even than that of some of the local *vici*); this despite being only a short distance up the Moselle from, and on the lifeline of, the imperial capital at Trier. But perhaps we can attribute the walls in this area to a rebuilding during the reign of Theodosius I (379-395), which saw a great deal of construction or modification of fortifications in the empire (including, perhaps, the defences at Saarbrücken). The late third-century defences must have hitherto run on a different circuit. This could have been either further to the north-east, leaving the basilica in the *suburbium*, or further to the south-west, allowing us to see the possible late fourth-century building as

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representing a contraction of the defended area. The latter would be plausible, given developments in the rest of the empire. The idea that Metz's fortifications were modified rather than built from scratch in the later fourth century removes the necessity of assuming either that St. Pierre's had a unique orientation or that Metz was unfortified until the very end of the century.

This theory allows us to see St. Pierre-aux-Nonnains as a public building, but its function as basilica or part of a bath complex remains uncertain. The presence of baths nearby makes Delestre's idea attractive, but they are not of typically 'public' type, as will be mentioned below. The very size of St. Pierre surely argues for a more exalted role, which may well have been as a civil basilica.

The final question about the basilica in this era concerns the suggestion that soon after its construction, the building was in use as a church. J.J. Hatt, in excavations near the site, believed that he had found a baptistery connected with the basilica (Hatt 1961). The features unearthed resemble the baths associated with the villa at Rouhling (Moselle) and are aligned with the basilica, though possibly post-dating it (see above), but no evidence was found which could prove whether these were further public baths or a baptistery. Gauthier (1986, p.47) says that buildings have since been found in the area, to which these baths belong. This has led Delestre to propose that the St. Pierre basilica was part of a bath complex. For the features unearthed by Hatt to have been a baptistery, the site would, in that period, have had to have been the cathedral. No Messin

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tradition claims this or indeed any early Christian status for the building and no early Christian artefacts have been found. Some funerary steles, a fragment of pottery and a bone comb of Merovingian date have been found which suggest that burial was going on on the site in the earlier seventh century and thus that a church existed on the site before that date. The fact that the Merovingian building led to the apse of the basilica being abandoned and a new wall built, giving the church a purely rectangular plan, suggests that the building was not in particularly good condition at the time, having been abandoned some time before this period, and maybe that it was indeed never completed by the Romans. The evidence for a Christian function for St. Pierre in the Roman period is therefore weak.

To summarize, the following hypothesis can be proposed: The complex of St. Pierre was built in the mid-fourth century (a date much later than the 360s is unacceptable for the reasons outlined above), either as a civil basilica or perhaps as part of a bath complex. We may suggest that St. Pierre was the last example in Metz of public building in the classical tradition. As we will see, the archaeological evidence from the rest of the town suggests that the prosperity of Metz ended in the later fourth century, further supporting a date for the basilica of no later than the 350s or 360s. From its orientation, St. Pierre's seems to have been intended to serve the southern suburb, and not the main town. For this to have been effective the town wall cannot yet have been in existence in its usually accepted position, ten metres from St. Pierre's main entrance. It can be suggested therefore that the town wall here dates to

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Theodosius I's reign and a modification of the town's defences. The construction of this wall will have severely restricted access to the building and may even have led to its possible abandonment before the Merovingian era. The theories put forward recently concerning St. Pierre-aux-Nonnains in the later Roman Empire require substantial modification. As they stand, they suffer greatly from a lack of awareness, or at least consideration, of the developments in urbanism across the rest of the Western Empire in this period.

5. The remainder of the town.

Within the city, fourth-century evidence continues to be plentiful up to the middle of the century. The extra-mural suburb at Pontiffroy shows evidence of abandonment in the late third-century but summary occupation continued into the fourth. Several sites have yielded traces of rebuilding in the period, but after the mid-century things change abruptly (see app. 2.c for the discussion of urban sites in Metz). On a number of sites the earlier fourth-century evidence is covered by an ashy layer, above which no Roman evidence was found. In the 1930s, Leclercq (1933, col.816), said that wherever one dug in Metz, the fourth-century evidence was covered by a thick black layer. Since the last war such traces seem to have been found only in a limited sector of the town, centring on the most important Roman baths, the 'Thermes du Carmel'. This layer is often associated with a sack of 352, but there is no evidence to support this. The nature of the deposit allows the suggestion that it may be the bottom of a deeper layer of 'black earth' such as is common in British towns, and

thus represent intra-mural horticulture or even agriculture, rather than simply the results of a sack.

Where this layer is not found, building often does not continue after the mid-fourth century. Dating the last occupation of these sites is problematic. Frequently it is based on 'Argonne ware', conventionally dated to the early and middle fourth century. However, work being carried out in the Direction des Antiquités at Metz now suggests that it could have been in use later in the fourth century and even into the fifth (Ph. Brunella, *verb. comm.*, Sept. 1988; the only publication of this work so far is Feller & Poplineau 1988). Nevertheless this cannot be used to dispose of the clear hiatus between late Roman and Carolingian occupation on sites in Metz. Several problems remain. Stratigraphically, as far as can be ascertained from the unsatisfactory excavation reports, it is difficult to push occupation far beyond the mid-century, except in a couple of cases. Coin evidence also appears to point to an abandonment of most of these sites around 350 (app. 2.c, esp. 'Parking souterrain de l'Esplanade et rue Poncelet').

Further north, in the Cité Administratif, a road was encroached upon by one of the few traces of building in the later part of the century (app. 2.c). This encroachment represents a trend which can be seen across the later Roman empire, in Carthage (S.P. Roskams, *verb. comm.*, 9.2.89) and, later, in Syria (Kennedy 1985), where the legislation against encroachment into public spaces seems to have been breaking down. Building private property into the public street may,

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as Kennedy argues for Syria, be indicative of a new and perhaps more vigorous form of urbanism. At Metz the building on the site of the 'Thermes du Carmel' may be another aspect of this process (Hatt 1958; 1961, p.23; app. 2.c). However, in one instance, also in the north of the town, precisely the opposite phenomenon was noted by Leclercq (1933, col.816). En Jurue, one of the oldest streets in the city, was found, by excavations in 1863, to run right across various Roman *insulae*, paying no heed at all to their alignment and providing probably the most serious case of abandonment and violation of the Roman street plan in Metz. Leclercq plausibly suggests that the area was abandoned in the late antique or early medieval period.

The city's official buildings suffered heavily in the century. The baths fell into disuse by 350 (Vigneron 1986, p.190). The Thermes du Carmel were abandoned and occupied by buildings in the early fourth century (Hatt 1961, p.23). The 'Thermes St. Jacques' also appear to have been abandoned in the fourth century (Jolin 1982). On the other hand, the public building known as *Rome-Salle* was rebuilt in or after the reign of Magnentius (349-53; Vigneron 1986, p.174) and the aquaduct which supplied the city was still being repaired as late as Valens' reign (364-378; a coin of this emperor was found cemented into the aquaduct at Jouy-aux-Arches; Toussaint 1950, p.100).

Apart from St.-Pierre-aux-Arènes, which, it has been suggested above, was in use as a church in the fourth century, several other Christian sites may have come into existence at this time. Archaeological evidence under the later church of St. Arnulf shows

that this site was in use in the fourth century, through a number of fourth and fifth-century Christian gravestones (Collot *et al.* 1979, 1st and 2nd unnumbered pages of text). Konrad Weidemann (1970) dated a large number of other churches in Metz to the Late Roman period from their *patrocinia* (see app. 2.e). Though many of these lie on the site of the Roman cemetery to the south, where one would expect such early churches to be, it must be pointed out that churches of known Merovingian date were also established there, so location need not be a sure indication of date. While it may be that some of these churches are early foundations, without firmer evidence Gauthier's (1986) more cautious methodology must be preferred and the first historical or archaeological indication of the church used as the *terminus post quem* for its foundation. The only other religious foundations whose existence in the fourth century may reasonably be surmised are St. Felix (Gauthier 1980, pp.93-95) and St. John the Baptist (app. 2.e, no.2), probably attached to St. Peter *in arenam* and thus supporting the hypothesis that the latter was the cathedral before St. Stephen's, and thus before the early fifth century.

The picture of Metz in the earlier part of the fourth century is, then, one of a slightly reduced but still important town. A change comes around the middle of the century when a large number of sites are abandoned or destroyed and not rebuilt. Evidence also allows us to suggest a degree of abandonment of the road network. After 350, though there were obviously still a large number of Roman buildings still standing, the picture is of contraction and dereliction.

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The works of Ammianus Marcellinus furnish a couple of references; one describing the town as one of the two major cities of Belgica Prima, after Trier (*Res Gestae* XV.11.9); the other mentioning that the Caesar Julian ordered the prisoners and booty taken at the battle of Strasbourg to be sent to Metz (XVII.1.2). Both of these suggest that the city was a place of some importance, especially the first, which omits the *civitas*-capitals of Toul (Tullum Leucorum) and Verdun (Virodunum) in Belgica Prima. We learn from the *Notitia Dignitatum* that a unit of the army was stationed at Metz. This was a *legio pseudo-comitatus*, the *prima flavia* (*Not. Dig. occ.* vii.95; v.269), but more importantly the city was the seat of two imperial officials, a *procurator gynaecii* under the orders of the *comes sacrarum largitionum*, transferred from Autun, and a *procurator gynaecii rei privatae* under the orders of the *comes privatorum*, moved from Viviers (Vigneron 1986, p.175, n.1). The latter was at Metz only temporarily, however, since by the time the *Notitia* was written, he had been transferred again, this time to (?)Arles (the manuscript is corrupt). Bishop Victor signed the pseudo-council of Cologne in the 340s (see Gauthier 1980, p.22, p.447 ff.). This all suggests that Metz acquired some importance in the imperial governmental system in the fourth century, probably because of its position on the Moselle, part of Trier's line of communication with the Mediterranean.

6. The Problem of Late Antique Decay.

Archaeological evidence for occupation in Metz dries up in the middle of the fourth century and the implications of this fact require consideration. There are number of possible explanations:

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1. That occupation ceased at Metz.
2. Modifying the above, that occupation ceased on the site of the Roman town of Metz, but may have carried on elsewhere, outside the walls for example.
3. That occupation continued but is archaeologically invisible, through our inability to recognise late fourth- and fifth-century material, through the use of extremely ephemeral buildings, or through both of these agencies.
4. That occupation continued but that all trace of this has been destroyed by later building.

No one has yet taken an extreme hard-line 'discontinuity' approach and suggested the first explanation. P.-E. Wagner (1987) comes close to proposing the second; the third and fourth possibilities lie, implicitly or explicitly, behind the bulk of work on late antique Metz. These alternatives require more detailed discussion.

Superficially, the abandonment and dereliction of almost every known Roman site in Metz by the later fourth century (using coins and conventional pottery dating), and the absence of succeeding traces of habitation before the later medieval or even modern periods argues for an end of occupation. However, arguments from long-accumulated negative evidence are not to be pressed too far; Richard Hodges' unfortunate statement on the absence of archaeological evidence for Anglian York ('At some stage we have to accept the power of this kind of negative evidence'; Hodges 1982, p.74) and the subsequent discovery of extensive middle Saxon remains on the Fishergate site will probably

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serve as a cautionary tale on this subject for a long time to come. In any case, the discovery of a handful of fifth-century sherds on sites at Metz shows that some kind of occupation continued. Furthermore we have archaeological evidence for two churches, and historical testimony to the fact that Metz was occupied through the later fourth and into the middle of the fifth century at least (see below).

Previous writers have often allowed themselves to be convinced by these written references, and the apparently unbroken succession of bishops in Metz from the early fourth century onwards, according to the episcopal lists, that town-life in Metz continued through this period (cp. Wagner 1987, p.511; 'la permanence du fait urbain est attestée pour Metz'). Though the existence of contemporary descriptions of Metz as a town or city is important, we must remember Hodges' important points on this subject (Hodges 1982, p.47 ff.). Discussing Irish 'cities', he shows that what contemporaries called towns might not conform to any general geographical model of an urban settlement.

Still taking account of the evidence of abandonment inside the walls, the second alternative is more attractive. Whilst this may simply be seen as a convenient means of dismissing extensive archaeological negative evidence, it must be conceded that the two churches known archaeologically to have been in use at this time, as well as the great bulk of those which, from their dedications, may possibly be late Roman, lie outside the city walls to the south, on

the site of the Roman cemetery. This can be added to the fact that the site of the Hôpital St. Nicholas, where a sherd of fifth-century pottery was found, lies outside the walls, again to the south. Further evidence may be provided by the fact that both of the coins of the Theodosian dynasty known from Metz (up to 1948; Toussaint 1948, p.80 & p.90) were found outside the walls. There is, however, a problem involved in the use of this kind of data. In the quarter of the Pontiffroy, coins of the mid-fourth century were found in recent excavations by P. Thion (N. Dautremont, *verb. comm.*, July 1989), yet the same excavations showed that this area was abandoned around the beginning of the century. We have to acknowledge a strong possibility that unstratified late Roman material outside the walls results from the dumping of rubbish from later intra-mural clearing and levelling.

The third possibility requires serious consideration. The work on Argonne ware decorated 'à la molette' has already been mentioned. This however has yet to be published in any detail, and as far as the discussion of Metz is concerned this research has so far been mobilised simply to attempt to dispose of the clear hiatus between the late Roman and Carolingian occupation. The desire to close this gap is founded on an outmoded idea of what constituted an early medieval capital. It is assumed that a capital must, as in later periods, have been the site of dense permanent occupation and economic activity. Ewig (1963) demonstrated that Merovingian 'capitals' were quite different, and this is a point to which we will return. As has also been mentioned, stratigraphy does not permit us to extend the

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last Roman phases in Metz much beyond the end of the fourth century. Leaving aside the redating of artefacts, the idea that fifth-century material has been found across Metz but not recognised for what it is is not very plausible. Some fifth-century wares have been found but they are rare. They have not, moreover, permitted any reappraisal of other undated artefact forms.

The fourth and final suggestion cannot be taken very far. It is highly unlikely that right across a very uneven site spread over a promontory at the junction of two rivers and incorporating two minor hillocks (the 'Hauts-de-Sainte-Croix' and 'the Citadel'), late medieval and modern levelling and rebuilding should have consistently removed all layers of occupation after the later fourth century and before the Carolingian period. The only site where this is plausible is the Citadel, which was levelled in the early modern period for the construction of the fortification from which it draws its name. One of the excavators here, Dominique Heckenbenner (*verb. comm.*, July, 1988; see also Heckenbenner & Thion 1986) considers that the possibility of vanished post-Roman layers is not to be ruled out. Nearby, on the site of the École des Arts Appliquées, Merovingian and Carolingian pottery was found, but lay apparently in a thick debris layer covering the fourth-century evidence (Collot 1967-68). Even here abandonment cannot be discounted.

Whatever else is uncertain we can be sure that, after the town had survived the crisis of the later third century despite reduction in size, the nature of occupation on the site of Metz underwent dramatic

change some time after the mid-fourth century. From the above discussion it must remain most plausible that a very large area of the late Roman town was abandoned. That the population moved to the southern extra-mural area is not at all to be discounted, but needs more evidence and will be further discussed below. The reasons for this change now need consideration.

In Metz's case it seems clear that the town's decline had little or nothing to do with the factors which Hodges (1982, p.30) believed were behind late antique urban decay - the fifth-century Germanic invasions and a lack of appreciation of the market principle by the newcomers. Metz was a shadow of its former self long before the Franks and Alamans were in control of the region. Hodges was, however, closer to the mark when he suggested (*ibid*) that the decline in urban life was connected with changes in the market pattern. The early Roman urban system was based upon the concept of a central place providing high order market services for a dependent region or *civitas*. Hodges suggests that a change to an economic system based upon the status of persons rather than places was the critical factor in bringing about the end of Roman towns. In this he may be right, but we must look for this change and the reasons for it earlier than he suggests. The desertion of towns in the late Roman period by the upper classes, who spent more and more time on their large country villas and estates, was the key to this change. It was increasingly apparent that the major employers of the region were no longer residing in the towns, and thus artisans and others in search of employment followed the landlords into the countryside.

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Roman aristocrats had always of course had estates in the country, so why should the migration into the country have had such important effects in the fourth century and not earlier? The reasons are again economic. The inflation of the third century will, as A.H.M. Jones (1964, p.732) said, have largely destroyed the revenues of most cities, making them more dependent than before upon the private wealth of the *curiales*. The second decade of the fourth century saw the confiscation of the temple lands, reducing the cities' sources of finance still further. Taxes and lands were all confiscated by Constantine and Constantius II and whereas in the east one third of the revenue from these was restored under Valens, no similar relief appears to have been granted in the West. All this put great strain on the resources of the curial classes and though for the upper strata these cannot have been too much of a burden, the period saw more and more *curiales* attempting to secure immunity from their duties. The wealthy decurions also saddled their less fortunate colleagues with the most burdensome liturgies, increasing the problems of filling civic offices.

The financial chaos of the third century will also have badly affected those of town's population who were involved in trade, finance and specialist crafts. Richard Reece (1980; 1981) has suggested that a change in the pattern of Roman trade took place in the third century. Rather than being a change in direction from centre-outwards to provinces-inwards, as he suggested in 1980, this seems rather to have been a change from an exclusively core-periphery, centre-outwards, economy to a series of provincial economies, as

existed before the exceptional economic situation of the first century BC and the first century AD, which led to the Roman conquest (cp. Reece 1981). This series of economies was still complemented by the continued movement of taxes towards the centre of the Empire (even this began to break down in the fifth century) and of supplies outwards to the frontiers, but this 'administrative' economy existed almost in isolation from the others. There will, as Reece argued, have been a period of 'slackwater' when the direction of trade was uncertain (Reece 1980, p.86) and this will have caused tremendous problems for those who drew their livelihood from involvement in a particular pattern of trade. This aside, when barter and payment in kind temporarily replaced the monetary economy, it would be necessary either to be able to exist on subsistence farming or to be able to produce some form of goods which could be regularly exchanged for foodstuffs. Even in the latter case, some form of food-production would probably be necessary to ensure survival. These factors would be bound to reduce the prestige of Metz within the settlement hierarchy.

Some town-dwellers will have moved to the countryside to acquire farmland. As outlined above, there is strong evidence for desertion and population decline in Metz in this period, which would be expected if there was such an exodus to the countryside. The number of town-dwellers involved in farming the immediate environs of Metz will have increased. Within Metz itself some areas may have been given over to horticulture or even agriculture, or the raising of smaller animals (an analysis of faunal remains from urban deposits in Metz would be

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very valuable). It may well be these processes which, as stated, are behind the deposition of black, organic layers over certain areas inside and outside the walls of Metz. This would also explain the abandonment of the intra-mural zone for more dispersed settlement outside the walls, facilitating the farming of the surrounding area. Significantly too, it would bring about a crucial, and necessary, break-down in the symbolic importance of the walls in signifying the town/countryside, non-agricultural/agricultural oppositions in late antique society.

A further solution to the financial problems suffered by town-dwelling artisans would be to enter the permanent service of a rich patron. The urban status of Metz might have been preserved if the local aristocracy had dwelt in the town. Such people, living off the produce of estates, might have been able to support the town's merchants and craftsmen by taking them into their households. However, as is well known, the late Roman Gallic aristocracy, whilst paying lip-service to the idea of towns as marks of civilisation, dwelt increasingly on their rural estates. After the third-century crises, they devoted their time to building up large rural *latifundia*. Towns ceased to feature in the economic plans of late Roman aristocrats. They ceased, furthermore, to figure in the cultural life of such magnates.

'Ironically it was then, during a period of profound change, that Gallo-Roman culture - often expressed in a refined, cultural manner of life played out in rural *villae* as much as at court - reached its high point (eg. the poetry of Ausonius)' (Berry 1987, p.468).

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This is clear also from the important work of John Matthews (1975). Apart from those able to draw a living in the town from the upkeep of baths, roads and so on, for which the *curiales* were, as mentioned, legally responsible, craftsmen and other 'professionals' who wished to survive by entering the full-time service of a rich employer, would, in the fourth and fifth centuries, only be able to do so by following these people to the countryside.

An exception to this would be provided by the presence of the bishop. The fourth- and early fifth-century Bishops of Metz probably resided outside the walls at St. Pierre-aux-Arènes, increasing further the importance of the extra-mural zones. The role of the church in the development of the settlement at Metz will receive more extensive consideration in chapter 7.

In the fourth century, then, the city was heavily dependent upon a curial, land-owning and essentially rural class for its finance, and the members of this class were increasingly either unwilling to undertake their responsibilities, when more prestigious alternatives were available, or unable to perform them because of the inequalities of the system. The fact that the rural areas of the *civitas* of Metz survived the chaos of the late third century reasonably well probably ensured that the town itself was able to live on until 350. A social élite which was still expected to fulfil its old role of providing public works maintained the appearance of well-being in the town, thus keeping the roads resurfaced, the water supply functioning and a theatre operating for about fifty years. In addition to this, the

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imperial capital now lay fifty or so miles downriver and Metz's position on the route from Trier to the Mediterranean helped ensure prestige and some prosperity. The economic basis of the city was far more precarious than the continuing functioning of the public buildings suggested. It relied firstly upon an élite class still able to pour money into the town, and indeed upon the survival of an administration with enough power to continue to force them to do so, and secondly upon Trier remaining one of the two most important cities in Gaul.

The end to this fragile state of prosperity came with the Alamannic wars of the middle of the fourth century, during which Metz found itself in the middle of a frontier war-zone (Ammianus Marcellinus *Res Gestae* XVI.2.9-10; XXVII.2.1ff.). The imperial capital remained down the Moselle at Trier for a decade, and the seat of the Prefecture of the Gauls for a generation or so after the troubles, but the latter was then transferred to Arles and by 400 one of the officials stationed at Metz, the *procurator gynaeicii rei privatae*, had followed the court there ((Vigneron 1986, p.175, n.1). This will have added to the loss of what became the *civitas* of Verdun under Diocletian to weaken Metz's administrative role, but more importantly the decades of warfare throughout the region seem to have put an end to the town's prosperity. The ravages of the Alamans had drastic results on the rural areas of the *civitas*. Few of the villas¹ of the region survived this period of warfare and Ammianus tells us that the Alemans

¹ By this of course is meant those villas which are known archaeologically. Those which may or may not underlie modern villages with -y, -ing, -ange, -court or -ville suffixes are omitted.

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defeated at Scarponne had just sacked a local farm (*Res Gestae* XXVII.2.1). This serious crisis in the countryside cut off Metz's other source of prosperity. With their homes and estates, which formed the basis of their wealth, severely affected, the upper strata could no longer afford to finance the town. It is perhaps significant that it is now that the baths and water supply break down, and that roads cease to be resurfaced. The upkeep of precisely these amenities was the responsibility of the curial classes, the liturgy of maintaining the baths being one of the heaviest which fell upon the decurions (Jones 1964, p.737).

The fifty years between the two periods of invasion in Lorraine serve as a valuable example of how the accepted patterns of late Roman aristocratic spending on towns were of little help in ensuring their continued economic well-being. Beyond the temporary employment created by the building projects involved, new theatres, resurfaced roads, and functioning baths did little to restore the town's economic status. Yet the people of the times continued to think that these things were what made a town. Unable to pay for them themselves, the aristocracy of the *civitas* of Trier begged the emperors to spend money on games and spectacles (Salvian, *Governance*, 6.15), though Salvian himself seems to have realised the futility of such reasoning. These things had been the hall-marks of successful towns but it was not enough to maintain a thriving urban centre simply to keep up these features and force wealthy rural-dwelling land-owners to pay for them.

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The essential fragility of Roman urbanism at Metz, as shown by the foregoing discussion, is far from untypical. Lyon collapsed after the calamities of the later second century, Autun after those of the late-third and mid-fourth (Berry 1987, p.459, pp.463-4). If the concept of urbanism is an integral part of a society it takes more than plague, war and famine to remove a central town from an area, though they might displace it. We need only note the fact that thriving towns exist to this day at Dresden, Berlin and even Hiroshima. To use Reece's excellent phrase, the Roman town was 'a tender Mediterranean plant' which grew badly in 'the foreign soil' of northern Europe (Reece 1980, p.78)

The migration of privileged persons to the countryside and the creation there of new nodes of trade, exchange and culture put an end to what we might term early Roman 'developed' urbanism at Metz. The establishment of new high-order exchange points forced a reduction in Metz's standing to one closer to that of its rivals, as Hirth (discussed in Hodges 1982, p.24) has suggested happens to gateway communities when competitors appear. We can also see the late Roman legislation aimed at maintaining the upper classes in the cities as the kind of increased social controls intended to preserve the status of the central place which Hirth argues are to be expected at this stage in a gateway community's evolution. Early Roman Metz probably cannot be classed as a gateway community but Hirth's model does seem to be applicable here. It is also significant that the late Roman laws which blocked up the avenues of escape from the curial class, like those which restored one third of the cities' much-needed

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revenues from lands, date from after the crisis-period of the mid-fourth century. It may be seen as a belated response to the crisis and its results, but it came, we may imagine, too late to help Metz.

A bishop and his staff continued to live at Metz, however, as did other people, though how many is unclear. Many of the latter will have lived off subsistence farming. The following chapter will consider the status of Metz within the settlement hierarchy in the dark centuries between the collapse of classical Roman urbanism in the later fourth century and the revival of Metz as 'capital' of Austrasia.

Chapter 7. Urbanism in Metz (2). The Hiatus.

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1. Evidence for the fifth and early sixth centuries (figs. 7.1 & 7.2).

The fifth century is a dark period for Metz, both historically and archaeologically. Stratigraphic data fails us and we have very little to suggest that there was any occupation of the city. On the Espace Serpenoise site, one piece of late Roman/palaeochristian pottery suggests that occupation may have lasted into the very early fifth century (Verdel, unpublished), but the dating is problematic (see appendix 2.c). Verdel also refers to scattered residual fragments of late fifth- or early sixth-century carinated pottery (*ibid*). These finds are not mentioned in the only publication of the site (Verdel 1986) or in Henri Galinié's short notice of the excavation (*Arch. Méd.* 1985, p.225-6). In any case after this possible fifth-century occupation, the area remained unused, except for some ninth-century latrine pits, until the late middle ages. Sondages in the nearby Rue des Clercs demonstrate the same thing (Verdel, unpublished; Wagner 1987, p.513).

Claude Lefebvre at first thought that the occupation levels on the St. Livier site (*Gallia* 38, 1980, p.409; app. 2.c) extended into the early fifth century, but he modified this to the late fourth century

two years later (*Gallia* 40, 1982, p.324). In excavations on the site of the Hôpital St. Nicholas, another single sherd of fifth-century pottery was found, though this site too showed a general hiatus between the late Roman and the Carolingian periods (Natalie Dautremont, *verb. comm.*, Sept. 1988). A number of early Christian funerary monuments have been found at St.-Pierre-aux-Arènes and elsewhere, some of which date to the fifth century (see Collot *et al.* 1979, 1st and 2nd unnumbered pages of text; Reynolds 1989, p.71). The only Roman fifth-century coin from Metz known to this author was found east of the walls, on the Rue St. Eucaire (Toussaint 1948, p.80). The presence in this area of a Merovingian cemetery (cp. finds at the Porte de Allemands and the Rue des Allemands; app. 2.a), makes the possibility that the coin was deposited in a 'secondary' context in a Merovingian grave far from unlikely.

This was a disturbed time. Metz may well have been among the many cities sacked when the Barbarians crossed the Rhine on the last day of 406 and rampaged through Gaul. Fredegar's Chronicle (II.60) lists Metz among them, saying that it was sacked after its walls collapsed, but his is a late source. In 451 the town was again sacked, this time by Attila (Hydatius, *Chronicle*, 150). This was a disaster which was retained in popular tradition for some time to come. In Tours, Bishop Gregory knew the story of how St. Stephen's was saved miraculously from the flames (*L.H.*, II.6), and in the 780s, when Paul the Deacon came to write his *Book of the Bishops of Metz* legends abounded about Bishop Auctor and the miracles which were performed

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when the Huns stormed the city. That apart, documentary sources tell us little of the town's history between 400 and 500 (see ch. 3).

The overall impression of Metz presented by the meagre sources is one of stagnation, though the fact that no gaps are discernible in the bishop-list may suggest that the situation remained stable to a certain degree. That the present cathedral, St. Stephen's, was founded in the earlier fifth century may argue for a level of prosperity. The church at St.-Pierre-aux-Arènes was certainly now in use, as were a number of other new sanctuaries.

Archaeological evidence for the first half of the sixth century is as scarce as that for the fifth. The hiatus in occupation evident on intra-mural sites across Metz covers most of the sixth century. Some artefacts have however been found. Most of these are from urban cemeteries and their dating is not certain; many could date to any time between the late fifth and the seventh centuries, according to Périn's (1980) chronology (the bone comb fragments from the Jardin Botanique [C.J. nos. 431-2] and St.-Pierre-aux-Nonnains [C.J. no. 451], or the bronze buckle found in the 'environs' of Metz [C.J. no. 131]); other finds from these sites suggest later dates. Few can be placed with certainty in the period before 550. One of those which can is a small pitcher from St. Pierre-aux-Arènes (C.J. no. 894; possibly as early as the mid-fifth century).

The first years of the sixth century are obscure, historically. The region had passed into the control of the Franks by the time of

Clovis' death, if not before (see ch. 3) and bishop Hesperius or Sperus of Metz was present at a council in 535.

2. A problem. The sack of Metz.

The most significant event in the history of late antique Metz is undoubtedly the sack of the city by Attila's Huns in 451. The first mention of this is almost contemporary, in Hydatius' *Chronicle*. One hundred years later, Gregory of Tours recounted, in the *Decem Libri Historiarum*, that the town was laid waste on Easter Eve. The Huns 'burnt the town to the ground, slaughtered the populace with the sharp edge of their swords and killed the priests of the Lord in front of their holy altars' (*L.H.* II.6). The 'oratory' of St. Stephen was, however, saved. Gregory told how a vision was seen in which St. Stephen begged SS Peter and Paul that Metz be spared on account of his relics which were kept there. The apostles, however, were unable to grant the request in full: 'Your oratory alone will escape the flames. As for the town, we can do nothing, for the judgement of God has already been passed on it. The evil-doing of the inhabitants has reached such a point that the reverberation of their wickedness has already come to God's ears. The town must therefore be burnt to the ground' (*ibid*).

In the late eighth century, Paul the Deacon repeated this story but added more details (*Lib. Ep. Mett.* 10-11). He conflated the vision of St. Stephen with the tale recounted in the Gregory's previous chapter (*L.H.* II.5) wherein Bishop 'Aravadius' of Tongres journeys to Rome to pray for the salvation of his city. Paul has the bishop

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return via Metz in time to warn his friend Bishop Auctor of the impending doom of the town. However, the name used by Gregory is a corruption of a Servatius attested in 349-356 (Gauthier 1980, pp.140-1). There are no problems involved here since Gregory actually says that 'Aravatius' journey to Rome took place some time before the invasion of Attila. Only Paul, despite naming the bishop correctly, moves his journey to the 450s. He further elaborates the account of the attack. The Huns laid siege to Metz but, seeing the strength of the walls, they went south to attack Scarponne. Whilst they were there Servatius arrived, warned Auctor of the coming sack of the city and went on his way. The town's walls then collapsed. Hearing about this the Huns returned and destroyed Metz. St. Stephen's oratory was saved because the church miraculously took on the appearance of a solid block of rock and the Huns were unable to find a way in. A further miracle took place as the Huns, leading their captives towards Tarquimpol, suddenly found themselves in pitch darkness (*Lib. Ep. Mett.* 12). Seizing upon this, Bishop Auctor told them that God would only restore light when the Huns had released all their prisoners, which they duly did.

Paul's account is a curious conflation of tales. The use of the 'Aravatius' story has already been discussed. The tale of the collapse of the city walls is also told by Fredegar, as mentioned, who associates it with the 406-7 invasion. The appearance of Scarponne and Tarquimpol also requires consideration. Ammianus Marcellinus mentions both of these *castra* in connection with battles with the Alamans (*Res Gestae* XVI.2.9-10; XVII.2.1). Whilst Paul had not read

Ammianus' work, it is unlikely that his use of these places is coincidental. We can propose that stories connecting them with 'Barbarians' still abounded in the 780s. This is made more likely by the fact that all sources agree that Attila moved, from Metz, south-west to Orléans. Tarquimpol lies to the south-east of Metz, and thus well away from the Hunnish line of march.

Why the choice of Attila's sack for this anthology of local stories? Barnish (forthcoming) demonstrates that it became a matter of prestige to show a connection with, or, better, involvement in the Hunnish invasion. The position of these events in the *Liber de Episcopis Mettensibus* is also significant. Goffart (1988, p.374) shows that it may well be intended to represent the 'flood' in a history using a decidedly 'biblical' structure. It can also be seen to make up the 'chiastic' pattern of the work. The story of Bishop Auctor 'mirrors' that of Chrodegang in the later part of the book, the accounts of these two prelates standing on either side of that of Bishop Arnulf at the 'crux' of the work. The journey from Rome to Metz of Servatius mirrors Chrodegang's voyage from Metz to Rome; the miracle of Auctor's restoration of a broken altar mirrors Chrodegang's works of renovation.

Nonetheless the sack of Metz was a major event; it was recorded by contemporaries in Spain. This fact is at first sight difficult to reconcile with the almost total absence of evidence of fifth-century habitation at Metz. If Metz was as good as abandoned in this period, why should its destruction have been regarded as such a catastrophe?

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Here we must return to the problems raised in chapter 6, concerning the interpretation of negative evidence. There it was argued that, although inability to recognise fifth-century material may partly explain the dearth of such evidence in the town, this was unlikely to account for the lacuna completely. Instead, a settlement-shift away from the Roman town was to be considered, and reasons for such a movement were given, such as a change to an economy based largely upon subsistence farming.

This hypothesis draws further support from the evidence of the fifth century. The scanty data available seem to point towards a shift of settlement to the south. Excluding vaguely-dated Merovingian grave-goods, all the sites where possible fifth-century evidence has been found, with the exception of St. Livier and the Rue St. Eucaire, lie either in the southern half of the late Roman walled area or outside it, to the south (see diagram 7.1).

In the last chapter it was mentioned that the late Roman bishop of Metz resided in this southern extra-mural area. This requires more detailed explanation. That St. Pierre-aux-Arènes was indeed the first cathedral is suggested by Paul the Deacon's statement that it was the first church in Metz, by the presence nearby of a church of St. John the Baptist¹, and by more explicit, but later, Messin traditions. Interestingly, St. Pierre never became a parish church (Schneider 1950, p.30). In spite of local attempts to make it one in

¹ In this period, baptism was the exclusive preserve of the bishop. Cathedrals were thus accompanied by the only baptistery of the diocese, very frequently dedicated to St. John the Baptist.

the later middle ages, the bishops consistently refused to grant the church this status. The present cathedral of St. Stephen has never been a parish church, and nor has any other church of the cathedral complex except St. Gorgon (a Carolingian foundation). Perhaps this continued refusal to make St. Pierre a parish church is indicative of some connection with the cathedral. It therefore seems reasonable to suggest that the late antique bishops dwelt outside the walls.

They were certainly buried there. Paul the Deacon states that the ninth and tenth bishops, Rufus and Adelfus, were buried in the church of St. Felix. John of Gorze, in the tenth century, stated that tombs of the first three bishops were also there, and the late tenth-century *Vitae S. Clementis* describe the crypt where they were to be found, including a miraculous fountain (Gauthier 1986, p.49). Beyond those mentioned above, it is difficult to identify other churches founded before 450 (if indeed there were any). Interestingly, in the extremely optimistic analysis of Konrad Weidemann (1970), which uses their dedications to date no less than twenty Messin churches as late Roman, only St Stephen's, its baptistery and the churches of Holy Cross *iuxta columnas* and Holy Cross *iuxta portam* are located within the city walls. The remaining sixteen are scattered around the outside of the city, principally to the south. Even though it is difficult to accept Weidemann's conclusions, drawn from such shaky evidence, we can say that the Messin churches which may possibly date to the last century of Roman rule are most likely to have been located in the extra-mural areas.

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Further evidence of the abandonment of habitation within the walls is suggested by the later parochial organisation of Metz. In the eleventh century there were still only three intra-mural parishes - those of Ste. Croix, St. Gorgon and St. Martin - as opposed to at least nineteen outside the area encompassed by the Roman walls.

In this light, the apparent contradiction between the implication of the written sources that the sack of Metz was an event of great significance, and the archaeological evidence for the desertion of the town begins to make sense. Given that 80% of all possible fourth- and fifth-century churches stand outside the walls, principally on the site of the southern extra-mural cemetery (the quarter known as 'Le Sablon'), we can see that the Hunnish army could easily have 'slaughtered the priests of the Lord in front of their holy altars' without setting foot inside the walls. Similarly, if the bulk of habitation now took place in the 'suburbs' then the Huns can have burnt most of the town to the ground without assaulting the defences. Pierre-Édouard Wagner has similarly drawn this conclusion (Wagner 1987, p.514) and, though he does not mention it, this is also the account given by the thirteenth-century *Petit cartulaire de St. Arnoul*.

This hypothesis sheds a new light on the fate of St. Stephen's oratory. Whether or not the *oratorium sancti stephani* saved from the flames stood on the site occupied today by the cathedral of St. Stephen has long been a matter of debate. After a long exchange spanning the earlier decades of the century R.-S. Bour (cp. Bour 1930;

1938) is usually held to have triumphed over the German G. Wolfram (cp. Wolfram 1892) and, though none of his arguments is completely decisive, his thesis that St. Stephen's has stood on its present site since the sixth century at least has gained general acceptance (cp. Heitz 1982, p.6). This would mean that St. Stephen's church, founded in the early fifth century, was the only church certainly in existence in 451 which stood inside the walls. If the Huns destroyed Metz by burning the extra-mural zone and the priests and populace whom the Huns put to the sword dwelt in these areas it is not surprising that St. Stephen's was the only church to escape the holocaust. Wagner (1987, p.514) has also drawn attention to this idea. The legend recorded by Paul that the Huns were unable to find an entrance to the church may be a corruption of the fact that it remained protected by the city walls.

3. Settlement shift at Metz. An explanatory model.

The previous chapter concluded that early Roman urbanism was insecurely rooted in northern Gaul, either socially or economically. The collapse of the 'classical' Roman town was explained as the result primarily of the third-century economic chaos which dramatically reduced the possibilities of urban prosperity. This was compounded by the unwillingness of the aristocracy to live in the cities, and to pay, through the tenure of civic office, for their upkeep. Evidence was adduced for the abandonment of the site of Roman Metz, an hypothesis which, as outlined above, finds support in the data for the fifth century. Reasons for this shift of settlement must now be explored.

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Chapter 6 argued that after the third century the economy of Metz was forced to become more and more agricultural. This was aggravated by the fact that the principal employers of the region no longer resided in the city. Consequently the need to acquire land for farming, was, it was argued, behind an exodus from the walled area and the abandonment of the latter to horticulture and even agriculture. Here again this idea finds support in the scanty evidence of the fifth and early sixth centuries. We have seen that archaeological evidence is concentrated in the south of the city, inside and outside the walls (further pointing to the break-down of the symbolic importance of the fortifications), whilst 'black earth' has been found quite commonly in the north of the intra-mural zone, alongside evidence of abandonment of the road network.

A change to a more agricultural economic base is thus a major factor in explaining the changes in the spatial organisation of the settlement at Metz. Another important factor can be termed socio-religious and hinges on the presence in the extra-mural areas of the new churches. What the existence of these churches indicates is difficult to decide. Their location south of the walls is, it is true, principally the result of their construction over the tombs of early bishops buried in the 'Sablon' cemetery. This would make it unlikely that they mark centres of population extant at the time of their construction. However, it is far from impossible that population would be drawn out to these churches. Reasons for this are not hard to find.

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In such uncertain times as the century which encompassed the end of Roman rule it was natural that people should have turned from the decaying temporal forms of authority to seek spiritual protectors (see above all Brown 1981). Such devotion to supernatural guardians was fickle. The archaeological evidence from the mithraeum at Sarrebourg (above, p. 126) suggests that the shrine found itself on the receiving end of a pogrom in around 400 - given the enormous calamities experienced in these decades (the invasion of 406-7 and the sack of Rome to name but two) it is not difficult to see how the temple of Mithras might be made a scapegoat. It was in this period that the cult of the saints began to gain ground.

In some ways the people of the *civitas* of Metz were not well provided with such spiritual 'big brothers', there having been no Messin martyrs during the Great Persecution. The city's cemeteries still provided a focus for the growth of the cults of local holy men. Metz's first bishops were all buried here and these men seem to have become the objects of local veneration from very soon after their deaths. Paul the Deacon (*Lib. Ep. Mett.* 8) relates a miracle story apparently dating to around 400, which describes a man touring the extra-mural basilicas for the sake of his soul's salvation. The cults of such holy men attracted people in search of an alternative source of protection and patronage to that of the local aristocracy, which was, in any case, probably weakening drastically in the fifth century (see below, ch. 9). The image of St. Martin's at Tours with its perpetual population of beggars, cripples, pilgrims and the possessed is well known (see for example Van Dam 1985, ch. 11).

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In addition, the bishop and his clergy and other staff resided around St. Pierre-aux-Arènes. These will have required ancillary staff - cooks and so on - adding further to the southern extra-mural area's importance as a centre of population.

Kurt Böhner (1977) claimed that the presence of churches around old Roman cities is in itself a mark of a change to a more agrarian economy. These churches were founded near aristocratic villas which had sprung up around the town. At some of the towns which he examined, particularly Trier, this seems very plausible. If it applies to Metz as well it only adds to the hypothesis of 'agrarianisation'. There are, however, drawbacks for the fifth and early sixth centuries. As will be argued below (ch. 9) the fifth century saw a great weakening of the power of the old Roman aristocracy and widespread social instability. The episcopacy may however have been the object of much competition between rival families, and the construction of churches a manifestation of the prestige of those which were successful. It has to be repeated that there are not very many certain fifth- and early sixth-century churches at Metz, and, apart from St. Stephen's, possibly no new foundations at all. This could be further proof that there were few families around whose resources and prestige were sufficiently assured for this kind of display to be possible.

A final economic factor for the importance of extra-mural Roman cemeteries in providing the foci of later settlement concerns markets. Polanyi (1978) argued that for regular exchange to be carried on in a

particular place, the neutrality and thus the 'peace of the market' must be guaranteed. He suggests that such guarantees can be geographical, secular or magical. The first of these guarantees comprises markets which take place on natural boundaries between socio-political or geographical zones. This would exclude the practice of exchange within a walled area, unless there were some form of authority which could safeguard the peace of the market therein ('secular guarantee'). In a period of stress such as the fifth century, when there were few definite secular sources of power and protection, this will not have been possible at Metz, adding further to the break-down of the importance of the walls. Beyond geographical neutrality, which would not be strong in the southern suburb at Metz, markets will have required other forms of protection, which Polanyi calls magical. This has frequently been used to explain the common existence of markets by or even in churches. Polanyi himself referred to this phenomenon (1978, p.94). At Metz, in 'Le Sablon', a fair of St. Arnulf certainly existed by the mid-tenth century (Wagner 1987, p.515), and probably earlier.

The question remains, however, as to whether the market came to the church or vice versa. The latter possibility was most interestingly mooted by Lombard-Jourdan (1970), who demonstrated that many 'christian' markets, such as those on saints' days, could be argued to continue earlier pagan fairs which had taken place on the same site and on the same day. The fair of Chalendemaï at Auxerre is one example. Although taking place on the feast-day of a local saint, by his church, the name of the fair - the Kalends of May - argues that it

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may have been a pre-Christian market, christianised by the discovery of the saint's relics on the site of the fair and the subsequent construction of a church. Many of these pre-Christian fairs took place by 'sacred' groves and so on but cemeteries are also included. To draw an example where the later construction of a church does not cloud the issue, the Irish royal cemetery at Tara was the site of a great fair. Sawyer (1981) draws attention to the numerous markets in churchyards which existed in pre-Conquest England and many of these could pre-date the construction of the church. Cemeteries can easily have provided a 'magical' guarantee of neutrality. The existence there of graves of previous generations - ancestors, real or fictive - would make violence there sacrilegious. However, this form of neutrality would essentially only be guaranteed for members of the same, or neighbouring, communities, which had some real or imagined connection with the cemetery.

Fairs and markets also existed in other extra-mural areas of Metz. A *portus* existed at the crossing of the Seille, the *Portus Saliae* (Schneider 1950, p.12), again the site of a late antique burial-place. At these sites the presence of a cemetery, strengthened, for longer-distance exchange, by the existence of a church in some cases, neutrality was assured. At the Seille crossing, another form of neutrality was used, geographical, and this also applies to the most important market at Metz. Schneider (1950, p.40) thought that the market of the 'Chambre', on the right bank of the Moselle to the north of the small amphitheatre, was the oldest in Metz. This *portus* is attested in 868 (Gorze 64) and seems to have run along the river bank

for some distance, up to the Moselle bridge. Gregory of Tours mentions the bridge (*Lib. virt. s. Mart.* IV.29) in connection with a miracle story about a salt-trader, and Venantius Fortunatus describes boats clustered on the Moselle in his *Carmina* (6.8). That this market is even older is suggested by the fact that the most probable, though far from certain, location of the Roman forum at Metz is at the top of the river bank by the 'Chambre'. The neutrality of the market would be guaranteed by its position on the banks of the river and by the bridge crossing it; it is an example of a 'geographical' guarantee of neutrality. By the high middle ages the 'Chambre' was a major economic centre with its own mayor and, despite its enclosure within the walls, was still distinguished by the name of the *suburbium sancti Stephani*. The cathedral of St. Stephen's, as would be expected from this name, had rights in this quarter.

This could further support the idea that the construction of the oratory of St. Stephen between 415 and 451 took place on the present site of the cathedral. It can be argued that the building of the *oratorium sancti Stephani* was a deliberate act to establish episcopal control over this important economic area. The presence of the church, containing widely-venerated relics, would reciprocally benefit those carrying out the exchange by further giving a religious guarantee of neutrality to the market. This model explains the precise location of this church *intra muros* much better than vaguer ideas of the improved condition of Christians allowing a move within the walls (Gauthier 1986, p.43). If the intra-mural area had largely been abandoned, why should a move there have increased prestige?

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Even if we accept this idea and the fact that the now-dominant Christians could adopt former civil monumental architecture (*ibid.*), it does not explain why the bishop should choose to use for this important church the long run-down site of a possible thermal building, and not, for example, the more recent basilica (the later St. Pierre-aux-Nonnains), the 'Thermes du Carmel' or the many other large standing Roman buildings scattered throughout other parts of the city (for which see Wagner 1987, pp.512-513).

The hypothesis of the general abandonment of the walled area for settlement outside, principally in the quarter of the 'Sablon' not only finds some support in the archaeological data, but it helps explain one of the problems associated with the sack of Metz. The abandonment can moreover be satisfactorily explained by a model which takes account of the social, religious and economic developments of the times. It must, however, be stressed that excavation in these extra-mural zones is now imperative to test this hypothesis. Though the survival of extensive late antique remains, probably ephemeral in nature, is not to be expected too highly in a zone which has suffered very serious and extensive damage through post-medieval development (the destruction of the churches in the siege of 1555, the construction of enormous fortifications in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and very intensive, large-scale works of urbanisation around the start of this century) this area must be sampled archaeologically (cp. Lefebvre & Colardelle 1984, esp. diagram B, for a gloomy assessment of the area's archaeological potential).

4. The transfer of the cathedral.

It is, as Gauthier (1986, p.43) noted, generally accepted that the church housing St. Stephen's relics became the cathedral of Metz shortly after 451, though she also rightly points out that there is hardly any evidence for such an idea. Nonetheless, such an hypothesis is plausible. As has been argued above, the first cathedral at Metz was probably St. Pierre-aux-Arènes, and this church was almost certainly destroyed in the attack of 451. The oratory of St. Stephen was probably, as outlined above, built for largely economic purposes and, being close to an important market, may well have benefited from this in the form of gifts and offerings. When the first cathedral and all the other churches of Metz were destroyed by Attila, this will have been all the persuasion the new bishop needed to move to St. Stephen's, within the walls.

This transfer, superficially a minor detail, is actually an act of great significance for the topography and urban history of Metz. The period between the end of the Roman town and the creation there of the 'capital' of Austrasia is chiefly remarkable for a very important change in the city's spatial hierarchy. Roman Metz centred on the Hauts-de-Sainte-Croix and the plateau between it and the 'Citadel', where there were baths, fora, temples and even an amphitheatre. The fifth- and early sixth-century town-centre was 'Le Sablon', the site of the Roman cemetery, around the new Christian churches - the area called, occasionally, by the eighth century *ad basilicas*. This shift of focus not only represents the probable movement of settlement and all that that entailed, as outlined above; it also illustrates

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critical changes in the perceptions of towns. The early Roman town was seen as important for its baths, fora, temples, amphitheatres and residential areas, and thus for the provision of largely socio-economic services for a wide region. Late antique Metz drew its position in the area primarily from the provision of religious services, through its bishop and churches. Though some administrative function was probably retained through the presence of a count, an office introduced in the last decades of Roman rule, and the markets around Metz may have served a wide area, these functions were of lesser importance.

The creation of a new centre is vital and analogous phenomena are known from many other towns of Gaul. At Tours and elsewhere this new focus became a town in itself - the *bourg* - where merchants (hence bourgeoisie) clustered, away from the influence of the count and bishop who dwelt within the old walls, in the *cit e*. At Tours this change was such that in the ninth century, after the Viking invasions, the *bourg* was fortified too, and rivalry between the two centres occasionally even erupted into violence (for the topographical development of Tours see Galini e 1978). At Metz this change was never carried to quite these extremes, though the principal extra-mural church, Holy Apostles, later St. Arnulf's, did acquire its own walls in the tenth century (it was *in modum castris* in 942-956; Wagner 1987, p.515) and rivalry between the episcopal city and the suburbs was a feature here too, before the administration of certain parts of the extra-mural areas was given over to St. Arnoul, St. Cl ement, St. Symphorien and St. Vincent (Wagner 1987, p.514). However, the move

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of the bishop back within the walls and the existence there of, at that time, Metz's most important relics, before the creation of the city's main extra-mural cult centre (at Holy Apostles, where St. Arnulf was buried), was an important step in preventing a complete fission, as at Tours. When the bishop and his staff returned to the site of the early Roman town importance returned to this area with them and so revived the Roman spatial hierarchy to some extent. This process was heightened from the later sixth century onwards, as we will see in the next chapter.

To conclude this chapter we must ask whether the late fourth- to early sixth-century settlement around the walls of Roman Metz can be called a town. Returning to the criteria established in chapter 2, Metz probably satisfied the third: social differentiation from other settlements. Such contemporary sources as exist still refer to Metz as a city (Hydatius calls it a *civitas*). The settlement fails to satisfy the other two criteria. The first, a larger population than other settlements, and one largely not engaged in subsistence farming, cannot really be said to be fulfilled at Metz. The settlement probably remained the most populous in the region but, as we have seen, the indications are that most of its people were now involved primarily in subsistence agriculture and horticulture. Only the bishop, his clergy and their staff, together with those dependents who gathered around their churches can be said to have been involved in other than subsistence farming. In this period the number of clerics at Metz will have been low, tending only a handful of churches. To these could be added the count, if there was one, and his staff. If

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analogy with other towns such as Tours can be used, however, the count was very often absent from the town, dwelling on his country estates. As for the final criterion, the provision of highest order services, and more of these than were provided by other settlements, this can be answered in the affirmative as far as Christian religious services are concerned, but in little else. In this period in northern Gaul it is unlikely that there was much administration of the wider *civitas* from its capital, there is no evidence of manufacture at Metz and the markets there probably only served slightly wider areas than those served by other local fairs and markets, particularly those near the *vici*. The conclusion must be drawn that Metz in 550 can be considered as no more than a large, quite dispersed village, or at best only a small town.

Chapter 8. Urbanism in Metz (3). The Recovery of Metz.

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1. The later sixth century.

In the mid-sixth century we begin to emerge from the gloom of the preceding hundred years. Looking first at the archaeological data, as before, a few objects found in the city may be dated to the sixth century. A fine bird-brooch from the Jardin-Botanique (C.J., no. 270) dates to the sixth century and some other items, particularly scutiform belt-fittings, are also datable to this period. Most artefacts belong to the very end of the century, however, and may even date to the seventh century. Possible traces of sixth- or seventh-century occupation were found near the Espace Serpenoise (below, p. 198; app. 2.c).

In the mid-sixth century written evidence begins to reappear for the settlement at Metz. In contrast to the Roman period, from now on we have far more documentary than excavated evidence. Around the middle of the century, the kings of Austrasia decided to move their principal seat there from Reims (see above, pp. 70-71 for the date of this; see section 3 below for the reasons). A summary of the political and ecclesiastical events which took place in Metz in this period is contained in chapter 3.

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As mentioned in chapter 7, Venantius Fortunatus describes boats clustering on the Moselle at Metz (*Carmina* 6.8), and Gregory of Tours refers to a bridge over the river (*Lib. virt. s. Mart.*, IV.29); this (pace Stahl 1982, p.105) is probably the later Pont-à-Moselle or Pont-St.-Georges (Schneider 1950, p.13). The *Libri Historiarum* (VIII.21) also describe a procession in 585 by the people of Metz, with their bishop, to the church of St. Remigius (probably St. Remy-de-Scy, since Gregory says they had to leave the city to get there). This chapter mentions a 'duke' of Metz, an unusual feature since most cities were governed by a count. Perhaps there was a count of Metz and a duke of a wider region (possibly corresponding to modern Lorraine), based in the city. A letter of Gogo, the *nutritor* of Childebert II survives (*Ep. Aust.*, 21) from not long earlier (Gogo died in 581; *L.H.* VI.1), in which he addresses by name a number of officials within the city. Most are religious but one, Theodemund, 'leader of the citizens', seems to be a secular official - if not the duke or count probably one of his following.

The written sources attest a royal palace at Metz (cp. Gregory of Tours *L.H.* VIII.36). This was long thought to have been located on the site of the Thermes du Carmel. A charter of 943 (Gorze 99) refers to a *mansus infra muros mettis qui dicitur aurea*, later known as the Maison Dorée, which stood on the site of the baths. That this was the palace-site was thought to have been proved when Hatt found rough stone foundations, dated by Merovingian pottery, there (*Gallia* 22, 1964, p.348). This discovery seems to have found no more recent mention in the literature (except in Stahl 1982, p.105) and in the

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Musées de Metz, where the baths' foundations are displayed and notices describe how the Merovingian kings may have used the site as their palace, no reference is made to Hatt's find. Whether Hatt's pottery-dating was wrong is unclear; the supposed discovery of the Merovingian palace seems to have been quietly forgotten.

More recently, P.-E. Wagner has proposed that the palace stood instead on the site of the 'Maison Quarrée' (Wagner 1987, p.513). This huge basilical building stood two storeys high until the eighteenth century, when it was drawn by the two Benedictines compiling their excellent, but unfinished, history of Metz (François & Tabouillot 1769-1790). Gregory (*L.H.* VIII.36) says that there were facilities for bear-baiting near the palace. Wagner (1987, p.512) places this, plausibly enough, inside the small amphitheatre, only a short distance from the Maison Quarrée. The central position of the building, near the cathedral, further supports Wagner's proposal. He goes on to suggest that the building was taken over by the bishops of Metz when the Carolingians abandoned the palace; the building was part of the Évêché when the Benedictines drew it.

The sixth century was also a time of foundation of churches. When Clovis I's eldest son, Theuderic, conquered the Auvergne, he established a link which led to the incorporation of the area into the kingdom of Austrasia. The links between north-eastern France and the Auvergne were strong and led to the adoption of a number of southern Gaulish saints by the Austrasian church. The churches of SS Amantius, Benignus, Victor and Julian are probably to be connected with this

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movement. Certain other churches, such as those of St. Aper and of course St. Medard, are named after sixth-century saints and probably date from that period, as do those of, for example, SS Martin, George and Hilary, whose cults flourished in the century.

Metz recovers dramatically during this century. Furnished burial in the city begins to be attested by the later sixth century and church foundations increase substantially. As we will see, coin minting, both royal (examples of Theudebert I's gold coins have been found in the area) and private may have begun in the city in this period.

2. The seventh and early eighth centuries.

The seventh century saw a continuation of this expansion. Archaeological evidence becomes much more plentiful, with artefacts of this date being unearthed at a number of sites. Cemetery sites certainly used in this century include the 'Brasserie Messine', the 'Lunette d'Arçon', the 'Porte des Allemands', the Rue Paul-Diacre and a site recorded in the Musées de Metz inventories only vaguely as 'Les Halles', all outside the walls. 'Les Halles' were located within the walls in the centre of the city (Clermont-Joly 1978; 1980) but it seems more likely that this site is also extra-mural (Magdeleine Clermont-Joly, *pers. comm.* 5.5.88). The 'Lunette d'Arçon' site corresponds to the church of St. Arnoul (St. Arnulf, earlier the church of the Holy Apostles). This cemetery is attested also by an interesting passage from the *Petit Cartulaire de St. Arnoul*, which is worth quoting in full:

When the venerable abbot Theobald, in the year of the incarnation of our Lord 1239, at the time of the venerable James, Bishop of Metz, a most noble and illustrious man, wished to make the choir longer and to make new stalls and *sedilia* there, so that the brothers serving God there could apply themselves to prayer more easily, conveniently and honestly, the workmen discovered, as they were digging in the choir, twenty-two tombs of venerable men, whose dignity and regal power was demonstrated by the cloth of silk, sandals and gloves, and rings, and staffs and crowns found in their tombs. There were also discovered certain ladies endowed with regal clothes of which the cloaks hanging down to their legs shone red like so much red gold. Besides these, boys were discovered in that place, covered with fine cotton and linen, and in each and every one of their graves, and those of the men and women already mentioned, the epitaphs were discovered. Since these epitaphs could not be read because of their age a decree was made that all the bones of these men and women were put in one place at the same time. The bones were placed in the middle of the choir in a white and honoured tomb and a certain master made the following verses about them: ...

This passage confirms the existence of burials under the church, accompanied by very lavish grave-goods. Though we may doubt the *Cartulaire's* author's attribution of them all to kings and emperors, many members of the Arnulfing/Pippinid dynasty are known to have been buried at Metz at St. Arnoul, apart from St. Arnulf himself: Drogo, son of Pippin II (Fredegar, Continuation, 6), Rodthaid and Adelaïd, daughters of Pippin III, and Adelaïd and Hildegard, daughters of Charlemagne (Paul the Deacon, *Lib. Ep. Mett.* 19).

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The cemetery on the 'Brasserie Messine' site seems to be associated with the church of St. Eusebius, not otherwise attested before the eighth century, but with a dedication common from late Roman times.

Other sites, probably in use but which can only be dated vaguely to the late sixth or seventh centuries include the Rue de l'Évêché, the 'Jardin Botanique' and the 'Porte de Thionville'. The cemetery at St. Pierre-aux-Nonnains is yet more uncertainly dated by grave-goods, which include a comb fragment (C.J. no. 451) and a bronze strap-end (C.J. no. 201). The form of Merovingian combs underwent no major change between the late fifth and later seventh centuries and so the comb cannot be precisely dated. The strap-end, found on the 'Citadel' seems to be datable only to between c.525 and c.675 (Périn's [1980] type 69?). The site's use as a cemetery is confirmed by the discovery of a tomb-stone probably dating to the seventh century. Historical evidence (see below) also argues for the site's creation in the seventh century. As ever, we have to add a number of finds of which the exact provenance is unknown, especially from the 'Sablon' (Clermont-Joly 1980, p.76).

A number of finds may indicate settlement. Isolated fragments of pottery have been found at the Square Gallieni, En Nexirue, St. Pierre-aux-Nonnains, the Place de la République and the École des Arts Appliqués (see app. 2.c). The pottery from St. Pierre probably comes from a cemetery, as shown above. That from the nearby École des Arts Appliqués may be that found in excavations by G. Collot in a thick organic layer covering the late Roman evidence. It was thus of

uncertain provenance, but possibly an indication of habitation. No traces of a cemetery have been found at any of the other sites.

To these usually unprovenanced finds we can add traces of later Merovingian occupation at the Espace Serpenoise, the dating of which is problematic (see app. 2.c). The excavation showed, however, that this area was abandoned or at best used for gardens between the fourth century and the late middle ages, a conclusion supported by sondages in the Rue des Clercs. The Carolingian sites discussed below, particularly that on the Rue Marchant (*Arch. Méd.*, 15, 1985, p.227), may perhaps have originated late in the seventh century. The pottery dating for the Carolingian period is somewhat vague. It seems, however, prudent not to bring these sites any earlier than the beginning of the eighth century for fear of being accused of trying to remove artificially the hiatus in occupation of sites at Metz.

Historical evidence for the century shows that the city continued to be an important centre for the kingdom of Austrasia, with kings and their mayors of the palace often being resident there (see pp.71-72 for a summary).

The first part of the century, of course, is the period of Metz's most famous bishop, St. Arnulf, a powerful lay magnate before accepting the episcopate, and ancestor of the Carolingians. The *Vita Arnulfi* sheds important light on the city in this period. It tells us of a procession of the citizens to the church of the Holy Apostles (V.A. 10). As mentioned above (p.193), such processions are attested

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from the late sixth century (Gregory of Tours *L.H.* VIII.21). The *Vita* also mentions a royal granary in the town (*V.A.* 20) and St. Arnulf's sale of a dish to raise money for alms for the poor (*V.A.* 14). This last reference is interesting. The poor are referred to as *matricularii*; that is to say they had to be registered on a list to receive alms from the church. The mid-eighth-century *Regula Canoniorum* of Archbishop Chrodegang sheds much more light on these people, as we will see, but this reference shows that the system of registration of the poor dependent upon the town's churches extended back into the seventh century.

Religious foundations continued to increase. As we have seen, the church of St. Martin at St. Martin-lès-Metz was probably in existence by 612 (above, p.72). The nunnery of St. Pierre-aux-Nonnains was certainly founded in the century and the church there probably does not predate it by very much, if at all. The finds from the site all appear to be of seventh-century date, with a cemetery apparently extending around the church. If the nunnery was only founded in the 670s or later, as Gauthier (1980, pp.296-7; 1986, p.47) originally claimed, then the site had a religious function, if not an ecclesiastical one perhaps three generations before the nunnery was founded. Gauthier's dating relies, however, on the identification of St. Waldrada's father Eleutherius, named in the Carolingian *vita* of the saint, with Leuthar, Duke of the Alamans, named by Fredegar's *Chronicle* in 643. The king Theuderic named in the *Vita* as reigning when the Nunnery was founded, thus becomes Theuderic III (679-91)

rather than Theuderic II (595-612) and the date of the foundation is moved forward some 70 years.

The artefactual evidence fits in better with the earlier date, and Gauthier's arguments may rely on rather too easy an identification. The later date requires us to assume that the detailed statement in the *Vita Waldradae* that the nunnery was founded in the days of 'Theuderic and Theudebert the sons of Childebert' (thus Theuderic II and Theudebert II) is a later fabrication. To support the earlier date we need only amend *Theuderic* to *Theudebert* at the end of the life (clearly, as mentioned above, p.94, a charter in origin), obviously a simpler solution. The architectural fragments found on the site do not help, since it does not yet appear to have been decided whether they are seventh-, eighth- or ninth-century, but Delestre's excavations appeared to show seventh-century modifications to the building (Delestre 1988a, p.30; Cuvelier, Delestre and Heber-Suffrin 1988, p.44). It is then likely that either the nunnery was founded in the early seventh century and then attracted burials around the site *ad sanctos* or that it was founded in the later part of the century on a site which already had some religious connotations (though the *vita* does not mention any previous church). The evidence for the former seems to be the stronger, and Gauthier herself has returned to the traditional date for the Nunnery's foundation (Gauthier 1988, p.376).

The church of St. Sigolena (Ste. Ségolène) probably dates to this century. The saint lived near Albi in the seventh century and her

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cult, like those already mentioned above (pp.194-5), came to Metz through the city's connections with the Midi.

Economically, the town was now the site of a mint. Royal coins were probably struck there, as were those of a number of other minters - Theudegisel, Halido, Caiviva, Ansoald, Godeonus (or Godecnus), Landoald, Chalderic, Boccolen, Bulcedenus (= Boccolen?) and Theudelenus are all named (Heidrich 1974, p.84; Stahl 1982, pp. 143-147). Metz was easily the most active mint in the region studied by Stahl. The mint may well have been in existence in the previous century, as Heidrich says (*ibid*, p.90), but the dating of such coins is difficult (*ibid*, pp.79-80). Stahl's more recent computer-based dating system, though not without its limitations, as Stahl admits (Stahl 1982, chapters III, VI and VII), places minting at Metz between c.560 and c.660, clustering in the earlier decades of the seventh century, around 630. This could be associated with the reigns of Dagobert and Sigibert III, practically the last effective Merovingians to reign on the Moselle.

When we enter the eighth century, the town is beginning to take on the appearance of a central and later medieval city. Though artefactual evidence is now scarcer, because of the abandonment of furnished burial, archaeology has still been able to help. As mentioned above, late Merovingian evidence has been found on the Espace Serpenoise, though this area was probably abandoned to horticulture. Two latrine pits may date to this period (app. 2.c.).

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At the Arsenal Ney a feature cut into the fourth century debris was discovered. Though undatable, it is not impossible that it belongs to this era (app. 2.c.; *Arch. Méd.*, 15, 1985, p.226). Other excavations, in the heart of the old city, the Hauts-de-Sainte-Croix, showed that this area was inhabited by the Carolingian period (*ibid*, p.226-7), and work on an extra-mural site, the Rue Marchant, again revealed sunken features and post-holes containing pottery of Carolingian or possibly earlier date (*ibid*, p.227). The sites at the Espace Serpenoise, Rue Marchant and Hauts-de-Sainte-Croix are presumably those which Gauthier mentions as having been described by M. Colardelle in an oral communication of late 1984, as showing the first traces of Merovingian wooden buildings (Gauthier 1986, p.41).

As Stahl (1982, p.99) says, written evidence for Metz's role as royal residence becomes scarce after the death of Sigibert III. The son of Pippin II, Drogo, was buried at the church of the Holy Apostles (already called the Church of the Blessed Confessor Arnulf) in the early eighth century (Fredegar, Continuation, 6). Other written evidence is scanty for the hundred years before the usurpation of Pippin the Short but by the middle of the century and the close of the period under review two important documents, the Processional List and Chrodegang's *Regula Canonorum* shed great light on the religious life within the city. The system of matriculation for the paupers dependent upon the church, both those around the episcopal group and those in the suburbs (*tam domi quam et suborbanis*; *Reg. Can.* ch.34), receives detailed treatment. The conduct of the *matricularii* left so much to be desired that Chrodegang ordained that they should come

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twice a month, regularly, early every other Saturday, to the church where the archbishop was. There the archbishop or his representative would instruct them by reading treatises or homilies of the Fathers. They were to make confession twice a year and each matriculation was to be supervised by an official called the *primicerius matriculorum*.

Charters survive from the end of the seventh century which show for the first time where the Messin churches held their estates. Saint Arnulf's held land at Mars-la-Tour and Norroy-le-Sec (Pertz mayoral 2; Petz royal 89; see above, pp.92-93). A further charter (Pertz Spuria 7) refers to a house of the Pippinid family within the walls, called *Romana Sala*. This, the later Rome-Salle, stood in the southern half of the city, between En Nexirue and the Rue des Clercs (Jolin 1977). If this information were reliable this would be a fascinating piece of evidence for the reuse of Roman monumental buildings by the rulers of Gaul, but there are problems. Pertz placed the charter amongst the forgeries, whereas Heidrich (1965) considered it authentic, but with the clause about Rome-Salle as an interpolation. Gauthier (1980, p.xviii) considers the charter to be authentic. The form of the charter is certainly unusual, and certain of its formulae are not very common in the early eighth century. Though there may well be a genuine transaction behind the charter, it seems most prudent to consider it, in its present form, to be a later, perhaps tenth-century, creation. Certainly Wagner (1987, p.512) is too uncritical in accepting this evidence for the Pippinid residence in Metz without reservations.

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The Gorze cartulary presents us with more valuable information. As far as the Merovingian period itself is concerned, Gorze 1 (dated Andernach, 20 May 745) the foundation charter of the abbey, is very useful. Since Archbishop Chrodegang founded the abbey from the lands of Metz cathedral, this document provides a valuable index of some of St. Stephen's possessions in the late Merovingian period. More can be filled in from other sources. Gorze 2, though interpolated, adds some more gifts made from the cathedral estates. The *Vita Arnulfi* (9, 15) mentions that the cathedral held lands in the Vosges, and this is confirmed by a document of February 713-February 714 (Wissembourg 244, dated St. George's church on the Brüschtbach), which mentions that the cathedral held a wood in *Remune wilare* (?Rimsdorf; ?Rauwiller). As Stahl (1982, p.102) points out, these documents show that the Metz churches were the centres for the administration of very widespread rural estates.

The Gorze charters also shed interesting light on the topography of Metz, though in a slightly later period. In 864 we find the first mention of the name of the trading area around the Moselle bridge - *super fluvium Moselle in regio qui dicitur porto* (Gorze 61). The *portus* was known as the *Rimport* in the twelfth century (Schneider 1950, p.12). Another charter (Gorze 74, dated Metz 880) refers to a *mansus infra murum Mettis civitatis, ad Termas vocato loco*. The 'Termas', despite their later name of 'Les Thermes' do not appear to have been anything to do with the Roman baths. The name rather originates as 'limits' (Wagner 1987, p.512), and this quarter lay on the left bank of the Moselle, north of the Moselle bridge. Wagner

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(*ibid.*) considered that this area had been fortified by 880, from the description of the area as *infra murum Mettis civitatis*. The phrase is, it is true, used in the Gorze cartulary to mean 'within the walls', as far as we can tell, but it technically means 'below the walls' and thus is used to refer to extra-mural areas in both the *Vita Arnulfi* and the *Regula Canonorum*. More interesting is Wagner's (*ibid.*) suggestion that the discovery of Roman funerary steles here is evidence not of a Roman cemetery but of fortifications, with these steles being used, as elsewhere, for foundations.

Other quarters of Metz are named in the 'Stational List' of Archbishop Chrodegang (Klauser/Bour 1929) and in the *Regula Canonorum* of the same prelate. The area to the east of the walls, by the Seille crossing, was known as *in viciniolo* (S.L.C. 21), with St. Stephen's church there also referred to as *cis Saliam* (S.L.C. 20). In the south-west of the walled area was a Xenodochium, which gave its name to the quarter (hence *ad sanctam Mariam in sinodochio*, S.L.C. 40, and *ad sanctum Andream in sinodochio*, S.L.C. 52), whilst the zone near the cathedral complex was known as *infra episcopo*. The area to the south of the walls was called the *suburbium* (cp. *Reg. Can.* 34) and *vici* around the town are also referred to (*ibid.*).

In 898 a charter refers, interestingly, to the area surrounding Metz as the *fine Mettense* (Gorze 85, dated at Metz), thus showing that the town, like the *vici* and the other rural settlements had its own *finis* - an attached agricultural zone. This charter refers to a vineyard, near the *portam Scarponinse* - the earliest reference to the

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Porte Serpenoise, Metz's southern gate. Gorze 2 (dated Metz, 25 May, 754) also refers to vineyards at Metz. The impression given by Gorze 85, that Metz was like any other settlement in that it was divided into a settlement and a surrounding area, is perhaps backed up by the fact that the properties in Metz referred to in the Gorze cartulary are described in exactly the same way as those in rural settlements and *vici: mansi* of given length and breadth in perches and feet, bounded by two *frontes* and two sides (*lateres*). This argues significantly against the existence of 'plots and houses of urban type' (in Heighway's phrase) in contemporary terminology. In this sense there was no social differentiation of a town from any other settlement.

Before leaving the written evidence, mention must be made to later testimony to the extent to which the buildings and monuments of Roman Metz still survived and influenced the topography of the city. Wagner (1987, pp.512-513) gives a useful summary of this. When Sigibert of Gembloux wrote, in the eleventh century, he described Metz's streets as antique, and the houses of Metz as 'like Roman palaces'. Besides the small amphitheatre, 'Rome-Salle', the basilica of St. Pierre-aux-Nonnains (reused as a church) and the Maison Quarrée (probably, as mentioned, the old royal palace, and later part of the episcopal complex), all mentioned above, the Thermes du Carmel stood to a certain extent and were known as the Maison Dorée (Gorze 99) and Roman 'cryptoportiques' were used as cellars for the abbey of Ste. Glossinde (the modern Évêché; Vigneron 1986, pp. 228-30).

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A number of fragments of carved, interlaced architectural fragments, found under the cathedral and especially at St. Pierre-aux-Nonnains (see above all Collot 1980), probably date from the middle of the eighth century, as mentioned in chapter 4. By this date we know that forty-one churches were in existence in the city, together with the two others in the immediate vicinity already mentioned (St. Martin-devant-Metz and St. Remy-de-Scy; see Gauthier 1986 for an excellent discussion of the location of, and evidence for, the Messin churches up to 750). Paul the Deacon (*Lib. Ep. Mett.* 27) mentions that archbishop Chrodegang made sumptuous architectural modifications to churches in Metz. By the end of the century the town was clearly thriving and it is little wonder that it was frequently a seat of the earlier Carolingians, that Charlemagne had his sisters, wife and two young daughters buried there and that no less a person than the Emperor Louis I 'The Pious' was buried in the city.

3. The revival of Metz.

Metz entered the Merovingian period as little more than a glorified village with a population consisting largely of farmers, with clerics and their ancillary staff, sheltering amid the derelict remains of the former city and its cemeteries. When and why did it emerge from this lowly state?

Archaeological evidence, as outlined above, allows us to suggest that burial within the city became more common around the mid-sixth century and increased dramatically during the next. Though it is true that burials are, because of the custom of furnished burial,

easier to detect in this period, it is significant that hardly any fifth- or early sixth-century grave-goods have been found. Topographical information reveals that churches were also founded in great numbers during the sixth century. It is difficult to know exactly how to interpret this. We need to consider more fully the question broached in the previous chapter, of whether burial and churches in the city necessarily imply settlement there.

As will be shown in chapter 12, Metz exerted an influence over the surrounding region in attracting people to the town for burial. Clearly it was regarded as more and more important to be interred at the city. Again, as will be argued in chapter 12, the 'zone of influence' around Metz seems to have attracted people of high prestige to the city to construct churches. The higher echelons of society, lay or ecclesiastical, saw it as prestigious to construct religious edifices within the city. Obviously this requires explanation. From the archaeological evidence alone it is possible to suggest that some stimulus to high status activity began to take effect at this time. This stimulus might have been economic, such as a revival of the town as a more important node in the trading network of the times, or we might suggest that it had something to do with a yet higher-status presence actually within the settlement. Such a presence could mean lay or religious people or it could be spiritual. The increased level of activity in the city is attested by the first traces of early medieval habitation in Metz, possibly to be dated to the seventh century. It is also worth remembering Böhner's suggestion (Böhner 1977) that aristocratic churches may well

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have been associated with villas around towns, and have been used as focal points for the administration of widespread estates.

Again, keeping to the archaeological data, it has been suggested that there was a change in the trade routes of post-Roman Europe in the later sixth century from a route which crossed the Alps and then passed down the Rhine, to one which travelled up the Rhone and then to the middle Rhine (Hodges 1982, p.32, fig. 5; pp. 33-35). When the latter trade route was established Metz would not only be situated firmly on the major economic artery of north-western Europe but also at a critical part of this route, as it passed between major waterways. A float from a wooden raft, found at Flavigny-sur-Moselle (Meurthe-et-Moselle) and carbon-dated to 540 ±80 (Lagadec 1983), underlines the importance of river traffic on the river in precisely this region at precisely this period. The primacy of this trade route is only supposed to have lasted two or three generations (Hodges 1982, pp.34-35) but this might well have provided the boost necessary to restore Metz's position as a major trading point, reestablishing its supremacy over the other high-status exchange nodes within the region. Were this the case it can easily be seen how the local upper classes might wish to associate themselves and their families with the site using the common early medieval methods of constructing churches and having themselves and/or their relatives buried in it. It would be equally predictable that the ruling élite within the region would wish to control such a centre. Their connection with a site would further enhance the status of the settlement and encourage more aristocratic activity there. Even if these conditions were to last

for only two generations we can see that solid economic foundations for the revival of the site might thus be laid.

We can test these ideas against the documentary evidence. The economic importance of Metz is attested by the references to river traffic in Gregory of Tours and Venantius Fortunatus mentioned above (section 1). These references are precisely what we would expect given the importance of the Moselle waterway as a connecting link between the Rhone and Rhine. In the *Decem Libri Historiarum*, Gregory mentions another merchant from the west who had journeyed to Metz on business. This time the trader in question was less lucky - he caught the dysentery which was epidemic in the city and died (*L.H.* IX.13). This would argue that the trade which passed through Metz did so not only on a general north-south route but also east-west within the Frankish kingdoms.

It has already been noted that the Frankish kings of Austrasia moved to Metz in the mid-sixth century. This evidence seems to suggest that the secular high-status presence in the city pre-dated the change in trade-routes by up to twenty-five years. The reasons why the kings transferred their principal urban residence to the city are to be sought rather in Metz's position within the Austrasian kingdom. The town lies equidistant between the Rhine frontier and the borders with Burgundy (south of the neighbouring diocese of Toul) to the south, and Neustria to the west. The curve in the Rhine's course means that between Strasbourg and Koblenz the river and thus the frontier with the 'Barbarian' tribes beyond, remained a more or

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less constant distance from Metz. The town's fortunes probably benefited from its natural defensive value, which constituted another advantage over Reims. The latter city lies close to the Neustrian border in open country in the plain of Champagne, and in wars between the Frankish kingdoms was frequently the first victim of Neustrian attacks (eg. 562, *L.H.* IV.23; 575, *L.H.* 50; 595, *Lib. Hist. Franc.* 36). Reims also lies a long way from the Rhine and Burgundian frontiers. Metz's defensive value was underlined when the bishop of the city refurbished the town-walls in the later sixth-century (*Venantius Fortunatus Carmina* 3.13).

The kings made good use of Metz, apparently residing there frequently, especially, one imagines, in winter. The two synods held in the city have already been mentioned (pp.70-71) and these were convened on royal orders. Gregory of Tours' vivid description (*L.H.* X.19) of the miserable bishops of the realm struggling through roads in which the mid-winter mud rose as high as their horses' knees, because none dare refuse the king's command, illustrates graphically the importance of Metz within the kingdom. Many towns would have been more conveniently placed to assemble bishops from as far apart as Tours and Mainz, Trier and Albi, yet Metz, the principal seat of the realm, was chosen.

The royal presence at Metz will have attracted trade to the city even when its main artery passed down the Rhine valley. The importance of royal initiative in reviving economic fortunes can be shown by Theudebert I's intervention at Verdun (*L.H.* III.34).

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Verdun, lying on the Meuse, similarly lay off the main north-south trade route and had suffered a certain amount of decline economically. When Theudebert loaned its merchants 7,000 solidi, however, it was able to recover sufficiently to be able to offer the king a substantial rate of interest on his loan, which Theudebert refused. One can easily imagine that Metz gained similarly from the kingly presence. When the Rhone-Rhine route was established the city will have received a further boost. The chicken-and-egg problem of 'which came first, the trading importance or the high-prestige presence' can be answered in Metz's case by saying that the royal presence there pre-dated the return of economic importance deriving from the city's geographical location.

The presence at Metz of the rulers of in many ways the most powerful of the Frankish *Teilreiche* did indeed attract high status secular attention back to the city, as we had predicted from the archaeological evidence. It was also the policy of the bishops of Metz, as elsewhere, to bring prestigious people of the region to the town (cp. for Clermont, Wood 1979). Gregory of Tours (*L.H.* VIII.21) describes the leading men of the city accompanying the bishop in the procession to the church of St. Remigius. Such processions are, as mentioned, again referred to in the seventh century. Wood describes the annual procession to St. Julian's at Brioude similarly in terms of episcopal policy to associate the local aristocracy with the town. Gregory's story also tells of the burial of one of the relatives of the wife of Guntramn Boso, one of the most powerful men in the kingdom, in a church in Metz. This, and the fact that Gregory tells

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us of the lavishness of the burial, connects neatly with the archaeological evidence suggesting a return of prestige burials in the city.

In this period too we can gather the first concrete evidence of noble involvement in the foundation of churches. The nunnery of St. Pierre-aux-Nonnains was founded with the consent of Duke Eleutherius and it is easy to imagine comparable associations in the cases of the many other sixth- and seventh-century churches of Metz. The *Vita Glodesindis* attests the support of Glodesindis' father, Duke Wintrio, in the foundation of her monastery. Some of the new foundations again benefited from the royal presence. Several churches were founded as centres for southern Gallic saints' cults and these reached Metz through connections between the Austrasian 'capital' and the kingdom's territories in the Midi. Except for their churches in Metz, some of these saints are not known at all outside the south. The religious population in the town must have been very numerous. Gogo addresses by name a long list of ecclesiastical officials and alludes to yet more (*Ep. Aust.*, 21). Several of these are abbots, and clerics of Metz are mentioned both by Gregory of Tours (*Liber in Gloria Martyrum* 62) and Venantius (*Vita Radegundis* 1.13). However, that the forty churches in Metz are not to be seen as indicative of a huge urban population is shown that by the eighth century at least, the bishop and his clergy had established a processional liturgy around the city from one church to another. This suggests that these churches were not all in use as devotional centres all of the time,

and adds support to the idea that they were instead largely aristocratic monuments and symbols of their prestige.

A final element of prestige in the city was the cult of St. Arnulf. When Arnulf died, before 640, having retired from the episcopate to a monastery, he was taken to Metz and buried in the church of the Holy Apostles, later to be called Saint Arnoul. This church was the centre for the cult of the saint, and as Arnulf's family rose to be the most powerful lay magnates in the realm and later of course kings this cult became increasingly prestigious. The burial of members of the Arnulfing/Pippinid family there has already been mentioned (section 2). In this we can see exactly the kind of spiritual prestige which we suggested from the archaeological data might have helped attract rich burial back inside the city.

4. The character of Metz, 550-750.

Having proposed a number of reasons, social, economic, political and military, for the resurgence of Metz, it is now necessary to look at the nature of the site in the period between the creation there of the chief royal residence of Austrasia and the end of the Merovingian dynasty. This section will look both at the topography and nature of the site and at its position in the settlement hierarchy.

By the eighth century settlement had returned to the zone between the northern walls and the Moselle, and, across the river in the quarter of 'Outre-Moselle'. This area centred on the important trading area of the *portus*, and engendered the creation of a number of

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churches. Similarly, to the east of the city a thriving suburb with its own churches, cemetery and market existed in the *viciniolo* and, across the river, the area known later as 'Outre-Seille'. In these areas there were, by the eleventh century, no less than nineteen parish churches (Wagner 1987, p.513). Schneider (1950, pp. 35-36, p.43 and p.49) points out that precisely these zones were the most densely inhabited in the high middle ages.

The southern extra-mural area, the *suburbium*, retained its importance. Though still heavily involved in farming, hence the references to vineyards there, the area had its own markets, attested by the tenth century, and was of course the site of no less than thirteen churches by 750. St. Genesis, St. Felix and St. John the Baptist were all parish churches by 1090 (Leclercq 1933, col. 854), and there were doubtless others.

By contrast, within the walls, evidence of habitation is scarcer. The royal palace stood there, probably at the Maison Quarrée, as did the cathedral complex, with baptistery, cloister and *domus ecclesiae*. Also within the walls must have been the official residence of the count of Metz and his attendants, and the nunnery of St. Pierre-aux-Nonnains certainly existed there. The possible existence of a palace of the Pippinids at Rome-Salle has already been discussed.

There are signs that habitation by less exalted folk was also increasing in the two hundred years up to the end of our period, but within the walls large areas must have still been unoccupied. Even

if we can no longer accept as certain the existence of a large cemetery in the centre of the walled area (originally proposed as the site of the 'Halles' cemetery), an area around St. Pierre-aux-Nonnains was certainly used as a cemetery and thus unavailable for habitation. The south-eastern and south-western corners of the walled town were taken up by the *xenodochium* with its associated churches of St. Mary and St. Andrew, and by the monastery of St. Glodesindis, with the church of Holy Cross *iuxta portam*. Nevertheless, scattered evidence of habitation in the late Merovingian and Carolingian periods has been found across the southern half of the town, as outlined above (pp. 197-8). This evidence, as at the Espace Serpenoise and Rue des Clercs, suggests that settlement was clustered along the principal Roman roads, with large areas abandoned to use as gardens in between. According to Schneider, however, this southern area of the city was densely occupied by the thirteenth century (Schneider 1950, p. 37). Within the walls, he also states that by this period settlement was densest near the gates (*ibid.* p. 35) and this feature may well date back to the late Merovingian period.

So far, little evidence has been found of settlement in the northern half of the walled city, beyond the Carolingian evidence from the Hauts-de-Sainte-Croix and the existence there of the church of Holy Cross *iuxta columnas*, one of the three intra-mural parishes by the eleventh century. Even in the high middle ages, the walled *cité* was 'still essentially an ecclesiastical town' (Schneider 1950, p. 35). The area between the northern *cardo maximus*, essentially the modern

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Rue Taison and Rue des Trinitaires, and the riverside walls was the quarter of the clergy (*ibid.* p.40).

We know from numerous sources the astonishing extent to which the ruins of early Roman Metz stood to considerable heights until the modern period and these certainly influenced the topography of Metz in the Frankish period. It may be this which partly at least ensured the survival of the Roman street-network, as noticed by Sigibert of Gembloux. The existence of these buildings and the preservation of the road network could, following the thesis of Hugh Kennedy (1985), have argued for the stagnation of this area in the centuries between the Roman period and the central middle ages. In the twelfth century these roads were protected by civic legislation enacting that they must be twenty-four feet wide and fining those who encroached upon them (Wagner 1987, p.513).

The later Merovingian period saw, then, another change in Metz's spatial organisation. The existence of royal, mayoral, comital, perhaps ducal, and episcopal presence in the intra-mural zone forced a return to a spatial hierarchy more closely resembling the early Roman one. Besides the actual residences of king, mayor, bishop, count and (possibly) duke, there were numerous ancillary buildings, such as the town's jail (*L.H.* X.19) and the royal granary (*V.A.* 20), as well as several churches and monasteries, the latter, in turn, with their supporting buildings. Though the suburbs retained considerable importance and the presence of the prestigious shrine of St. Arnulf in the 'Sablon' perhaps cancelled out the presence of St. Stephen's

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relics within the walls, the focus of the city returned to the area around the old forum and the Hauts-de-Sainte-Croix. Metz thus avoided a complete separation into twin nuclei, such as at Tours. Instead, by the time the *Statistical List* was written, the town's religious nucleus, the episcopal group of churches, was located in the administrative centre, and this was surrounded by commercial zones, with (with the exception of St. Arnoul) lesser religious centres. The situation is analogous to that at Trier (Böhner 1958; 1977).

With reference to the criteria established in chapter 2 it can be seen that, by the seventh century, Metz can be satisfactorily called an urban centre. It certainly contained a larger population than existed in any other settlement in the region (and probably beyond), and one largely not involved in subsistence agriculture. Metz provided the highest-order services for the region in a number of areas. It was the major market for a wide region, with long-distance exchange contacts (if, in the case of those with the Midi, rather artificially created); though some administrative importance was localised in the *castra* and *vici*, it was the administrative centre of the *civitas* and frequently of the kingdom; it was the focus for widespread ecclesiastical, royal and aristocratic estates; it contained the major mint of the region; and it was the most important religious centre in the region, a status recognised in the mid-eighth century by the elevation of Chrodegang to the archiepiscopate.

The question of social differentiation is more difficult to answer. Like those of the Alamans and Bavarians, the laws of the Franks,

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Salian and Ripuarian, include not a single clause relating to urban settlement, in contrast to those of the Visigoths and Lombards. This would appear to suggest that there was no contemporary social differentiation between urban and rural settlement, a significant point. As stated above, this may well be supported by the fact that land-holdings in the town were defined in exactly the same way as those in rural hamlets and villages, and, on a wider scale, the settlement itself was seen as divided into a centre of habitation and surrounding *finēs*, like any other settlement in the later eighth century. The settlement itself was consistently referred to as *civitas* or *urbs* but the significance of this is difficult to assess. Firstly, for much of the earlier part of the period, these words were somewhat vague in meaning, having both regional and urban connotations. Secondly it is difficult to know how far the term was used simply to preserve classical terminology. Though we know archaeologically of *vicus*-sites occupied in the Roman period and thereafter abandoned or reduced to hamlets, and called *villae* in the sources, we do not have any Roman written sources which refer to them as *vici*. It is thus difficult to find examples of the terminology for a particular site changing in this period. It seems that these terms may have meant nothing more than that the place was technically the capital of a *civitas* (in its wider sense, as diocese), but this may be sufficient distinction.

It is perhaps significant that the coins refer to Metz as a *civitas* rather than as a *vicus*, but the classicism which permeates the written sources is evident here too. Verdun, which was only elevated to the

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rank of *civitas* in the reign of Diocletian or Constantine, is simply called VEREDUNO on the coins (Stahl 1982, p.31). Perhaps the best possibility offered to us is Stahl's suggestion that the coins show that the town of Metz had its own court (the *mallus materiicum*) as opposed to the *malli* which served the countryside (*ibid.* p.134), but this is only a theory.

It is thus difficult to find evidence of the differentiation of Metz from other settlements in contemporary terminology. We can argue that the presence of king and magnates, as well as the bishop, distinguished Metz from other settlements. Though people of high prestige and privilege would doubtless congregate at the royal and mayoral palaces when the king or mayor was there, the frequency with which such people stayed at Metz would be greater. Kings and mayors, as far as we can tell from our evidence, were at Metz very commonly between the mid-sixth and mid-seventh centuries (when our evidence begins to fail us), and this would add to the high-order religious, administrative and economic services provided by Metz in attracting the presence of powerful people to the city. Since the town played an important role in the lives of the upper strata, we can then suggest that Metz was implicitly differentiated socially from other settlements in the late Merovingian era.

Late Merovingian Metz was therefore an urban settlement in the terms laid down in chapter 2, and a thriving one at that. It is instructive to compare the early medieval town with its early Roman predecessor. We can see, in general terms, certain similarities.

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Early Roman Metz was a centre of consumption. So was early medieval Metz. In the first to third centuries this was manifested in the expenditure of the surplus produced in the *civitas* on huge civic monuments such as the aqueduct, baths and theatre. The produce of the estates of the local aristocrats served to finance the urban projects which were the hall-mark of their rank; curial liturgies but more importantly the provision of games and other entertainments and the construction of other monumental architecture. The early medieval town was a centre of consumption in that the churches and monasteries there existed from the extraction of surplus from widespread outlying estates. In addition, the aristocracy, if Böhner is right, used towns as the foci for the administration of their estates. The Merovingian aristocracy had their own monumental architecture too, except that this took the form of churches rather than monumental arches or bath-houses.

Both the early Roman and the Merovingian towns were thus also essential components of the social life of the élites of the region. In addition to the reasons just given, the early Romano-Gaulish aristocratic life involved attendance at accepted social centres, the fora and baths, the games and the temples. For their Merovingian counterparts the urban component in their culture comprised (in the case of Metz) attendance at the royal court, when it was there, and, more commonly, presence at religious festivals - the processions described above, but also at aristocratic burials and baptisms. In the early Roman period civic office was a source of prestige, and sixth- to eighth-century Metz had its counterparts to this too. The

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episcopacy was, as is well-known, the object of great competition between important families, as was the office of count.

Nevertheless, having pointed out these general similarities, the differences in detail are apparent. Eighth-century Metz drew its prestige from religious sources to an immeasurably greater extent than its predecessor under the Principate. There are other, more important differences. Early Roman Metz had its own corporate sources of revenue: the temple lands, the city's own lands and taxes, and so on. The first- to third-century city was also a centre of dense permanent population, to a large extent not involved in subsistence farming: craftsmen and artisans as well as urban poor dependent upon the hand-outs of rich patrons. Merovingian Metz had no independent sources of revenue. The population was certainly less dense, probably less numerous and still, in the eighth century involved in agriculture to a greater degree than the Roman town. The poor of the town were dependent upon the church; that is to say upon religious rather than secular administration of charity.

High-status presence in the city in the Merovingian period was much more periodic. The aristocracy dwelt on their estates and came to town for special occasions. The early Roman rich were town-dwellers most of the time, who sojourned in the countryside; who 'idolised the countryside and went there as rarely as possible'. The monumental architecture of the first to third centuries was also 'public' in nature, aimed at entertaining or providing services for the whole population, though it was also clearly a demonstration of prestige, in

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competition with other families. Early medieval monumental architecture was much more limited in its audience. Similarly intended to display wealth and power to rivals, aristocratic church foundations were concerned with the salvation of the souls of the founder and his or her family and friends, celestial reward in the next life and heavenly protection in this. Another difference between the early Roman and early medieval periods is that the 'middle classes' (for want of a better term), the free small-holders who made up the bulk of the urban population in the first and second centuries and who were so hard hit in the third and fourth, were still largely absent in seventh- and eighth-century life.

Though they were largely removed by the central middle ages, these critical differences between early Roman and later Merovingian forms of urbanism argue further that the definition of a town needs to be as general as possible if urbanism in one period or culture is to be studied in its own terms. Late Merovingian or early Carolingian Metz makes little sense as an urban centre if judged solely on criteria which come ultimately from classical or modern civilisation. Yet the settlement at the confluence of Seille and Moselle was undoubtedly a town. The development of this town and the differences between it and its first-century predecessor are to be sought in the changing nature of society, and it is to this we now turn.

Part 3. Social Organisation.

Chapter 9. The Historical Evidence.

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1. Introduction.

Written evidence for social organisation relating directly to the Merovingian *civitas* of Metz is somewhat scarce, and so this chapter must utilise sources of more general application, such as the law-codes and narrative sources. The more geographically specific data are rather generic in form; charters and saints' lives for instance. The temptation might therefore be to broaden this chapter into a discussion of general theories of Merovingian social structure and of the use of these kinds of data. While such an approach might have been desirable there is simply insufficient space to permit it and so this chapter must instead concentrate upon what little we can say from documentary sources about social structure in the region of Metz.

2. Social hierarchy.

The first topic for consideration is the nature of what may be termed 'vertical links' in society, that is to say the social hierarchy. As was briefly outlined in chapter 3, the late Roman period saw the creation of a particularly rigid and sharply

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distinguished social hierarchy, with a very powerful nobility at its apex. The distance in wealth and power between it and the bulk of the free population appears to have been enormous, though there are indications that some 'second order' local leaders existed.

As has been mentioned at several points, the dearth of written evidence between the fourth and the sixth centuries makes it difficult to study the development of this social organisation. When Salvian was writing in the 440s the inequalities of the Roman system were, partly at least, still in force. Rich landowners still exercised considerable power and their dependents clustered around them for protection, often at the expense of their own personal freedom (*Governance* 5.8). However, even then Salvian said that others among the lower classes were fleeing either to the Barbarians or to the *Bacaudae* (*Governance* 5.5), who may have been local leaders whose power was not officially sanctioned (Van Dam 1985, chs.2 & 3, is an excellent discussion of the *bacaudae*). Many of the Roman élite, meanwhile, like Salvian himself, fled to the south.

When documentary evidence again becomes available, in the middle of the sixth century, the picture of society is quite different. Obviously the settlement of the Salian and Ripuarian Franks, and possibly the Alamanns too, had caused great disruption. The personnel of the upper strata would have been changed and at a lower level a new element had to be incorporated into the rural population. As has been outlined already, there is little realistic hope of being able to assess the numbers of newcomers involved, how they fitted into

the landscape and how long it took for any effects they had upon the people and culture of the region to be brought about. Nonetheless their arrival cannot but have added to the social upheaval caused by the disintegration of the Roman state.

The form of social hierarchy which emerged from this turmoil has long been a matter for debate, largely concerned with the nature of the aristocracy. Was there a hereditary nobility in the sixth century, as, for example, Irsigler (1969) argued, or was there instead no formal aristocratic caste? This is an historical minefield which has justly been worked through by a number of theses (Bergengruen 1958; Irsigler 1969; Grahn-Hoek 1976). Any discussion of social organisation must deal with this problem but there is no space here to do more than sprint across the minefield.

Certainly there is nothing in *Lex Salica* to suggest any hereditary noble rank (Grahn-Hoek 1976, pp.27-54). Instead, all freemen are held as being worth a *wergild* of 200 solidi. Higher *wergilds* are the result of holding an office in the king's service (as *grafio* [count] or *sacerbaro*), being a sworn member of the royal following (*trustis*) or being on active service with the army. Clearly, there must have been *de facto* differences in the wealth and prestige of freemen, even if, *de jure*, they were all created equal (Grahn-Hoek 1976, p.37). Nonetheless, this lack of legal distinction is extremely telling, and arguments from it cannot entirely be dismissed as based upon nineteenth-century beliefs in early Germanic democracy (cp. James 1982, p.130).

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James argues that the narrative sources show a powerful aristocracy in existence in the sixth century, of which the power 'was by no means dependent upon the king' (*ibid.*). The writings of Gregory of Tours do indeed depict men such as Guntramn Boso, Rauching, Berthefried and Ursio as extremely wealthy, with numerous dependents and widespread land-holdings. However, this picture does not contradict the impression drawn from *Lex Salica*. The power of these magnates (or *optimates*, as they are called even in the *Pactus pro tenore pacis* of 524-558; Grahn-Hoek 1976, p.55, n.248 for the dating) was extremely uncertain and based essentially upon the prestige of the individual. When Count Bodegisel died of old age in 585, Gregory thought it noteworthy that he passed his estate to his sons 'without having to forfeit any of it' (*L.H.* VIII.22). Lewis (1976, pp.392-3) also draws attention to this. When Waddo was killed (589) his son had to go to the king before he could enter into possession of his father's estate (*L.H.* IX.35). This anecdote not only argues against the notion that aristocratic power was independent of the king, it underlines the point made by the story of Bodegisel that the transmission of power from one generation to the next was extremely uncertain.

On the other hand, the army, the political assembly of the Franks, could dictate a king's 'foreign policy', threaten to betray him for his brothers (cp. *L.H.* III.11), and even manhandle him if he refused to act as they wished (*L.H.* IV.14). Nevertheless, even these stories underline the fact that, individually, the members of the army relied upon the king and his wars to bring them treasure in the form of loot.

These wars were also their chance to demonstrate their worth and to try to obtain offices through good service.

Ultimate dependence upon the king, or at least the king's complete ability to dominate individual aristocrats, is also shown by the careers of the magnates referred to above, of whom at least two were connected with the region under discussion. The family of Guntramn Boso's wife was associated with Metz itself (*L.H.* VIII.21) and Ursio held estates in the Woëvre (*L.H.* IX.9). Although men like these could acquire vast lands and treasures, and thus obtain a formidable power-base, their continued well-being was entirely reliant upon the maintenance of good relations with their master. When they fell foul of their ruler they had no option but to hide in a strong-point (*L.H.* IX.9) or take themselves into sanctuary (*L.H.* IX.8) and plead for forgiveness. Either way they knew the end was near. The careers of these men show that whilst it was possible to hold out for some time (cp. *L.H.* VI.1 & ff. [strongholds]; *L.H.* V.4 and ff., and VII.21 and ff. [sanctuary]) and sometimes to slip into and out of royal favour with comparative ease (cp. the career of Childeric the Saxon), the withdrawal of royal support was usually fatal. Boso, Rauching, Ursio and Berthefried all met similarly bloody ends (*L.H.* IX.9-10; IX.12). Their property was confiscated by the fisc, and their families exiled. The withdrawal of royal favour was frequently far more arbitrary. After the revolts of these magnates, Gregory tells us, 'certain dukes were demoted from their dukedoms, and others were promoted to replace them' (*L.H.* IX.12). In Metz itself, a certain Magnovald, was summarily executed on Childebert II's orders, and no one really knew

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the reason why (*L.H.* VIII.36). His property too was appropriated by the treasury.

Though there were clearly powerful men in sixth-century Austrasia their power was by no means guaranteed. Ross Samson (1987b, p.288) has concluded from a careful analysis of the *Libri Historiarum* that perhaps as many as 40% of the highest levels of office-holder (dukes, counts, patricians, etc.) could expect to die violently. Besides arbitrary execution, summary dismissal from office and the confiscation of property were not uncommon. Death of its head placed the status of a family in question and sometimes the transfer of property to the next generation seems to have required royal permission.

Contemporary terminology is also illuminating. The appearance of the Frankish word *leudes* and the latin terms *optimates*, *potentes* and even of *viri magnificentissimi optimates* (*Edictum Chilperici*) in the sixth-century capitularies (cp. Grahn-Hoek 1976, p.55ff.) does not necessarily argue against these conclusions. As has been repeatedly pointed out (cp. Bergengruen 1958, ch.2), none of these titles says anything about the security of tenure of high position, or about whether or not such status was hereditary or granted. In the *Decretio Childeberti* (II.2) the king refers to 'our noblemen' (*optimatibus nostris*); a dependence upon the king is still implied. Even in the Carolingian capitularies the word *optimatis* still suggests some connection with the king (cp. King (trans) 1987 p.257, Cap.19.18, where it appears alongside counts, royal stewards and holders of royal

benefices). In the *Histories* Gregory uses the word *nobilis* thirteen times to refer to people. In eleven cases it is used to describe either the Romans, people living south of the Loire (including one Italian Ostrogothic context; *L.H.* III.31) or the ancestry of the Merovingian royal house. In only one instance (*L.H.* VIII.16) is it used to describe a Frank ('*Francus cuiusdam et nobilissimi in gente sua...*'), and there the speaker is Vulfoaic the Lombard. It is surely significant that the only term which could imply a hereditary nobility is largely absent in Frankish contexts. This is underlined in the following century.

It has been argued that in the seventh century there is similarly little evidence for the existence of a hereditary nobility (cp. Sprandel 1961, p.58). In our major narrative source, Fredegar's *Chronicle*, the word *nobilis* remains notable by its absence in a Frankish context until the end of Dagobert I's reign, even though Fredegar uses the term to describe the magnates of other races such as the Lombards (IV.34), Burgundians (IV.27) and even Bavarians (IV.52). Within Gaul the existence of the senatorial aristocracy in the south and of the *burgundae farones* in Burgundy (Burgundian law, unlike Frankish, distinguishes nobles - *nobiles* - from other freemen; *The Burgundian Code* II.2) suggests that the Franks were alone in not formally recognizing a noble rank. Instead their magnates are described as *proceres*, *primati*, *optimates*, or as *leudes*, just as before. Irsigler's suggestion that to be described as *de gentis francorum* in the sources was to be an aristocrat is certainly justifiable in most regions of central and southern Gaul, but is

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somewhat unlikely in areas of Frankish colonization, such as the region of Metz. This terminology changes in the last years of Dagobert's reign. From 636 (Fredegar IV.78) onwards, the word *nobilis* is increasingly frequently used to describe the leaders of the Franks. Aega was 'of noble birth' (*Eratque genere nobele...*; IV.80), as were Bodilo (*uno franco nobile*; Continuation 1) and Leudesius (*Leudesio filio Erchinoaldi nobile*; Continuation 3). Whereas the carnage in the civil wars between the sons of Childebert II was described in terms of 'many strong warriors' being killed (Fredegar IV.31), that in Charles Martel's wars for supremacy is described in terms of the loss of nobles (*non modicum ibi perpeusus est damnum de viris strenuus atque nobilis*; Continuation 9).

There are other differences between the sixth and seventh centuries. It has been remarked on several occasions (Sprandel 1961, pp.57-58; Graus 1965, ch.3; Prinz 1967, p.532) that seventh-century hagiography differs from its sixth-century precursor in that the saints are repeatedly described as being of high, and even *noble*, birth (cp., in the present context, V.A. 1, wherein Arnulf is described as *prosapie gentis francorum altis satis et nobilis parentibus*). Whatever the precise interpretation of this, it appears to support the conclusions drawn from Fredegar and suggests that, as Sprandel said (1961, pp.57-58), an awareness of class-consciousness was more visible in the later period. Prinz (1967) plausibly argues that it was the result of a mobilisation of the Christian cult of the saints to underpin the growth of aristocratic power. From the late sixth century there seems to have been a common practice of

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introducing the sons of aristocrats into court or aristocratic circles from an early age. Arnulf was brought up by the *subregulus* Gundulf (V. A. 3). We may suspect that spiritual (i.e. Godparenthood) or other fictive kinship systems played some part in this. In the seventh century the group of young aristocrats gathered around Dagobert I, and those who met at Luxeuil (including Arnulf's friend Romaric and kinsman Berulf) are justly famous examples.

Another difference between the sixth and seventh centuries is legal. *Lex Ribvaria*, presumably the main law-code in the Moselle valley, whilst for the most part representing a fossilization of the sixth-century *Lex Salica*, differs notably in several respects. Firstly there is immunity for certain lords (ch.68.3; the Edict of Paris of 614, chapters 14-15, makes similar provision). Secondly, the legislation against sworn gangs of freemen (*contubernia*) is largely absent. Thirdly, the freemen dwelling in villages, the *vicani*, are also omitted. Fourthly, there is discussion of certain freemen who have *satellites* - *homo cum satellitibus suis*. All these factors point to some change in the organisation of society (Sprandel 1961, p.52). A man was now capable of obtaining prestige without having to be the captain of a sworn band of his peers; instead it was recognised that he might have *satellites* or dependent followers (cp. Fredegar, Continuation, 24, *multitudine primatum et agminum satellitum*). The power of landlords also seems to have grown and the Edict of Paris suggests that the *potentes* now had a say in the nomination of local officials.

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The power of the aristocrats seems to be greater in the seventh century. Certainly, political history is dominated by the feuds of rival aristocratic families and their supporters, to which there is nothing comparable in the preceding century. In Metz, the Mayor of the Palace, Grimoald, was even able to put his son Childebert on the Austrasian throne for a while, before his rivals defeated and killed him (*Lib. Hist. Franc.* 43). When a king of Neustria, Childeric II, attempted to revive the arbitrary powers of his ancestors and maltreated a magnate (Bodilo, significantly described by Fredegar as of noble birth, see above), he was quickly assassinated (Fredegar, *Continuation*, 1; *Lib. Hist. Franc.* 45).

In the region of Metz, it is only from the late seventh century onwards that we have evidence permitting us to move from the theory of the laws, the circumstantial evidence of the narratives, and from the discussion of developments on a wide geographical base, to look at the reality of landholding. Before the end of the Merovingian period, such evidence comes almost exclusively from the Wissembourg cartulary. Sprandel, working from the witness-lists of these charters, concluded that they testified to the existence of a class of free-commoners under changing leadership (Sprandel 1961, pp.54-55). However, this conclusion is not wholly convincing. Analysis of the geographical spread of the estates of some of the families seems to show that some at least could be described as *potentes qui per divisa possident*, to use earlier terminology (diag.9.1). The family of Gundoin gave extensive lands in five *villae* around Einville in the Sânon valley, as well as in the upper Sarre valley at Biberkirch (Wiss.223, 226, 228,

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229, 239, 240, dated between 699 and 715). The contemporary family of Weroald held estates in a number of *villae* between the middle Sarre and the Vosges (Wiss. 231, 233, 241, 242, 243, 256; dated between 700 and 721). Weroald's father was a count, Audoin. Similarly the family of Chrodoin (which can be traced in dealings with Wissembourg well into the Carolingian era) gave estates in *villae* fairly widespread in the Sarre valley, the Vosges foothills and possibly further afield (Wiss. 242, 231, 233, 256, 243, 241; dated between 700 and 737).

The witnesses to the charters of these three families show no very clear patterns of association. For example, Constantine, Dructimund, Frumoald and Charoin witnessed charters of both Chrodoin and Weroald in 712. Dructimund and Charoin appear among the witnesses to two charters of the Gundoinings three years later. Chardoin and Theudo (or Teudo, or Theotun) also witness these charters (and those of the Gundoinings which date to 699) but are attested in the witness list of a charter issued by Weroald in 713. In 718, they witness a charter of Chrodoin, where they are joined by Baldoin, who had witnessed a charter of Weroald in 713 and one of the Gundoinings of 706-7. It would seem then that these witnesses were not involved in any exclusive ties with any of the major families. This, presumably, is what led Sprandel to his conclusions. However, there are more problems. Firstly, the witness-lists of the Wissembourg charters seem to be the most problematic parts of the documents. The list to Wiss. 246 (dated Wissembourg, 29 June, 775) includes the somewhat suspicious pair, Romanus and Francus. More suspicion is aroused by

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the witness-list to Wiss.235 (Wissembourg, 1 Dec., 741), which, after the first three names, contains those of the witnesses to the previous charter, issued twenty-nine years earlier, and lists them, furthermore, in almost the same order. None of these men are otherwise known after 715.

More importantly, there may be reasons to doubt that Ermbert and Otto (the sons of Gundoin), Weroald (son of Audoin) and Chrodoin (son of Petrus) really do represent different families. Apart from the repetition of the -oin suffix in these names, Audoin is, in one charter, referred to as Otdo, like the son of Gundoin. The latter is occasionally referred to as Ottun or Odon, suggesting that the two shared the same name. In 720, Weroald witnesses a charter relating to Waldhambach, where he and Chrodoin held estates. This charter is issued by a Luca on behalf of her son, who has the very suggestive name of Chrodoald, containing elements of both Chrodoin and Weroald's names. The mention of Waldhambach leads on to the point that these three supposedly different families held land in many of the same *villae*. Interestingly, the sons of Gundoin held lands in *villa Audoino* as well as in *villa Gunduino* (Wiss.223, dated Wissembourg, 1 May, 699). Apart from Audoin, two other counts are associated with these people. Willibert signs Weroald's charters in 713 and Adalchar signs them in 721. Adalchar also held the lands which Gundoin's sons gave to Wissembourg as benefice in 720. It could then be proposed that we are dealing here with different lines of the same high-prestige family.

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People using the titles of count, duke or, even, in 720, of *vir inluster comes* are relatively common in the Wissembourg cartulary. This seems to suggest that there had been a proliferation of such titles since the early Merovingian period, when there had been only one count per *civitas* and only one duke for a wider region. Now, as mentioned in chapter 5, there appears to have been a count based in Sarrebourg (Willibert, attested in 713), and a duke of the *pagus salininsis* (Theotchar, attested in 682-3). The areas of jurisdiction of count Audoin, Weroald's father, already dead in 700, or of count Adalchar (attested in 720) are left unspecified.

By the end of our period, the power of the aristocracy, which, as we have seen, had been growing over the previous two hundred years, was further strengthened by the first developments in the creation of the feudal system. The development of the system of benefices and vassalage from the later seventh century - it was well established by the time of the Gorze cartulary (the 750s onwards) - is one indication of this process (Ganshof 1964, part 1; part 2, ch.1). In the eighth-century records in the Continuation of Fredegar's *Chronicle*, though the word *nobilis* drops out of use, it is sometimes replaced by phrases which similarly imply that birth was now a requisite for entry into the aristocracy (*maiores natu*; Continuation 37, 48). It is interesting to note too that it is only at the very end of the period under review that the word *nobilis* begins to appear in Frankish legislation. A compilation of Pippin I refers to laymen *tam nobiles tam ignobiles* (though this could mean free or unfree; *Pippini regis Concilium Vernense an. 755*, Boretius (ed) 1883, p.32). A council of

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770 revises a phrase of the Bavarian Law stating 'if any free person wishes...' as 'if anyone of noble birth wishes to give from his inheritance...' (*Si quis de nobili genere de hereditate sua voluisset dare...; Dei concil. Dingolf. ch.6*). Earlier it talks of nobles, freemen and slaves (*nobiles et liberi et servi; ibid. ch.2*). The Saxon and Frisian codes and the Saxon capitularies issued by Charlemagne are the first laws issued by Frankish kings to recognise a legally-defined noble rank (cp. *First Saxon Capitulary of 782, ch.15, '...and for every 120 men among them, nobles and likewise freemen and liti...; inter 120 homines, nobiles et ingenuis [sic] similiter et litos*).

At the beginning of the Merovingian era in northern Gaul, the aristocracy was a group of royal followers and servants whose power was somewhat transient and based upon rewards from the king. It is not difficult to see how, through consistent loyalty and political acumen, such power-bases might be built up and converted into hereditary possessions. The aristocracy adopted other strategies to develop group identity and enhance their power, such as the mobilization of saints' cults and the establishment of non-blood kinship ties. The series of royal minorities from 575 to 613 and from the mid-seventh century weakened the power of the kings and permitted the political might of the aristocracy to grow. Birth as well as *de facto* power came to define the ruling élite; in our terms we see a shift in aristocratic power from prestige to privilege. By the end of the Merovingian period we can see the foundations of the medieval nobility.

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The role of the church cannot be underestimated in aiding these developments. In theory the church recognized a rigidly-defined hierarchy, even if we need look no further than the *Libri Historiarum* to see how the sixth-century reality was as blurred and fluid as the secular social hierarchy. By the time of *Lex Ribvaria* however, this hierarchy was defined in law, with the different grades of churchman being assigned differing *wergilds*. Similarly the possessions and dependents of the church were given special privileges. This and the creation and consolidation of huge, perpetually-held estates must have given a spur to the development of a more clearly defined social hierarchy and of more permanent and independent power-bases for the ruling élite. The church, moreover, affected the lives of very many of the region's inhabitants. To illustrate this we need only plot the the known estates of Wissembourg abbey and St. Stephen's cathedral, Metz, up to 750 (diagram 9.2).

Having looked at the élites, we are, as ever in the early medieval period, faced with far less evidence for the rest of society. We have no absolute numbers and so we do not know how society was structured; was it 'bottom-heavy, with a high proportion of the unfree, or middle-heavy, with a higher proportion of free peasants' (James 1989, p.38)?

Lex Salica and to a lesser extent *Lex Ribvaria* both indicate a rather fluid society (as outlined above, with reference to the aristocracy); clearly the turmoil described by Salvian had profoundly altered the very rigid social organization of the Late Roman period.

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Movement up and down the social scale is evidently possible, as is marriage between people of different rank.

The free commoners which the laws suggest were very numerous are still visible in the eighth century. Some of the donors to Wissembourg Abbey and, later, to Gorze are clearly small-holders, supporting some of Sprandel's conclusions. By the end of our period, when we begin to receive evidence about the internal organization of settlements, we can see the definition of properties held, for the most part, by small-holding freemen.

As for the unfree, we again suffer from a lack of information, but it is generally held that the transition from Late Roman to early medieval society saw a reduction in the numbers of the unfree and possibly some improvement in their condition (Samson, forthcoming, is an interesting, if not flawless, discussion). Gregory of Tours (*L.H.* VI.45) mentions slaves being able to make wills. This amelioration may have been the result of the collapse of central authority, as Samson suggests. It may also have come about because of the differing ideas of social relationships between Frankish and Roman society. Just as Rivet has argued that the Roman conquest brought about the reduction in the condition of the poor from client status (of which, he argues, the Romans had no concept) to tenant (Rivet 1969, pp.182-3), so the same may have happened in reverse in the Frankish takeover, bringing about improvements in the state of the peasantry. The chaos brought about by the end of the Empire in the north and the flight to the south of many of the owners of the great *latifundia* must have

aided this process. Nonetheless, even by the end of the period, in both Wissembourg and Gorze cartularies, the existence of comparatively large numbers of unfree people (*servi, mancipii, ancillae*) is clearly attested. As well as being subject to changes in the ownership of the land to which they were tied, these people could be given away or sold to other lords and transported elsewhere, to populate estates (Wiss. 241). The fairly grim existence of the unfree suggested by these charters and by later polyptichs either suggests that there was in fact no real improvement in their lot after the Roman era, or that, with the crystallization of society suggested, with reference to the aristocracy, above, the condition of the unfree had reverted to that which existed under the Empire.

3. 'Horizontal' and 'diagonal' links and barriers.

a. Kinship and the family.

Throughout the Merovingian period in Austrasia the kin-group was of dominant importance in defining social organization. In the earlier part of the era it was probably more important than any vague notions of class. This is a subject which has been thoroughly covered in the literature (Theis 1976; Murray 1983; Drew 1988; McNamara & Wemple 1976 on marriage) and does not require detailed treatment here. It will suffice to say that the collective will of the kin-group could often override the wishes of the individual. Thus when St. Waldrada's father, Leutherius, granted substantial estates to his daughter's foundation of St.-Pierre-aux-Nonnains in the early years of the seventh century, this resulted in his murder by his kinsmen (*Vita Waldradae* 2). That this remained a fear into the Carolingian period

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is shown by the repetition of protection clauses safeguarding donations of land or property against attempts by the donor's family to regain them. In the east of the region, the estates which Chrodoin gave to Wissembourg were, in 785, held by his grandsons, Gebehart, Rodoin and Lantfrid, who had taken them back without the abbot's permission (Wiss. 196a). The fact that the worth of the individual was very often subordinate to his value to his kin is further underlined in examination of the 'horizontal' links and barriers created by gender and age.

b. Gender and age.

The relationships between gender and power are perhaps best discussed in the context of a critique of the theory which has sometimes been proposed (Fell 1984; Herlihy 1985) that the early middle ages were something of a 'golden age' in the condition of women. There are a number of bases upon which such a supposition is built, and each needs to be examined in turn.

The first concerns property rights. It is sometimes claimed that women had greater freedom to possess and dispose of property in the early middle ages. There are two ways of looking at this problem. The first is through the medium of the theoretical treatises, the laws. In certain circumstances, both *Lex Salica* and *Lex Ribvaria* appear to give women not only the right to retain an independent property base but also to inherit lands, on the face of it, in preference to male heirs. The latter point has been effectively dismissed by Bergengruen (1958, ch.2), who makes it clear that the

succession of father's sisters and so on applies only if there are no male heirs. He also discusses at great length the famous chapter 59.6 of *Lex Salica*, which states that women shall not inherit *Salic land*. This he suggests is a later addition and came, by the end of the period to mean that they should not inherit the principal estate-centre of the family. That this is the case is made clear by the corresponding clause (57.4) of *Lex Ribvaria* which says that women shall not inherit *hereditas aviatica*, the ancestral landed inheritance.

Whatever their theoretical property rights, the 'documents of practice', the charters, rarely show women donating lands to monasteries without the support of a male relative (son, brother, father or husband), and there are few charters issued by women in any case. Thirty-five Merovingian charters are contained in the Wissembourg cartulary but, of these, only seven are issued by women (Wiss.202, 225, 228, 229, 261, 262, 265). Two of these women issue the charter jointly with their husbands, and another with her son (her brother also appears in the witness list). Two of the remaining four charters are issued by Gundoin's wife Wolfgund (Wiss.228 & 229) without any male occurring in the text of the charter as co-donor. Nonetheless, it is significant that in Wiss.228 her son Ermbert appears as the first witness and in Wiss.229 both of her sons (Ermbert and Otto) head the witness list. Wiss.261 is issued by a Geretrude-Gaila but on behalf, not only of herself but also of her three sons, one at least of whom, Buccellin, was old enough to be the first witness. This leaves only one Merovingian charter out of thirty-five (2.86%) in

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which a woman grants land to Wissembourg abbey without the consent of a male who has come of age. All of the handful of other Merovingian charters relating to the region of Metz are issued by men. Furthermore, in the thirty-five Merovingian charters of Wissembourg Abbey, seven named properties are mentioned as bounding those being given to the abbey. These are identified by the name of their owner and in every case this is a man.

Another foundation upon which the 'Golden Age' thesis has been built concerns the protection given to pregnant women in the laws (*Lex Ribv.* 40.10; *Lex Salica* 24.5 & 41.19). Whilst this has been seen as society's concern to protect the vulnerable (Irsigler 1969), this argument is easily refuted. The high *wergild* for a pregnant woman set down by the law is made up, as can be seen from cursory study of the text, of the fine for the death of the fœtus plus the fine for the death of a woman of child-bearing age. All women between the time when they began to have children and forty years of age were valued at three times the normal *wergild* (*Lex Ribv.* 12.1; 14; *Lex Salica* 24.8 & 41.16, which implausibly defines child-bearing age as up to sixty years). This is difficult to interpret as representative of society's concern to protect the weak. If this was the case we would expect children and old people, especially widows, to have had high *wergilds*, but *Lex Ribvaria* valued all these at the same rate as anyone else. *Lex Salica* only placed a similar high *wergild* on boys of under twelve. In any case *wergilds* are paid to the family of the deceased and therefore represent, in our terms, value rather than worth. The murdered woman, obviously, derives no active benefit from the high

wergild. It is surprising that this fact has never been mobilised by those who seek to argue that the absence of special *wergilds* for aristocrats is not significant; after all an active male member of an aristocratic family is no more valuable to his kin than an active male freeman is to his (this argument can only be effectively refuted by the facts that a) a high *wergild* is not the only manifestation of a legally-defined nobility, and b) that contemporary law-codes for other peoples, and later Frankish laws, do allow for a legally-defined noble caste).

This digression aside, another snippet of anecdotal evidence, though difficult to interpret in isolation, also suggests that child-bearing capability was a determinant in female status. This is Gregory of Tours' statement (*L.H.* VIII.21) about the burial of one of Guntramn Boso's wife's relatives in Metz. Before describing her interment with 'much gold and a profusion of ornaments' he sees fit to specify that the woman had died 'without children'. Obviously we do not know whether or not she was still of child-bearing age, and we do not know if or how her lack of children related to the wealth placed in her grave, but Gregory still implies that whether or not one had had children was a fact of some importance in determining female status.

Grahn-Hoek (1976, pp.30-31) has also refuted the claim that high *wergilds* for pregnant women represent a concern for the vulnerable. She argues that the concern was instead to protect the family line. Either way, the woman of child-bearing age was seen as of value to her

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family. This lack of active control of actions is underlined by the innumerable accounts in narrative sources, as well as in hagiography, of young women (and less commonly young men) being forced into arranged marriages. In the context of the region of Metz, Saint Glodesindis' entry into the religious life was sparked off by her refusal to marry the second husband arranged for her by her family (the first arranged marriage did not come to fruition because her fiancé was hauled before the king on an apparently trumped-up charge, imprisoned and subsequently executed!). Glodesindis refused to enter into the marriage and fled to sanctuary. It was only with some difficulty that her family was placated and Glodesindis allowed to live out her life in her nunnery at Metz.

Other indications that women were held to be of value to their families are provided by the series of laws against the abduction of women, against sleeping with a woman without the consent of those whose *mundium* she was under, or even against touching the hand or arm of a free-born woman (*Lex Salica* 15; *Lex Ribv.* 38, 39, 43). The crime is evidently held to be against the family of the woman, not against the woman herself. Hence there is no distinction in the laws between cases where the woman wished to run off with the man and cases where she was abducted against her will. *Lex Salica* 15.2-3 makes a distinction between rape and fornication (either way the male is held to be responsible, paying 62½s. fine for the former and 45s. for the latter). On the other hand, *Lex Ribvaria* 39.2 ('If anyone engages in sex with a free-born girl, let him be held liable for fifty solidi') contains no discussion of whether or not the 'girl' (by which,

apparently, is meant a virgin, or at least an unmarried woman) was a willing partner (pace McNamara & Wemple 1976, p.101). There is no clause about rape in the later code. It is clear that, to the compilers of *Lex Ribvaria* at least, the wishes of the woman were held to be irrelevant. There are, needless to say, no comparable clauses about men. The only similar clause (*Lex Ribv.* 17) concerns selling men into slavery, and in any case includes identical punishment for a similar offence against a free woman. In both codes, whilst a man could divorce his wife, a woman had no similar right to instigate separation (McNamara & Wemple 1976, p.100).

With this in mind some of the tensions in Merovingian family life (or at least in Merovingian aristocratic family life; evidence is practically non-existent for other levels of society) become even more explicable. Without wishing to deny genuinely pious motivation, the desire to enter a religious life can also be seen as brought about to escape the situation of most young women, wherein any status they had was based upon their *value* to their kin-group. Instead, by entering a nunnery (still more by founding such a house and becoming an abbess) they could acquire a status based upon active *worth* to society. This active worth can be shown nowhere more neatly than in the very full social role of Merovingian urban nunneries (McNamara 1985). In such a house a woman, whilst submitting to a spiritual *mundium*, nevertheless escaped that of the secular world and could acquire prestige which might otherwise be barred to her. Such an hypothesis explains the extent to which the entry of female saints into nunneries was so frequently sparked off by an unwanted arranged marriage and

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accompanied by much strife with the rest of the family (as in Glodesindis' case). This is not a very new idea. In *Woman under Monasticism*, published in 1896, Lina Eckenstein wrote:

'The right to self-development and social responsibility which the woman of today so persistently asks for is in many ways analogous to the right which the convent secured to womankind a thousand years ago.' (Quoted in Fell 1984, p.10).

Clearly, though, not every strong-willed woman entered a nunnery. Other means of acquiring power and prestige might involve actively 'subverting' the system by using the position of wife and perhaps mother to influence husbands and children. The term subversion is used here simply because there is no institutionalized recognition of such power-bases; indeed the laws seem to imply that a woman is very much subordinate to her husband. In the *Libri Historiarum* we see repeated instances of a man being able arbitrarily to put away his wife and take another. Evidence of powerful wives and mothers is therefore of necessity anecdotal. Some of the Merovingian queens (Fredegund and, in the case of the region of Metz, Brunehildis in particular) make good examples. Janet Nelson (1978) has shown how such powerful women were so resented by males as to influence their depiction in contemporary sources.

One other means of looking at the condition of women is through examination of the charters. Firstly it is interesting to note that, unless they are the donors, women never appear in the witness-lists. Secondly we can look at the *mancipii* who are given to Wissembourg abbey. Fifty-eight names are listed in the Merovingian period (in

the charters Wiss.227, 228, 232 and 241, dated to between 705 and 737). Nothing very remarkable emerges from study of these names. Thirty-one are female names and twenty-seven are male; children are not, it seems, named. The structure of these lists makes it clear that we are dealing with married couples for the most part. This is not in itself very startling but it does represent a marked difference to the more numerous charters of the early Carolingian period (charters dated 755-864), where forty-nine out of eighty-three named *mancipii* are males. If we remove *mancipii* who are given to the abbey without being attached to a land grant, then the figure is forty-nine out of seventy-three (two thirds). In one case the charter makes it clear that a man's wife has not been named.

Either women are now being deliberately left unnamed, which is important in itself, or perhaps there are actually less women. The only apparently complete list of a community (Wiss.193, dated Ungstein, 19 Nov., 764) contains only ten female names out of twenty-seven. It may also be significant that the only *mancipii* given to Wissembourg without being attached to a specific land-grant are all women. Wiss.241 makes it clear that such gifts of *mancipii* alone are being made to help populate estates. If only women are being given it suggests that they may be in short supply and therefore valuable. Emily Coleman (1976) has argued persuasively, from the slightly later Carolingian Polyptich of St. Germain des Près, that certain rural communities of *mancipii* were, at various times, practising female infanticide as a means of population control. These figures from the Wissembourg cartulary may support this. Certainly, if the argument

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is valid, it does make the strong measures taken to prevent the abduction of females and the high value attached, in the laws, to women, especially those of child-bearing age, more explicable.

A further means of examining female status is from the analysis of names. Herlihy (1976) argued that the early middle ages saw a growth in the use of matronymics to identify men. We may define patronymics and matronymics as 'primary' (the child takes exactly the same name as his/her father or mother; obviously this is limited to taking the name of the parent of the same sex as the child), 'secondary' (the child is defined as 'son or daughter of [father's name] or [mother's name]') or 'tertiary' (the child takes a component, prefix or suffix, of his/her father or mother's name). The last may well be more significant than the 'secondary' naming practice, since the name makes a direct link with that of one of his parents. However, the name-pool, or name-element-pool, of the early medieval Germanic-speaking world was so small that the deliberate incorporation an element of a parent's name is rarely susceptible to proof. Because of the chance or coincidence factor, this practice must be relegated to tertiary status. A common theory is that early medieval names were frequently of a hybrid 'tertiary' formation; that is the child took an element of both his father's and his mother's names. There is in fact hardly any indisputable evidence to support this.

Even leaving aside his rather dubious use of statistics, Herlihy's thesis finds singularly little support in the charter evidence from the region of Metz. Obviously there are no men with the same names

as their mothers, but there is similarly no evidence of what we might call maternal patronymics (that is, taking the name of the maternal grandfather), as far as this could be detected. Nor are there any examples of the donor of a charter being identified as the son/daughter of his/her mother (secondary matronymics). This fact makes it very nearly impossible to look at primary matronymics for women or at tertiary matronymics, but wherever a mother-son relationship can be found there is no evidence that an element of the mother's name was used in that of her son. Conversely, tertiary patronymics are sometimes indicated in female names (cp. Wolfgund the daughter of Wolfoald [Wiss.228-229]), and secondary patronymics are also known for women (Wolfgund's case, again, but see also Geratrude-Gaila, daughter of Theudo [Wiss.261]). The only times when men are defined in relationship to women are in the witness-lists to charters issued by their female relatives.

If we turn, as is necessary for any discussion of the condition of women, to look at male status, a somewhat different picture emerges. Continuing the theme of name-giving, primary patronymics are known in the charters. Duke Theotchar's son was also called Theotchar (Wiss.213), and one hundred years later we meet a Gebold son of Gebold. Primary patronymics at various removes (equating with the practice of 'leading names') are known in some families. The Merovingians themselves are the best-known example, but in our region, the repetition of the names [Ch]Rodoin, Gebehart and Lantfrid in the family descended from Petrus is noteworthy. Secondary patronymics are also common (Chrodoin son of Petrus, Weroald son of Audoin,

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Erlafrid son of Wolfrid etc.). Tertiary patronymics are not perhaps as common as might be expected but they are attested (Erlafrid, son of Wolfrid; Gundoin's son Otto seems to have been called Audoin - they appear as Gundun and Ottun in *Wiss.* 226; Sigoin son of Haruin). This use of the father's suffix is particularly frequent in the Gorze cartulary between 770 and 790, when almost every father-son relationship bears witness to this name-giving custom. After this short period the names return to the same more or less random patterns as were attested earlier.

This domination of name-giving practices by patronymics reflects well the reality wherein the male head of a family governed the actions of all those who came under his *mundium*. The laws make it clear too that once he had come of age, a male had more freedom of action and was also held to be more accountable for his deeds. Almost all the legal clauses relating to violence begin with 'if a freeman'. The only form of murder where it is recognized that a woman might be responsible is through magic (*Lex Ribv.* 86). As already mentioned, in cases of fornication, it is always the man who is accountable. A male is even permitted to cast off his kin (*Lex Salica* 60). *Lex Ribvaria* 61.18 allows that the family of a free woman may try to prevent her from marrying a slave, but there is no comparable statement that a family has any way of stopping a freeman from marrying an unfree woman. As far as can be ascertained from the laws, and from the witness lists of charters only males were liable to be called to testify.

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The conclusion has to be drawn that Merovingian society in northern Gaul was extremely patriarchal. There is little or no evidence to support the notion that the condition of women was any better at this time than at any other period during the middle ages; indeed it was probably worse. There were no recognizable institutionalized forms of female power besides those allowed by the church. Instead female status was very much based upon value, as child-bearers, though some prestige could be acquired through one's status as a wife and mother. There are even indications that female children were allowed to die as a means of population control; this certainly tallies with the high value of those women who remained. Such a practice could easily be justified in a society where almost every desirable or important post in life, or course of actions, was reserved for males.

There is little that can be said from the documentary records about the role of age and position in the life-cycle in the creation and acquisition of power. Children, whether male or female came of age at fifteen according to *Lex Ribvaria* (84) and at twelve under *Lex Salica* (24). In *Lex Salica* (24; 41.18), male children were valued at a higher *wergild* (600s.), which may give further support to the idea, just outlined, that male children were held to be more desirable than female children. A child, under *Lex Salica*, is, moreover, not held to be responsible for any of his actions (24.7). None of this appears, however, in *Lex Ribvaria*. A reduction in the status of children, at least of unfree children, is suggested by the fact, mentioned above, that by the time we have charter evidence, the children in communities of *mancipii* are usually left unnamed (they are

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named more frequently in the Wissembourg charters of the Carolingian period). Children, needless to say, are not found issuing charters, though, again, as outlined earlier, their mothers are occasionally found making grants on their behalf.

The significance of old age is difficult to establish from the written sources. The fact has already been mentioned that once a free woman ceased to be able to bear children her *wergild* fell back to 200s., the same as most other free members of the community. There are no other legal provisions concerning age. Anecdotal evidence suggests that in some cases (such as that, perhaps exceptional, of Queen Brunehildis), people might hold on to their power into old age, but the implication of the narratives is clearly that the tenure of prestige and power was more likely to be challenged as one grew older (cp. Chramn's rebellion against his father Chlothar I, only one year before the latter died; the removal from power of Queens Brunehildis and Baltichildis).

c. Fictive kinship systems.

A final element of the bonds used in the organisation of society concerns groupings of people, the membership of which is not based upon either consanguinial (blood) or affinial (marriage) relationships. Though it is not without its problems, the term 'fictive kinship systems' can be applied to such links.

The most obvious form of fictive kinship is spiritual kinship, which means, for the most part, godparenthood (discussed in great

detail in Lynch 1986, ch.6). As ever, we have little evidence for the realities of godparenthood in the lower strata of society, but we can make a number of points. Godparents received the baptized from the font and stood as new spiritual parents to them. This involved a number of responsibilities based upon the fact that this spiritual tie was supposed to mirror any other parent-child relationship. One could not, in theory at least, marry a godparent or godchild, and one was not expected to treat them other than as a blood child. One was as obliged to help one's spiritual kinsmen as one's blood-relatives in feud and so on (James 1982, p.79). A rule of war was that the godchildren of the victors should be spared (Halsall 1989, p.164). When Chlothar II invaded Austrasia in 613 and wiped out the family of Theuderic II, the only child he spared was Merovech, his godson, because 'he felt a godfather's affection' (Fredegar IV.42). Theudebert I of Austrasia, whilst his father Theuderic I was still alive, similarly refrained from carrying out his father's orders to kill his godson Sigivald. 'Theudebert had held this young man at the font at his baptism and was he unwilling to kill him' (*L.H.* III.23). One of the ways in which Ebroin is depicted as such a villain in the sources is in his murder of Leudesius, his godfather (Fredegar, Continuation 2).

Clearly spiritual relationships like this served important secular purposes. Bonds between godparents and godchildren could of course bridge other social barriers such as class or rank. Thus Sigivald could be the godchild of the Merovingian Theudebert (although Gregory says there was some blood relationship between the two; *L.H.* III.13;

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III.23). We may suppose that godparenthood and spiritual kinship were mechanisms used in improving the status and prestige of the individual, either the godchild or his parents. The obligation to treat a godchild as a blood-relative could also be used to protect a child. Godparents might be chosen from those who might otherwise threaten his inheritance. When Fredegund and the Neustrian aristocrats placed the infant Chlothar II in the care of Guntramn and asked Guntramn to stand sponsor to him at the font this was a deliberate, and very necessary, policy to protect the inheritance of the child-king (*L.H.* VI.5 & VIII.9). Similarly, Theuderic II in turn chose Chlothar II to be the godfather to his son Merovech.

Spiritual kinship was not the only form of fictive kinship active in Merovingian Austrasia. Similar in its effects was adoption (see Lynch 1986, pp.179-80). Childebert II was adopted by Guntramn of Burgundy after the latter's sons had died. This move secured protection for the child Childebert and gave Guntramn an heir. Both Frankish law-codes allow for the adoption of an heir when there were no children (*Lex Salica* 46; *Lex Ribv.* 50). Another comparable fictive kinship bond could be created by giving a child to another man or family to bring up. As has been mentioned, Arnulf of Metz was brought up by Gregory of Tours' uncle Gundulf. This mechanism could also bridge rank barriers, and (most notably in the case of the *nutritor* to a royal child) be of great political use to the family of a guardian of lower social rank. Guardianship, like godparenthood, also helped to remove the risks involved in the transfer of prestige and possessions from one generation to another. Should the father of

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a child die, then the child's guardian would, theoretically, help to secure his inheritance. Association with the guardian would (where he was of the same or higher standing as the child's father) also enhance the transmission of prestige. A final form of fictive parenthood could be created by the ceremony of the first cutting of a boy's hair or beard, traditionally carried out by someone other than the boy's father (Lynch 1986, p.180). Of course, godparenthood, adoption and guardianship all bridged the barriers and differences in status created by age difference.

It has already been mentioned that guardianship was a means of establishing group identity within the aristocracy. It was also mentioned that another mechanism aimed at bringing about this end, was the sending of aristocrats' children to court, to the *schola palatina*, or to high-prestige monasteries. The children or adolescents who grew up there obviously established bonds with each other. This is most notably seen in the letters of Desiderius of Cahors to his former colleagues, who included two bishops of Metz.

A final form of fictive kinship would be constituted by the sworn bands or gangs of freemen mentioned in the laws; the *contubernia* of *Lex Salica* (14.6, 42, 43) and the *hariraida* of *Lex Ribvaria* (67). It is obvious from the laws that these groupings are viewed with extreme hostility by the kings and their lawmakers. There is, as stated, less concern with these gangs in the later *Lex Ribvaria*, for whatever reason. Possibly the bands have indeed become scarcer. Possibly they have been replaced by the bands of sworn followers of a lord

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(*satellites, ingenuus in obsequio*), somewhat more easy to accommodate into the structure of society.

Ties of lordship, vassalage and dependence can be viewed as yet another form of fictive kinship, but one wherein the distinction between 'vertical' and 'diagonal' links was somewhat blurred. This brings us back to the first section of this chapter, which described the development of such ties in the creation of a nobility and a more rigidly defined social hierarchy. Having outlined the many forms of links and barriers which written sources attest as existing between the people of Merovingian Austrasia, we must now turn to see which, if any, of these are suggested by analysis of the archaeological cemetery evidence.

Chapter 10. Creating a Model. The Cemeteries of the
civitas of Metz.

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1. Ennery 'Les Trois Arbres' (diags. 10.2 & 10.3).

Analysis of the archaeological cemetery evidence from the Merovingian *civitas* of Metz began, naturally, with the site of Ennery (dép. Moselle), the only sizeable cemetery of the region yet to be published (see app. 2.a. 'Ennery' for an account of the excavation and publication of the site).

a. Chronology.

From Böhner's chronology and its refinement by Périn (Böhner 1958; Périn 1980) Ennery can be placed in Böhner-Périn period III (the mid- to late-sixth century), with one or two graves crossing into the seventh century. Alain Simmer has dated graves 6 and 8 to c.600 (Simmer 1983, p.170), but this seems slightly too late for the bulk of the site. Alarmingly, the *laeti* date put forward by Delort (1947, p.400) was still quoted by Morhain (1960-61) and, less excusably, by Vigneron (1986). That the excavated section of the cemetery at Ennery covers quite probably only a generation or two means that chronological distortion of mortuary practices is unlikely to have affected the data to any great degree. This gives any conclusions greater validity than would be the case if the graves were spread over the two hundred years that Salin (1949, p.326) suspected.

b. Associations between artefacts and gender.

The analyses performed on the data from Ennery began with an attempt to determine which artefacts were associated with males and which with females. Rather than using Heuertz's (1957) physical

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anthropological study from the start, this was felt to be a valuable opportunity for testing a methodology for determining the sex of the deceased from grave-goods (see app. 2.d. for an account of this). If such a method was found to be accurate it could then be used with cemeteries from the region which had not been studied by a physical anthropologist. At Ennery, as outlined in appendix 2.d., the method of sexing graves from their artefacts was proved to be accurate in 82.86% of cases (diag. 10.5), and in one of the instances where it seemed to be wrong (grave 32, buried with a necklace but sexed as male), it in fact probably corrected an error by Heuertz.

Arranging the grave assemblages into a series starting with those with the most diagnostically male artefacts through to those with the most typically female items produced the seriation shown in diagram 10.6. Five groups were felt able to be distinguished. Group A comprised those graves containing only male gender-specific objects and group B graves contained only neutral artefacts. In between these groups was placed Group AB, graves containing male and neutral artefacts. This could be subdivided into AB.1 (AB graves containing weapons), and AB.2 (AB graves without weapons). Beyond group B was group BC, comprising graves containing neutral and female-specific items. Group C, graves containing female artefacts only, was only represented by grave 34, and possibly by grave 21, which produced a necklace and nothing else. Intact graves with only one artefact had been excluded from the seriation as is commonly the practice when producing, for whatever reason, such tables of grave assemblages (Périn 1980). However, grave 21 is unlikely to constitute a type C

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burial since it contained iron debris and at Ennery no exclusively female artefacts were made from this metal. The other graves of this type could not reasonably be put in any of the groups (in later analyses of other sites, such graves were listed as Ax, Bx or Cx, depending upon whether their single object-type was masculine, neutral or feminine; graves only containing object-types excluded from the seriation were called X graves).

From the artefactual data it could be concluded that the males of the Ennery community were buried with a greater range of artefacts and generally a greater number of grave-goods than the females. Items which most men took with them to the grave were knives, coins, belt-hooks, a belt-buckle of some sort and, to a lesser extent, flints. Twenty-three out of the twenty-nine anthropologically-sexed males who were buried with grave-goods and whose graves remained intact took between two and five of these objects to their last resting place. Only grave 44 had none; the others had one of these. All six graves unsexed by Heuertz but predicted as male from their artefacts had between two and five of these items. Twelve of the men of the settlement were buried with weapons. Half of these (graves 70, 71, 6, 5, 54 and 39) had two weapons, the others (graves 4, 44, 22, 1, 65 and 37) had one.

Females showed significant differences from men in terms of their artefact kit. Four of the eight anthropologically-sexed women wore necklaces, to which we can add a further four artefactually-sexed females so attired. Where a necklace was worn it was accompanied by

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earrings in three cases and a bracelet in two. These represented all of the burials with earrings and half of those with bracelets (though one bracelet burial was incomplete). Four of the necklace burials also contained a comb and one contained a brooch, hairpin, bracelet and two finger rings. Three of the other four females sexed by Heuertz all had some form of pottery in the grave, either sherds of apparently Roman pottery, or a red-ware bowl of the Roman tradition. Both the number and range of artefacts buried with women were more limited than with the men. The furnished male graves sexed by physical anthropology contained an average of over six artefacts each, drawn from over thirty object types, whereas the corresponding female burials contained an average of just under three and a half objects each, drawn from a range of about eighteen types. It has to be said, though, that there were over three times as many such male burials as female. The problem of drawing information from the simple number of artefacts in a grave will be discussed below.

c. Associations between artefacts and age.

The evidence of physical anthropology was also used to examine the relationships between the types of object buried with the dead and the age of the latter. This was done by producing a diagram in which the intersections between artefact types and age-groups associated with them were shaded (diag. 10.7). Again only intact assemblages were analysed. It was expected, on anthropological analogy, that children and old people would be not be associated with gender-specific objects. This was expected to change as one approached adulthood, with young adults being the age-group in which gender differences were

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most emphasised. Thereafter these distinctions would reduce as old age was approached.

The results followed the expected pattern very closely. The youngest children received a few gender-related artefacts but older children were buried no such items. When Heuertz's 'juvenile' age (fourteen to twenty-two years) was reached, women began to be associated with the full range of female-specific artefacts - necklaces, earrings and bracelets. Four out of the nine group BC and C burials were juveniles. At this age, however, males remained artefactually neutral. This changed when the early twenties were reached. At this age men received the full quota of weapons, belt-fittings and so on. Women between twenty and forty wore jewellery less often but retained the female object types. In mature adulthood (forty to sixty years) women lost earrings completely and rarely wore jewellery, one bracelet and one six-bead necklace being the only such items associated with this group. At this age males were no longer associated with swords but retained the remainder of their characteristic burial goods. In old age, as expected, there was a return towards artefactual neutrality. Women lost all their gender-specific items, and men were no longer interred with spears or swords, though the axe was retained in two cases (graves 44 and 71) and the scramasax in one (grave 71). These two were the only weapon burials out of six furnished graves of elderly men (and out of eight in all).

Returning to the seriation diagram, some of the conclusions reached above were reinforced. The female groups BC and C contained four

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juveniles and two young adults out of nine burials. Grave 21, which was excluded from the seriation but which we argued above was probably BC, was also a juvenile. This underlined the notion that women were most likely to wear characteristically female finery at these ages. The weapon-carrying groups A and AB.1 were predominantly (nine out of eleven) young or mature adult males, six of the twelve being between twenty and forty. Most children (four out of six) and old people (seven out of nine) fell towards the more neutral end of group AB.2 and in group B.

As was also expected, the range of artefacts buried with the dead rose with age and took a slight drop only when old age was reached. Seven artefact types were found with young children, twelve with older children, seventeen to twenty with juveniles, twenty-three to twenty-four with adults, twenty-seven with mature adults and twenty-two with old people.

Among children, two graves broke away from the expected pattern. One (grave 70) was interred with five items, all heavily male-orientated and including a spear and a scramasax. This child was about six years old. The other exception was grave 49, which contained a necklace and a comb, again a child of under seven.

Once the way in which certain objects were found with particular age-groups had been examined, it was decided to look at the incomplete grave assemblages to see how these confirmed or modified the conclusions made from the intact graves. A diagram of these graves

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in the same form as diagram 10.5 of intact assemblages was produced (diag. 10.8) and sex and age were predicted from the grave-goods. In all three cases where verification was possible, gender was correctly predicted. Four cases could have their age verified by physical anthropology. One of these was wrongly predicted, forcing a change in diagram 10.7. Of the other two graves, one was predicted as being of 'juvenile' age or above, and was indeed a young adult (grave 46). Another grave (grave 19) was predicted to be older than seven years and was a young adult. Finally, grave 56 was predicted to be a mature adult and this turned out to be exactly correct. This was a satisfactory result suggesting (since the sample was so small) that the age of the deceased could be predicted within reasonable limits. It could be estimated that the buried person had passed childhood, and in one case the age-group could be predicted within narrower brackets. For these brackets to be narrowed, however, more artefacts needed to be present in the grave.

More specific artefact-age associations were revealed by looking at all the Ennery furnished graves. As already suggested, younger and mature adults were those who were buried with most of the weapons. However, the knife also revealed this pattern of association, with an especially strong bias towards mature adult males. Sixteen out of thirty-four examples were buried with this age-group. A further ten were buried with younger adults (22-40) and five of the remaining eight were found in the graves of old men. Once again the child grave 70 proved an exception, having two knives. It would seem therefore that the knife had some of the symbolism of weapons, in that

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it was usually buried with adult males above the age of twenty. The knife, however, showed a difference from true weapons in its stronger association with men of over forty. All the examples except that (now lost) from grave 72 were from male graves. Grave 72 was, moreover, disturbed so that we cannot rule out the possibility that the knife is intrusive.

With buckles, it was noticed that these items of dress were also generally found with the age-groups past childhood. Iron buckles were most commonly associated with men of between twenty and forty years of age, and plaque-buckles were usually associated with males between forty and sixty years old, occurring most often in AB.2 graves. Five out of seven bronze buckles were similarly found with people aged over forty, but these buckles, unlike the others, could be found in female graves.

Of jewellery, the only point which could be made was that the necklaces with the most beads were associated with younger adult women.

d. Artefact shape and size.

Besides examining the patterns of association of types of artefact, it was decided to look at the significance of shape and size of artefact, since recent work on Anglo-Saxon cemeteries (eg. Richards 1987) has shown that this could well be related to sex, age and other forms of social status. With good physical anthropology available to help us, this was felt to be a worthwhile exercise at Ennery. In

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most cases, however, the limited number of anthropologically sexed and aged graves furnishing similar objects restricted the worth of any conclusions to suggestive value only.

i. Scramasaxes.

Seven graves contained these 'Merovingian machetes' (James 1979), but three of these are not contained in the Metz collection. Delort provided interesting information concerning one of the latter, however. The lengths of the blades of the remaining four were plotted against the age of the occupant of the grave which furnished them. This showed that the eldest man so accompanied, that buried in grave 71, was also the man buried with the longest scramasax. When taken in conjunction with Delort's statement that the missing sax interred with the six-year-old in grave 70 was the shortest found on the site, it might be suggested that the length of the scramasax placed with the deceased rose in accordance with the age of the latter. This suggestion, only tentative for the reasons outlined above, might be tested on sites where the evidence was more plentiful.

ii. Ceramics.

The Ennery pottery could be divided into grey-ware and red-ware, the latter of Roman Argonne-ware tradition. A number of measurements were taken of these pots (shown in diag. 10.9). The height of all these pots was then reduced or increased to a standard 5cm. and the other dimensions reduced or enlarged proportionately.

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The Ennery evidence clearly suggested that men were buried with taller, thinner pots, often carinated. All of the latter forms of pottery, of the typical early medieval carinated vase shape, both red- and grey-ware, belonged to males. Grey-ware vases all belonged to men, whereas red-ware bowls were more neutral. The pottery buried with women seem to be of shallower, more open forms, such as bowls.

A final point to be made about the associations of pottery of the different types is that the grey-ware vessels were found in what were, in simple terms of numbers of goods placed with the dead, richer tombs than the red-ware pots. It is probably more significant to note that the vases of carinated shape (including the red-ware example in grave 4) are found with substantially more lavishly furnished graves than the other forms (carinated shapes in graves with an average of just under eight objects with the dead, other shapes with an average of just over three). As mentioned before, however, the problems of looking simply at the number of goods in a grave will be examined below.

iii. Glassware.

Only three glass beakers could still be provenanced in the Metz collection but these revealed a clear rise in size with age. The smallest vessel was interred with a child, whilst the others were buried with adults, one juvenile and one elderly. Between the child and the juvenile there was a marked increase both in the height and the width at the mouth of the glasses. The glass buried with the old person in grave 58 was also slightly larger than that found with the

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richly attired juvenile girl in grave 57. The increase in size of receptacle with age is an interesting suggestion but with a sample of only three vessels it must remain only an attractive possibility which might be tested elsewhere. Before leaving glassware it is perhaps significant that the small container buried with the child in grave 42 is that in which the width of the mouth is least in relationship to its height. Since grave 42, like all the children, unable to be sexed by physical anthropology, was artefactually male, this might support the notion that tall thin vessels were buried with men.

iv. Other artefacts.

The other artefact types of which there were enough examples for suggestions made from their associations to have some value were bronze and iron belt-buckles, plaque-buckles, knives and spears. Of these, the buckles showed no clear relationships between age and size. All three may have suggested a slight overall increase of buckle size with age but nothing which could be argued to be significant. The bronze buckles did reveal that female examples were the smallest but the low number of examples prevents this idea from being pursued too far. As stated above, only bronze buckles were found with women. The vague possibilities suggested in this brief study might be tested on a large, well-recorded cemetery.

Spears were found to be too few and to comprise too many different types for any distinctive patterns to be revealed. There were similarly too few axes in the Musées de Metz, whose provenance was still known, for any conclusions to be drawn. Knives showed no

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significant changes in length with different ages, though it should be said here that, yet again, grave 70 was distinguished by two particularly long examples. Almost all knives were of the 'straight-backed' variety, of a shape closely resembling that of the scramasax, with only two certain 'symmetrical' types. This shape may be important, given the fact already noted that knives were generally found with adult males of between twenty and sixty years of age - more or less the same age associations as the sax. Perhaps it is not too fanciful to suggest that these small probably domestic blades which aped the form of the larger weapons also carried some of the symbolism of the scramasax.

e. Unfurnished graves.

There are five intact burials without grave goods (graves 31, 41, 68, 69, 74). Of these graves, three were males, one was female and one was unsexed. Three were mature adults (forty to sixty) and two were elderly (above sixty). In addition to this there were three unaccompanied burials of children (graves 24, 25 and 50) which were apparently intact, though the skull was all that survived of grave 50. These graves would appear to underline the notion put forward above that furnished burial, especially that with gender-specific artefacts, was particularly associated with those past childhood, and usually under forty. Unfurnished adult burials were labelled E.1, unfurnished child burials being called E.2.

f. Arrangement of the Grave.

Diagram 10.10 repeats the information of diagram 10.6 but adds

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gender, age, and data on grave-layout. Many artefacts from Ennery originally represented the contents of small bags or pouches of belongings, placed in the grave with the dead. These containers were placed by the head of the deceased in twenty-one cases (according to Delort's publication), over a quarter of the total number of excavated graves. When not positioned there it was placed near the middle of the body, by the arms or by the femur, and once by the foot. Where sufficient information is recorded, the purse or pouch was placed to the right or left of the deceased with more or less equal frequency. The placing of the bag by the head was most often found in group AB.2 burials, with only two of this group not having their pouch so positioned. Similarly, both of the group A burials had this bag placed by their heads, but only seven such examples were found across the other three groups (counting only the intact graves).

The position of the belt (as manifested by that of the buckle) was often related to that of the purse. Nine graves in which the pouch was placed by the head also revealed that the belt was similarly positioned. That in grave 35 had clearly been folded and placed in the grave next to the deceased's head, with the buckle facing down and the dorsal plaque facing upwards. Once again this feature was most common with group AB.2 burials, seven of the nine examples coming from that group. All burials with the belt by the head were found in graves where the pouch was similarly located. The next most frequent position was at or near the waist, with six instances. Where this was the case there was usually no bag of belongings, but two examples were so furnished. In one the pouch was located near the left femur

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(grave 39) and in the other it was located by the head, though in this case a second buckle was found by the skull as well. Two buckles were found on the chest of the occupant of the grave (graves 44 and 55, neither of which is recorded as having a bag), which may be interpreted as post-depositional movement from the waist, or as indicating that the folded belt was placed on the chest of the deceased. The remaining two noted positions for buckles were at the arms. In one of these the purse was similarly placed, whilst in the other it was located near the head. All these recorded locations lead to the supposition that the pouch was associated with the belt and probably, we may imagine, fastened to it. Even in grave 11, where the purse and buckle were in different locations, these were not sufficiently far apart to exclude the notion that the two were originally connected. In three cases where a pouch and a buckle are known to have been found, the position of the buckle is not noted. These bags of belongings and how they are to be seen when looking at the possible significance of the number of artefacts in a grave, will be discussed later.

Pottery was most commonly (in ten out of eleven recorded cases) positioned by the feet. Of these cases, five were by the right foot and three by the left, with two cases where the side of the body was not mentioned. The remaining recorded position of a vessel was by the head in grave 7. No distinctive age or gender associations were revealed for these positions. Glassware was usually similarly located but with one instance of positioning by the pelvis. Here it is important to note that in two graves the spear was placed resting

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on the vessel (red-ware in grave 6, glassware in grave 54). This appears to have been a relatively common practice in furnished burials of this period, a lavish example being that at Sutton Hoo mound 1 where several spears including an *angon* were positioned with their points through the mouth of a hanging bowl. At Ennery, added significance may be provided by the fact that these two graves (6 and 54) are also the two which contained swords. Grave 6 was, however, part of the double grave, to which we will return.

g. Skeletal arrangement.

The way in which the corpse was arranged in the grave is not, unfortunately, the subject of very many published observations. Delort said that most bodies were laid out with their arms by their sides but also notes the custom of crossing the hands on the pelvis, which is recorded in four cases (graves 1, 3, 4 and 22) and that of placing the hands on the chest, grave 69 being the only example of this. Three of the instances of crossed hands on the pelvis were group AB.1 burials but this is probably not as significant as the location of these burials within the cemetery, as discussed below. Finally the double burial (6 and 8) involved the placing of the right hand of grave 8 on the left hand of grave 6, not an uncommon occurrence in double graves, as will be noted later.

h. Grave Structures.

The Ennery graves were almost all simple trenches. Coffins may have been used but no specific instances were observed or published. Some nails were found in one grave but these were of bronze and

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probably from a plaque-buckle. It is not impossible, however, that some of the iron debris may represent fittings. Two graves were found to have the common feature, within Lorraine, of a stone-lined tomb. Perhaps importantly, these were both of juveniles, one male and intact, the other unsexed and disturbed. These two cists represented the only grave structures observed at Ennery.

1. Cemetery Lay-Out.

The cemetery at Ennery was laid out in an orderly way but not with the graves in sufficiently neat rows for the term *Reihengräberfeld* to be particularly meaningful. No traces of above-ground grave markers were noted. The edges of the cemetery appear to have been located by the excavation on the north, east and possibly the south sides, but the extent of the site in the other directions remains unclear. There were only two certain cases of violation of a grave by later burials (63*bis* and 28*bis*). The graves were usually oriented west-east but a large minority were laid out north-west-south-east.

Within the cemetery we can plot the distribution of certain burial types, skeletal positions, certain artefacts and so on. Mapping the occurrence of groups A to E.2 produced diagram 10.11. From this it can be seen that analagous burial practices were frequently found grouped within the cemetery. Thus both of the group A graves were found side-by-side at the north-eastern extremity of the site, group AB graves, especially group AB.1, were clustered at the opposite end of the excavated area, and there were several other examples of similar rites being grouped together. Four group BC graves (48, 51,

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49 and 57) form one cluster. B graves 40 and 45 are found together and so are E.2 graves 24 and 25, E.1 graves 68 and 69 and AB.2 graves 63 and 67. More generally, group B graves were all found in the central, eastern section of the site, as were all E graves except one.

Variations in skeletal position, where noted, could also be plotted (diagram 10.12) and revealed that three of the four published observations of arms crossed on the stomach were to be found in the cluster of graves in the south-west of the cemetery, where, as noted, AB graves were concentrated and this might well be significant, as will be discussed below. The two stone cists were not located near each other, on the other hand, one being in the northern part of the cemetery and the other in the southern.

Of the distribution of artefacts, it was most noticeable that the glassware found was concentrated in the centre of the eastern edge of the site, with graves 42, 52, 54, 57 and 58 all being provided with such vessels. Weapon-graves of type AB.1 were also concentrated in one part of the cemetery, as already mentioned, though, as Delort himself noted, the individual types of weapons were of more or less even distribution across the site. Only the north-western part of the site yielded no weapon-burials.

A final point to be made concerning the organisation of the cemetery concerns the fact that of the fifteen artefactually- or anthropologically-sexed women of the site, no fewer than eleven lie in the northern half of the cemetery (diagram 10.13), which may indicate

that within Frankish cemeteries the use of space was related to gender. René Legoux has shown that in the first phases of use of the cemetery of Bulles, men and women were buried in separate parts of the site (in Périn 1980, although Legoux does not interpret the data in this way). Bailey Young has also described certain Hungarian cemeteries which show very sharp divisions between male and female areas (Young 1975, pt, 2, ch. 5.).

J. The Double Grave.

One of the most unusual graves at Ennery is the double burial, graves 6 and 8. Briefly, this burial comprised two males, one in his early twenties, the other between sixteen and eighteen years old, with their arms linked, the right hand of grave 8 being placed on the left hand of grave 6. The man in his early twenties was buried with a sword and a spear, the latter being placed on a red-ware pot, as described already. He had two buckles, both plaque buckles, one at least by his head, alongside a pouch containing a knife. The teenager similarly had his belt and bag, containing a bone comb decorated with chevrons, placed by his head.

Alain Simmer made a useful study of the double burial in the Frankish world (Simmer 1983) but had not then read Heuertz's anthropology report and was consequently unaware that both occupants of the grave were male. He thus repeated Delort's assumption (far from unusual in early excavated instances) that the subjects of the burial were man and wife, with grave 8 being the woman! Double-graves such as this are not uncommon in Lorraine. Simmer found one

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on his own excavation at Audun-le-Tiche (Simmer 1988), and others are known from Torgny in 'Lorraine Belge' (Simmer 1983), and just beyond the *civitas*' northern boundary at Rammelfangen (the only publication is *Saarbrücker Zeitung* Thurs. 23 April, 1987).

k. The Pit.

On the eastern edge of the cemetery was found a large pit full of bones - jaws of dogs, pigs and 'herbivores', ten or so tibias, six humeri, an enormous femur, phalanges and many other types of bone (Delort 1947, pp.391-3). It will suffice to say that Young's curt dismissal of this pit as a refuse pit associated with the Roman villa near the site does not help very much. This deposit of bones is rather to be linked with the cemetery, as will be argued below.

l. Prestige graves.

How might we search for prestige graves among the people of Merovingian Ennery? One common means of doing this would be to count the grave goods and produce a bar chart showing the number of grave goods on the x-axis and the number of graves containing x number of grave-goods on the y-axis (cp. Arnold 1980). It was mentioned above, in connection with burials of young women and with the associations of the different forms of pottery, that the number of goods in the grave might be significant. It was also noted that many of the artefacts at Ennery were originally the contents of small pouches of belongings. Often placed by the belt, these bags were, as mentioned, probably attached to them. If they were simply worn as in life there might be

a case that they represent simply the everyday dress of the dead man and that the number of goods in them is somewhat random.

Counting the straightforward number of grave-goods probably does present a biased view when comparing males and females, if these bags are not taken into account, for women were not, it seems, buried with them. This does not affect the conclusion, however, that young women were buried with more goods than females of other age-groups. As for the problem of whether or not the number of artefacts contained can have any meaning for men, the first point to be made is that in only one case (grave 39) is it likely that the belt and bag were worn by the corpse as in life. In almost all other cases the purse and its belt were placed neatly by the side of the dead man, commonly by his head. Secondly, the clear symbolic function of the knife must be repeated. The flint too had clear patterns of association and this was also frequently placed in the pouch. When we take into account the clear increase, with age, in the range of items chosen from to fill the bag the conclusion must be reached that the contents of such a pouch were carefully chosen before being laid in a specific part of the tomb. They do not represent what the dead man 'had on him' when he died. We may then include artefacts contained in such a purse in counting the objects placed in a grave.

With males, however, it seems possible to confirm that the number of artefacts placed in the grave rose when adulthood was reached (adulthood being reckoned as starting with the early twenties among Ennery men it seems), dropped slightly when mature adulthood was

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reached (from forty) and fell more seriously at the age of sixty (diag. 10.14). With this in mind, we cannot analyse all male burials together to try to find lavishly furnished graves, as the age factor will obviously blur the picture. Each age-group must be examined separately. The results of such analyses did not reveal any clearly distinguished graves, but seemed to show that a separation into two groups, well-furnished and poorly-furnished, became more accentuated as old age was approached (diag. 10.15).

How else might prestige be manifested? The only way to examine this is by looking at all the elements of a grave and its context within the cemetery. Two instances of possibly higher social standing may be noted at Ennery. The first concerns graves 70 and 71, and is probably the most likely case of prestige to be found within the cemetery. These two burials are unusual in several ways. Firstly and most obviously from the plan, they lie at the north-western edge of the cemetery and are also oriented differently from the surrounding graves. Secondly, these two burials represent all of the group A graves known from Ennery, that is to say they include male gender-specific grave-goods only. A third feature is that they both have two weapons. Apart from the fact that only six burials are so provided in the cemetery we must look at the age of the two subjects. One (grave 70) was a child of six or seven, the other (71) an elderly man of over sixty. Thus grave 70 represents the only child provided with weapons at Ennery, and grave 71 one of only two weapon burials of elderly men (and the only one with two weapons). They both thus come from age-groups not usually associated with arms.

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In addition to this, grave 70 was not only given a pouch, the only case of one such being placed with a young child and one of only three cases of one being placed with a child of any age (two slightly older children of eight or nine [graves 11 and 42] were similarly provided), but was the only child buried with a plaque-buckle and/or belt-fittings and one of only two buried with a knife (in fact he had two). These knives were also, as has been mentioned, quite long examples. The child was buried with a quite unusual number of grave-goods for one of his age, and the old man had slightly above the average number for a man of his age buried with goods. All these unusual factors combine to allow the suggestion that these two, probably related given the similarity of their burial rite (both had their pouch placed by the head), their similar orientation and location next to each other, came from a family which had some standing in the community. We may regard the two as a patriarch and a family heir, perhaps dying at more or less the same time of the same illness, and thus buried with a great display of their distinction from the others in the community. These two graves lie quite close to grave 65, the most lavishly furnished burial on the site, and to grave 61, one of the other two well-furnished graves of old men. These graves may be connected with graves 70 and 71.

The second example concerns the group of graves in the south-west of the site, centring on the double-grave. This burial certainly represents something quite different from anything else in the cemetery. As far as we know, there were no other double interments at Ennery, and these two males, perhaps separated in age by

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four years or so, were not only placed in the same grave but also had their arms placed on top of each other. One was still in his teens and so received only a comb and a buckle, but the other, in his early twenties, was deemed to have reached adulthood and so received a sword and spear as well as a plaque-buckle, knife and red-ware carinated bowl. This fact also suggests that Alain Simmer's proposition (1983, p.170) that the different quantities and types of artefacts placed with the two occupants of such double graves represents a difference in social rank between them is unlikely to be the case. We must take into account any age differences and look also at artefact/age associations throughout the cemetery before we can put forward this idea, and to be fair Simmer does not press it very far, arguing, probably with more reason, that it is the fact of the double burial itself which is of significance in determining status. The elder man also had his spear placed with its head on top of the bowl. This was one of only two sword burials, the other (grave 54) also having a spear which was placed on top of a vessel, in this case a glass beaker. It may not be unreasonable to suggest that these two young men (possibly brothers, given the linked arms?) also belonged to a family which had high prestige within the community and thus wished to bury its dead in a suitably distinctive manner. If this was so the similarity between grave 54 and grave 6 might also lead us to suppose that the former was of similarly high prestige, but we should not pursue this idea too far.

The rest of the group around the double burial show certain features which mark it out from the rest of the cemetery. Firstly,

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there seems to be a zone free of graves all around this group. This is clear not only from the excavation but in part from the distribution of chance finds of grave-goods by the owner of the site. Secondly, the group contains an unusually high proportion of AB graves, particularly AB.1 burials. Thirdly, burials with purse placed by the head are more common than usual (eight out of twelve intact graves), and three of the four recorded instances of burial with the hands crossed on the pelvis are to be found in this group. Fourthly, two of the three burials of mature adult males most lavishly equipped with male-specific items (graves 7 and 4) are to be found here. Finally, three out of the four females interred in the southern half of the cemetery were buried in this group. These distinguishing features, and the fact that this group of graves seems to break usual community rules (about burying females in the north of the cemetery, for instance) allow us to see the people who used this area of the site as a family of some distinction in the community. Even so, the conclusion has to be drawn that the means of detecting prestige graves have to be quite subtle in examining the cemetery at Ennery.

2. The other cemeteries of the *civitas* of Metz.

As has been outlined in chapter one, Ennery remains, at the time of writing, the only cemetery of the Merovingian *civitas* of Metz, containing over thirty graves to have been published, albeit in a far from satisfactory form. Other small clusters of intact graves have, however, been found and published throughout the *civitas*. For a

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description of all these sites and the literature relating to them please see the respective entries in appendix 2. a.

a. Altheim 'am Knopp' (diag. 10.17).

Paradoxically, we begin with a site not yet properly published but which requires discussion, the cemetery of Altheim in the Saarland. The site is dated to the seventh century, thus to a later period than Ennery, and appears to have been almost completely excavated, 116 graves having been recovered. Altheim is the subject of some promising analyses by Cornelia Hackler of Mainz University, a short preliminary survey of which has been published (Hackler 1989). Though the assemblages have been examined in qualitative and numerical terms and grave construction, shape and size have been considered and related to chronological phases, Hackler has not published any detailed, modern analyses of associations between artefact types and gender or age, or between these and the other variables noted. This is something of a shame but may be remedied in the publication of her thesis, to which we must look forward with interest.

The graves have been divided into three qualitative groups, 1, 2 and 3, in ascending order of quality, these groups being subjectively determined (Hackler 1989, p.180). Her groups 2 and 3 probably conform to different levels of A, AB, BC and C graves in the terms defined at Ennery. Be that as it may, Hackler concludes that male graves, as at Ennery, were typically more lavishly furnished than female burials (*ibid.*). One striking difference to the results at Ennery is the presence of a group of child-graves in the centre of the

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site, often with grave-goods 'above the average' (... *mobilier funéraire, souvent au-dessus du moyen...*'; *ibid.* p.181). Such graves were, as noted above, rarely well supplied with grave-goods at Ennery. Without detailed publication of Altheim and analysis of the gender associations of the artefacts we cannot be sure whether these children were buried with or without gender-specific artefact-kits. At present no further information is available to help compare and contrast this cemetery with that at Ennery.

The cemetery seems to have been organised in terms of three groups, as Hackler points out (*ibid.* p.180). It is also interesting to note that in the eastern side of the site, the earliest phase, a group almost entirely of men and one formed largely of women can be discerned. In the rest of the cemetery the sexes are more evenly mixed, though even here there are distinct clusters or rows of men and women. The graves are not neatly organised into rows; it seems that family plots may have been a more prominent consideration.

b. Berthelming 'Alt Schloss' (diag. 10.18).

After Ennery, the small, twenty-four-grave cemetery at Berthelming in the Sarre valley is probably the best-known from the *civitas* of Metz. The graves date to the seventh century and are placed in the ruins of a Roman villa, abandoned in the early fifth century. No ceramics were found, and grave-goods were scarce. An attempt was made, using the methodology developed at Ennery, to separate the artefacts into male and female groups but no discrete groups of artefacts emerged. Firstly, only four artefact types occurred more

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than once. Secondly, even including all object types, no correlations could be drawn between gender and artefact type. Information on other variables such as grave-shape, skeletal position and artefact positioning was not available, data on grave-size was available only for a few graves, and there had been no physical anthropological study. Nevertheless, even with these problems a number of features stood out; the absence of ceramics, the massive reduction in the number of grave-goods, and the standardization of those which remained (six of the nine furnished intact graves contained a buckle, in four cases this was the only grave-good; a further three were buried with plaque-buckles). The only weapon-grave was that of an adult (judging from grave-length), which may lend support to the idea that such male gender-specific objects were not placed in children's graves. Given that twenty-four graves (with about twenty-eight skeletons) is likely to represent at least ten percent of the cemetery (on analogy with Audun-le-Tiche), these characteristics may well be significant.

c. Bettborn 'Bienenzaun' (diag. 10.19).

These points were underlined in examination of the site of Bettborn. This cemetery, well-excavated and excellently published by Annette Laumon (Laumon 1977), lay in the Sarre valley, in the next commune to the south of Berthelming. It was similarly on the site of a Roman villa, was to be dated to the seventh century, and contained no ceramics. Only ten graves were excavated, however, to which could be added a further isolated grave discovered by Marcel Lutz in 1948. This small sample of the cemetery was somewhat better provided

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with grave-goods than the Berthelming graves but, even so, no patterning emerged. No weaponry was found. Necklaces, usually a female artefact, emerged in the centre of the seriation of grave-goods, even when all object types present in the graves (including those not occurring in the requisite two graves containing two object types) were incorporated into the analysis. Nor did the groups of associated artefacts which did appear seem to be linked with geographical zones of the cemetery (divided into sectors by walls of the old villa), age (where this could be ascertained), skeletal position, grave-shape or size, or grave-construction. One feature to emerge was that the stone-lined graves in the north of the site were square-cut whilst those in the south had more rounded ends. Six graves contained iron nails, suggesting the presence of stretchers or coffins.

Five out of the nine intact graves contained knives. Since these included graves containing jewellery, women could be interred with such objects, unlike the sixth-century females at Ennery.

d. Bouzonville 'Au dessus du four à chaux'.

Bouzonville, twenty or so kilometres north-east of Metz is something of an enigmatic site. Excavated in the 1890s, it was published to a reasonable standard for its day (Schenecker 1899), but unfortunately no plan of the site was given. The objects disappeared into private hands and no illustrations appeared until almost half a century later when Wilhelm Reusch tracked them down. They show that the site was occupied, again, in the seventh century. The thirty-two

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graves excavated surely represent at least ten to fifteen percent of the whole cemetery. No observations were made about the integrity of the graves so we cannot be absolutely certain that the assemblages are intact. Grave 14, containing necklace and spear, must, however, have contained two burials, one male and one female, and grave 25, with its skull apparently displaced by some distance, seems to have been damaged. The absence of objects such as earrings, belt-hooks, hair-pins and so on may lead us to suspect that Schenecker missed small artefacts, but the fact that he did find necklace-beads in eight graves argues otherwise.

There were several similarities between this cemetery and those of the Sarre valley. Grave-goods were not very common; fourteen graves seem not to have been furnished at all. No clear patterns of association could be found. There were only three weapon-graves; the burials with spear and sax each contained only one other object, and that with an arrowhead contained no other artefacts. As at Bettborn, necklaces and knives were the most common objects, each found in eight graves. Knives were found in graves of both sexes (again as at Bettborn). Only one pot was found in the thirty-two graves, pointing again to the abandonment of the custom of depositing ceramics with the dead in the seventh century.

Weaponry seems to have been placed only in adult graves (two of the three weapon-burials, graves 3 and 11, were those of adults, judging from skeleton- and grave-length respectively; no measurements were given for the other weapon-grave, grave 7). This gave some support

to the hypothesis formulated at Ennery that children would not be buried with weapons. Grave 21, the burial with the most jewellery and (by comparison with other seventh-century cemeteries of the region; see chapter 11) other female objects (châtelaine, shoe-buckles), was that of an adult, also perhaps supporting the idea that children would not be buried with such a gender-specific artefact-kit. However, two of the four children of the cemetery (graves 22 and 30) contained necklaces. This argues against the Ennery hypothesis, although on anthropological analogy the idea that children might be 'artefactually female' would not be unexpected. Nonetheless this is further support for the idea that correlations between grave-goods and the age and sex of the deceased are far less clear-cut on seventh-century sites.

Finally, the cemetery site contained, amongst the graves, a pit, one metre in diameter, filled with ashes and burnt earth as well as a large number of small traces of wood. As with the Ennery pit, this seems to be associated with the cemetery and the activities which went on there. The interpretation of this evidence will be discussed in chapter 12.

e. Gündingen 'Fronfeld'.

Gündingen is one of only two sixth-century sites known from the Bliesgau area of the Saarland. The other, Gersheim, was clearly a major cemetery, used in the sixth and seventh centuries and containing a large number of burials, including some which were lavishly furnished. Most of the graves were destroyed in the construction of

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a railway station, however, and the six recorded grave assemblages date to both the sixth and the seventh centuries, leaving too few in each period to be able to draw any meaningful conclusions. GÜdingen too seems to have been an important site. Only eight burials were recovered and seven of these were damaged by the house-building works which led to their discovery. Fortunately the one more or less intact grave was that of a man of clear high prestige in the area (grave 4). In addition to sword, sax and spears, two or three knives, a belt-set, comb and shears, tweezers and so on, the burial contained a shield-boss, a horse-bit, balances, a bronze bowl and a bucket; all prestige items in this region. The man was about forty years old. Even allowing for the obvious lavishness of the burial, this grave conformed to the patterns presented at Ennery. Firstly he was an adult - a child would not be buried with such a numerous and strongly male-specific artefact-kit. Secondly, the man had not reached old age, at which, according to the Ennery evidence, such an artefact-kit would largely have been abandoned.

The other weapon-graves (graves 3, 5 and 8) were all of adult males, though no more precise ageing was given. This again is exactly what would be expected. It has to be said, though, that no child graves were known on this site, to confirm or deny the hypothesis. The female graves were also interesting. Two graves of teen-age girls (graves 1 and 7) were found. Though both were damaged, they conformed to the rules suggested at Ennery. The sixteen- to eighteen-year-old of grave 1 wore a necklace and an antler pendant, her dress was fastened with a bronze pin, and she was

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interred with a bread-cutter (a rare object, marking the burial out as a prestige grave; Stein 1989a, p.154) a pitcher and a glass vase. The upper half of the body was lost so we cannot judge the presence or absence of brooches, hairpins, earrings and so on. The sixteen-year old of grave 7 wore three brooches and a necklace as well as a belt-set. Once again we see the graves of adolescent women being well furnished.

The slightly older occupant of grave 8 (twenty-five to thirty years old) wore a necklace only. The lower half of the body was destroyed, however. A possible challenge to the hypothesis established at Ennery came with the forty- to forty-five-year-old woman of grave 2. She, like the adolescent of grave 7, wore three brooches and a necklace. She also had a crystal amulet. In addition to this, however, this grave contained a comb, a knife, and a decorated carinated vase, as well as prestige items - a bronze bowl and a bucket. At Ennery, such a lavish artefact-kit, especially the jewellery, would have been rare at this age. On the other hand, the GÜdingen woman was perhaps only just past the age where such assemblages were normal (about fourteen to forty years of age at Ennery), and, allowing for a slightly wider margin of error, may still have been in this age-group. Similarly, the presence of a larger number of artefacts not related to dress and physical appearance would be expected in the grave of a woman at the older end of this age-group. The problems raised by this grave need not, therefore be unsurmountable. Nonetheless, the absence at GÜdingen of the graves of young children or of old people, the damaged nature of the burials

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and the lavish character of the whole ensemble make it difficult to draw definite conclusions, either supporting or refuting the Ennery hypothesis.

f. Hayange 'Forêt d'Hamévillers' (diag. 10.20).

Hayange, to the north-west of Metz, is again a seventh-century site. Sixty-four graves were excavated here in the early years of this century, but only seventeen assemblages have survived. The cemetery was covered by a forest, and with the root-damage which is likely on such a site (cp. Audun-le-Tiche) it is possible that the graves which yielded these assemblages were not intact. No excavation records have survived (except a plan, on which the burials yielding the artefacts cannot be located) so we can never check this. Nicolay (1937, p.42) mentions that some graves contained more than one skeleton, though none of his examples tally with any of the surviving assemblages.

As with Berthelming, Bettborn and most of the Bouzonville graves, no pottery was found. Grave-goods were sufficiently numerous, with most artefact types occurring in at least two graves containing two or more objects, for a reasonable seriation to be carried out (diag. 10.21). Two groups of artefacts emerged, one containing jewellery, the other scramasax and simple buckles (the site's one sword was associated with this group, as was a belt-hook). A link between these groups and females and males respectively seemed certain. As at Bouzonville and Bettborn, knives were the most common artefacts, occurring in ten out of seventeen graves, of both sexes. Plaque-

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buckles (occurring in five graves) were similarly neutral, unlike those at Ennery. Given that we have no information on grave-shape or layout, or on the age or sex of the dead, it was not possible to check any of the Ennery ideas about object associations with these variables. However, given that most of the assemblages (ten of them) contained only one or two objects, and five of the seventeen were neutral (four of these containing knife alone), it would probably have been difficult to establish any clear patterning (diag. 10.22).

g. Moyeuvre-Grande 'Kleiner Vogesenberg' (diag. 10.23).

Moyeuvre-Grande forms a pair with Hayange. It is similarly seventh-century in date, lies to the north-west of Metz, and was excavated in the early years of this century. Twenty-three graves were excavated but only fifteen grave-goods were retrieved from six or seven graves; the others contained no objects. The cemetery has been dated, logically enough, to the last decades of the seventh century.

As at several of the seventh-century sites discussed here, knives were the most common objects, found in five of the furnished graves. Once again, no pottery was found. Artefacts were too few for any seriation to be possible. From the plan of the cemetery, the site's single weapon-grave and single jewellery burial were both graves of adults, as might have been expected. That apart, the cemetery at Moyeuvre underlines several of the points made at the other seventh-century sites of the *civitas*: massive reduction in the numbers of graves-goods; reduction in the numbers of graves with strongly gender-specific artefact-kits; increasing standardisation and consequent

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reduction in the specific gender/age symbolism of individual artefacts (hence the knife and the plaque-buckle, strongly male at Ennery, become neutral); and abandonment of ceramics.

A final point to be made from Moyeuve concerns the fact that the graves are divided into small groups, which may correspond to families, particularly the group of three sarcophagi at the south-west edge of the site, and another group of three graves placed some distance to the north of the other burials.

h. Walsheim 'am Dorf' and Wittersheim 'vor dem langen Zaun' (diag. 10.25).

The final pair of sites is again in the Bliesgau area of Saarland. At the seventh-century cemetery of Walsheim we cannot be certain that the published assemblages are intact. The artefacts from the site had a complex post-excavation history and a number remain unprovenanced. Two swords also appear to have disappeared. No site-plan has been preserved and we have no information on the variables of grave-shape, -size or -construction, skeletal position or of the age or sex of the deceased. Similarly no note seems to have been made concerning the integrity or otherwise of the grave. Nonetheless, it may be significant that no pottery seems to have been recovered from the site.

Taking these problems into account, the seriation produced from the Walsheim grave-goods (diag. 10.24) must be viewed with caution. Nevertheless the ordering of artefacts is hardly surprising, with two

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distinct groups emerging, one containing weapons and knives (as at Ennery, despite the difference in date), the other jewellery. These must correspond to gender differences. As at other seventh-century sites, the plaque-buckle, strongly male at Ennery, has become neutral, though most examples, especially the elaborate ones, were to be found in the graves of men. Walsheim is thus similar to Hayange in many respects.

Given the absence of information about age and sex, we cannot test the ideas established at Ennery about the links between artefact types, and types of assemblage and these variables.

At Wittersheim only six graves were found, though these were well excavated and planned. Four of the graves were weapon-burials, one was that of a woman buried with a buckle, a brooch, no less than four rings, a necklace and a bead waist-band, as well as, judging from the plan, some form of dress pin. The other grave was unfurnished. The site dates to the seventh century. Although the excavated graves surely represent only a very small sample of the whole cemetery, the Wittersheim burials are very different from other seventh-century graves of the *civitas* of Metz. The facts that four out of six burials contained weapons, one with a shield-boss (rare in this period), and that three different weapon-types were represented are unusual. Nevertheless, the graves showed striking uniformity. Four graves contained knife, sax and belt-fittings; three of these contained a plaque-buckle as well. This standardisation had been suggested, albeit in different ways, at other sites, and was to be

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underlined more strongly in examination of the cemeteries of the wider region of Metz (see below, chapter 11).

i. Other sites.

The ten sites (including Gersheim but excluding Altheim) discussed above represent the bulk of the published grave assemblages of the Merovingian *civitas* of Metz. There are other isolated graves, of which the contents are known but they can tell us little in themselves. It is more interesting to look at the distribution of certain object-types. Figure 10.26 shows the distribution of shield-bosses, spurs and items of horse-harness in the region of Metz. As can be seen, beyond finds in Metz itself, a zone is revealed, extending for about thirty kilometres around the city, where only two such artefacts have been found. Adding bronze bowls, buckets, balances, *angons* and horse-burials to this (figure 10.27) makes this zone slightly less striking, but its presence is definitely established. This is further supported by the the fact that these artefacts have come from chance discoveries, rather than from systematic excavations. The zone around Metz shown in diagram 10.26 contains over eighty possible Merovingian cemeteries and almost all the intact assemblages of the *civitas*; if those of hitherto unpublished sites are included, the latter total over 400 graves. Yet none of the latter has produced a shield-boss or a spur. Outside this zone, in the area illustrated in figures 10.26 and 10.27, over forty sites have produced such objects, only fourteen of which were the subject of controlled excavation. The conclusion has to be drawn

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that these objects, when placed in burials, have some form of social significance, which will be discussed in chapter 12.

Some other points can be made from the cemeteries of the diocese. Another possible cemetery pit was discovered at Koenigsmacker (dép. Moselle), which contained a pitcher, fish and animal remains, a knife, a spindle-whorl and many pieces of charcoal, all in a very dark layer. The problem with this pit is that the pitcher may well be later than the cemetery and the whole may rather be associated with a slightly later settlement, as Simmer (1987, p.362) suggests. The presence of pits on cemetery sites is far from uncommon, though, and this certainly seems to be a refuse deposit, possibly associated with funeral feasts. Since Koenigsmacker was not properly excavated we will never be certain of the function of this pit.

Some mention has to be made of deviant rites, to which we will return in the next chapter. At Koenigsmacker Émile Linckenheld claimed that there were a number of burials in a sitting position. Unfortunately, given that this site was destroyed without any archaeological recording worthy of the name, we cannot draw any information from this fact. Face-down burials were apparently located at Marsal (see above, ch. 5); again it is impossible, from the surviving data, to know for sure even whether these burials were accompanied by grave-goods, though it seems probable that they were. Another such burial, this time without artefacts, was seemingly discovered at Blemerey (dép. Meurthe-et-Moselle). At Koenigsmacker (Simmer 1987, p.362) a face-down burial was found, wherein the

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deceased was interred wearing a necklace. Seemingly, then, there was no correlation between the burial of the deceased in an unusual position and the furnishment of the grave with artefacts.

Other unusual customs include the burial of animals. A probable double-grave at Gondrexange 'Haut-Desseponck' (Linckenheld 1932b, pp.132-133) contained the skull of a dog. An entire skeleton of a horse was found at Bettviller 'Guising' (dép. Moselle; Toussaint 1938d, p.18) near Merovingian burials. Such burials are well known in Alamannic areas and significantly Bettviller is one of the north-easternmost cemeteries of the *civitas*, close to the Vosges and the regions thought from written sources to have been under Alamannic control. As mentioned in chapter 5, the skull of a horse was found in the much disturbed Merovingian cemetery of Tarquimpol (Wichmann 1892; Guillaume *et al* 1988, p.104, fig.73). Little more information can be drawn from these examples, beyond the fact that the killing of a horse must have been an important display of prestige, and is one of the few funerary practices condemned as pagan by church writers.

Not much can be gleaned from the fragmentary data to confirm or deny the ideas put forward above about the associations between grave-goods and the age and sex of the deceased. The only possible exception is the cemetery at Saint-Ulrich (Lutz 1972). Only two graves were excavated. The subject of one, containing no artefacts, was quite old, giving some support to the notion that the chances of burial with grave-goods declined as one approached old age. The other burial was that of a ten-year-old child which contained pottery

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and an iron ring of uncertain function. If this came, as Lutz suggested (1972, p.61), from a spear, this would argue against the theory that children were not buried with weaponry. However, since no spear-head was discovered, this remains unlikely. The remainder of the assemblage, a single vase placed by the feet is very typical of a child's grave and would support the notions put forward at Ennery.

3. A provisional descriptive model of funerary practice within the *civitas* of Metz.

From the foregoing discussion a provisional model can be established, containing two general groups of points, relating to the sixth and seventh centuries in turn.

1. In the sixth century, artefacts deposited with the dead had distinct associations with sex and age. In particular, gender-specific assemblages such as those including weapons or jewellery were not associated with children or old people. The gender of the deceased could be accurately predicted from the artefacts placed with him or her, and even age could be predicted within reasonable limits. There was also enough in the patchy data to suggest that the material, shape and size of objects might be linked with gender and age variables. Wealth, class and rank distinctions seem to be rather more subtle and not easily traceable from the grave-goods without analysis of other variables.

2. In the seventh century these associations break down. There is widespread abandonment of pottery. The number and range of grave-

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goods diminishes. In particular, artefacts, other than jewellery or weaponry, previously specific to one or other sex, often become neutral and the range of gender-specific artefacts becomes much smaller. Artefactually neutral and unfurnished graves increase in numbers and the assemblages seem also to become much more standardised.

Before attempting to explain this model, it must be put to the test with larger cemeteries outside the *civitas* of Metz but within the general region.

Chapter 11. Testing the Model: Cemeteries Outside the
Civitas of Metz.

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1. Introduction.

As was mentioned in chapter 1, and as will have become clear from the previous chapter, the data from the *civitas* of Metz are too fragmentary and of too uncertain reliability for the conclusions drawn from them to carry very much weight. Consequently a number of cemeteries from outside the *civitas* but within the general region of Metz were chosen for analysis. The limits of space prevent as thorough discussion and analysis as was possible with Ennery. Consequently the analyses performed here were concerned with the examination of the relationships between artefact-types, gender and age, with the relationships between these and grave-size, and with the study of social organisation from the results of these tests. Discussion of artefact-shape, -size and material and the links between these and other variables, or of the symbolism of artefact types, was left aside for treatment elsewhere. Summaries of the excavation of these sites can be found in appendix 2.f. Figure 11.1 restates the definition of the various classifications of grave from A to X.

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2. Chaouilley 'Aux Écailles' (diag. 11.3).

The first site we shall look at is the sixth-century cemetery of Chaouilley (Voinot 1904). Here it was possible to divide the object-types into three groups and, as at Ennery, the male group contained more types than the female (diag. 11.4). Again, weapons and belt-fittings formed part of the male group, and jewellery the bulk of the female. Shears were found to be male (the only pair of shears at Ennery had been found in a male grave, grave 28), and all three sets were found in lavishly furnished burials of adult males. Similarly the only pair of tweezers found at Ennery was found in a male burial, and this object-type was male at Chaouilley. One difference occurred with the knife. At Ennery this had been a strongly male artefact but at Chaouilley, though seven out of ten examples came from the burials of men, the other three were found in the graves of women, all of teen-age or older and all containing jewellery (a necklace and one or more brooches occurred in all three burials). The same applied to grey-ware pottery, which was male at Ennery and neutral at Chaouilley. One refinement here will emerge below, however. The remainder of the neutral group was composed much as at Ennery; six out of eight types in this group which also occurred at Ennery were neutral in both cemeteries.

With perhaps one exception, it was always possible to predict the sex of the deceased correctly (diag. 11.5). The exception was grave 25, marked on Voinot's plan as female. However, no information on sex is given in the text, and since two of the three grave-goods placed with the body were otherwise only found in male graves, it

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seems certain that the occupant of the grave was male. One problem occurred with children. Three children were buried with female objects. All three of these had identical assemblages; a necklace and a vase. As at Bouzonville, this could mean that children were considered as female; as extensions of their mothers, rather than that there were more female than male children. This is supported by examination of the pottery (see below).

The age of the deceased was estimated from the bone evidence in only ten graves containing artefacts, and a further two unfurnished graves (20a and 20b, though we cannot be completely certain that these are intact). A further thirteen furnished graves could be identified as of either children or adults (four children, nine adults) from the dimensions of the grave, dental evidence and the size of the bones. Nonetheless, similar trends as occurred at Ennery were suggested. Age predictions were accurate in 55% of cases (diag. 11.5). Of the three B graves (containing neutral items only), one was a child, one a fifty- to sixty-year-old woman and one a forty- to fifty-year-old (a woman according to Voinot's site-plan, though he states in the text that the sex could not be determined; the sex appears to have been attributed on the grounds that this grave lies in an area seemingly reserved for women). If these ages are correct they support the Ennery hypothesis well, with children and females over the age of forty frequently receiving to burial without gender-specific grave-goods.

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Of the unfurnished E graves, all those which Voinot felt able to sex were male. The five bodies pitched into multiple grave 4 seem from Voinot's account to represent a disturbed grave. Four of the six others were excavated by the Voinots' less methodical colleague, Monsieur Parisot, and no information was retrieved, beyond the fact that there were no grave-goods. The remaining two (20a and 20b) were adult males, one aged between thirty and forty, the other between fifty and sixty. If there was an intact burial in grave 4 it was that of a forty- to sixty-year-old man. At Ennery a thirty- to forty-year-old might have been expected to be buried with grave-goods, and a fairly numerous assemblage at that. On the other hand, one man of between forty and sixty was buried without artefacts at Ennery. Little could then be suggested from this data except that it seemed that, as at Ennery, one stood a greater chance of unfurnished burial or burial with neutral grave-goods only after one reached the age of forty.

All the AB.1 graves (with masculine items including weapons, and neutral objects) were those of adult males, thus supporting the conclusions drawn at Ennery. Of these no age was estimated in five cases. Of the remaining five, three were under the age of forty (two of these being aged between twenty and thirty), one was aged between fifty and sixty and one was simply 'un vieillard', without further precision. The old man contained the smallest number of grave-goods. This did not contradict the Ennery results in any way and appeared to lend some support to the idea that they might have more general application.

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Apart from the three children discussed above, the BC graves and Cx graves were all those of adults. One of the most lavishly furnished (grave 21) was a girl in her early teens. Grave 1, which contained a bracelet, was not aged, but the teeth were not very worn, and so did not suggest someone much beyond young adult age. As at Ennery, such things as hairpins, earrings, bracelets, brooches and dress-pins were only found in the graves of women aged between puberty and about forty. The richest female grave, grave 19 was not aged anthropologically. It was simply 'adult'. The striking similarities which it bore to its neighbour, grave 20c, which will be discussed below, suggest that the subject died quite close in time to that of 20c, and that she was related to him, perhaps his sister or wife. This would suggest that the two were of more or less the same age, somewhere between twenty and thirty.

Although there were insufficient numbers of anthropologically-aged skeletons for any conclusions to be hard and fast, there was enough in the data to suggest that people went to their graves with the most object-types when aged between twenty and forty, as at Ennery. When the two sexes were added together it could be shown that, as at Ennery, the average number of object-types placed with the dead rose as one approached 'young adult' age (twenty to forty years) and then fell gradually as one reached old age (diag. 11.6).

In examining the forms of artefacts and any associations these had, analyses focused on the ceramics. Here it was noticed that, as at Ennery, pots in which the height was equal to or greater than the

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width at the mouth seemed to be buried in male graves. It was also noticed that shallow red-ware bowls were buried in graves of adult females three times (graves 3, 6 and 19), in the burial of an adult male only once (grave 20c) and in child-graves twice (graves 24 and 40). Other forms of red-ware pottery such as pitchers were found in other male graves, however. Grey-ware vases with black glaze were found in seven men's graves (graves 16, 20c, 25, 27, 28, 34 and 35), in two child-burials (graves 24 and 36), and in only one adult female grave (grave 19). In three graves red bowls and grey/black vases were found together; the child-grave 24 and the lavishly furnished graves 19 and 20c, female and male respectively. From this it might be suggested that the red-ware bowl was usually a female artefact and the black vase a male item. Child-grave 36, however, contained necklaces as well as supposedly 'male' black vases. This evidence might be used to suggest that jewellery in child-graves does indeed have no real weight as an index of sex. With one female and one usually male object, these graves have to remain neutral. The cases of graves 19 and 20c will be returned to later.

The dead were buried with dress ornaments in the place where they would have been worn. Spears, javelins and arrows were usually placed at the left side of the body, though grave 14 had his to the right of his head and grave 20c had missile weapons on both sides of his body. Pottery was almost exclusively placed by the feet. Again, the only exception was the pot in grave 20c placed by the deceased's head.

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The organisation of the cemetery of Chaouilley deserves some attention (diag. 11.7). As at Ennery, women were grouped at one end of the site, in this case the south, however. Certain object-types were grouped in specific areas. All three bronze bowls came from graves 18, 19 and 20c, located side-by-side in the westernmost row of burials. Graves 34, 35 and 36, similarly situated next to each other in a row, all contained black-glazed vases. With the possible exception of 20c, all intact AB.1 graves were located in clusters; graves 13, 14, 16 and 17 form one, graves 27 and 28 another, and graves 33, 34 and 35 a third.

Another point which must be made concerns the number of adult women. As at Ennery this is surprisingly low. Ten subjects on this site could be anthropologically or artefactually sexed as women, to nineteen males. Excluding the children, to reach an adult population of the usual sexual structure, one would need to assume that six out of every seven remaining unsexed burials (disturbed, unfurnished or artefactually neutral) were those of women. It has to be said, though, that we have no information on whether or not any of the cemetery's edges were located.

When looking for graves marked out as special at Chaouilley we are immediately struck by graves 19 and 20c. Not only are these two burials the most lavishly furnished on the site, they show striking resemblances to each other. Both have very similar bronze bowls, in both cases placed on a wooden board by the left foot, and containing a comb. They also appear to break community rules; 19 is the only

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adult female buried with a black-glazed vase, and 20c the only man interred with a red-ware bowl. 20c is also the only intact AB.1 grave not to have a similar AB.1 grave to one or other side of him. Two later burials were placed in his grave, albeit very carefully; neither appears to have disturbed the original burial, interred a remarkable 2.2 metres below the 1902 ground level. When added to the fact that the grave was carefully stone-lined, this original burial must have required an unusual amount of labour. Like the special graves 70 and 71 at Ennery, graves 19 and 20c at Chaouilley are situated at the edge of the site, grave 20c occupying the middle of the westernmost row of burials. This privileged group of burials may perhaps be extended to graves 18 and 21. Grave 18 contained a grey pot of a similar shape to the grey/black pitcher in grave 19, and a bronze bowl like those in graves 19 and 20c, similarly placed by the feet. Grave 21 is, with graves 19 and 20c, the only one to contain a comb, which, like the others, was located at the feet.

3. Lavoye 'Le Haie des Vaches' (diag. 11.8).

The largest cemetery analysed was that at Lavoye (Joffroy 1974). Here there were thirteen late fifth/early sixth-century graves (diag. 11.9). In this phase there were again clear male, female and neuter groups of object-types, with possible further divisions into strongly male, and strongly female, female/neutral and male/neutral (diag. 11.10). Sex was always accurately predicted and the trends put forward from Ennery seemed to be supported (diag. 11.11). All burials in this phase had gender-specific object-types, which is perhaps why there were clear divisions into strongly male or female

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and less strongly male or female artefacts. Again, one of the two female graves with the least strongly female artefact-kit was a child, whereas two of the most strongly female graves seemed to fall into the 'early teens to young adult' group, though this was not entirely clear from the report. With one exception no ageing was given on the male AB graves, but all were adult it seems. The earliest grave was the celebrated 'tombe de chef' (grave 319). He had a complete set of male-specific object-types and was separated from all other graves by a large empty zone. The dead man was about fifty years old, roughly the same age as the subject of the lavishly furnished grave 4 at GÜdingen. As there, this did not refute any of the Ennery hypothesis. The man was neither a child or aged above sixty, and the wide range of masculine objects other than weapons were not untypically placed with men of his age-group at Ennery.

Grave 319 is clearly a prestige grave, but it is marked out not simply by its artefacts (which were both numerous and of high quality) but by the extraordinary length (3.5m.) and depth (1.6m.) of the grave, and by the large area devoid of burials, roughly four and a half metres in radius, which surrounds it. Grave 241 also had a complete assemblage of male objects (several types of artefact found in grave 319 were not discovered in any other contemporary burial and so were excluded from the seriation). This burial lay near the centre of a zone densely occupied by later burials, but was separated from its contemporaries by a gap of about six metres. This other possible 'privileged burial', rather more subtly distinguished from its contemporaries than grave 319, has not been remarked upon before.

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Other zones occupied by later graves, in the centre and south-west of the site, also seem to have been 'founded' at this time, but these 'founder graves' (graves 110 and 189) are not, in artefactual terms, in any way remarkable. This underlines the notion put forward at Ennery that sixth-century privileged graves were often distinguished from their contemporaries in very subtle ways.

After this initial group of burials, 198 graves could be included in the area of the cemetery used between c.525 and c.600, of which 181 were suitable for analysis (diag. 11.12). Obviously these constituted an excellent sample for comparison with the contemporaneous cemeteries of Ennery and Chaouilley. As with those sites, two large distinct groups of associated objects were apparent. The composition of these and the neutral group is shown in diagram 11.13. The feminine group was again smaller than the masculine, containing only eight object-types to eleven masculine. In the neutral group, flints, plaque-buckles and purse-fasteners gravitated very strongly to the male side. Only one female burial contained flints, and plaque-buckles and purse-fasteners were each found in only two graves of women. Shears, too, were found more often in male than in female burials. Knives were contained in five times as many male as female graves (fifty to ten). When the large size of the sample was taken into account this supported the idea that these object-types were generally associated with males in the sixth century. Interestingly, the two female graves with plaque-buckles were both dated to the last phase of the sixth century (Périn's phase DEF; cp. Périn 1980, p.388, table 143) and this lends support to the hypothesis

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of a break-down in the structure of the groups of masculine and feminine artefacts around 600.

Neutral objects which fell towards the female end of the scale were shoe buckles (five to three), iron belt buckles (fourteen to four or five; showing a similar female bias for this object as was found at Chaouilley) and disc brooches (twelve to three). The presence of disc brooches in male graves is at first sight surprising but is known from more recent excavations in Lorraine (cp. Toul 'St. Èvre', grave 1; Liéger, Marguet & Guillaume 1984, p.304). The possibility that they are residual is ruled out by the consistent location of the brooches between the knee and pelvis, close to other items such as strike-a-lights, flints, coins and so on; in short to typical pouch-contents. None of these graves produced a true purse-fastener, though the pouch of grave 188 was associated with a small buckle which probably served to fasten it. It seems that these three disc brooches were used in a secondary context (the example in grave 92 had lost its cloisons) as purse-fasteners.

The sex of the deceased, predicted from grave-goods, did not tally with Meunier's physical anthropological observations in only two cases (diag. 11.14) and one of these (grave 90, stated to be female but containing belt-fittings, otherwise exclusively male) probably represents an error on Meunier's part.

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The next stage was to predict the age of the deceased from the grave-goods. Depending on the system of marking used (diag. 11.15), this showed between 62 and 72% accuracy (diag. 11.14). This was very pleasing and gave strong support to the descriptive model established at Emery. Twenty-seven out of thirty-four children were B or E.2 graves. Of the others, one was an AB.2 grave, and one a Cx grave (containing a necklace only). The other five were BC burials but, leaving aside disc brooches which the seriation counted as neutral, all except one contained only a single female object-type.

Of thirteen old people identified by Meunier, nine were artefactually neutral B or Bx graves, or unfurnished E.1 graves. There were three AB graves. Two of these contained no weapons, and there was never more than a single male-specific item. In all three graves there was an average of only three object-types and of only 3.33 grave-goods in total (this compared with an average of well over four object-types or over 6 grave-goods for all adult males). There was one BC grave, but this was similarly poorly furnished, with only three grave-goods, including two object-types, one of which was gender-specific (a dress-pin).

Where a subject had been identified as a female adolescent (only one instance, leaving aside unspecified *fillettes*) or a young adult woman, it was a BC burial in six out of eight cases. Surprisingly the other two were E.1 burials. However, even including these, the eight burials averaged 5.25 grave-goods, compared with the overall female average of 4.76. The six accompanied burials all fell in the

more lavishly furnished half of all female burials (fig. 11.16a), four out of the eleven burials most lavishly equipped with female gender-specific grave-goods were adolescents or young adults (fig. 11.16b), or, expressing the data another way, four out of eleven burials with three or four female-specific object-types belonged to this age-group (fig. 11.16c). It must be remembered that no ageing information was given for any of the other adult females in this more lavishly furnished group. We cannot tell how many of them fell into the age-group below forty years of age.

Seven burials were described as of 'young men', though as with most 'young women' it is difficult to say what Meunier exactly had in mind by the term 'young'. It could possibly have included the late teens. Nevertheless all seven burials were AB graves, five with weapons. These burials contained an average of almost nine grave-goods, well above the overall male average of 6.2. However, when male-specific items only were taken into account, these graves, unlike those of young adult females, did not show a pattern very different from that of adults in general.

The results of these analyses gave general support to the hypothesis established at Ennery and backed up to some extent at Chaouilley. Children were rarely buried with gender-specific artefacts, never with weaponry, and with few grave-goods in general. Young adults, where they were identified, were well-provided with artefacts, and, in the female case, with gender-specific objects in

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particular. Old people were buried with few grave-goods, and were usually artefactually neutral.

As at the other cemeteries adult males were buried with both a higher average number of grave-goods (6.2 to 4.76) and a slightly higher average number of object-types (4.45 to 4.32) than adult females. Study of the burials of old people revealed that, as at Ennery, males were more likely than females to keep some gender-specific objects into old age, though they rarely had weapons and were generally badly provided with grave-goods (though better furnished than old women).

The grave-goods were almost universally placed where they would have been worn, with small objects placed together in pouches hung from the belt (frequently hung from châtelaines in the case of women). Pottery was nearly always positioned at the feet or lower legs. The only exceptions comprised a handful of instances of 'Charon's obol' (graves 191, 177 and ?268, to which we may add grave 272 where the coin was held in the left hand), and a few more where objects were placed by the head (graves 94, 178, 181, 167, 224 and 97). More general variations from the rule of placing objects as they were worn in life concerned weapons. Scramasaxes were sometimes placed point-upwards, and more rarely on the deceased's torso, and swords were always placed with the hilt by the upper arm and the point by the thigh or knee. In one burial (grave 166) the right arm was crooked around the sword. In the other three sword-burials, the sword was placed at the left of the corpse.

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The sixth-century phase of Lavoye is organised into four distinct groups (diag. 11.17). Group 1 comprised the southern, somewhat rambling group of seventy-two graves. Group 2 contained the central group of ninety-one burials. This group was, apart from a rather disorderly cluster at its eastern edge, neatly organised into rows. The third group contained thirty-one graves in the north of the site. These too were reasonably neatly arrayed in rows. Finally, a fourth group was formed by the four graves to the north of grave 319, identified in the past, plausibly enough, as the family of the 'chef' himself.

Interestingly, although group 4 was set well away from grave 319, which retained the empty zone around it throughout the history of the cemetery, the sixth-century phase seems to have been laid out with regard to group 4 rather than to the *tombe de chef* itself. Groups 1, 2 and 3 are arranged so as to leave a zone about twelve metres wide around the group. The other possible special grave of the cemetery's initial phase, grave 241, was the subject of quite the opposite phenomenon, being the centre of the northern half of group 2, with burials clustered around it.

The cemetery is organised into distinct rows, the central and northern groups (2 and 3) being particularly neatly arrayed. Within these rows some small clusters may represent family plots. Graves 103 and 104, side-by-side, show similarities in the fact that they have very similar pots placed at their feet, and, as Joffroy said (1974, p.114), this suggests some relationship between the subjects of

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the burials. When the division of this phase into groups is taken into account, the distribution of adult males and females (diag. 11.18) begins to reveal a similar pattern to that at Ennery. The bulk of the women of groups 1 and 2 are buried in the north of their respective groups. Group 3 differs by containing a very large number of men and by being composed largely of unfurnished burials. In this group there are, moreover, no BC graves (diag. 11.19). This might suggest that these groups correspond to different communities using the cemetery, something backed up by study of the seventh-century phase (see below).

When it came to identifying prestige graves, this had again to be quite subtle. Beginning with the male graves, analyses took the form of counting the numbers of object-types and of actual numbers of grave-goods. Within each of these two general groups, separate tallies were made of gender-specific, neutral and of the total number of object-types or grave-goods. For the reasons outlined above, that they were habitually buried with fewer grave-goods and only one or two gender-specific artefacts at most, children and old people were excluded from the analyses. The results of these tests are shown in diagram 11.20. The tests which most clearly separated a small group of graves from the rest were tests A and B, those looking at gender-specific objects. Test F was slightly less convincing, and tests C and D still less so. Test E could produce no clear group of special burials.

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The facts that old people are almost certainly under-represented and that many are therefore doubtless included in the unspecified 'adult' group are cause for some caution about the results. If the indications of Ennery and of the known graves of old people at Lavoye are anything to go by, however, these people would have less grave-goods overall and fewer gender-specific artefacts, making tests C, D and E even less conclusive whilst probably not affecting the results of tests A, B and possibly F. That we have no specific ageing information for most adults means that we do not know how many were above forty and how many below. Considering the results of the Ennery analyses and the indications at Lavoye, where young adult males were buried with higher numbers of grave-goods and of male-specific items, this is a far more serious problem, and must mean that the results of these tests should be used with care.

However, so many graves were found to be separated from the others in more than one test that the six tests produced only nineteen graves in some way 'special', and fifteen of these were marked out in two or more tests (diag. 11.21). Some conclusions could be drawn. The lavishly-furnished grave 194 stood out in all of the tests. It had a higher number of grave-goods or object-types than other male burials and far and away the most complete set of male-specific object-types, nine in all, out of a possible eleven. This burial also lies close to the middle of the sixth-century phase at Lavoye. If, however, any grave lies at the centre of this phase it is grave 191, which contained the highest actual number of male grave-goods (eleven in all) and was signified as special in four of the six tests. Grave

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191 lies in a small group of burials at the north of group 1, clustered around an early grave (grave 189), and containing mainly male burials, four out of six of which are weapon-graves (AB.1). There is also a zone extending for about four metres to the north, west and north-east of grave 191 which is free from burials. This burial must be of someone from a family with some kind of local prestige.

Some other burials were similarly worthy of note. Grave 243 was among the graves distinguished from the rest in four tests, and lies close to the earlier special grave, grave 241, in the centre of the northern half of group 2. In group 3, grave 289 was indicated to be special in three tests. To the south-west of grave 191 lay another cluster of burials, one of which, grave 19, was among the most lavishly furnished burials in four tests. Group 1 produced a handful of graves which were slightly better provided than the others, graves 355, 359 and 104 had six, four and four male-specific items respectively, placing them in the special group in tests A and B. Grave 92 was amongst the most lavishly-furnished graves on the site in terms of overall numbers of grave-goods and in terms of neutral object-types and grave-goods. It also lay in the middle of the southernmost group of burials in group 1 and was one of the few graves provided with a coffin. Grave 94, its neighbour to the east also had a coffin and was the only A grave in the cemetery. These graves seemed to be of people of note within the community using the southern section of the site.

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Returning to group 2, four burials arranged in a rectangle in the western part of the site (graves 164, 166, 155 and 157) were among the best provided graves in terms of neutral grave-goods and of grave-goods in general. It is interesting to remark that the graves distinguished from the rest in three or four tests, especially those concerning male grave-goods or object-types, lie closer to the centre of the site, in the first part of this phase of the cemetery's use (Périn's phase BCD: Périn 1980, p.388, fig. 143). Those marked out only by higher numbers of grave-goods and the highest numbers of neutral artefacts lie further away from the centre, and in in four out of five cases in the final phase of the sixth century (Périn's phase DEF; *ibid.*). This may point to a change in the means of demonstrating high status in the years around 600 AD.

Performing these analyses on the female graves produced very different patterns (diag. 11.22). Age factors probably distorted the pattern even more than with the male graves. The most lavishly-furnished burials were not as clearly differentiated from the others as their male counterparts had been. Taking the top 10% in each test produced ten graves more richly furnished than the others in some way or other. That two of these were 'young women', and another was aged about thirty, that is to say in the age group one would expect to be best furnished with grave-goods, is strong grounds for caution. Nevertheless some patterns emerged (diags. 11.23 and 11.24).

Grave 307 was probably the most remarkable, having the most gender-specific grave-goods and object-types (jointly with three other

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graves), the most neutral object-types, and was in the top 10% in two other tests (C and D). This grave was the closest sixth-century burial to the 'tombe de chef', grave 319, and seems to have been buried in a sitting posture.

A similarly distinguished grave was grave 354, in the top 10% in four tests, and located between male burials 355 and 359, which were also marked out in these analyses. Grave 89 was distinguished by its total numbers of grave-goods and object-types, and by its number of neutral object-types and lay close to the similarly 'special' male grave 92. In group 2, graves 175 and 227, each in the top 10% in two tests, lay near male 'special' graves 194 and 229 respectively, whilst burial 240, marked out in three tests lay near to the distinguished male grave 243, on the other side of the early prestige burial, grave 241. The four distinguished male graves at the west of group 2 similarly had their accompanying female burials, graves 158 and 161. As with the male burials, the graves distinguished by their gender-specific grave-goods lay close to the cemetery's core in the earlier phases, while those marked out only in overall numerical terms or by their numbers of neutral grave-goods lay further away in the later phases of the sixth century.

Of all these possible special graves, only grave 194 has so far been remarked upon (Young 1986, p.74), probably because previous analyses have concentrated only upon the obvious variables and markers - number and subjectively-defined 'quality' of artefacts and

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exceptional grave size. Grave 191, at least as distinguished, perhaps more so, than grave 194, has gone unnoticed.

The last phase of the cemetery's use, between c.600 and c.675, comprised 110 graves, but only ninety-six were suitable for analysis. Most were spread around the edges of the site, but one or two filled in gaps in the sixth-century area (diag. 11.25). In this period, the expected changes did occur. The range of object-types chosen from fell from 34 to 21, and the number of male and female-specific artefacts fell too, from 11 to 8 and from 8 to 4 respectively (diag. 11.26). Flint became an exclusively, and strongly, male item but the knife became more neutral. The plaque-buckle also became a neutral artefact, occurring in graves of all types. Where a prediction was felt able to be made the sex was accurately predicted in all but two cases (grave 216, an Ax grave thus predicted as male, was sexed as female; grave 48, a B grave, was thought to lean towards the female end of the scale but was instead a young man; diag. 11.27). However, the increased standardisation and higher number of neutral graves meant that predictions were possible in a smaller number of cases (53% as opposed to 60% of sixth-century burials).

Predicting age was more difficult than before (diag. 11.27). In this phase age predictions showed an accuracy of between 58 and 68%, only slightly lower than that for the sixth century, but predictions were rarely accurate to narrow age-groups. Usually the only thing which could be predicted was whether or not the deceased had reached adulthood. The general features of the sixth century were still in

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evidence but the previous age distinctions seemed to have been breaking down. Certainly the striking uniformity of the grave-goods means that distinctions between various age-groups will not have been as clear as before.

Three quarters of adult males were AB graves (half of them were AB.1), the remainder being neutral or unfurnished. This compared with only 57.5% of sixth-century adult males, but this increased standardisation probably added to a break-down in age distinctions. Meunier only noted three 'young men' (the fact that age observations are far fewer in this phase of the cemetery resulted from the fact that the seventh-century area was excavated before the sixth-century phase). Two of these were AB.1 graves but the other was a neutral B grave. As will be remembered, all sixth-century 'young men' had been AB burials, so this suggested a change in practice. A more important change came with adult women. Only four such females were buried with gender-specific grave-goods, the remainder being neutral. Two of the three observed 'young women' were BC burials and represented the most lavish female burials in this phase, and this tallied with sixth-century custom. The other was a neutral X grave. Only three old people were noticed, one was an AB.1 grave, one an E grave and one a B grave. This in itself did not suggest a real change from the sixth century, but, as mentioned, the far higher percentage of adult burials with male-specific items intimated that old males were more likely to have been buried with such grave-goods. As for children, seven out of nine graves were, as in the sixth century, artefactually neutral or unfurnished. The other two were one AB.2 grave and one BC

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burial (graves 64 and 70 respectively). A change was represented here by the fact that, unlike the child-burials with gender-specific objects of the sixth century, these two graves were well furnished, particularly the BC grave (grave 70); in fact they were better provided with grave-goods than the majority of adults.

The break-down in the previous age distinctions was partly the result of the end of frequent female burial with feminine grave-goods but mainly a result of the composition of the neutral B and Bx grave groups, and of the E graves. This was more heterogeneous than before, with larger numbers of general adults. Old people and children formed less than one fifth of these groups (nine out of forty-eight graves).

As mentioned above a key feature of the seventh century was the striking uniformity of the rite. Four object-types - plaque-buckle, knife, grey-ware pot and scramasax were found in a quarter or more of the graves; the first in over half of the graves of the sample (and in 70.6% of furnished graves). Belt-fittings, coins and iron belt hooks were each found in over twenty graves (over 20% of intact graves and over a quarter of furnished burials). Over a third of the graves had both plaque buckle and a grey-ware pot. The presence of pottery was of course one place where Lavoye departed from the expected model - it had been predicted that pottery would be abandoned in the seventh century.

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There were further important changes in the seventh century. Firstly, the subjects of AB burials were not, as before, usually buried dressed, but had their grave-goods piled up neatly by their lower legs, with the pot placed by the opposite foot. The subjects of B graves and female burials were still usually, though not always, buried with their grave-goods in the position in which they would have been worn in life. There was enough in the data too to suggest that burial with arms crossed on the pelvis was slightly more common among AB graves than among the other elements.

The cemetery's organisation continued the sixth-century division into three main areas (diag. 11.28). The most important group of burials, group 1, lay to the west and south-west of the sixth-century group 2 and contained seventy-seven graves; group 2 (twelve graves) extended the southern end of the earlier group 1 and group 3 (twenty-one graves) filled in a gap between the north of the sixth-century group 2 and the west of the earlier group 3. Whether it was a western extension of the latter or a northern extension of the former is unclear. The large number of unfurnished burials gives it strong similarities with the sixth-century group 3 (diag. 11.30). On the other hand, the position of the most lavishly furnished grave of this group, grave 214, close to the special graves of the northern half of the earlier group 2, implies the second option. Périn's chronological study (Périn 1980, p.391, fig. 149) also seems to suggest this latter possibility but since he left most of this group undated his analyses cannot clarify the issue completely. With the exception of the northern half of group 1 and perhaps the graves of

group 3, the seventh-century burials are far more haphazardly arranged than their sixth-century precursors.

The groups showed some distinctions from each other. Group 2, besides consisting mainly of adult males, with only two women and no children (diag. 11.29), contained five burials with arms crossed on the pelvis (out of only fifteen such graves observed in this phase). Group 3 contained a higher than usual number of males buried dressed (five out of seven AB graves; seven out of nine furnished male burials; diag. 11.31).

When it came to investigating the lavishness of grave-furnishings, very different patterns from those produced by the sixth-century analyses emerged. The tests C, D, E and F, carried out on male burials (diag. 11.32), produced a normal curve; a few graves with no, or few, grave-goods, many with an average number, and a few with more grave-goods or object-types than was usual. Tests A and B, however, revealed a pattern closer to that of the sixth century, with many graves with no, or few, masculine grave-goods or object-types, a smaller number with more such artefacts, and a few with high numbers of male-specific grave-goods or object-types. The female graves produced results similar to this and to the sixth-century patterns (diag. 11.34), but the fact that the two most lavishly-furnished burials were of young adults meant that age may still have played an important part in blurring the issue, and the fact that so few women were buried with female artefacts confuses things still further.

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A small number of graves emerged which fell in the top 10% in more than one test. In spite of the usual reservations about this methodology, it seemed reasonable to identify these as in some way 'special', particularly in view of the fact that some of these graves were grouped in small clusters (diags. 11.33 and 11.35). Graves 83 (distinguished in four tests) and 84 (distinguished in two), lying side-by-side in the north of group 1, represented one such cluster. These two may represent a continuation of the group of later sixth-century special graves located nearby (male graves 155, 157, 166 and 164, and female graves 156 and 161). Further south, graves 51 (distinguished in four tests), 54 (distinguished in three) and 44 (distinguished in two) form another group. At the southern edge of group 1, graves 3 and 143 were both marked out in three tests, though neither could really be said to lie by any other privileged grave. In group 2, grave 139 was one of the burials most lavishly-furnished overall and also contained a high number of male-specific object-types, as did its neighbour, grave 138, though the latter was not distinguished in any other way. The most distinguished grave in group 3, grave 214, was in the top 10% in three tests and lay quite close to the earlier special graves 240, 241 and 243.

The two child-graves already mentioned, buried with unusually high numbers of artefacts (graves 64 and 70), also deserve attention. These so clearly break the rules that they must be considered as in some way privileged. Both graves are also respected by the others. Grave 64 has an area free of burials to its east and west, and grave 70 has such a zone to its east, west and south.

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Clearly none of these graves compares with the classic 'tombes de chef' of the late fifth and earlier sixth centuries, but writers have been wrong to discount the existence of seventh-century special burials for this reason alone (cp. Young 1986, p.74). It is a futile exercise comparing the seventh-century graves with their late fifth- and sixth-century precursors. Burials were more lavishly furnished throughout in these early periods. If, however, like is compared with like, and only contemporaneous graves are considered, then certain graves do emerge as unusual. Grave 214 contained 14 grave-goods compared with an overall male average of just under five. Over ten sixth-century graves contained numbers of grave-goods similar to or higher than this, but this was far and away the most lavishly furnished seventh-century male burial. As such it was significantly different from its contemporaries and may thus be considered as special. Similarly, to be buried with three or more masculine object-types was almost commonplace in the sixth century (over one quarter of sixth-century males were buried with this many male object-types). In the seventh century, however, only six males (or one in eight) took three or four male-specific object-types to their graves, and so they deserve to be thought of as being in some way marked out from their contemporaries.

As at Ennery there was, overall, a significantly lower number of women than men (diags. 11.18 and 11.29). In the sixth century only fifty-one out of 181 graves could be sexed as female, and in the seventh-century phase a mere eighteen out of ninety-six could be artefactually or anthropologically sexed as female.

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It will have been noticed that the seventh-century phase at Lavoye was substantially smaller than the sixth-century. This may well be the result of communities which had hitherto used this central cemetery creating their own grave-yard nearer their settlement and ceasing to bury their dead at Lavoye. The fact that only one large seventh-century group of graves exists, as compared with two or three sixth-century groups, lends support to this notion. This is also suggested by the fact that the numbers of children buried in the cemetery fell from forming just under 20% of the total (thirty-six out of 181) in the sixth century to under 10% (nine out of ninety-six) in the seventh. This leads us to suspect that mainly adult males were being brought from some communities for burial in the old cemetery, and that other elements of the population were now being interred elsewhere. This notion is also supported by the fact, noted above (pp. 105-6), that seventh-century cemeteries are more numerous than sixth-century grave-yards, and seem to reveal a settlement:cemetery ratio closer to 1:1.

The results of the analyses at Lavoye seemed to provide striking confirmation of the general points of the model proposed from the data from the diocese of Metz.

4. Dieue-sur-Meuse (diag. 11.36).

Dieue-sur-Meuse (Guillaume 1974-75) also presented the possibility of testing these ideas since it too was used in the sixth and seventh centuries. There was no physical anthropology for this site, unfortunately, apart from the obvious distinction between child and

adult. In the sixth century (diag. 11.37), only fifty graves were suitable for analysis (only forty-five contained more than one artefact-type). Dieue proved to be unusual in several ways. Unlike all the other sites examined, it revealed a larger group of female artefacts than male ones; nine female to five male (diag. 11.38). Consequently, in the sample of intact burials, there were substantially more BC graves than AB graves; three times as many in fact (diags. 11.39 & 11.40). This discrepancy was compensated for by the fact that of the disturbed graves, many more were artefactually male than female. The high frequency of disturbance of male graves may also account for the unusually low number of male gender-specific items.

The composition of the respective groups did not differ greatly from that on the other sites (diag. 11.38). Weapons, plaque-buckles, flints and purse-fasteners were masculine, items of jewellery and châtelaines were female. One point of departure was, however, that shears were a female object at Dieue. The disturbed graves seemed to suggest that, as elsewhere, tweezers were also a male artefact. In the neutral group were knives, belt-fittings, bronze and iron buckles, ceramics and glassware, coins, combs, bronze needles (masculine at most other sites) and iron 'belt-hooks'. As elsewhere, knives, belt-fittings and 'belt-hooks' gravitated to the male side.

One reason for the preponderance of feminine burials was the fact that children were frequently considered to be female. This seems to be an extension of the practice already noted at Bouzonville,

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Chaouilley and Lavoye. Twelve out of seventeen intact child-burials were artefactually female, forming 40% of the total number of BC graves. One result of this was that necklaces and bronze rings, which frequently accompanied children, were practically neutral. However, as at the other sites, the only female-specific artefact-type in four of the twelve child BC burials was a necklace. Overall, the child-burials contained an average of 1.28 feminine object-types, compared with an average of 2.48 for the adult BC graves. This reflected usual practice. The average number of artefact-types placed in child-graves was 3.05, slightly higher than at Lavoye, Chaouilley and Ennery. There seemed also to be a slight increase in the numbers of grave-goods placed with children as the length of their graves increased, with two of the three most lavishly-furnished child-graves being 1.6m. long (apart from grave 132, which was 1.80m. long, 1.6m. was the greatest length dimension recorded for child-burials). Three child-graves between 1.0 and 1.2m. long contained an average of 2.0 object-types; seven graves between 1.3 and 1.5m. long contained an average of 3.57 types, and six graves 1.6m. or more in length contained 3.8 artefact-types on average. Numbers of female-specific object-types rose similarly. This might suggest that, as puberty was reached, female children came of age and began to receive more 'adult' numbers and types of grave-goods. Too much weight should not be attached to this, however, as the evidence is very insecure.

Judging from grave-dimensions all AB graves were adults, as before. No testing of grave-goods against age was really possible but one or two quite lavish BC graves may have been of girls in their early teens

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- the dimensions of the graves were quite large, though not quite of adult size but what survived of the bones pointed to a young subject. Of the children not classed as BC graves, three were neutral B graves, one was a neutral Bx burial and the other was an unfurnished E.2 grave. As would be expected from the other sites, there was no child AB burial.

The men of the Dieue community, like those of Ennery, Chaouilley and Lavoye, were buried with more object-types than the women (5.3 to 4.8), although because of the lack of a physical anthropological study, only AB and BC graves were compared. As at all of the other cemeteries examined, these figures were substantially higher than the average number of object-types buried with children (3.05, as stated above).

Oddly, the comb was the most common artefact type, with almost half of the burials in the sample possessing one. This was strikingly different from the other sites examined, and may suggest that bone-working featured prominently in the economy of the Dieue community.

It was interesting to note that the dimensions of the grave corresponded in some ways to the artefact types (diag. 11.41). The adult graves were arranged in the same order as in the seriation shown in diagram 11.39, but E.1 graves were inserted into this seriation next to the B graves (since E graves are similarly neutral in artefactual terms. Then the size of the grave was plotted as a bar against this. Comparing the results with the pattern expected if

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large graves corresponded with strong gender related messages showed that the former followed the latter in some ways. The B and E graves were generally smaller than the AB and BC burials and the most strongly male grave (grave 115) was also that which required the greatest effort in its construction, necessitating the removal of almost six cubic metres of earth. Three of the six largest burials were amongst the five most feminine adult burials, and the other two graves in this group were also BC or AB graves. But the pattern was by no means straightforward and there were many discrepancies. No link between the overall number of object-types and grave-dimensions was revealed, however (diag. 11.42). This underlined one of the results of the Lavoye analyses; that, as a variable which should be analysed, the number of gender-related grave-goods was independent of the total number of grave-goods.

Because of widespread damage and robbing, the sample of intact burials formed less than half of the sixth-century graves at Dieue. Because of this, it was felt that analyses such as were performed at Lavoye, aimed at finding prestige burials, would not be particularly meaningful, especially given that some clearly quite lavishly-furnished graves had been robbed. It had to be pointed out, however, that grave 143 appeared to be the focus of the sixth-century phase of occupation; like Lavoye grave 319, and some of the other prestige graves there, it had a large empty zone around it. It also lies quite centrally within the cemetery. Child-grave 84 is very unusual. It is only 1.3m. long and thus presumably that of a young child. It contained, however, eight object-types, five of them female-specific.

Not only was this the most lavishly-furnished child-burial, it also went strongly against what appeared to be the customary burial practice at Dieue, where children received an average of only just over three artefact types, and just over one female-specific item. Furthermore, as has been suggested, there was enough in the data to propose that younger children were usually buried with even less object-types. Although the positioning of grave 84 within the cemetery is not remarkable, it seems reasonable to argue that the subject came from a family of some prestige in the community. Beyond that it is difficult to find any grave which might be that of someone with prestige or privilege.

The sixth-century phase at Dieue underlines particularly strongly James' dictum that the individual cemetery is the largest possible unit for social analysis:

'... regional and even local differences must surely make any attempt at an overall theory a fruitless task.' (James 1979, p. 78)

Apart from peculiarities in the choices of artefact - the preponderance of combs for example - we have noted the abnormal lavishness furnished upon children's burials and the unusually high frequency with which children were buried as females. The attention given to the burials of women is also atypical. Jewellery-forms are more varied even than among the larger sample at Lavoye, leading to an unusually high number of female-specific items. As was noted, the adult burial most likely to represent the high-prestige focus of the site is that of a woman.

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On the other hand, certain more general rules still apply. Children are still buried with less artefact-types than the adults, and women with less than men. No children are buried with weapons, and adult females took more female gender-specific objects to their graves than artefactually female children. Furthermore, there was a hint in the site data that, as elsewhere, female children could be buried with larger numbers of artefacts, including female-specific ones, from about puberty onwards.

Although it contained only thirty-three burials suitable for analysis, the seventh-century phase (diag. 11.43) corresponded to the expected pattern. The choice of artefacts is reduced dramatically, from a range of twenty-five artefact-types occurring in more than one intact grave to only thirteen types. No items of jewellery occurred in more than one grave, and only two graves had any such items, one containing a ring, the other a possible necklace. As in the sixth-century phase the comb was a popular item, but this was now superseded by grey-ware pottery as the most common item, again going against the pattern established in the diocese of Metz, where pottery died out in the seventh century.

More importantly, however, there was no clear patterning in the artefact associations which related to gender. Two groups of artefacts which never occurred together were revealed, one comprising flint, iron 'belt-hook', belt-fittings and strike-a-light, the other iron buckle and iron ring. The latter two items never occurred together. Both iron buckle and all the first group were associated

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with weapons. The grave which yielded iron buckle and scramasax was intact so it seems that, if weaponry was still a male attribute, then these two groups did not relate to gender. This point is supported by the fact that one of the graves which contained jewellery contained an iron ring whilst the other contained belt-fittings and a flint. However, the item of jewellery in the latter grave was not certain to be a necklace; the grave also contained a scramasax. Nonetheless, the fact remains that there appeared to be no very clear gender-related bipartite division of artefacts. The two groups which were revealed might have been chronologically related; this idea being supported by the distribution of such graves within the cemetery. This break-down in the significance of grave-goods in the seventh century supported the hypothesis put forward from the data from the diocese of Metz.

5. Audun-le-Tiche (diag. 11.44).

We now come to the seventh-century site of Audun-le-Tiche (Simmer 1988). Extensive violation and disturbance reduced the 200 excavated graves to a sample of only fifty-four definitely intact graves with grave-goods and of these only thirty-one had more than one artefact. A further fifteen graves had been disturbed but may have left one burial intact. This group of graves (designated 'D?') was excluded from analyses of artefact-associations but examined when looking at other aspects of the site. A range of only twenty-three artefact-types occurring in more than one grave (more or less standard for a seventh-century site, though, as expected, less than is typical on a sixth-century site) revealed seven exclusively male artefact types and

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eight female types (diag. 11.45). Again the weaponry/jewellery; male/female contrast was apparent. Once more, male artefacts also included flints, strike-a-lights and 'belt-hooks'. As well as jewellery, iron buckles appeared to be female-oriented, and bronze buckles and the few grey-ware ceramics also gravitated strongly to the feminine end of the scale. Knives and plaque-buckles, as elsewhere in the seventh century, were decidedly neutral. Again, as on other sites (Ennery, Chaouilley and Lavoye) shears showed a strong masculine bias with three out of four examples being found in male burials.

Physical anthropology suggested one change to the above interpretation of the patterns of association. Though, as stated, the latter placed it at the female end of the neutral group, physical anthropology showed that bronze buckles were only found in female graves. This would make flints neutral (because one grave, sexed anthropologically as female, contained flint and bronze buckle), and thus make a total of nine feminine object-types and six masculine. Perhaps the fact that the subject of the burial with both object-types (grave 171) was apparently an old person supports the idea that gender-divisions broke down at old age; there are no other possibly gender-specific artefact-types in the grave to help us to decide whether or not the physical anthropology was incorrect (a possibility; this grave was the only one to have its sex incorrectly predicted from the grave-goods), or whether flint genuinely was a neutral object-type. Though there are female graves with flints on the other sites examined, flint is a very strongly male grave-good, especially in the seventh-century phase at Lavoye, possibly the best analogy for Audun.

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Some artefactual peculiarities are also to be noted. Pitch-forks were found in three male graves, in every case associated with a scramasax and a knife. These are surely to be interpreted as 'substitute spears'. The positioning within the grave was as would be expected for a spear. As was predicted from the data of the *civitas* of Metz, pottery was extremely rare. Excluding probably residual sherds of Gallo-Roman wares, ceramics only occurred in seven burials, in a particular area of the site.

As well as the reduction in grave-goods noted above, the seventh century is, as at Lavoye, characterised by great standardisation. Knives were found in twenty-five intact graves (46% of intact graves), and in a further seven 'D?' graves (retaining more or less the same overall percentage). Plaque-buckles were discovered in twenty intact burials (37%) and belt-fittings in nineteen (35%). Ten intact burials (18.5%) contained all three of these items. Scramasaxes were found in twelve intact burials - sixteen if 'D?' graves are included - making 22-23% of graves in the sample, and between 85 and 92% of intact adult male burials (though many neutral burials were unsexed). This standardisation, as at Lavoye, would have serious repercussions in predicting the age of the deceased.

At Audun the sex of the deceased could be accurately predicted in every case except one (as noted above) but, as at Lavoye and Dieue, the higher numbers of neutral burials (twenty-two graves, or 40.7% of all definitely intact burials) reduced the number of occasions where predictions were possible (diag. 11.46).

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Examination of age brought further problems. It must be pointed out here that we still await the physical anthropological report on this site. Age predictions made from artefacts were shown to be only 40% accurate (diag. 11.46), the lowest accuracy on any of the sites examined, except for the seventh-century phase at Dieue, where the almost random nature of the custom precluded any predictions. Of nine intact child-burials, four were artefactually neutral B or Bx graves. Four of the others were artefactually female Cx and BC burials, but the other was an AB grave. Superficially, this represents something of a change from usual practice, but closer examination reveals that this grave (grave 168) was, like many other child-graves, accompanied only by ceramics, a red-ware pot and a grey-ware vessel. However, at Audun, the only other item of red-ware pottery was found in the strongly male grave 145, making red pottery a male artefact-type. The average number of artefact-types buried with children was 2.2. On the whole, then, the burials of children, were not too untypical, though the high percentage of artefactually female graves was reminiscent of Dieue.

There were three burials of adolescent males (graves 103a and 103b, and 178) as well as one which, from the length of the body, seemed to be of similar age (grave 198). All of these burials were AB.1 graves; two with scramasax, one with spear, and one with spear and scramasax. This represented a radical difference from usual practice, and may suggest either that males came of age at Audun earlier than they did at the other, sixth-century sites, such as Ennery, or that weaponry was losing some of its symbolic significance,

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and coming more to signify 'male' rather than 'adult male'. Another possibility, examined below, is that these graves are those of people of families of local prestige, and thus go deliberately against the norms. Including grave 198, these adolescent male graves contained an average of 6.25 artefact-types.

Two graves were said to be those of young adult males (graves 145 and 148. Both were AB.1 graves, one with spear, the other with spear and scramasax, and contained an average of 8.5 artefact-types. This high score may result from the fact that these graves were found in what appeared to be a high-prestige area of the site. The other adult male burials, of unspecified age, were all AB graves, and all AB.1 burials at that. They contained an average of 4.28 artefact-types each.

As for the female burials, there were, in Simmer's publication, no recorded adolescent women. There was, however, one young adult and one pregnant woman (grave 160 and grave 88 respectively). These were, as expected, both BC graves, and contained 4.5 object-types on average. Unspecified adult female burials, of which there were nine, were made up of one C grave, two BC burials, four Cx graves and two Bx graves. These contained an average of only 1.66 artefact-types. A startling difference came with the graves of old women (there were no reported observations of old men). Five burials of 'old' women were recorded (graves 147, 182, 150, 156 and 171). Of these at least three (graves 147, 182 and 150) were BC graves, and lavishly furnished too, with an average of no less than 8.75 artefact-types each. The

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other two were, if bronze buckles are neutral (see above) a B grave and an AB.2 burial, but if the bronze buckle was female, then these two were BC graves. Overall these burials contained 6.4 object-types on average. Clearly this pattern was very different from that which emerged at Ennery, Chaouilley and Lavoye. It is difficult to know how to interpret it. The possibilities are:

1. That a different system was in operation at Audun, which venerated old women.

2. That, as has been suggested elsewhere, the age/gender significance of grave-goods had collapsed, leaving a much more straightforward correlation between numbers of grave-goods and wealth.

In connection with the latter alternative, we must look at the location of the three more lavish burials of old women. Graves 147, 150, and 182 all lie in a confined area of the site, around the Gallo-Roman *fana* which appear to form the focus of the site; indeed grave 147 is the only definitely Merovingian burial which lies inside one of these buildings (grave 164 seems to be Roman). These graves, especially grave 147, are all also quite large. It seems not unreasonable to suppose that they represent members of a family or kin-group of some local prestige, as will become clearer below.

Overall, Audun presents some similarities with the other cemeteries analysed. Men received more attention in their burials than women, and children took less grave-goods to their final resting place than adults. On the other hand there were striking dissimilarities. The attention lavished upon certain old women and adolescent males has

been mentioned, but can perhaps be accounted for. The uniformity of the weapon-burial rite for males of teen-age onwards is reminiscent of the similar phenomenon at seventh-century Lavoye. It is difficult to see how Simmer (1988, p.135) arrives at the conclusion that the scramasax is a symbol of high social rank. This suggests a reduction in the specific symbolism of funerary artefacts. Again, as at other seventh-century sites (Lavoye above all, but also Wittersheim) the burial practice at Audun-le-Tiche is characterised by uniformity across the community.

Another variable to be analysed was that of grave shape and size. There did not appear to be very significant changes in the shape of graves across the site (judging from the overall site-plan, the only representation of this; Simmer 1988, pp.158-159). Unfortunately, Simmer did not record the dimensions of simple trench graves, of which there were only two amongst the intact burials. Nevertheless, as at Dieue, some relationship was suggested between grave-size and the extent to which the deceased was interred with gender-specific objects (diag. 11.48). Out of ten intact graves requiring the removal of over one cubic metre of earth (the Audun graves were very shallow on the whole), eight (or nine, if the bronze buckle is a female artefact-type) were AB or BC burials. Adult B and E graves were on average slightly smaller than adult AB or BC burials.

Comparing the numbers of grave-goods and artefact-types with grave-size also revealed an overall decrease in the size of the grave as grave-goods became fewer (as above, only adult burials were

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considered; diag. 11.49). The relationship was not straightforward, however, and sufficient anomalies occurred for the size of the grave to be retained as a variable independent of the grave-goods (for example, grave 167 was the ninth largest intact grave, yet contained only one artefact). Perhaps prestige in the community could be demonstrated in the expenditure of labour upon the construction of the burial, where lavish grave-goods were not appropriate. In this connection it is interesting to note that more children were buried in sarcophagi than adults, whilst, as has been outlined, the interment of children rarely involved much expenditure in terms of grave-goods.

When looking for prestige burials, numerical analyses of the type performed at Ennery and Lavoye are not possible for the same reasons as at Dieue; even including the 'D?' graves, only one third of graves (a quarter of all *burials*) were intact. Nonetheless some clear points did emerge. Examination of the organisation of the cemetery reveals a division into two halves, separated by the *chemin des cerceuils* (diag. 11.50). Although this is of course a modern intrusion, the cemetery plan appears to show a genuine absence, or at least a thinning-out, of burials between the two zones. These two areas are area 2, in the south-west of the cemetery, around the *fana* (Simmer's zones IV and V; 1988, pp.158-159). Area 1 comprises Simmer's zones I, II and III (*ibid.*), in the north east of the cemetery.

Study of the intact graves reveals that the graves of area 1 are more uniformly and less lavishly-furnished than those of area 2.

Area 2 comprises graves with more numerous grave-goods, drawn from a wider selection, though there is still a certain uniformity visible. Combs are far more common here, and all the graves with ceramics are, as noted, located in this area. This may be chronologically related. Simmer (1988, p.111) suggests plausibly that the use of the cemetery began around the *fana* and then spread to the east. However, as Simmer himself notes (*ibid.*) and as becomes clear from study of the report, the establishment of chronology at Audun is difficult and at times idiosyncratic (cp. dates assigned to unfurnished burials). Nevertheless, Simmer's cautious suggestion tends to support the hypothesis proposed here, of progressive reduction and standardisation of grave-goods as the seventh century progressed. The assemblages of area 2 resemble those of a sixth-century cemetery far more closely than those of area 1.

The graves around the *fana* deserve closer attention. These include a number of very well-furnished graves; to the west, grave 147 (in the northern *fanum* itself, as noted above), grave 145, grave 148, grave 150 (these graves average 8.75 artefact-types each), and, to the east, graves 178 and 182 (averaging 8 each). The graves to the west are, as mentioned, frequently of very large dimensions; grave 160 is the largest intact grave on the site, grave 145 is the second largest, grave 147 the fourth largest and grave 150 the fifth. This should be seen as showing a greater effort expended on their construction, rather than that they were intended to be double-graves, which is the strictly functionalist interpretation of Simmer (1983, p.171). These two groups also include graves which clearly go against the usual

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funerary customs of the sixth century at least; the three lavishly-furnished graves of old women which contain numerous female-specific objects (graves 147, 150 and 182), and two of the four lavishly furnished weapon-burials of adolescent males (graves 178 and 198). If Simmer's chronology is accurate, then we can perhaps see some of these lavish burials (especially grave 147, the most obvious prestige burial) as those of the founders of the cemetery (diag. 11.51).

In area 1, the most obvious burial revealing a family of local prestige is grave 103, the double-burial. This contained two adolescent males, with linked arms, as in the Ennery double-grave, but with the heads removed, apparently after death and before burial (Simmer 1982). In addition to this obvious distinction in rite the graves were two of the most lavishly-furnished in area 1. This grave was surrounded by a small wall. It is interesting to note, in area 1, how common are these walls surrounding graves, or small groups of graves. In addition to that around grave 103 and its neighbour, grave 104, there are similar enclosures around graves 43 and 44, graves 100, 110 and 116, around grave 113 and around grave 31. Similar walls separate grave 17 from 15, and 93 from 102. Also in this sector was found the justly famous small cross, which seems to have stood in an empty zone between graves 33, 39 and 41 (Simmer 1988, p. 17, p. 19). Fragments of gallo-Roman sculpture, apparently reused as grave-markers are more common in this zone (*ibid.*, p. 132), as are stone sarcophagi and intact stone coverings for tombs. These features seem to suggest that, in this later part of the cemetery,

other factors than the deposition of grave-goods could be of paramount importance in the demonstration of a family's social status.

Audun is renowned for being a somewhat unusual site, and the features which give it this reputation deserve comment here. Firstly we must consider the deposition, in graves or in their fills, of nails, pot-sherds, shells, animal bones and ashes. The nails seem (pace Simmer, 1988 p.103) to represent wooden funerary structures, although only three graves (in area 2) revealed traces of wood. Many seem to represent wooden coverings of stone-lined graves, which have later collapsed into the burial, leading to the sometimes bizarre location of the nails within the burial (in a pot, for example, in grave 157). These graves do not have stone coverings, and grave 103, as Simmer (1988, p.53) states, did indeed suggest a wooden covering supported by two flagstones. Simmer's suggestion (1988, p.103) that there was a ritual of throwing nails into burials for phylacteric purposes is surely not to be taken seriously. The presence of numerous Gallo-Roman pot-sherds is interpreted by Simmer (1988, p.145) as another funerary ritual, with the people of the community wandering around the ruins of the nearby Roman settlement, collecting pot-sherds to throw into the grave. The fact that these graves are cut into an area very close to zones of Roman occupation does not appear to have occurred to Simmer as a reason for the presence of small pieces of Roman pottery. Once again the notion of residuality is notable in Merovingian archaeology only by its absence. Like the animal bones, shells and ashes, the pot-sherds do not appear to show any pattern of

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association with graves of any particular area, age, gender or type (diag. 11.52).

Animal bones, and ashes can perhaps be seen plausibly as the results of funerary feasts around the graves, though, for the bones, residuality cannot be ruled out. In two of the four intact graves with animal bones, ashes were also located, however. Another feature of the site which should be mentioned here is the stone-lined pit ('grave' 181). This, as Simmer (1988, p.8) states, seems to be Roman. It contains several Roman coins, fragments of Roman tile and pottery, and a Roman knife. It also contains animal bones which Simmer (*ibid.*) says are to be seen as the remains of a meal. However, the construction of the pit is, as Simmer also states (*ibid.*) identical to that of the Merovingian graves, and Roman coins, pottery and tile fragments are of course found in the Merovingian burials too. Only the Roman knife really allows us to doubt that this is another refuse-pit associated with funerary feasting, as at Ennery and elsewhere (Halsall 1988, p.51). A more satisfactory publication of the data, especially stratigraphic relationships, would have been desirable here.

Snail shells, also show no clear patterns of association, but, as has been made clear from Salin's day onwards, and is underlined strongly in Simmer's report (1988, p.139 ff.) these cannot be the result of chance. Snails of the types represented are not found in the area; they are aquatic. They also show signs of deliberate placing in the burial. Similar shells are found on many other sites

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throughout the region, and the conclusion cannot be avoided that we are in the presence of a funerary ritual, of which the meaning will probably always remain unknown.

We now turn to the question of mutilation of the body. We must remain dubious of many of Simmer's supposed mutilations, proposed simply from the absence of bones, but some seem incontestable. As noted, the subjects of grave 103 were headless, and there were a number of other burials like this on the site (intact graves 8, 10 and 11; the latter is not mentioned in the inventory but only on p.149; several other disturbed graves without skulls should be discounted). The case of grave 103 shows that bodies without skulls could still be interred with numerous grave-goods. Grave 11 also has grave-goods, but graves 8 and 10 are E burials. Other rites of immobilisation are noted, such as the nailing of skulls (graves 48 & 120), face-down burial (grave 19 is the only certain case) and immobilisation by weighing down the body with stones. Many of the latter should be viewed with extreme caution, since they are either disturbed or the stones could have originally been positioned on top of a wooden covering which subsequently collapsed. Two cases seem clearly to be genuine, however (graves 123 and 160). Grave 123 is an E grave but grave 160, where the deceased had a veritable wall constructed across the upper half of her torso, was not only lavishly furnished but was, as mentioned, the largest intact grave on the site. The other immobilised burials were all D graves with the exception of grave 19, which was an E grave. Thus though several of the graves showing clearly 'deviant' rites were unfurnished, there was no correlation

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between abnormal burial and interment without grave-goods. The two must therefore remain independent variables, probably demonstrating different facets of social status. Perhaps the former is to be seen as a manifestation of the status of the individual, and the latter as a demonstration of the status of his or her family.

Something more should be said about Simmer's religious interpretation of the site (Simmer 1987; 1988, pp.130 ff.) and its funerary practices. He argues that the north-eastern part of area 1 was reserved for Christians because of the presence of many sarcophagi there, the existence of the stone cross and so on. The flaws of the 'religious' argument, especially that drawn from sarcophagi, have already been discussed (above, ch.2, esp. p.32 for sarcophagi). The remainder of the argument mistakes the change from short-term, transient displays of status (in the form of grave-goods) to a local audience of all community-members, to long-term, more permanent displays (in the form of above-ground burial-markers) to wider audiences, particularly of peer-group-members. This is surely related to the social changes which will be discussed in the next chapter.

6. A Descriptive Model.

At this stage we can propose a modified descriptive model thus:

1. In the sixth century, grave-goods are clearly divided into those with male, female and neuter associations.
2. Grave-goods in the sixth century are also commonly associated with age groups so that:

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A. Children are usually neutral in artefactual terms, though on some sites they are seen as female.

B. Weaponry is almost always associated with adult males. Exceptions to this rule are noteworthy. In many sites the bulk of the weapon-bearing group is formed of young men.

C. There frequently seems to be a distinction between young and mature adult males.

D. Burials with lavish jewellery are frequently those of young adult women, and commonly of those in their teens.

E. Once beyond about 40, women seem rarely to receive female-specific artefacts.

F. Old people are usually artefactually neutral or are buried without grave-goods.

3. Whilst obvious displays of prestige in grave-goods are common in the sixth century, it is usual to have to look for more subtle manifestations (as at Ennery, Lavoye and Dieue).

4. The associations between artefacts and age groups and even gender break down in the seventh century, making it more difficult to predict age and sex from such evidence.

5. In the seventh century, the choice of artefacts placed with the dead usually becomes both more limited and more uniform. Sometimes it becomes almost random.

6. The number of gender-specific artefacts is reduced in the seventh century.

7. In the seventh century, the deposition of weaponry is limited to a narrower range of weapons, usually the scramasax and the spear.

8. The deposition of pottery is frequently abandoned in the seventh century.

9. In the seventh century, artefacts placed with the dead are more commonly dress adjuncts.

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Chapter 12. Conclusions.

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1. Analytical models of social organisation in the region of Metz, c. 450-c. 600.

Having proposed this descriptive model, how do we go about explaining it? First, we must consider some traditional explanations for the variability in Merovingian mortuary remains. Before we begin we can remove any idea that grave-goods are linked either with the ethnicity of the deceased or with his/her religion (above, pp. 30-39). Are then the patterns of association random? We can discount this notion, for the sixth century. The repeated patterns of association between certain age-groups and certain styles of burial, types of artefact and so on must argue against this.

The first of the traditional views is to assume that the number of artefacts placed with the dead relates directly to a form of social organisation based upon a single low-to-high scale of rank. Whilst this may explain some of the more extreme cases of lavish burial such as the 'princely' graves (the Childeric grave, those under Cologne cathedral, the lavish graves at Krefeld-Gellep, Morcken etc.) and, at a

lower level, graves such as GÜdingen 4, Chaouilley 20c and Lavoye 319, it cannot be pushed very far. It obviously does not explain the situation where the number of artefacts in a grave is clearly related to age, and decreases after the age of about forty. If it were the case, we would have to assume that young women and men were the highest-ranking members of society!

If such a theory were accurate, we might expect analysis of the numbers of grave-goods in burials to produce a pattern resembling the structure of the society involved. Thus a bottom-heavy, pyramidally-structured society, with many unfree, a lower number of free peasants, a still smaller number of wealthier landholders and a small aristocratic élite, would, we may expect, produce a graph such as that in diagram 12.1.1.a. There are a few graves with numerous grave-goods, a rather larger number with slightly fewer grave-goods and so on up to a very large number of graves with very few or no artefacts. A 'middle-heavy' society, wherein the unfree, the semi-free and the upper strata are outnumbered by a free peasantry, should produce a diagram like that in diagram 12.1.1.b. Here most graves have a few grave-goods, and smaller numbers of graves have few or no artefacts, or many such goods. If the grave-goods are designed to manifest rank, we should also expect the distinctions between groups to be very clear (diagram 12.1.1.a & 12.1.1.b).

Obviously the correlations with age distort any such picture, leading, in itself, to doubts that manifestation of rank was the prime consideration in the deposition of grave-goods. Since rank brings a

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hereditary form of prestige - privilege - age considerations should be unimportant; once a noble, always a noble. Even so, with old people and children excluded, and analyses confined to graves of the same sex, tests carried out on the sixth-century graves at Lavoye do not produce the patterns we would expect from a society in which grave-goods related to rank. Only analyses of male gender-specific artefacts produce what we might expect from a bottom-heavy ranked society - an exponential decrease in the numbers of graves as the numbers of artefacts increases (cp. diag. 11.20a & b). Other tests showed no such clear patterns. The lack of clearly distinguished groups of graves, defined by numbers of artefacts, argues against rank being the major determinant behind mortuary variability. The fact that only certain artefact-types appear to have demonstrated anything akin to rank suggests that, even if such forms of social differentiation existed, they were being hidden to some degree. The similar tests carried out at Ennery support this conclusion.

Another idea is that wherein certain social ranks are associated with certain artefact-types. Samson (1987a, p.117) has usefully produced an English version of Steuer's table summarising attempts to demonstrate this. Even leaving aside the problems just mentioned, concerning the idea that rank is an important factor in determining the choice of grave-goods, other drawbacks soon appear. First of all, it is obvious that such hypotheses are completely untestable. There is absolutely no way of proving that someone buried with a spear and a sax, for instance, is a freeman, whilst someone with sax alone is a semi-free *laetus*. We would, moreover, have to accept that

people's rank changed as they went through life, being slaves at birth, nobles in young adulthood, through to free status and then back to semi-free status or even slavery! The hypothesis also takes no account of regional or chronological variations, as has been pointed out by a number of authorities (Steuer 1982, Samson 1987a, James 1989). We would have to accept that Alamannia had more nobles than central Austrasia (even that Alsace had more nobles than Lorraine), that the north had more nobles than the south, and that, as has often been said, Bavaria was populated largely by slaves (Steuer 1982, p.314, quoted by James 1989, p.32)! If we accept these ideas we must also grant that there were more nobles in the sixth century than in the seventh, and that rank distinctions broke down dramatically in the seventh century. This, needless to say, is precisely the opposite of what the written sources appear to indicate was happening (above, pp.230-3). Rather than being in any way demonstrable, the idea that certain artefact-types are linked with specific ranks can soon be shown to be false.

The final drawback of the 'rank model' lies in its complete failure as an explanation of the data. If society was well-structured in terms of rank, then we must ask why such clearly deliberate customs of grave-furnishing should need to have been employed. We are forced to see the grave-good custom as a passive manifestation of 'tradition' or 'culture', and more specifically of pagan Germanic influence. Since both the religious and the ethnic component of such an hypothesis can be effectively discounted, the ultimate unsuitability of the 'rank model' is yet further underlined.

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An idea related, on the face of it, to the 'rank model' is that the number of goods in the grave relates to wealth, and thus, in our terms, to class. This has many of the same drawbacks as the previous idea. Once again the correlations with age argue against the idea that numbers of grave-goods relate to wealth and class in any crude fashion. Analyses of numbers of artefacts in graves, such as mentioned above and described in chapters 10 and 11, should reveal such a society. Bottom-heavy and middle-heavy societies should emerge, in the same way as was predicted for societies based upon rank, but we might expect that the differences between groups would be much more blurred (diag. 12.1.ii.a and b). Analyses of the numbers of grave-goods at Lavoye produce results more in line with this hypothesis, although, as stated, children and such old people as were observed had to be excluded. The sixth-century graves seem to show a general, gradual progression from small numbers of lavishly-furnished burials to higher numbers of poorly-furnished ones. This appears to reflect a pyramidal division of wealth. At Ennery a distinction into two groups of male graves, lavishly- and poorly-furnished became more accentuated with age. Whilst this argues against the existence of rank, it suggests that prestige was acquired and based upon one's fulfilment of the roles required at certain ages. Thus some might acquire high prestige and, presumably, wealth as well, whilst others might fail to do so.

The 'wealth model' has some attractions, notably its ability to avoid any one-to-one identifications with historically-attested ranks, and the fact that it must be produced from individual cemetery-

analyses. Nonetheless, it requires some modification, such as only analysing people of the same age-group and gender. Distinctions, at least in the sixth century, between age-groups and sexes argue that, within these groupings, the wealth deposited in a grave was more the wealth of the family than of the individual. Otherwise, whilst we could claim that women were always less wealthy than men and, even more plausibly, that children were always poorer than adults, we have difficulty in justifying the fact that young adults (and teen-age girls) were the richest members of sixth-century society.

A variation of the 'wealth model', and in many ways a modification of it, is represented by the 'quality groups model', as created most notably by Christlein (1973). Here certain artefact-types and their patterns of association are examined to produce 'quality groups'. Types of artefact, which might have some significance as indices of high wealth, occur repeatedly in groups in the same burials (eg. bronze bowls, decorated swords and belt-sets, horse-harness). This model has received a great deal of criticism, but, as Burnell (1988, p.395 ff.) points out, in an excellent defence of Christlein's ideas, these critiques have suffered from not using Christlein's own terms of reference, and by assuming that he intended to equate his quality groups with historically-attested social ranks, which he did not.

'Christlein was adamant that his model was intended to highlight only personal wealth and hence *de facto* social status and influence within a community, rather than institutionalised social rank' (Burnell 1988, p.397).

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Within the region of Metz, Christlein's ideas find a certain amount of support. Bronze bowls, horse-harnesses or spurs, ornamental buckets, *angones*, balances and shield-bosses do indeed occur with remarkable consistency, if not always in the same graves then at least in the same cemeteries (cp. diags. 10.26 and 10.27). However, the distribution map of such sites, as discussed above (pp.295-6), is very distinctive, leaving an almost blank zone for twenty to thirty kilometres around Metz. Clearly this requires explanation. It seems difficult to argue that there were no people of Christlein's value-group C within thirty kilometres of Metz. Either people within this zone went to Metz itself for burial, which is likely (but begs the question of why those who lived further away did not take their dead to the city), or they manifested their prestige, for whatever reason, in a more subtle manner. That the latter could equally be the case is suggested by the analyses performed at Lavoye. Whilst grave 319 is obviously a C-grave (in Christlein's terminology), in the next phase, graves 191 and 194 contain no group-C indices. Yet they are clearly distinguished from the remainder of (for Lorraine) a very large cemetery-using community (as stated, 198 burials of the period c.525-c.600) and even from the other burials which might fall into Christlein's group B. Why should this change have come about? Similarly, at Ennery, the high-prestige burials are more subtly distinguished. Thus we may suggest that, whilst the presence of Christlein's diagnostic artefact-types can identify a member of a certain wealthy social class, their absence does not necessarily prove the opposite.

Variability in funerary customs may also, in the region under discussion, distort the picture. Whilst Burnell (1988, pp.399-401) argues that burial variability has been overestimated in Alamannia and Bavaria, it cannot be overlooked in central Austrasia. We need look no further than at the differences between Lavoye and Dieue to see this. Not only are, in certain cemeteries, children and women given more attention than in others, on some sites the specific connotations of certain object-types change. Thus, at Ennery, the iron belt-buckle is male whilst at Chaouilley and Lavoye it is essentially female. Trying to apply Christlein's work in a blanket fashion to very wide areas is rendered difficult by other fundamental differences in burial-custom. For instance, the shield-boss is, in Lorraine, very rare and appears to be an index of a certain high-prestige social group, whilst in the region where Christlein worked (Alamannia) it was so common as to have no worth as an artefact criterion (unless it was decorated in some way). Other drawbacks with the value-group model are highlighted by the facts that the distinctions between the groups can sometimes be rather blurred and that changes in fashion can lead to the abandonment and reappearance of certain artefact-indicators.

It is sometimes forgotten that Christlein's system permitted a grave to belong to a certain group even if it possessed only one or two of the artefactual criteria. This, as Burnell (1988, p.397) notes, gave it the important advantage of allowing high-prestige graves to be identified from disturbed contexts. This point also needs to be borne in mind to circumvent one criticism which might emerge from the present study. In the sixth-century region of Metz,

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it seems that weapons and jewellery were the preserves, essentially, of certain age-groups. If, as seems quite often to be the case in critiques and applications of Christlein's work, the weaponry and jewellery elements of his artefactual criteria are seen as essential, then we will have extreme difficulty in identifying the graves of, for example, wealthy old people. In some ways we might be better off ignoring these criteria and concentrating on Christlein's other defining object-types, such as bronze bowls (which occur in graves of either sex), horse-harnesses and so on. Thus whilst the wealth model and the value-groups model have their attractions they still suffer from certain drawbacks and require modification. In particular they do not go any way towards explaining why the furnished burial custom was used. Usually we are forced back upon the discredited ethnic/religious explanations. Before attempting to propose an alternative analytical model for the region of Metz, one more approach needs to be considered.

In the context of the present study, the work of Bailey Young (1984; 1986) must be discussed. Young is, after all, the only person to study the cemeteries of the region in order to extract information about social organisation other than from an ethnic/religious point of view. Nevertheless, his analyses remain essentially disappointing. They revolve around simple quantitative analyses; counting graves of certain types. Not without reason did Alain Dierkens accuse Young of reducing his data to 'fallacious percentages' (Duval & Picard (eds) 1986, p.83, 'Debat'). In 1984 Young analysed Lavoye and Dieue in terms of five groups of burials; group A (weapon-graves), group B

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('typical' female graves, i.e. with jewellery), groups C-1 (with plaque-buckles), C-2 (with simple buckles) and C-3 ('dressed' burials without buckles), group D (furnished burials but with the deceased not apparently buried dressed), and group E (intact, unfurnished graves). No real justification for these groups was offered, although it is important to distinguish between those graves wherein the deceased was buried dressed and those wherein he/she was not. More importantly, no distinction was made between the different periods of occupation on these sites, a disastrous oversight considering the profound differences between the sixth and seventh centuries, as revealed in chapter 11.

After counting the graves of the differing types, Young listed how many were 'rich', described the incidence of various funerary practices and recounted what, if any, correlations existed between grave-size, skeletal position and grave-type. Young also lists, for good measure, the percentages of the different groups which had pottery and does come to some of the same conclusions as have been reached here about the fact that flints, purse-fasteners, knives and plaque-buckles are strongly male. If he had separated the sixth century from the seventh he might have noticed how such things change with time. More promisingly, Young also draws attention to the facts that there is a tendency for unfurnished graves to be smaller than furnished burials, that children are not buried with weapons and that they are more frequently female.

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In 1986, Young added the cemeteries of Chaouilley and Villey-St.-Etienne to his sample, but his method essentially remained the same, this time counting weapon-graves and lavish jewellery-burials, working out what percentage these formed of the total, and finally making some comments, none of which was very original, about 'tombes de chef'.

These works suffer from important fundamental problems. Unlike his excellent doctoral thesis (Young 1975; later partly published as Young 1977), they contain absolutely no theoretical consideration. There is no attempt to justify the division into these groups, or the choice to examine the frequency with which pottery was associated with them. At the end of the exercise, even more disappointingly, Young makes no real attempt to say what his lists of percentages and correlations actually mean. This is probably not surprising since it does not appear that his analyses were designed to answer any particular problems in the first place; just to describe the data. The whole is sadly rather meaningless.

How, then, can we explain the data? To understand sixth-century society from burials we must not simply try to postulate a society from the graves themselves; from the grave-goods, grave-construction and so on. We must explain why the particular burial-customs were used. Such an explanation will tell us a great deal about the nature of sixth-century Merovingian society; it is the failure to do this which leads to the short-falls of the models discussed above.

We know that the late antique funeral was used as a means of cementing the standing of the deceased's family within the community. Feasts which accompanied funerals were a particular way of doing this. To receive food from someone was to enter into a dependent relationship with him or her (Halsall forthcoming). Caesarius of Arles (sermon 54) juxtaposes the scriptural quotes 'You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils, you cannot be partakers of the table of the Lord and of the table of devils' (1. Cor. 10. 20, 21) with 'you cannot serve two masters' (9 Matt. 6.24). Archaeologically, in the region of Metz, the pits on cemetery sites at Morley (Meuse; Salin 1946), Koenigsmacker (Moselle, above p.296), Varangéville (Meurthe-et-Moselle; Salin 1946), Bouzonville (Moselle; above p.288) and Ennery (Moselle; above p.277), which contain ashes, bones and pieces of pottery, are just the kind of evidence one would expect of the sweeping up after a feast. The presence of food and drink offerings, either in the form of animal bones or in the deposit of pottery in graves argues further for the importance of funeral feasts. The charcoals, pot sherds and animal bones found in the fill of graves are probably also best explained as part of the remains of such activities.

The furnished burial rite should also be seen as part of this process of reaffirming the social standing of the family. It can be argued that the reemergence of furnished graves in the later fourth century in Gaul was associated with the social unrest and competition for community leadership surrounding the end of the Roman empire

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(Halsall forthcoming). In times like these such displays were necessary, for death called the status of the family into question. That this continued to be the case throughout the sixth century can be seen from examination of the written sources (above pp.225-30). The existence of the furnished burial rite tells us a great deal about fifth- and sixth-century Austrasian society. It tells us that it was essentially unstable, that prestige and power were not easily transferred from one generation to the next, and that a family's status required repeated underpinning, here through the funerals of family-members.

Further explanation for the use of this burial rite can be gained from analysis of the 'message' of the graves themselves. At these funerals it was important to demonstrate the place of the deceased in society according to certain rules, albeit fairly vague ones, and ones which changed in detail from one community to the next. The existence of these rules circumvents Burnell's criticisms (1988, pp.401-2) of the notions that the family of the dead were the prime agents in the arrangement of the burial, and that they might therefore use the burial rite to enhance as well as to reinforce their social standing. His suggestion is that the deceased prescribed what went into their graves before they died, in accordance with general rules 'which would otherwise have had automatic effect' (*ibid.*, p.401) and which were governed by a 'unity of culture and ethos in Germanic society' (*ibid.*, p.402). This theory cannot explain the Merovingian burials of the region of Metz. Unless the deceased themselves could subvert or manipulate the customs it assumes that the individual had

only a passive role in the creation of the rite, which therefore has to be explained as culturally- or ethnically-determined, neither of which explanations stands up to rigorous examination. Nor does the notion of 'the unity of culture and ethos in Germanic society' withstand detailed consideration, when applied to Austrasia, for the reasons already outlined.

The data from the region of Metz suggest strongly that, in the late fifth and sixth centuries, normative codes of behaviour laid down, loosely, what types of grave-goods were appropriate to individuals of a given age and sex. If the deceased played an active role in deciding which objects would be placed with him or her and how large his/her grave was to be, then we should expect the correlations between gender, age, object-types and grave-size to be far more haphazard than analysis reveals them to be. Why should old people generally not wish to be buried with weapons or jewellery and desire, usually, to be buried in smaller graves with fewer artefacts than the rest of the community? Child-graves remain essentially hard to explain and we are forced into some difficulty in accounting for the vast differences between male and female burials (both in numbers of artefacts and in the general choice of grave-goods; men have far more objects not associated with dress). If a unified Germanic ethos determined which grave-goods should be placed with the dead then we should expect far less deviation than does exist, and furthermore we would not expect the dramatic chronological changes which can be observed. It is also difficult to envisage a unified ethos which laid down that the weapons of a male in his prime were in some way not

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inheritable and must therefore accompany him to the grave, whilst those of an old man could be inherited and need not be placed in his burial.

If, on the other hand, we accept the existence of the 'community rules' suggested here, we are not forced to 'perceive the burial in isolation' (Burnell 1988, p.402) and we can indeed see the kind of continuum which Burnell envisages. (However, it must be borne in mind that Burnell is working both on a different region of the Merovingian world, where the burial customs were, apparently, far more uniform, and, generally, on a later period, when even this study suggests that things were different.) We can also escape a drawback, related to Burnell's criticisms, which many writers fall into when they take the view that the furnished burial custom represents social instability and the difficulty in transmitting prestige from one generation to the next. The impression given by some authors is that the only people who died in the early middle ages were family heads who had a social position to be inherited (cp. Samson 1987a). They fail to explain the attention given to people who cannot have held such social roles (eg. children). This is circumvented if we see the social stress and competition as requiring that a family's standing be reaffirmed in all the necessary acts of 'social theatre', such as the funerals (and presumably the marriages and other social rites) of all family members.

What appears to govern the deposition of grave-goods in late fifth- and sixth-century Austrasia is some form of role-theory. The grave-

goods are indicators of the deceased's social standing. That does not necessarily contradict any of the theories dismissed above. However, the evidence clearly shows that one's place in society (at least in theory, which is surely what 'community rules' represent) was heavily dependent upon one's sex and place in the life-cycle. Hence the repeated associations between certain kinds of object and numbers of artefacts and the age of the deceased, during the sixth-century.

Children have lesser status in their relations with the adult world and often they are considered as extensions of their mothers. This might explain why child-burials usually receive little attention and few grave-goods. If rank determined the nature and number of grave-goods, a child, like an adult, would be buried with numbers of grave-goods befitting his/her inherited social position. The poor nature of child-burials throughout the sixth century also argues against the numbers of objects representing the wealth of the family in any straightforward manner.

At Ennery and elsewhere, young adult women, especially those in their teens, received especially lavish burials with large numbers of items of personal adornment. Women up to the age of about forty receive, if less items of jewellery, then frequently the most artefacts. We might suspect that the young women are dressed up because they are of a marriageable age, and that those slightly older receive higher numbers of artefacts because of their position as mothers. Such an idea links neatly with *Lex Ribvaria*, which, as mentioned above (p.243) states that women of child-bearing age, which

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it defines as up to 40 are worth three times the *wergild* of other members of the community. This corresponds well with the evidence from Ennery, which suggests the ages of about 14 to 40 for the most lavishly furnished female graves, and Chaouilley, which similarly reveals a higher level of attention lavished on women of between 12 and 40. We can then propose that, in Frankish Lorraine, women were considered marriageable from their very early teens onwards.

Does burial with large amounts of jewellery constitute prestige or privilege in this case? It seems that it does not in most cases. A marriage was a valuable counter in establishing family alliances and not one to be squandered lightly. Thus, whilst a teen-age woman might be dressed up to look attractive, we can be sure that it was her family which retained the right to decide who married her, and this, as described in chapter 9 (p.245), is borne out by the written sources. Here it is interesting to note that Caesarius of Arles mentions mothers dressing up their daughters in their jewellery (*Sermons*, 78.4). If jewellery was passed down from mother to daughter, this might also provide something of a drawback for the usual chronological schemes! Indeed at Lavoye and elsewhere *démodé* jewellery is found in graves more often than other out-of-date artefact-types (cp. Lavoye grave 114). The higher *wergild* mentioned in *Lex Ribvaria* is also, of course, paid to the family. This and the indications from a survey of other forms of written evidence (above pp. 245-6) would argue that the amount of jewellery and so forth in graves of teen-agers represents *value* rather than *prestige*, in the typology outlined earlier. The fact that this wealth was taken by

the young woman with her into her grave may however suggest a slightly more active role, and thus something touching upon *worth*.

Worth is definitely a concept we must reckon with when we come to look at child-bearing women. These women have a form of status based upon their position as mothers. They will also have prestige based upon their position within the household, which, though not recognized institutionally, is attested in the documentary data (above, p.247). The fact that at Ennery women of this age-group received not so much jewellery but other possessions underlines this essential difference between the teen-age girl dressed up for use as a political counter, and the mother with her household and her own brood of children. Here is one instance where archaeology reveals a dimension of social activity more fully than the written sources.

Another reason for the value of the marriageable girl may be suggested by the low number of women on some sites (Chaouilley, Ennery and Lavoye). This can be taken with various pieces of historical evidence outlined above (pp.248-9) to suggest that some Frankish rural communities were practising female infanticide as a means of population control. Burnell (1988, p.457) has reached a similar conclusion for Merovingian Alamannia. The suggestion that women are being buried elsewhere does not stand up to detailed examination, above all in the case of sixth-century Lavoye (above, pp.326-7), although it can be used to account for the lower numbers of seventh-century females on that site. In the sixth century it seems clear that the whole community is being buried at the same cemetery. We do

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not need to search far to find the justification for this form of population control. The symbolism of men by weaponry stresses their theoretical worth as warriors. Merovingian society was violent in reality, even for the upper strata, as Ross Samson has argued (Samson 1987b). This stress on weapons and warriors means that an area of life in which women could not (or were not allowed to) participate was given especial worth. It is further supported by the written texts, which show, also, that the army was not merely a military but also a political assembly. Thus, participation in politics was limited to those who could fight; to men. Masculine weapon-symbolism is also apparent in other spheres of life. Oath-helpers must swear 'with their right hands armed' (*Lex Ribv.* 37, 69); a man who wishes to marry a widow or to adopt an heir must go before the court armed with a shield (*Lex Salica* 44.1, 46.1). This obsession with warriors and fighting would make female children in some ways 'worthless'.

Returning to the men, they do not, as a rule receive lavish burial until their early twenties or slightly before. Unlike the conclusions drawn from female graves, this does not tally very well with the laws, which state that a child came of age at twelve (*Lex Salica* 24) or fifteen (*Lex Ribv.* 84). Perhaps there was some difference between legally coming of age and beginning to bear arms. The reasons were possibly demographic. If there really were fewer females than males then it would follow (pace Herlihy 1985) that the women would marry earlier, in order to produce sufficient children to keep the society going. This might well require a practical, if not legal, 'coming of age' for males somewhat later in life. Since they

probably would not marry and settle down until later, males in their teens would probably have lesser status in dealings with women of the same age, let alone with their elders. Hence they remain as children in their grave deposits. In their twenties, though, they were seen as having worth as warriors, theoretically, and so received lavish burials with weapons and so on. At the age of forty or so, the Ennery data suggests that men took on new roles. Weaponry was frequently reduced, or replaced by a badge such as the knife. It is unfortunate that we have insufficient skeletal data from the region to confirm or modify this hypothesis with regard to other sites. As among the Bantu Tiriki of Kenya (Sangree 1965), at Ennery a man's status in the age-group above forty may have been dependent upon his achievements whilst he was of the 'warrior' age-grade. Men of this age probably now had prestige based upon their position as active heads of families, again something supported in the law-codes, and so frequently receive such things as flints and strike-a-lights - symbols of the hearth - in their graves.

Women beyond child-bearing suffer drastically reduced status, since their worth as child-bearers is gone and they are perhaps supplanted already by the next generation of mothers. In old age, both men and women have little status, the women particularly so. The men are now replaced by the next generation of active family heads and the women have long outlived their worth. However, men do still receive some attention, and respected old women may have this respect shown in such variables as the effort put into grave construction, which may be revealed at Villey-St.-Etienne (Salin 1939).

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The society revealed by analysis of the grave-goods is clearly patriarchal, as attested by the written sources, but we can modify this by saying that it seems that a male family head had to be of such an age as to be able to perform his role actively. It also appears to be a society wherein age-groupings played a significant part. We might suppose that membership of the same age-group created a kind of 'diagonal bond', or fictive kinship (see ch.9, section 3.c). Ellis Davidson (1989) suggests that such bonds existed in Anglo-Saxon society. Perhaps we should see the *contubernia* of *Lex Salica* in this light.

We now turn to forms of prestige other than those linked simply to age and sex. As has been mentioned, the kinds of status revealed in grave-goods appear to be acquired rather than ascribed, and based on role-theory. Yet we know that there were groups of people acquiring power over other people in the sixth century - a developing aristocracy (above pp.225-30). Where are they in the burial record? As was shown in chapters 10 and 11, in the sixth century the definition of prestige graves is relatively subtle in the region of Metz.

At Ennery the two prestige groups could only be identified through careful analyses, revealing subtle differentiation of these graves through uniformity of rite, spatial positioning, orientation, and subversion of the usual 'community rules' (above, pp.279-82). At Lavoye, grave 319 is distinguished from its contemporaries in obvious terms - with lavish and expensive artefacts - but its spatial

positioning and the respect with which it was treated throughout the use of the cemetery are equally noteworthy. Nonetheless, the slightly later grave 243 is equally interesting, though more subtly differentiated. In the major sixth-century phase, it was shown that it was only male-specific grave-goods which clearly separated some graves from the rest, possibly backed up by position within the cemetery (above, pp.316-9). Chaouilley graves 19 and 20c are more clearly distinguished in conventional terms, with lavish and high-quality grave-goods. Yet here too this is backed up by positioning within the site, by the expenditure of effort on the grave, by uniformity of rite between these two graves and the third member of the group, grave 21, and by a subtle subversion of an apparent community rule concerning pottery (above, pp.306-7). Dieue-sur-Meuse yields a couple of possible prestige graves (above, pp.331-2) but here too they are distinguished from their contemporaries not only by numbers of grave-goods but by their type and by the size of the grave.

The prestige-graves of the region of Metz in the sixth century are thus marked out, usually, by exaggeration of the community rules (Güdingen grave 4 can be included under this heading; above, p.289). Occasionally there is subversion (as at Ennery) but usually this is quite subtle. Graves 70 and 71 break the rules about children and old people not being buried with weapons or large numbers of male-specific object-types but grave 70 is not the only grave of an old man with weapons (though it is the only one with two weapons). Furthermore neither of these graves has a particularly high overall

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number of grave-goods. More notable is the fact that they only contain male-specific object-types.

We can suggest that the masking of such class differences (through the use of only subtle means of differentiation, or through the fact that the graves still conformed to general rules) was deliberate. Not that this means that everyone fell in with these 'normative' rules. Even leaving aside the fact that they are not hard and fast within individual communities and that, in detail, in specific symbolism and so on, they change from one cemetery to another, there was scope for seeking prestige and status through the system. Some of the graves which appear to be unusual but which seem isolated in the context of the cemetery may well be instances of failed attempts to establish prestige in the community; those which are surrounded by distinct groups of similar burials are probably the attempts which succeeded.

The encouragement of this practice by the upper ranks of society, who could afford the expense, forced the less wealthy to depend upon their superiors even more. Yet the underlying social functions of the burial custom were hidden by an almost egalitarian ideology which made it seem that the community was organised simply in terms of age and sex. All these points underline the picture of social instability backed up by study of the written evidence. Even the fact that people were content to see age and gender as the primary distinctions in society is, in usual archaeological thought, an index of a loosely stratified society. The funeral was then a valuable and

indeed essential instrument in the struggle for community leadership in such a period.

In looking at this explanation of the burial rite as a means towards community control, we must return to the distribution maps, diagrams 10.26 and 10.27. These show that outside Metz itself, lavish burial, with certain objects (spurs, buckets, angons, shield-bosses) did not, as a rule, take place within thirty kilometres of the city. This shows that the city exercised some influence over the surrounding region, by attracting people to Metz as an important arena for the display of prestige, but also, with the presence of king, bishop and magnates, by deterring people from demonstrating their prestige with such overt, often warlike, symbols, if not under the direct eye of the central powers, until quite a long way into the rural areas, where they were out of reach. This notion is supported by the fact that these prestige-burials come closer to Metz in the west, where the *Côte de Moselle* presents a barrier to movement, and spread further away in the east, where the ascent onto the Plateau Lorrain is an easy one. Similarly, it is in the hilly, forested region of the Bliesgau, and in the foothills of the Vosges where these graves are particularly common.

In the region of Trier, studied by Böhner (1958), analysis of the same forms of artefact reveals a less pleasing distribution (diag. 12.2). This, however, may represent the fact that the *Triererland* is an area of difficult terrain, far hillier than the region of Metz, with narrow, winding, heavily-wooded valleys. Nevertheless even this

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analysis revealed an important cluster of prestige-graves occupying the band of territory which is over thirty kilometres from either Metz or Trier. Most prestige-graves lie away from the major rivers, out towards the hills. Though there is no exclusive zone, the bulk (ten out of sixteen) are located over thirty kilometres from Trier itself. On the macro scale it is interesting to note that most of the celebrated rich burials of the Merovingian world also lie on the periphery - Cologne, Morcken, Krefeld-Gellep, the Alsatian and Alamannic burials and so on - in areas where the effective power of the Merovingian kings was not easily felt.

2. Town and country, c. 450-c. 600.

The discussion of the influence of towns upon their surrounding regions makes a useful link between analysis of social organisation revealed by the cemeteries and a consideration of how this theory applies to the settlement patterns of the region. The social instability between 450 and 600 suggests a striking discrepancy with the models frequently proposed concerning the development of the rural settlement network in this period. In this sphere, as was mentioned in chapter 4, it is often claimed that the drastic reduction in the settlement pattern was the product of nucleation. The latter process is certainly visible in both literary and archaeological evidence for the late Roman period, and the written sources attribute it to the creation of large *latifundia* by increasingly wealthy aristocrats. This led to the clustering of dependents around these powerful people (above, p. 68). This model suggests, then, that the rural settlement pattern was dominated by a powerful group of aristocrats, even nobles.

Obviously this is difficult to square with the hypothesis drawn from cemetery data and written sources.

However, the major written source for these developments in northern Gaul, Salvian's, *Governance of God*, also allows us to see that the highly stratified late Roman society was under threat in the early fifth century (above, p.225). As the state which protected the interests of the old élite collapsed, alternative sources of power and authority were wielded by the *Bacaudae*; some landlords found themselves under physical attack, some (like Salvian's family) fled to the south. Other landlords had their estates confiscated by the incoming Franks. We are left to see a society which had been created through the investiture of massive power in the hands of a few, and which had seen the nucleation of the rural settlement pattern around these people, suddenly have this powerful upper caste 'creamed off'. Such a situation could not but have created massive social confusion, especially given the fact that many new landlords will have held a different view of the organisation of society from that of their predecessors. Throughout the long process of the collapse of the Empire in *Gallia Belgica*, through the fourth and into the fifth century, the population seems to have fallen dramatically, even allowing for a reduction in settlement-numbers through nucleation. If the grim picture of life given by Salvian is founded in more than mere rhetoric then this decline can clearly have come about through the worsening of the conditions of life in the late Roman period, the weakening of morale and, indeed, through general 'culture collapse'

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(above, p.118). The condition of the unfree may have improved and their numbers may have declined (above, pp.239-40).

This is the context in which we should see the break up of the old *villae* into geographical groupings of smaller holdings, which appears to be well-attested by the late seventh century. It also provides the setting for the use of the furnished burial custom. In these communities, still presumably living in fairly close proximity, the tenure of local prestige was clearly precarious, especially since the old mechanisms for regulating social rank and position had collapsed. The Franks and their laws only recognized one free rank in society, and the divisions between it and the ranks below it were not always hard and fast. In such a society the funeral and furnished burial custom, whilst apparently conforming to community rules, were in fact vital means of reasserting and/or redefining the standing of the family in local society.

It is also hardly surprising that this society should not have contributed greatly to any revival of urban life. The basis of real power was still the control of rural estates but since this was not assured, the personnel of the aristocracy changed frequently. In these circumstances an urban-dwelling élite, setting itself apart from the remainder of society and existing upon what we termed 'compulsory supply' in chapter 2, could only be created with difficulty. The economy remained essentially local, agricultural and socially-embedded. The bulk of people lived in small communities, existing upon subsistence strategies. With this in mind it is not difficult

to see why the 'urban middle class', which had existed in the early Roman period and which was to reemerge in the central middle ages, continued, on the whole, to be notable by its absence. The same factors led to the continued decline of 'middle-order' settlements, which were, again, a feature of early Roman and later medieval life. The only institution which could now support the poor was the church. The church filled a vacuum created by the collapse of concrete forms of secular power, both in terms of providing offices which were worth competing for and also in conceptual terms (Brown 1981; Van Dam 1985). The services which people expected from a 'town' were now spiritual rather than socio-economic (ch.7, section 3). The church, too, had the most assured rural economic base, which could supply its staff and ancillaries in Metz. Considering these points, it is only to be expected that Metz was, throughout the fifth and most of the sixth centuries, primarily a religious settlement.

3. Social change around 600 AD.

The seventh century brought a change. Archaeologists have been aware of the change in material culture at this time since the beginning of this century and the chronologies of Pilloy and Brenner (Périn 1980, pp.32-42). They have never, however, attempted to explain this, other than in terms of fashion. We can suggest that it was associated with a profound social change.

It is, after all, not the only change which is attested as occurring in the decades around 600 (perhaps c.580-c.620). As has been pointed out (above, pp.105-6), there are also many more seventh-

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than sixth-century cemetery sites. The changes which occur in the furnished burial rite have been described in detail (ch.10, sections 2 & 3; ch.11, esp. pp.347-8) and, as was outlined in chapter 8, Metz itself begins to revive in the late sixth century, experiencing a more dramatic up-turn in its fortunes in the seventh. The detectable differences between the sixth and the seventh centuries are summarized in diagram 12.3.

This can be explained in terms of a massive change in social organisation in this period. This, we may suggest, revolved around the triumph of the local élites. By the turn of the seventh century it seems clear from written sources that the Austrasian aristocracy was well established as a major power in the politics of the kingdom. This, obviously enough, was a result of the series of minorities which occurred between the death of Sigibert I (575) and the accession of Chlothar II (613). During this period of thirty-eight years, very roughly equating to the period when the changes appear to occur, a king who had reached his legal majority (fifteen years of age according to *Lex Ribvaria* and indications in Gregory of Tours' account of Childebert II's reign) was on the throne for only twenty-six years (Childebert II, 585-598; Theudebert II and Theuderic II, 600-613). And Theudebert was, according to Fredegar, 'weak-minded' and reliant upon his advisers. In this context the Austrasian magnates acquired great power and strengthened their own position considerably.

It would seem that, for the first time since the late fourth century, they no longer needed to use the funeral as a means of

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consolidating family power. The death of a member was no longer a threat and rivals within the local community were fewer. There was less need to demonstrate prestige to a wide audience of local people; hence the move to a cemetery: settlement ratio closer to 1:1. The same ability to remove oneself from close competition with one's neighbours may have led to an actual expansion of settlement in the seventh century. The increased rigidity in society may be reflected in the greater standardisation of the burial rite. The lack of importance attached to the funeral led in turn to the reduction in the significance of the grave-goods. They begin to say less and less, and even gender-distinctions are less pronounced in artefactual terms. At Dieue-sur-Meuse, the choice of grave-goods appears to be almost random. Overall, the various weapon-types are reduced to one or two; scramasax and spear. There was less need to demonstrate status in the military sense. By the time we come to the site at Moyeuve the grave-goods seem to be little more than a token gesture. This explains the extinction of the furnished burial custom. The end of the rite had nothing to do with a change to Christianity, but it might relate to the spread of rural parishes in this period. With the presence of a parish priest, able to tell people that there was no need to provide the dead with grave-goods, a custom which had ceased to have any social meaning would easily be abandoned. By then it was something which was 'done because it was done'.

Since the grave-goods come more and more to represent simply 'Sunday best', correlations between grave-goods and wealth may be more straightforward, as perhaps at Lavoye. The change from a society

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wherein, in archaeological funerary remains, gender and age are the major means of social differentiation to one wherein wealth and class are the prime considerations, is a classic symptom of social development. In the seventh century, demonstrations of wealth and prestige are less exaggerations of 'community rules' than deliberate and obvious breaches of them, as seen in the early, possibly 'founder' group of burials at Audun-le-Tiche, with its old people, children and adolescents, all with lavish grave-goods. There are indications that the same may be true at Altheim (Hackler 1989; above, pp.283-4). Lavoye reveals similar changes (above, pp.323 & 325). Burnell (1988, p.451 ff.) seems to show comparable features at work in seventh-century Alamannia and Bavaria. In the *Reihengräberfelder*, children appear to be less well furnished in their graves than the adults, and even 'nondescript', but in 'segregated' cemeteries and especially church-burials, children can receive lavish funerary furnishings.

Concurrent with this reduced need to demonstrate prestige to local neighbours and rivals, is the increased desire to make one's power manifest to a wider, peer-group audience. Thus the seventh century is, in Metz itself (the only part of the region where we have anything like reliable evidence for such activities), the time when significant numbers of church-building projects begin. The desire to create permanent rather than transient displays of a family's social standing may also be reflected in the changes at Audun-le-Tiche, where the later phase of the cemetery shows much greater concern with above-ground, visible markers. Analogous changes occur at this time in

Anglo-Saxon England, with the increased construction of barrows as massive mortuary displays of power (eg. Sutton Hoo & Taplow).

In support of these hypotheses, we can return to the documentary data, which do indeed suggest that the aristocracy was far more powerful and independent in the seventh century than the sixth (above, pp. 230-3). It is no coincidence that it is at this time of profound social change that the law-codes are issued in Austrasia. As pointed out in chapter 9, these give no indication of the existence of a privileged élite; a nobility. This is what we would expect; the use of ideology to paper over the cracks, to deny that change had taken place, to fossilise in law the theory of social organisation of the previous century. Historians have sometimes expressed surprise at the archaic nature of the Frankish laws. Seen in such light, their surprise is somewhat misplaced. In fact, even *Lex Ribvaria* gives subtle hints that society had changed since the days when *Lex Salica* was issued.

The increased rigidity in social organisation had important effects on other spheres of life too. We have already outlined how it may have resulted in an expansion of the settlement network. The revival in the fortunes of Metz in the seventh century can be explained with reference to exactly the same features as accounted for its continued stagnation throughout most of the sixth century. Aristocrats with more assured power-bases now had the ability to create monumental architecture in the city, demonstrating their prestige to their peers. They also had the means to support themselves and their dependents in

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the city for longer periods than had earlier been the case. Nevertheless, that the city continued to have a regional role, as before, can be shown by diagram 12.4, which shows a similar 'zone of influence' around Metz for parish churches built over Merovingian cemeteries as existed for the 'prestige burials'. Even now, it seems that the city's growth was not based upon permanent high-status settlement but upon an ability to attract high-prestige people to the city for various spells of time. Those who lived outside the 'zone of influence' could continue to demonstrate their prestige independently of the town.

Comparable to church-building in the city is the aristocratic upsurge in monastic foundation in the countryside. Here too can be seen the increase in the power of the élites. The bishop in his city was no longer able to control the existence of such sites.

From this time on, the aristocrats continued to increase their power, developing the existence of vertical bonds between them and their followers and dependents, so that they can truly be called a nobility by the close of the Merovingian era. The systems of vassalage and even of serfdom can be clearly seen by 750 and the usurpation of the Carolingians. From these seventh-century foundations, was built the society of the high middle ages.

4. Assessment.

This thesis has attempted to account for the development of central medieval society from its Roman predecessor. In doing so it has

taken all the evidence from a relatively confined area, the region around Metz, be it written or archaeological, relating to cemeteries, rural settlement or towns. Rather than simply describing the evidence and its apparent 'messages', a coherent explanation, accounting for the testimony of all these forms of data has been given. However, we cannot stop here. As will have become clear, the data used have been of uncertain reliability and lacunary. Whilst this cannot discount the results of this survey, which appear to give a consistent explanation of the changes between the end of the Roman era and the beginning of the Carolingian, it must be stressed that more archaeological fieldwork needs to be done. As has been stressed repeatedly throughout this thesis, such work must comprise:

1. More excavation and, more imperative, more complete publication of urban sites in Metz, above all, if possible, in areas which lay outside the Roman walls.

2. More field-survey in the region and thorough publication of such work.

3. More detailed excavation of the last phases of Roman rural sites, *vici* and *castra*, to examine the nature of their abandonment, if, indeed, they were abandoned. The extra-mural areas of *vici* and *castra* should also be investigated. In line with this, we must hope that the trend towards the examination of early medieval rural settlements is continued. As before, these excavations need to be published to a modern standard.

4. The publication of recent cemetery excavations to a modern standard. As has frequently been said, the investigation of a cemetery and its associated settlement(s), in use from the fifth to

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the eighth centuries remains highly desirable.

5. The administration of excavations must be changed, to make the results of excavations more accessible to researchers. Perhaps a set period of time, to allow publication, should be applied before excavation archives become public. The quality of the archives could also be improved. In any case, the system whereby the results of an excavation remain the property of the excavator must be overhauled if we are ever to advance in our knowledge of the Merovingian period.

Leaving these modifications aside, this thesis leaves a number of questions unanswered and begs that further research be carried out. Firstly, as Burnouf (1988, p.114) argued, the study of rural settlements and their information on social organisation must be carried out. We still need more archaeological and palaeo-environmental data on the Merovingian rural economy. Further afield, work comparable to that carried out here should be done, both to test the conclusions of the analyses performed here, and to examine how they are to be modified in other regions, especially those closer to, say, Paris and the core of the Merovingian realms (Metz is perhaps only what we might term a secondary core), as well as further away from the 'capitals' in Germany and in the south. It is hoped that this work has sketched out some new approaches to the study of social history between c.450 and c.750, some of which, it is true, challenge seriously the accepted notions of Merovingian society. It is far more to be hoped that such challenges will be taken up.

Guy Halsall. York 29.3.1990