A Study of Post-Depositional Funerary Practices In Medieval England

Jennifer Nancy Crangle

PhD Thesis

Volume 1

Department of Archaeology
University of Sheffield
September 2015

Abstract

Peri-mortem treatment of the body and the fate of the soul after death throughout the English medieval period (c. 600-1550) have been extensively studied. However, the post-depositional fate of physical remains has been largely neglected, despite there existing substantial excavated and documentary evidence for a variety of post-inhumation disturbances, customs and practices. To date, these activities have consistently been interpreted on a purely functional basis. Consequently, incidences of disarticulated, disinterred skeletal material are routinely dismissed as simply representing the by-products of liturgical activities, and hence are assumed to be devoid of meaningful purpose.

This study catalogues and examines post-depositional disturbance and treatment of disarticulated remains, chronologically, from the advent of Christianity in England (c. 7th century), throughout the early medieval period (c. 7th to 11th century), into the later medieval period (c. 12th to mid-16th century), concluding with the Reformation period (c. 1550-1600). Reviews and analyses of translations and elevations, charnel houses and developments in cemetery management were undertaken, with differences and similarities between the early and later medieval period noted and discussed. This analytical method demonstrates that disturbances before the 10th to 12th centuries were less structured than after, but significantly, that the majority of post-depositional activities and forms of disturbance originated in the earliest years of Christianity, and were sustained throughout the entire medieval period. This thesis considers how skeletal material was perceived by contemporary medieval people, addresses modern attitudes and beliefs concerning archaeological disarticulated remains and discusses how these have influenced and hindered interpretations of medieval post-depositional mortuary behaviour, beyond pragmatic explanations.

This research elucidated overwhelming evidence for misunderstood and frequently unrecognised medieval funerary practices where disarticulated, disturbed and

disinterred skeletal remains were curated as opposed to being merely collected or conveniently relocated, and one where the dead were compassionately curated, both physically and spiritually, by the living.

Acknowledgements

CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 2:

CHAPTER 6:

CHAPTER 7:

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1: Medieval Post-Depositional Disturbances

(1.1.1) Current perceptions

The manner in which societies treat their dead, both physically and spiritually, is crucial to understanding those societies' views about life and the afterlife. Such issues have been comprehensively discussed in recent studies of the early medieval funerary record (c.400-1000), for example Howard Williams' '*Death and Memory in Early Medieval Britain*', or Howard Williams and Duncan Sayer's edited volume *Mortuary Practices and Social Identities in the Middle Ages*, but the funerary archaeology of the later medieval period (c.1000-1500) has been far less extensively investigated. Previous research has explored the physical and spiritual preparation of the body for burial, both in the home and at the graveside, but the fate of the body *after* burial has received comparatively little attention. Yet, there is evidence of a variety of post-burial mortuary activities involving engagement with the dead by the living on a physical as well as a spiritual level, from a range of sites across England (see Chapters 2-5). This evidence includes the removal of human remains from graves into ossuaries and charnel pits, the redeposition of individual burials in containers such as boxes and bags, the management, control and organisation of cemeteries, translations and elevations of 'saintly' skeletal remains and the promotion of the cult of relics. The treatment of saintly remains has been extensively discussed by historians principally on the basis of written accounts of these cults, but the post-burial treatment of the remains of wider society has attracted little comment. On the few occasions when this largely neglected area of medieval funerary archaeology has been discussed, it is occasionally intimated that the occurrences of such post-burial activities at medieval sites are insignificant, or not indicative of either ideology or ritual. For example, the post-depositional movement of skeletal material is typically described as having been a functional but not a spiritual activity: 'As is widely known, the custom in the Medieval period was to exhume bones from areas of proposed

building and deposit them in an underground purpose built building' (Roberts 1982: 110). It is often assumed that the majority of post-burial activities merely fulfilled a functional requirement for more burial space, and that they were separate to post-mortem activities, such as the provision of funerary monuments, masses and obits: 'Ultimately some sites had to be reused, with any bones turned up in the process removed to a charnel' (Horrox 1999: 104).

Incidences of post-depositional disturbances have been identified at numerous sites (see Chapters 2-6). Although the physical remains constituting such disturbances have been briefly recorded in archaeological reports, or occasionally mentioned in publications, they have never been investigated in detail, or collectively, with a means to defining their purpose or determining their role within the society which created and sustained them. Where mentioned, these disturbances are typically dismissed as evidence of bone accumulation and redeposition, subsequent to accidental or incidental disinterment during grave-digging or building works, thus intimating that the occurrences are insignificant and neither indicative of ideology or ritual, exhibiting nothing which may contribute to further understanding medieval funerary archaeology (Phillips & Heywood 1995: 75; Grainger 2011: 103). Such attitudes are, however, not substantiated by reference to data or archaeological and historical evidence and appear to be based on assumptions rather than facts. These uncorroborated assumptions have been perpetuated over decades of research and are inherent in the disciplines of archaeology, osteoarchaeology, funerary studies, medieval studies and history. This is despite no meaningful attempts having been made to authenticate the significance of medieval post-depositional disturbances, to comprehensively investigate and decipher their role and purpose, or to analyse and understand the attitudes of medieval people towards their buried dead.

(1.1.2) Aims & objectives

The aim of this thesis is to identify and investigate post-depositional disturbance of the buried dead throughout the early and later medieval period in England (c.500-1550). These incidences of disturbance require assessment in order to define whether there were liturgical, practical or other motivations and justifications for

physically disturbing and engaging with human skeletal material. Each example of post-depositional disturbance necessitates analysis to determine if the act was incidental, accidental, or intentional. This will establish if particular incidences of disturbance signify previously unrecognised medieval funerary or commemorative treatment and observances. If disinterred material was destined or intended for further liturgical or devotional purposes, then it may be possible to place the phenomenon of post-depositional disturbance within the wider context of medieval funerary curation and commemoration of the dead. A multi-disciplinary approach will be adopted as the most comprehensive method of analysis, incorporating osteoarchaeology, funerary archaeology, history, theology, and documentary evidence.

The objectives of this thesis are as follows:

1) To undertake a study investigating medieval physical interaction and engagement with the dead, after burial or primary deposition had taken place.

2) To assess the role and significance of post-depositional practices within the wider medieval funerary context.

3) To identify and define different forms of post-depositional disturbance and to document any recognisable attributes of such practices.

4) To establish any regulatory procedures, structure or aspects of exclusivity inherent in each category of disturbance.

5) To establish the origin and prevalence of each category of disturbance throughout the medieval period from their initiation to cessation.

6) To elucidate medieval attitudes towards the dead, physical interaction with deceased individuals, and human skeletal material.

(1.1.3) Terminology & Definitions

Throughout this thesis numerous specific terms and phrases will be used repeatedly in describing and discussing certain medieval funerary practices. As has recently been observed by Christopher Knüsel (2014), the application of specific funerary and osteological terminology to archaeological skeletal material is not consistent amongst archaeologists, nor is there universal acceptance of particular definitions relating to burial and funerary osteology. Due to this lack of clarity and in order to ensure consistency in the use and application of such terms, below is provided a list of definitions of certain terms and phrases that will be encountered throughout this thesis, as understood and used by the author:

1) **Disturbance:** The physical movement of, and/or interaction with, a deceased individual or multiple individuals, within and/or from their original depositional or burial context. Disturbance may be accidental or intentional.

2) **Post-Depositional**: After the initial deposition of a deceased individual/s in a burial context.

3) **Secondary Burial**: The post-depositional movement and displacement of an individual or multiple individuals, or a part of that individual/s, from their initial place of deposition and their subsequent redeposition and/or reburial in a different location to the original place of deposition.

4) **Disarticulated:** Skeletal elements that are no longer in articulation with each other. Disarticulated skeletal material may be in correct anatomical position or may have been disturbed and displaced.

5) **Post-decompositional:** After bodily decomposition of a deceased individual is completed.

(1.1.4) Methodology

The examples of post-depositional disturbance discussed throughout this thesis were attained via multiple sources. A detailed literature review was conducted for each chapter comprising this thesis. The online databases Pastscape and Heritage Gateway were fundamental in sourcing many examples of all kinds of post-depositional disturbance. Certain publications, such as Gilchrist and Sloanes' *Requiem: The Medieval Monastic Cemetery in Britain*, Jupp & Gittings' *Death in England: An Illustrated History* and Binski's *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation* proved seminal in providing numerous examples of post-depositional activities. These sources in turn led to additional publications that either focussed on particular categories of disturbance, or contained brief mentions of a single instance, including articles, books and excavation reports. Specific cases, such as the charnel chapel at St Leonard's church, Hythe (Kent) and that of Holy Trinity, Rothwell (Northamptonshire) plus a large number of other ossuaries and charnel chapel sites were already well known by the author, having previously studied them in detail (Crangle 2009). For specific types of analysis, namely the discussion of medieval skeletal imagery, an internet image search was utilised. The images cited in the chapter in question, Chapter 6, were not available or mentioned in any of the main publications on medieval wall paintings, and as such, appear not to currently be recognised as a medieval class of wall painting.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to investigate all excavated cemetery sites dating to the early and later medieval period in England in order to find and catalogue every documented example of each type of post-depositional disturbance. The frequency with which these disturbances were encountered in publications indicates that had it been possible to examine every cemetery site, there would have been sufficient information collated to create a thesis out of each chapter. Instead, a selection of sites that have been extensively studied were chosen that represented each type of ecclesiastical complex that existed in the medieval period; hospitals, cathedrals, abbeys, monasteries, urban, rural and parish churches. Additional sites were included when mentioned within these publications as exhibiting evidence of post-depositional activity. This method ensured that a broad and inclusive dataset was

compiled which determined if any element of exclusivity or restriction was involved in the manifestation of post-depositional disturbance, or if certain types of activity only occurred at particular sites or locations. It also highlighted how instances of post-depositional treatments exacted on human remains were interpreted and regarded by the excavators at sites that have been substantially investigated, by comparing the level of analysis and recognition of these occurrences compared to other notable features of the sites.

(1.1.5) Official Attitudes Towards & Perceptions of Disarticulated, Comingled, Disinterred Human Skeletal Material

It has been well documented that throughout the medieval period in England, the remains of people, whether skeletonised or, less frequently, still undergoing decomposition, were frequently disturbed within or from their graves (see Chapters 2 & 5). This has sometimes been interpreted as indicating an indifference on behalf of those performing the disturbance of the buried dead (Horrox 1999: 104-5). It is also thought to reflect a more general medieval view that grave-disturbance was regarded as an ordinary, even inevitable, occurrence, one which was accepted with indifference by the laity and ecclesiastics alike. The archaeological evidence of medieval post-depositional disturbance is significant and when reviewed and interpreted in isolation, appears to substantiate the theory that a considerable proportion of medieval grave disturbance was neither liturgically prohibited nor regulated. By adopting a multi-disciplinary approach, much additional evidence for how the buried dead were treated and regarded may be gleaned from non-archaeological sources. Documentary evidence, such as medieval manuscripts including theological texts, artistic depictions of the dead in wall paintings and illustrations, and accounts of the dead in medieval folklore reveal a complicated and intricate belief system regarding both fleshed and skeletonised dead, one which can be difficult to recognise by studying archaeological records alone.

Medieval cemetery management has also been discussed extensively, by both archaeologists and historians, with the main analytical focus having been on identifying zones of burial within graveyards that were designated exclusively for

either lay or ecclesiastical burials, male or female burials, and juvenile or adult burials. The consecration and usage of churchyards and their formalisation between the 10th and 12th centuries has also been extensively studied. In contrast, the layout, organisation and long-term planning and maintenance of medieval cemeteries have not received the same attention, beyond occasional discussion in individual site reports. This may be due to an assumption that these are functional aspects of management that were therefore not significant on liturgical grounds, contributing little to our understanding of medieval life and death. Sites exhibiting intercutting graves and their contents, post-depositional disturbance, and a seemingly chaotic layout give the impression that there exists more proof for a lack of consistent cemetery management than there is evidence for it. Even when evidence for cemetery management far outweighs the evidence for post-depositional disturbance, the former is typically overlooked in favour of discussion of the examples of disturbance, which are cited as proof that such management was not undertaken (see Chapters 3, 4 & 7). As a result of such interpretations, the substantial evidence for cemetery management throughout the entire medieval period has not been recognised, despite the same distinctive characteristics having been identified at countless sites. Consequently, it could be perceived that medieval people, both lay and ecclesiastical, were indifferent, perhaps even irreverent, towards the buried dead. The evidence for cemetery management will be discussed in Chapter 7.

As a consequence of the above points, human skeletal material excavated from archaeological sites, that has been disinterred, disarticulated and/or commingled is generally considered to be osteologically redundant. This opinion is shared by osteologists, field archaeologists, funerary archaeologists and medievalists alike, as will be demonstrated below. In official guidelines for field excavation of human skeletal material and its subsequent analysis in the laboratory, the study of disarticulated material is repeatedly advocated as being unnecessary or futile. In the English Heritage guidelines for assessing human bones and production of skeletal reports, it is stated that 'Cemetery excavations generally produce significant quantities of disturbed, disarticulated skeletal material. Such material is of limited scientific value' (Mays *et al.* 2004: 4*).* It is further stated that 'disturbed, and

disarticulated bone is not usually considered worthy of study at the analysis phase' and that 'the study of material that has become disarticulated as a result of post-depositional disturbance is not a priority for study' (Mays *et al.* 2004: 4)*.* A distinction is made, however, between disarticulated material from prehistoric sites and Christian burial sites, due to the former having been 'deliberately deposited in a disarticulated state in antiquity'. This is a clear reflection of the attitudes of archaeologists towards disturbed and disarticulated material and of the perceived origins and manner by which the material came to be in its disarticulated form. In the English Heritage guidelines for treatment of human remains that have been excavated from Christian burial grounds, treatment, care and respect for disarticulated material is not even mentioned. Instead, it is merely stated that 'Unstratified, disarticulated bone is normally of little value and can be reburied' (Mays 2005: 14).

In the BAJR (British Archaeological Job & Resources) guidelines for excavation and recovery of human material from archaeological sites, no provision is offered for how to recover disarticulated material, except to state that 'Excavators will need to be able to distinguish between the disarticulated and articulated remains for the purposes of osteoarchaeological analysis' (Western 2005: 5). The implication is that articulated skeletal material has analytical value, whereas disarticulated material has none. In a separate BAJR guideline publication on the recovery of human remains, under the heading 'What should we do with disarticulated remains?' it is stated that 'In most cases, disarticulated bones tend to be the result of the disturbance of earlier burials by later ones. These dispersed remains tend to be of little scientific value' (Western 2007: 5). Retention and analysis of disarticulated material is recommended, but 'only in the absence of other evidence'. The passage concludes by stating that 'the retention and analysis of disarticulated material may not be necessary if a sufficient sample of articulated remains is recovered'.

The BABAO (British Association for Biological Anthropology & Osteoarchaeology) guidelines on standards for recording human remains contains the most extensive advice and procedures relating to the analysis of disarticulated material out of all

guidelines discussed here. Two pages of text and two pages of illustrations of the 63 page document are devoted to the topic (Brickley & McKinley 2004). The section, written by osteoarchaeologist Jacqueline McKinley, focuses on methods of analysis, advocating a zooarchaeological approach concentrating on assessing quantity, taphonomic information and distribution of disarticulated material across archaeological sites. Despite this, it is still stated that in the vast majority of cases and in relation to large assemblages of disarticulated bone 'It has been concluded that there is limited value in the analysis of such assemblages and that observations should be restricted to basic quantification (no. count/weight, generally covered in basic post-excavation processing), and recording the presence of unusual or illuminating pathological lesions and skeletal features' (Brickley & McKinley 2004: 15). The definitive use of the term 'concluded' succinctly illustrates the prevailing attitude by archaeologists regarding the merit of analysing disarticulated bone; it implies that the lack of value of disarticulated bone analysis to archaeology is universally accepted.

It must be noted that excavation, analysis and storage of disarticulated material is an expensive venture. The guidance examples cited above concerning the treatment of disarticulated skeletal material are mostly compiled by commercial archaeological units and so knowledge of the expense involved in excavating and processing disarticulated material may have influenced how the guides were written. Yet as excavation reports form the basis of analysis for archaeological academics and researchers, guides such as these essentially dictate how much information regarding disarticulated skeletal material is available for further study.

(1.1.6) Assumptions relating to disarticulated material

As we have seen (see Section (1.1.5)), there are various justifications offered by archaeologists for the conclusion that analysis of disarticulated bones is not merited. This reasoning is evident in personal communication, in excavation guidelines, osteological reports, articles and other publications, and it ranges from being explicitly stated to merely insinuated. One of the main reasons for not considering

disarticulated material as a valid source of osteological and funerary merit, is its perceived absence of ritual.

(i) Absence of ritual

The creation of disarticulated skeletal material is perceived to be the 'secondary' non-ritual result of a 'primary' ritual event; causes of disarticulation and incidences of post-depositional movement of skeletal remains are rarely interpreted as being indicative of ritualistic behaviour. The manner by which the material came to be moved from its original deposition context and associated skeleton is understood to be due to an unintentional process whereby the material was accidentally or incidentally disturbed (see Chapters 3 & 4). This disturbance occurred during the undertaking of a 'primary' event, for example, the creation of a grave. The making of the grave is the intended action, and is a ritual and liturgical process. Any skeletal material that is intercut, disinterred or disarticulated by means of this process is regarded as a secondary act, automatically designating the disarticulated material an unintentional by-product. Taken in isolation, this disarticulation process therefore signifies nothing. The fact that disarticulated material is evident at most medieval cemetery sites is taken as proof of a general callousness and indifference towards the buried dead by the living, and a lack of desire or need to regulate the occurrences by any means (See Chapter 7 Section (7.1)).

(ii) Limitations of osteological analysis

In the guidelines discussed above (see Section (1.1.5)), the reason provided for not analysing disarticulated material is that it 'is of limited scientific value' (Brickley & McKinley 2004: 14; Mays 2004: 47; Mays *et al.* 2005: 5). Traditional methods of analysis of osteological material have been developed for application to complete skeletons (Aufderheide & Rodríguez-Martin 2011; Krogman & Işcan 1986; Roberts & Manchester 2005; Ortner 2003; Schwartz 2007). Assessments of biological sex and

age-at-death rely on the presence of particular elements of the human skeleton being available for analysis. In 1986, Krogman & Isçan (1986) determined that estimation of sex using cranial attributes alone is only 90% reliable. Estimation based on the pelvis alone has a 95% reliability and accuracy. When taken in conjunction with each other they give a 98% reliability and when based on the entire skeleton determinations are nearly 100% accurate. A disarticulated and/or fragmented diagnostic element will provide limited information, therefore lowering the reliability of the sex and age-at-death determinations. Certain elements, such as a rib, even in an articulated skeleton will provide limited information about that individual's sex or age. It may thus be understood why a disarticulated rib or rib fragment is regarded as serving no useful purpose in these terms. Identification of certain pathological conditions (e.g. syphilis, leprosy, tuberculosis) is also only possible or deemed sufficiently accurate when the entire skeleton is available for analysis (Aufderheide & Rodríguez-Martin 2011; Krogman & Isçan 1986; Roberts & Manchester 2005; Ortner 2003; Schwartz 2007). These diseases manifest skeletally on multiple elements and in multiple regions of the skeleton, and so identification of the diagnostic characteristic of those diseases on a single element, or fragment of an element, is insufficient to confirm the presence of the disease.

(iii) Time consuming & difficult

Analysing large quantities of disarticulated material, according to the traditional methods outlined in Section (ii) above, is an incredibly time-consuming venture. Each individual fragment requires its own assessment, independent of all other fragments constituting the assemblage. In addition to this, simply possessing the ability to identify quickly each fragment is a skill that can only be developed with time and experience. The estimation of MNI (Minimum Numbers of Individuals) represented in the assemblage relies on the successful identification of

all fragments and of the division of each category of said fragmented elements into those deriving from the right or left of the skeleton (White & Folkens 2005: 339, 423). As noted by McKinley in the BABAO guidelines for assessment of disarticulated material, depending on the size of the assemblage, this can be a near impossible feat (Brickley & McKinley 2004). Given the limitations involved in the estimation of osteological standards (sex, age-at-death, pathology, MNI) it is generally not deemed to be worthwhile to attempt to assess disarticulated material, nor are archaeological companies willing to pay an experienced osteologist to undertake this lengthy post-excavation analysis.

(iv) Nothing left to learn

With regard to the early, later and post-medieval periods of England, attitudes towards the analysis of associated disarticulated material are effectively that it is a redundant venture. Irrespective of the osteological analytical limitations, is the implication that funerary studies encompassing death, burial and commemoration of the individual during these periods have been substantially investigated. Seminal texts such as Gilchrist & Sloane's *Requiem: The Medieval Monastic Cemetery in Britain*, Jupp & Gittings' *Death in England*: *An Illustrated History* and Binski's *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation*, are effectively regarded as having explained the complex attitudes towards death and the afterlife of medieval Christian religion (2005; 1996; 1992). These texts, amongst many others, have collated vast bodies of information concerning death, the body and its treatment peri- and immediately post-mortem, both ideologically and physically throughout these periods (Daniell 1999; Gilchrist 2012; Hadley 2001; Houlbrooke 1998; King & Sayer 2011; Marshall 2004). The intricate relationship between the living and the dead has been scrutinised by funerary archaeologists, historians, osteologists and medievalists for each period in question (Ariès 1976; 1981; 1986; Binski 1992; Bynum 1996; Gilchrist & Sloane 2005). Peri-

mortem activities and the spiritual preparations for death such as the creation of wills, establishing chantry chapels or providing financial payments for masses and payers to be said post-mortem, have been researched in detail (Bell Burgess 1987; Furnivall 1882; Harding 1992; Horrox 1999; Lepine & Orme 2003; Morgan 1999). Beliefs relating to the moment of death and the conceptualisation of the afterlife in the forms of Heaven, Hell and Purgatory have equally been debated and discussed extensively (Binski 1996; Bynum 1996; Horrox 1999). The importance of *Ars Moriendi*, or of dying a 'good death', is understood, the manifestation of the soul and even how it is released from the body at the point of death have all been established. The post-mortem funerary activities have been equally well scrutinised; the treatments extended to the deceased body in preparation for burial, the manner by which the deceased was transported to the church and cemetery, or the regulations in place for who could be interred in which specific location (Daniell 1999; Gilchrist & Sloane 2005; Morgan 1999). The doctrinal and social changes brought about by the Reformation and Counter-Reformation of the 16th century and their effect on burial and commemoration have been researched extensively and provide critical information regarding how perceptions of the afterlife and Christian liturgical practices evolved in England from this time period, through early modern times to the present day (Houlbrooke 1998; Marshall 2004; O'Sullivan 2013; Parish 2005; Phillips 1973).

What has received comparatively little attention are the post-burial physical interactions between the living and the dead. Aside from the creation and reverence of relics, it is assumed that any post-depositional interaction was undertaken for functional necessity rather than symbolic or liturgical purposes (see Chapters 3-5). The manner by which articulated skeletons came to be disarticulated, disinterred and commingled is understood in practical terms, as defined in Section (1.1.6) (i) above. As this process of disturbing the buried dead is encountered with such frequency on

medieval cemetery sites, it is equally assumed to reflect contemporary complacent attitudes of the living towards post-depositional disturbance throughout the medieval period.

1.2: Re-Assessment of the Evidence

This thesis will address the various assumptions and presumptions outlined above concerning medieval post-depositional disturbances of human remains, will investigate their validity or failings and will offer new interpretations of the evidence. This will be achieved via a multi-disciplinary approach, utilising historical, archaeological and osteological resources but also by assessing early medieval and post-medieval funerary practices, medieval mentality and societal attitudes towards the buried dead. This research is necessary in establishing how and why particular beliefs and the connected activities become ideologically obsolete or imperative to contemporary people and their religious beliefs. The development of medieval post-burial practices may have roots in pre-existing and subsequent recognised customs and traditions, just as the cessation of certain activities may be indicative of contemporary changes in religion and theology. It is intended to demonstrate that those currently under-investigated post-burial activities were as valid ideologically and spiritually as were the co-incident post-mortem activities, and by their elucidation will contribute to medieval mortuary archaeology, providing a more complete and accurate impression of medieval funerary activities.

The role of relics of saints in medieval religion is essentially the only post-depositional practice that has been extensively investigated to date. The ideological importance of relics to medieval lay and ecclesiastical society and their religious significance has been established (Cosgrave & Mynors 1969; Crook 2011; Neale & Webb 1843; Nilson 1998; Rollason 1989). It is hence plausible, if not probable, that other such post-burial activities were equally significant, and thus merit investigation, individually, collectively and comparatively. Patterns in deposition, redeposition and disinterment within sites will be considered in this thesis in relation to skeletal contents to determine associations of particular practices with various levels of society and to identify potential aspects of exclusivity and exclusion. To date, little if any effort has been made in determining when particular post-depositional funerary practices began, how they developed over time or in establishing when and why particular

post-burial activities ceased. Further to identifying the individual and collective importance post-depositional practices held, the chronology, extent and scale of practices involving disinterred skeletal material will be explored, and trends relating to these occurrences will be elucidated. This will be achieved by exploring changes in funerary practices regionally and over time, and by identifying concentrations of certain practices in particular areas or time periods.

Acts of disinterment and engagement with the buried dead are the physical manifestations of medieval beliefs concerning the afterlife. The contemporary ideological attitudes towards interred and disinterred human skeletal remains, and the role of such remains within society and religious ideology, will also be explored. Representations of skeletons are rife in medieval art, texts, illuminations and iconography, and tales or parables involving sentient skeletons are plentiful (see Chapter 6). The purpose and extent of such depictions will be examined as a means to establishing a connection between the portrayal of skeletal remains and actions performed on and in relation to such material. It will be argued that physical interaction with human skeletal material was representative of, and relevant to, contemporary religious beliefs and activities, and was potentially a significant and, as of yet, unrecognised element of medieval religion. It is equally imperative to elucidate the means by which skeletal material was disinterred, the regulations in place prohibiting and controlling post-depositional activities and interactions, and who specifically was involved in the acts of disinterment and designated roles in relation to the curation of the remains (see Chapters 5-7).

This thesis will document and examine the persistent occurrences of early and later medieval post-burial charnel as they manifest archaeologically. The evidence will be collated and assessed to determine if such post-depositional disturbances and interactions with the buried dead may be explained on more than the traditionally expounded functional and circumstantial terms. Medieval funerary and ideological attitudes towards death and the afterlife may have persisted beyond interment, manifesting as post-burial charnel deposits and activities. It is possible that

investigation will elucidate a prescribed post-burial practice with regulations equal to that of the bodily and spiritual preparations prior to and including burial itself. Thanatological, documentary, osteological and archaeological analyses of incidences of post-depositional behaviour will define the role, if any, of post-burial activities in relation to the more established medieval funerary practices and ideological beliefs, and serve as a valuable contribution to established later medieval funerary archaeology. Above all, it is imperative to re-evaluate our understanding of post-depositional disturbance and current perceptions of the value of studying disarticulated human skeletal material, and to provide methods of interpretation for the future to ensure that disturbances are not dismissed or deemed irrelevant.

This thesis will contribute to the study of osteoarchaeology, church archaeology and medieval studies, by investigating varying aspects of medieval cemetery management and use, including how the physical buried dead within these cemeteries were regarded and treated by the living. These have, to date, been particularly under-researched area of these disciplines, despite there existing a significant amount of evidence, as will be demonstrated in the ensuing chapters. By utilising the methodology advocated in this study, and combining the results of the ensuing research with what has already been established to date regarding medieval funerary studies, a fuller, more detailed picture of medieval life and death may be achieved.

Throughout this thesis, new analytical approaches are offered to interpret disturbed human skeletal material, and to decipher the means by which human remains came to be in a disarticulated state and/or in a disturbed and secondary context. The importance and value of thanatology, the study of artefacts *in situ*, to osteoarchaeology is increasing in its application in excavations (Knüsel 2014). This is focussed on in all sections; the precise physical manifestation of elements or charnel within cemeteries may reflect important considerations and beliefs held by those committing the act of deposition. This in turn reveals insights into how medieval people perceived and treated their dead. It will additionally be demonstrated that

disarticulated material is equally as valid as articulated skeletons in what it may contribute to the disciplines of osteoarchaeology and medieval studies.

CHAPTER 2: TRANSLATIONS & ELEVATIONS

2.1: Introduction

Translations and elevations were the deliberate and intentional removal of a person's remains from their grave, in order to relocate those bones or preserved body to a church's interior, where they could be revered more appropriately in a sanctified location, as relics. This act represented the canonisation of the individual, which was the official recognition of that person being of saintly status. Translations were initiated in England from the 7th century and they were undertaken throughout the entire medieval period, only ceasing with the advent of the Reformation in the 16th century. This act of disinterring a grave signifies the first incidence of *structured* post-depositional disturbance in relation to Christian practices. Although other contemporary post-depositional acts were certainly carried out, these were of the 'ordinary' and lay population of England and any formality or adherence to procedure is less defined (see Chapters 3-7). Translations were reserved for ecclesiastics, and in later centuries, for royalty. The act was an exclusive one; to be disinterred was a privilege reserved for only the most esteemed and worthy members of society.

Translations are a much researched area of medieval history (Crook 2011; Nilson 1998), but this research has tended to avoid discussion of the details pertaining to the physical act of disinterment, as if there is insufficient evidence available. This chapter will show that this is not the case, and will elucidate each specific procedure involved in the complicated act of translation and will define the traits involved. This will demonstrate the complex reasoning which justified disinterment in the early and the later medieval period, illustrated by the strict and solemn adherence to each translation component. This is essential in understanding the role that post-depositional activities fulfilled during the early centuries of Christianity in England. The 'template' will also be applied to various archaeologically identified potential translations in order to confirm or refute their validity. Most importantly, the

perceptions of both secular and lay society alike will be investigated in relation to post-depositional disturbance of this kind. It is expected that these first acts of regulated intentional disinterment formed the basis for later post-depositional activities of the medieval period.

2.2: Translations & Elevations of Saints' Remains

(2.2.1) Definition

'Translation' is the term used to describe the disinterment and relocation of the whole skeleton or preserved remains of an individual, from their initial burial place to a secondary site of interment. The remains were redeposited in a new location within a church, usually close to the altar, in an elevated or raised tomb or shrine (Rollason 1989: 34; Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 197; Nilson 1998: 15). An 'elevation' is the movement of a person's bones or body from the original place of burial within a church, to another, more prominent location within the same church. Remains of those elevated were redeposited in a shrine above the ground level of the church floor (Nilson 1998: 16; Rollason 1989: 34). Translations and elevations were reserved for those individuals who had exhibited signs of saintliness during their life, or after death; 'This was the ancient equivalent of canonization: only those honoured by a burial above ground in the church were considered worthy of liturgical cult' (Farmer 2004: 21). Permission had to be obtained from the ecclesiastical head of the community to which the deceased person belonged whilst alive, or from the head of the community associated with their burial place (Rollason 1989: 37). The majority of early (c. 7th – 10th century) descriptions of translation and elevations derive from Bede's writings and accounts of the lives of saints (Colgrave & Mynors 1969; Farmer 2004). Despite these narratives not referring specifically to the motivation behind these post-depositional disturbances, the implication is that these acts confirmed the saintly status of the deceased whilst promoting the veneration of their bones and shrine, and marked the initiation of their cult; 'in this age before the development of any real process of canonization, it was not only a means of enshrinement of the intact relics but also a means of registering the defunct person as a saint and promoting his or her cult' (Rollason 1989: 35).

Effectively, translations and elevations were a means of appropriating relics for a religious community. By the 7th century, it was accepted that relics, or physical

remnants of a saint's body or belongings, were required or 'were generally necessary for the worship and ministry of the church' (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 105). The canonisation of a member of the religious houses' own community was a more viable method of acquiring a saint than obtaining relics from abroad, whilst simultaneously having a self-aggrandising effect for the ecclesiastical community, which permitted a claim that a confirmed saint had been a member of their own establishment.

(2.2.2) Background & Origins

The first documented case of translation occurred in Italy between 351 and 354, with the translation of the bones of the martyr Babylas by the emperor Gallus (Rollason 1989:10). The veneration of a revered individual's grave has origins in Biblical passages where the graves of exceptionally holy people are recorded as being distinguished (Anonymous 1971: Book of Tobit 4:18; Matthew 23: 29-31). In the early centuries of Christianity in Europe, the *dies natalis*, the anniversary of a deceased martyr's death, was celebrated at the site of their grave. This graveside observance developed into the cult of martyrs, which in turn evolved to include masses said for the martyrs in churches (Rollason 1989: 5). The earliest evidence for the creation of relics from an individual is documented in 4th-century *Passions*, which are descriptions of a martyr's death. These describe how the remains of the martyred person were collected for reburial elsewhere in a shrine or tomb so that they may serve as a focal point for those wishing to celebrate their life and sacrifice, but also to serve as inspiration for Christians to commit to their beliefs in the face of adversity and persecution (Rollason 1989: 5). This desire to create or sustain a reverence for a saintly individual appears to be the origin for the justification of moving physical or bodily remains from one location, to another more prominent position. The movement is to benefit the deceased individual, as much as the community conducting the translation; the canonised saint would receive the veneration and honours due to them and their remains would be physically and spiritually protected due to their new location within a church. This necessity of seeking an ecclesiastic's approval and permission to disinter or disturb a buried body is echoed in later medieval examples of people wishing to disturb the grave of a deceased individual who was believed to be a revenant (see Chapter 6).

(2.2.3) Control & Authorisation of Translations

The decision to translate or elevate a person's bones during the early centuries of Christianity in England (7th – 10th centuries) was regulated to an extent, but was not under the jurisdiction of the papacy. Translations and elevations did not involve the papacy until the 11th century and did not come under its full control until 1234, during the pontificate of Pope Gregory IX (Rollason 1989: 3). Up to this point there were no strict guidelines on who could be constituted a saint or who could officially designate them to be so. From the 9th century onwards, it was the decision of bishops and Church councils, but prior to this it was simply done on the decision of the most senior member of the church or religious community from which the 'saint' derived (Rollason 1989: 3). If miracles occurred at the site of an individual's burial, then that person was regarded as being saintly in some way. The number and magnitude of these miracles indicated the level of saintliness of the deceased person, and this 'proof' was the justification for a translation or elevation to take place. Further proof of the saintliness of the individual was reflected by the deceased being incorrupt at time of disinterment (Foxhall Forbes 2013: 269-70). With the involvement of the Papacy, canonisation became regulated, and it was no longer the remit of the ecclesiastical establishment to decide who would be regarded as a saint. In 1215, the fourth Lateran Council decreed that 'relics newly found could not be venerated without papal permission' (Spurrell 2000: 66). This extended to secondary relics (non-corporeal items which had a physical connection with the saint during their life), primary relics (a corporeal portion of the saint themselves), whole relics (a complete articulated individual) or translated or elevated skeletonised and disarticulated individuals (Spurrell 2000; Crook 2011: 16-18). Many saints were regarded as such by secular and lay members of society alike, without any official recognition being necessary. If the chosen saint was approved for canonisation then not only did it confirm the beliefs of the associated community, but it made their saint's veneration 'legal': 'By this papal proclamation a liturgical cult of the new saint was approved and extended to the universal church, his feast day established, his veneration endorsed and the invocation of his intercession by the faithful encouraged' (Daly in Nilson 1998: 11). Relics and translated saints could also be demoted by the Papacy, if they

deemed them to be 'frauds' and so by the late 12th century, having a Papally sanctioned saint for an ecclesiastical community was a huge accolade for that establishment (Geary 1991: 111).

(2.2.4) Characteristics of Translation & Elevation Procedures

The acts of translation and elevation appear to have consistently been carried out in accordance to a prescribed method. Even in the very earliest documented records of translations and elevations, there are distinct similarities between the accounts. Translations and elevations are mentioned in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People (Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum)* seventeen times (see Table 1) (Colgrave & Mynors 1969) with additional acts cited in various saints' Lives and *passions* (accounts of martyrs' lives and deaths) (Farmer 2004; Keynes 2007; Crook 1992; Battiscombe 1959). Although the translations are not described in great detail, sufficient information is provided to allow comparisons to be drawn between these limited accounts. Similarities between these accounts indicate that it was accepted that there were certain preconditions that ought to be observed in preparation for, and during, the translation. It has been suggested that since the earlier translations that occurred prior to Papal intervention and control in the 12th century are largely undocumented, that it is not possible to trace a chronological line from the earliest examples to those of the late medieval period (Nilson 1998). However, this is not entirely true. While the earlier examples are certainly lacking in detail when compared to those of later centuries, particularly those dating to after the 12th century, the early, 7th – 10th century translations have traits that are identifiable in translations dating to after the 12th century. These features are discussed/outlined below.

Table 1.1: Records of translations and elevations mentioned in Bede's Ecclesiastical History& various *Lives* of Saints that date to before the 12th century (Colgrave & Mynors 1969; Farmer 2004; Crook 1992; Keynes 2007; Battiscombe 1959; Bonner *et al.* 1995)

Year	Saint	Translated From	Translated To
602	Peter	*Amfleat* (Ambletouse), France	Inside an unspecified church at Boulogne, France
Post 604	Augustine	Outside church of Sts. Peter & Paul	North chapel inside church of Sts. Peter & Paul
633	Edwin	*Haethfelth* (near Doncaster)	Porch of Church of Apostle Peter, York*
Post 650	Bishop Birinus	*Dorcic* (Dorchester)	*Venta* (Winchester)
Post 640	Nun Earcongotta	Church of Prototmartyr Stephen	Same location but deeper
c.640	Abbess Ethelberga	Church of all Apostles	Church of St. Stephen the Martyr
Post 642	King Oswald	Place of death, *Maserfelth* (Oswestry, Shropshire)	Inside church at Bardney Abbey, Lincolnshire
Post 651 664	Bishop Aidan	Monks' cemetery on Lindisfarne	Right of altar in church of the Apostles, Lindisfarne Portion taken to Iona, remainder enshrined in sanctuary of church of Apostles, Lindisfarne
Post 633	Bishop Fursey	Porch of church in Peronne	Near the altar of same church In chapel east of the altar in church at Peronne
Post 659	Bishop Cedd	Outside, at *Lestingaeu* (Lastingham), near Whitby	Right of altar in church at Lastingham
Post 672	Bishop Chad	Close to St. Mary's Church, Lastingham	Church of Peter, Prince of Apostles, Lastingham
Post 675	All deceased nuns and monks of Barking	Cemetery of *In-Berecingum* (Barking) Convent	Single tomb within church of Blessed Mother, Barking Convent
660	Abbess Etheldreda	In nuns' burialground, Ely Convent	Inside church at Ely convent
698	Bishop Cuthbert	Right of altar in Church of Apostle Peter at Lindisfarne	Above gound, same location, in sanctuary
Post 690	Priest, Hewald the White & Hewald the Black	Unspecified location near the Rhine, Fresia	In Church in Cologne
Post 689	Abbots Sigfrith/Sigrid & Eosterwine	In porch of St.Peter's Church, Wearmouth/Jarrow	South of sanctuary and east of the altar, next to Benedict's body, St. Peter's Church, Wearmouth/Jarrow
Post 709	Bishop Wilfrid	Unspecified location Oundle monastery	At the gables of St. Peter's Basilica, Ripon Cathedral
Post 716	Ceolfrith	Church of the Three Brother Martyrs, *Langre* (Haute-Marne), France	Unspecified location at Wearmouth
971 974 1093	Swithun	Outside the west end of the Old Minster, Winchester	Interior of the Cathedral Same location in different reliquary To the new Minster church
1022	Bede	Jarrow	Cuthbert's coffin, Durham Cathedral

(i) Preparation & protection of the grave & its contents

A small number of translation accounts document the erection of a protective structure over the site of the grave to be opened for translation or elevation (Colgrave & Mynors 1969; Farmer 2004). Other narratives document the vehicle transporting the translated bones as being covered in some manner.

In 660 Æthelthryth, Abbess of Ely, in Cambridgeshire, was to be translated from her grave amongst the nuns' burials outside the convent church, to the church interior, on the authority of her sister Sexburg, the new abbess (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 395). At the time of the translation

a tent structure was erected over her grave; 'When some years later, her bones were to be taken up out of the sepulchre … a tent was erected over it' (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 395). In the same text, Bede describes how King Oswald's bones, who had died in 642 and exhumed by his niece, the queen of Mercia, were left outside the monastery of Bardney overnight under a tent or awning; 'the relics remained outside all night with only a large tent erected over the carriage in which the bones rested' (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 247). At the translation of Bishop Wilfrid from Oundle to Ripon after his death in 709, his body was washed by the abbots 'outside the monastery buildings in a tent put up for the purpose' (Farmer 2004: 181).

While it might be construed that these coverings merely served as shelter from the elements for the people conducting the disinterments, and for the protection of the bones themselves once removed from the grave, it is feasible that the coverings also fulfilled a spiritual protective quality. Awnings or tent-like structures may have signified the sacred nature of the graves' contents or may have indicated to onlookers that there was something holy contained in the vehicles transporting the bones. At particular times of the Catholic liturgical year sacred objects and images are covered, and there are various Biblical passages citing the covering of holy items for spiritual, as well as practical reasons (Anonymous 1971). The same reasoning may have justified the covering of the bones or bodies of saintly people.

(ii) Preparation of the soul

Bones intended to be translated and removed from the grave were believed to be of saintly people and therefore were regarded as holy artefacts. Consequently, coming into physical contact with the bones was a deeply meaningful and solemn act. Preparation of the soul in order to partake in the translations would have been essential. This is documented by Abbot Wulfstan of Winchester, in relation to the

translation of the bones of St Swithun in 971 (Keynes 2007; Watson 2008). Wulfstan describes in great detail the spiritual preparation required prior to the translation, not only for the individuals charged with the task of undertaking the physical movement of the saint's bones, but also for all the members of the associated ecclesiastical community.

Æthelwold, bishop of Winchester between 963 and 984, who arranged for the translation to take place, addressed the members of the congregation of Winchester Cathedral imploring them to join him in fasting for the three days prior to the translation. The aim of the fast was to 'thoroughly cleanse us that we may be found deserving to raise up this holy bishop from his tomb with praise and to translate him with ceremony into this church' (Keynes 2007: 183). This spiritual preparation was undertaken by all the monks of Winchester; 'Then they took up the task, pouring forth prayers and offerings to the Lord in supplication, and all the numerous assembly of monks began to fast and rendered the chanting of the psalms by night and day' (Keynes 2007: 183). After three days of such preparation Swithun's bones were 'solemnly translated into Bishop Æthelwold's new cathedral' (Keynes 2007: 183). The importance of being sufficiently worthy to be involved in the translation reflected on the entire community of monks. When the monks of Bardney agreed to house the bones of Oswald after initially refusing to do so, they 'began to pray earnestly that the relics might be lodged with them' (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 247). The state of the soul was paramount, and those who had not recently confessed were not permitted to take part in the ceremony. The monks who were chosen to translate the remains of Thomas Becket at Canterbury in 1173 were selected due to their holy and untainted lives (Nilson 1998: 14, 27). These monks then handed each bone removed from Thomas' grave to the archbishop, who himself placed them in a wooden box (Nilson 1998: 29).

(iii) The translation ceremony

When Bishop Aidan's bones were translated some years after his death in 651 from the monks' cemetery on Lindisfarne to the Church of the Apostles on the same island, Bede records that 'his bones were transferred to it … in accordance with the honour due to so great a bishop' (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 265). No further details are provided as to what these 'honours' entailed, but the same terminology is used by Bede in describing the translation of Abbot Peter from Ambleteuse to Boulogne, France, in c.602. He notes that 'He was given an unworthy burial by the inhabitants of the place' as they didn't realise he was an abbot (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 116-7). However, once they had verification of Peter's identity, 'they removed his body and put it in a church in Boulogne with all the honour due to so great a man' (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 117). The same phraseology is used in numerous other descriptions of translations. Augustine's body was translated from outside the church of Ss Peter and Paul some time after 604, to the inside of the new church once it had been dedicated: 'But as soon as it was consecrated, the body was carried inside and honourably buried in the chapel' (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 144-5). The bones of King Oswald of Northumbria were translated from Shropshire to Bardney after his death in 642, where the bones were 'placed in the church with fitting honours' (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 247). Bishop Fursey who died in *Latiniacum,* France in 633 was also translated to a chapel within his church at Péronne, France 'with all due honour' (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 277). St Alchmund of Hexham, who died in 781, supposedly appeared in a vision to Bishop Eadmond between 1020 and 1041, requesting that his bones and those of Bishop Acca be translated 'to a more honourable position within the Church' at Hexham, Northumberland (Battiscombe 1959: 40). Wilfrid died in Oundle in 709 (Farmer 2004: 180). When his body was translated to Ripon by a number of abbots, they chanted on the journey, and 'The community came out with the holy relics to honour the cortège' (Farmer 2004:181). Wilfrid was subsequently 'buried with all honour,' or

'with the honour befitting so great a bishop' (Farmer 2004:181; Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 517).

When Æthelthryth's body was translated in 660, the whole community of Ely was present. They are described as having stood around the grave as it was disinterred, chanting, 'the brothers on one side and the sisters on the other' (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 395). This may be one form of 'honours' or reverence which was bestowed on the deceased saints. Cuthbert's body was initially elevated in 698 'so that they might be worthily venerated' (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 443). An anonymous narrative of his translation in 1104 details the actual translation ceremony. Although this is a much later translation than the others cited so far, it may be argued that at least some of the traditions and observations which occurred in 1104 derived from those exacted in earlier centuries. The writer records that all those within the church were chanting, and as the body and coffin of Cuthbert was borne out of the church, people began singing hymns. The monks bearing Cuthbert's remains led a procession around the outside of the church to its east end, where they stopped for a sermon from the Bishop of Durham, before restoring the coffin to its original resting place in the sanctuary in an elevated position, and celebrating a 'solemn mass' (Anonymous in Battiscombe 1959: 106).

From at least the 12th century onwards, many translations took place at night, which seems to be the opposite to when earlier (7th-11th century) translations took place (Nilson 1998: 26). By the 12th century, translations had gained more notoriety, attracting an increasing number of non-ecclesiastical people whose presence seems to be unwelcome, as their desire to witness the disinterred saint might detract from the solemnity of the ceremony or even cause unintentional physical damage to the saint's remains (Nilson 1998: 26-7). It might also be here suggested, that an additional concern was that not everyone attending the ceremony

would be sufficiently spiritually prepared as was required (see (ii) above) and so could potentially 'taint' the translation. The translations of the 12th century and later, generally, were larger and more elaborate affairs than those of preceding centuries. By conducting ceremonies at night, it allowed the sacred act to be conducted solemnly, and to avoid any brash and unwanted intrusions by enthusiastic crowds (Nilson 1998: 26-7).

In the late medieval period most ceremonies took place over a number of days. The removal of the body from the grave and its' procession around the church, outside the church, and sometimes through the town, was followed by an overnight vigil by the body of the saint inside the church, before their secondary deposition the next day (Nilson 1998: 25-30). The length of the ceremony and the public interest in these 12th century and later translations illustrates the popularity of the practice compared to earlier examples. This is due to pragmatic reasons; now that the translations were Papally sanctioned, they became more widely known and celebrated, with more people desiring to witness the occasion than would even have been aware of translations in earlier centuries. They were also now financially valuable for the church; the more people who partook in the celebrations, the more monetary gain the church could expect from indulgences granted on the day to pilgrims, and from contributions and dedication to the cult by supporters of the saint. Nilson has highlighted that there were three distinct stages to the later medieval ceremony: procession, consecration and mass (Nilson 1998: 32). These three elements are mostly evident in the early examples, but to a lesser degree. This is most likely attributable to the simple fact that fewer people were practising Christians in the earlier centuries, and translations and elevations were not a fully formalised process, until the 12th century, by which time, the majority of the inhabitants of England would have been Christian and aware of what translations signified.

(iv) Who performed the translations & who was involved

In many cases it was the abbess, abbot, bishop or highest order of ecclesiastic available who undertook the actual removal of the bones from the grave, assisted by other members of the order. The abbess Sexburg was helped by other sisters at Ely at the translation of Æthelthryth: 'The abbess herself had gone inside with a few others [to the tent] for the purpose of raising and washing the bones'. It is also recorded that the whole community of Ely was present (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 395). The removal of Wilfrid's bones from Oundle to Ripon was carried out by the abbots of Ripon, in the presence of, and possibly assisted by, the monks of Oundle (Farmer 2004: 181). The apparition of St Alchmund which appeared to Bishop Eadmond, ordered that his own translation and that of Bishop Acca was to be undertaken 'in the presence of the assembled population of the territory of Hexham' (Battiscombe 1959: 40). The elevation of Cuthbert in 971 was undertaken by the monks of Lindisfarne who carried out the orders of Bishop Eadbert: 'the brothers did as he commanded; they wrapped the body in a new garment, put it in a new coffin and placed it on the floor of the sanctuary' (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 445). The translation in 1104 was carried out in the presence of numerous ecclesiastics, monks, secular clergy, and other 'brethren of the church' (Anonymous in Battiscombe 1959: 105). There was also a large crowd outside the church of spectators and worshipers who had travelled to Durham to witness the occasion (Anonymous in Battiscombe 1959: 106). Swithun's body was translated in 971 by Bishop Æthelwold, assisted by 'other attendants' but it may be assumed that the whole community was involved to some degree, as it was requested by the bishop that all the monks spiritually prepared themselves for the translation (Crook 1992: 197; Keynes 2007: 183).

On the walls of the Morley Library at Winchester Cathedral is a medieval wall painting which appears to depict a translation of St Swithun's body (see Fig. 2.1) (Crook 1992). The image is highly worn and interpretations

vary, but it has been speculated that an amorphous dark mass represents the remains of a depiction of monks in dark habits gathered around a grave. This reflects the narrative of Bishop Wulfstan detailing the translation, and is also reminiscent of the description of the translation of Æthelthryth (see (iii) above) (Keynes 2007; Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 157 & 238).
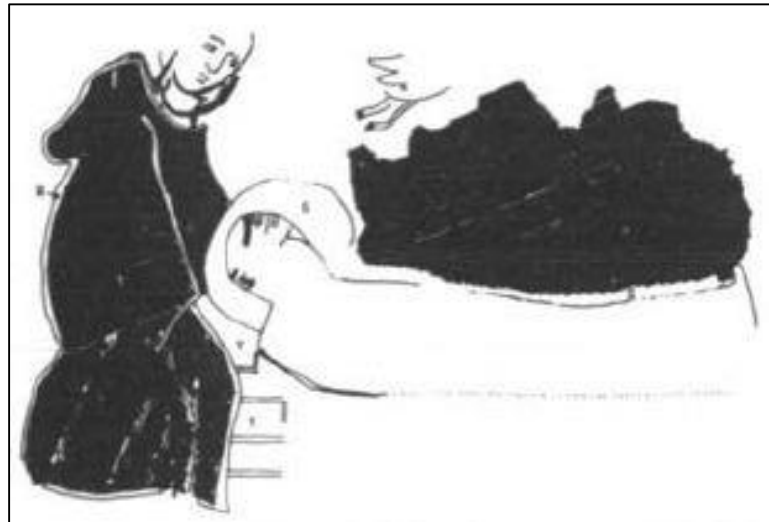
Fig.2.1: Reconstructed drawing of the wall painting supposedly depicting the translation of St Swithun, the Morley Library, Winchester Cathedral. The black mass in the background is interpreted as representing a large number of monks in black habits, like the figure in the foreground (after Crook 1992: 181)

The translations dating to after the 12th century certainly involved the whole community, both lay and secular (see (iii) above). The events were planned far in advance and were advertised widely. St Thomas' translation in 1220 was announced via a proclamation circulated through Europe, two years before the occasion (Nilson 1998: 24). The 1093 translation of St Swithun was attended by 'almost all of the bishops and abbots of England' (Nilson 1998: 24).

(v) Washing of the disinterred bones or body

A recurring theme in many translation accounts concerns the washing of the bones or bodies of those being translated. Where specified, it was normally carried out by a senior ecclesiastic, and was conducted outside of ecclesiastical buildings. Æthelthryth's body was washed by Abbess Sexburg prior to it being brought inside the church at Ely (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 241 & 395). Oswald's bones were also washed prior to their admittance and enshrinement at Bardney, although it is not recorded who performed the act: 'The bones were washed, laid in a shrine constructed for the purpose, and placed in the church with fitting honours' (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 247). Abbots from Ripon, and possibly other ecclesiastical establishments, came to Oundle to transport Wilfrid's body to Ripon for burial after his death in 709 (Farmer 2004: 181). It is recorded that 'Some of them wanted to wash the corpse and have it decently vested (as indeed was only right and proper) and obtained permission to do so' (Farmer 2004: 181). After permission was granted, one of the abbots, Bacula, 'spread out his robe on the ground,' for Wilfrid's body to be laid on while the washing took place. It is also recorded that the abbots themselves performed the washing and it was done 'outside the monastery buildings' (Farmer 2004:181). St Swithun's body was washed at the site of his grave, outside the west end entrance of Winchester Cathedral (Crook 1992: 197). It is implied that Bishop Æthelwold, who ordered the translation and was the first to commence the disinterring of the body, was assisted in the washing by additional brethren (Crook 1992: 197). Æthelberga's body was washed prior to her translation at Barking, Essex, although where exactly this took place and by whom is not recorded (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 241). Although not noted by Bede, Cuthbert's body must have been washed at the time of his initial elevation in 698, as earth from the place where 'the water from washing the corpse had been thrown out,' had miraculous properties (Farmer 2004: 97).

Undertaking the washing may have been regarded as an act of humility. Swithun was a bishop, yet it was the Abbot Æthelwold who partook in the washing of Swithun's body (Crook 1992). The act of disrobing, as Abbot Bacula performed, in order to have something suitable on which to lay Wilfrid's body, may also have been considered a similar act of humility. For a higher order member of clergy deigning to disrobe and wash a lower order member of clergy is reminiscent of the biblical passage of Jesus washing his disciples' feet (Anonymous 1971). It is plausible that everyone present at the translation would have been very aware of these acts and what they represented. There is no indication in any of the accounts dating to before the 12th century that the bones or bodies were washed in anything other than water, or if the water itself had been blessed. Later examples do, in contrast, record that a combination of water and wine was used (Nilson 1998: 29). Once the washing was completed however, numerous miracles took place in relation to the water. The water-drenched earth from the washing of Oswald's bones during his translation had the power of 'driving devils from the bodies of people possessed' (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 247) and the site where the water from washing Wilfrid's body had been emptied was marked by a cross due to the many miracles that subsequently happened there (Farmer 2004: 181).

(vi) Location of the translated remains

The altar was the holiest place within a church (Nilson 1998: 67). It is the place where transubstantiation took place, which was believed by Christians to be the point at which bread and wine turned into the flesh and blood of Jesus (Daniell 1999: 7). The consecrated bread and wine were kept in a receptacle called the tabernacle, which was located on or east of the altar. The sanctuary was the region that enclosed the altar and defined this sacred area. Locating the bones of saints in the vicinity of the altar, was intended to be a reflection of the holy state of the deceased person; the closer the burial to the altar and sanctuary, the holier that

person was. It may also be significant that many translations were reinterred at the right hand side of the altar, perhaps being symbolic of the right hand of God (Anonymous 1971: John 16, Romans 8, Acts 2). Bishop Aidan's bones were reburied at his translation on the right side of the altar in the church of the Prince of the Apostles at Lindisfarne (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 265). Bishop Fursey's bones were reburied 'near the altar' after their initial translation from the porch of his church at Péronne, France. They were subsequently translated to a specially built chapel east of the altar of the same church (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 277). Bishop Cedd was reinterred at his translation on the right side of the altar of a church at Lastingham (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 289). The shrine of St Wite, Whitchurch Canonicorum, (Dorset), is also located to the right of the altar (Syer 2005; Waters 1980). When Abbot Benedict Biscop died in 689 he was buried in the church of St Peter, at Wearmouth, to the east of the altar (Farmer 2004: 202, 219). This may have been considered a suitable location for the redeposition of a saintly individual, between the altar and the east wall, behind the most sacred space in the church. Abbots Eosterwine and Sigfrids' bones were later disinterred and reinterred together next to Benedict's (Farmer 2004: 208). Sigfrid's bones had originally been buried in the sanctuary of the same church (Farmer 2004: 208). Cuthbert was buried in a stone coffin located on the right side of the altar of the church of St Peter, Lindisfarne. This was later elevated and 'placed … on the floor of the sanctuary' (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 445; Farmer 2004: 96). Once the papacy took over the control of canonisation and hence of translation and elevation authorisation after the 11th century, locations of translated remains became more regimented. Their resting place was dependant on their status as martyr, confessor or saint; 'a newly recognized or canonized saint should be enshrined at the High Altar, and preferably behind it … Normally confessors were enshrined to the south of the altar, and martyrs to the north' (Spurrell 2000: 67). In the same text, the author claims that 'Before the Norman Conquest I have not found an English example of a saint who

was specifically stated to have been enshrined behind the altar' yet it has been demonstrated that at least one individual, Abbot Benedict Biscop, was buried, if not enshrined, to the east of the altar (Spurrell 2000: 67).

(vii) Association of translations with existing grave sites

The desire to be buried beside or in as close proximity as was possible, to a holy body was called *ad sanctum,* meaning 'close to a saint' (Foxhall Forbes 2013: 266; Crook 2011: 23). Spatially connecting a newly canonised individual to those remains who had already been revered as saints for years was a deliberate act, committed seemingly to accentuate the holy status of the newly translated individual. Eadberht died in 768, 81 years after Cuthbert's death and 70 years after the elevation of Cuthbert's body. According to Bede, Eadberht 'was put in Cuthbert's tomb under the chest containing the incorrupted body' (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 127; Kirby 1995). There were numerous other individuals or portions of individuals who were also added to Cuthbert's tomb. It is recorded in the chronicler Symeon of Durham's *Historia Dunelmensis Ecclesiae*, written between 1104 and 1108, that 'the bones of Balther and Bilfrid the anchorites; of Acca and Alchmund, bishops of Hexham; and of King Oswin; as also those of the Venerable Abbesses Ebba and Æthelgitha' were deposited with the body of Cuthbert (Symeon in Battiscombe 1959: 41). The bones of St Boisil of Melrose Abbey who died in 661 were also translated and 'deposited … honourably in a second shrine (similar to that in which they had hitherto rested) near the body of St Cuthbert' (Symeon in Battiscombe 1959: 41). According to Symeon, a portion of Bede's bones was also deposited within the same coffin (Battiscombe 1959: 41). These assertions are confirmed by an anonymous account of the translation of Cuthbert in 1104, which records the monks finding within Cuthbert's coffin, the bones of Aidan, Eadbert, Eadfrid, Æthelwold, Bede, and other un-named saints, plus the head of Oswald (Anonymous in Battiscombe 1959: 102). Other translations are also recorded as having been relocated to specific graves of established

saints. The bones of Eosterwine and Sigfrid were buried beside the burial of Benedict at Wearmouth (Farmer 2004: 208). Augustine was translated from outside the Church of the Apostles to the north chapel of the church once it was consecrated at an unspecified date (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 143-4). Bede records that 'This is also the resting-place of all succeeding archbishops' (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 145). Archbishop Laurence of Canterbury died c.619 and was buried beside his predecessor (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 157). When his successor Mellitus died in 624, he too was interred 'with his fathers' in his church near Rochester, Kent (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 159). Abbess Hildilid, who succeeded Ethelburga after her death c.640, had all those buried at Barking 'taken up and transferred to the church of the blessed Mother of God and buried there in one place' due to restricted space at the convent (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 363-4). These examples illustrate that there was a propensity to bury venerated ecclesiastics in the same vicinity as other revered ecclesiastics within churches. Although the bones of Bishop Acca and St Alchmund were not reinterred near or in association with an existing burial in the church at Hexham, their bones were placed within the same container (Battiscombe 1959: 40).

(viii) Translation containers: caskets inside tombs

Occasionally details are provided in translation accounts of the container into which the disinterred bones were placed. When the bones of Bishops Eosterwine and Sigfrid were translated and reburied beside those of Benedict's, Bede describes how Bishop Acca, who ordered the translations, 'had both sets of bones placed in one casket, divided by a partition inside' (Farmer 2004: 208). The bones of Oswald are also described as having been 'laid in a shrine constructed for the purpose' (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 247). In 664 Bishop Colman took some of the bones of Aidan, but left an unspecified amount of them, ordering them to be 'interred in the sanctuary' at Lindisfarne (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 309). Although there is no mention of a casket in this description, the

terminology suggests that they were enclosed within a box of some type. The monks who disinterred Cuthbert's body for his first translation in 698 expected it to be skeletonised: 'his bones – which they expected to find quite dry, the rest of the body, as is usual with the dead, having decayed away and turned to dust – and to put them in a new coffin' (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 443). When the tomb of St Wite, located in the church of St Candida, Whitchurch Canonicorum, was opened in the 19th century there was a leaden box inside the stone coffin which contained bones and was inscribed with the words '*ct relique sce w hic requesct relique sce wite*' meaning 'here rest the remains of St Wite' (see Fig. 2.2) (Syer 2005: 21; Waters 1980: 5)

Fig. 2.2: The shrine of St Wite, Whitchurch Canonicorum (Dorset). Inside the stone coffin consisting of the upper portion of the shrine are said to be the bones of St Wite, enclosed within an inscribed leaden box (Photograph author's own)

When it was decided to translate the bones of Æthelthryth sixteen years after her death in 644, a new coffin or sarcophagus was ordered. Despite expressing surprise at finding her body uncorrupted and not skeletonised, the coffin obtained by the monks and nuns appears to have been full sized. No dimensions are provided, but as Æthelthryth's body is recorded as having been laid inside, the intention appears to have been

to place the bones of Æthelthryth in a smaller box inside this full size coffin, just as the bones of St Wite were treated inside her full-sized coffin (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 297). As Gilchrist and Sloane point out in relation to later medieval translations, 'Caskets were used for burials most often in the case of translations or reburials … Every instance identified to date has come from within the church or another building' (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 116).

(2.2.5) Translation Elaborations After the 12th Century

In 1099 Pope Urban II appointed an archbishop to investigate the merit of sanctity ascribed to one Nicholas of Trani, a devout 11th-century pilgrim who was regarded as a saint (Nilson 1998: 11; Toynbee 1929). This was the first move towards papal control over the canonisation of saints. By the time of Pope Innocent III (1198 – 1216) the Papacy had sole control over designating saints. The practice became regimented and even extended to demoting people who had been revered as saints, to 'normal' status (Nilson 1998; Spurrell 2000). The translations and elevations after the 12th century are more documented than those that occurred in the preceding centuries, largely due to this involvement of the Papacy. Whether or not the actual translation ceremony was redesigned according to a specific template of procedures is unclear, but the vaguer aspects of the act of translation are described in greater detail from the 12th century. The 'honours' mentioned in the translations dating to before the 12th century are elaborated, such as that of the translation ceremony of Erkenwald in 1140. Members of the clergy moved in procession to his tomb, 'singing litanies and bearing candles and crucifixes' and throughout the event the congregation prayed and sung hymns (Nilson 1998: 27). That the event was well-attended is also testified by the fact that the crowds who had gathered to witness the translation broke the doors of the church in their eagerness to be present (Nilson 1998: 26).

The processional aspect of the translations was one which seems to have been elaborated over the centuries. By the 1476 translation of Swithun, the relics were processed outside the church and around the town, before the physical translation took place (Nilson 1998: 33). The furore reflects the public interest in translations by

this time. Not only are there more detailed accounts of what the ceremony entailed in general, but the reactions of those involved is also detailed. The number of attendees as well as their experience of the rite are recorded. Large crowds, too great to estimate numbers, were recorded at the translation of Thomas Beckett in Canterbury in 1220, and there were 'many crowds of men and women' at Oswald's translation c.909 (Nilson 1998: 25). These later translations deliberately involved the lay community of the church and town. The event was now rather like a public festival: 'greater ceremonies were turned into massive festivals, sometimes lasting a whole week' (Nilson 1998: 25). Pilgrims were encouraged to attend, and invitations were sent to noted ecclesiastics (Nilson 1998: 24). After the 12th century, translations were officially sanctioned by the Church, and they could therefore be officially advertised widely with full papal support, thus elevating the status of the church or cathedral that was hosting the translation. Papal recognition and sanctification of the church's own personal saint, was a huge boost to the coffers and general status of that church, not least as pilgrims and lay attendees were encouraged to pay for indulgences on this holy day (Nilson 1998: 25-6).

2.3: 9th-Century Change: Translations of Royalty & Non-Ecclesiastics
(2.3.1) 9th-Century Political Changes Initiating Translation Changes

From at least the mid-7th century, individuals who were members of royalty were entering religious orders and subsequently after their death came to be regarded as saints (Farmer 2004: 18-21). Prior to the 9th century, there were numerous saints who had descended from royalty, or were believed to have had royal connections, but the level of involvement of royalty with translations, and the reverence paid by royalty to saints' cults, intensified markedly after c.850 (Rollason 1989: 136-44). Throughout the 9th century until unification in the late 10th century, the kingdoms comprising England were frequently at war with each other, and faced the persistent threat of Danish forces invading from the north (see Fig. 2.3).

Fig. 2.3: Map of Anglo-Saxon kingdoms c. 800 (edmaps.com)

This was also the time when Christianity was becoming more influential and powerful as the country gradually converted fully from paganism. Kings – and hence their subjects – were being converted, as the Church would support a Christian ruler but not a pagan one (see Table 2.2) (Rollason 1989: 133-64; Thacker 1985: Theilmann 1990).

Table 2.2: Dates of conversion to Christianity of pagan Anglo-Saxon
Kings (after Rollason 1989; Farmer 2004; Colgrave & Mynors 1969)

Date	King	Kingdom
601	Æthelbehrt	Kent
604	Rædwald	East Anglia
604	Saeberht	Essex
627	Eorpwald	East Anglia
627	Edwin	Northumbria
630	Sigeberht	East Anglia
634	Oswald	Northumbria
635	Cynegils	Wessex
635	Cwichelm	Wessex
638	Cuthred	Wessex
653	Sigeberht	Essex
655	Peada	Mercia
655	Æthelred	Mercia
655	Cenwalh	Essex
662	Swithhelm	Essex
675	Æthelwealh	Sussex
685	Cædwalla	Wessex

In this time period the various royal kingdoms were vying for political power and authority. By aligning with the Christian Church, royalty could expect to gain from this association; by the late 10th century, individuals who were not ecclesiastics during their life, but instead had been members of Anglo-Saxon royalty, were being canonised and regarded by certain ecclesiastical communities as saints. There was also a developing practice of associating particular saints with living kings (Rollason 1989: 137; Crook 2011: 41-106; McClain 2011a). The relocation of relics that occurred during this time period reflects this desire to associate saints and ecclesiastical centres with particular kings and kingdoms (Geary 1978: 95; Rollason 1978). This was exemplified by the appropriation of relics by royalty from less influential and small ecclesiastical establishments to deposit them at larger, powerful and more wealthy religious communities, who received their patronage and were under their authority

(see Fig. 2.4) (Rollason 1978; Rollason 1989: 133-63; Irvine 1990). The desire for a king to be definitively linked to a particular saint, or for a member of royalty to be regarded as saintly, had political motivations. The deliberate recognition of a specific saint's cult being associated with a prevailing king may be understood as reinforcing 'the standing and prestige of the royal line, and … as a means by which doubtful or unreal claims to rule were legitimized or reinforced by reference to the authority and power of the saints' (Rollason 1989: 137). It was a symbiotic relationship between royalty and ecclesiastical establishments; the religious community received patronage and protection of the king, who in return, had his status as king 'accepted' by God, via affirmation of the saint through their miracles: 'Royal families presumably gained prestige when saints appeared in their lineage or were associated with them' (Rollason 1982: 15).
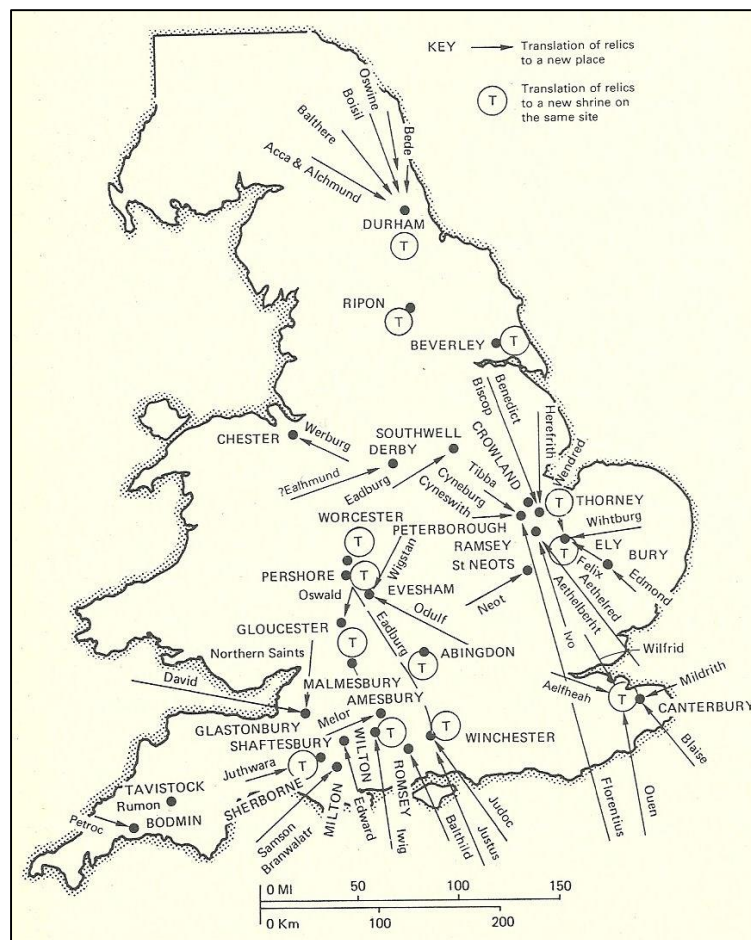
Fig. 2.4: Map of 9th-century England showing the movement and relocation of pre-existing relics from lesser to greater ecclesiastical centres (after Rollason 1989: 178)

(2.3.2) The Making of Royal Saints

(i) Royal ecclesiastics

It has been argued that Cuthbert may have been a member of royalty, as when he arrived at Melrose Abbey to enter monastic life, he arrived on horse, was armed and had at least one servant in attendance (Farmer 2004: 52). These accoutrements would only have been available to people of high social standing in the 7th century. Although an early example of a (possible) royal ecclesiastic, Cuthbert serves to illustrate the early origins of royalty becoming clergy, in England.

Eadburg was the daughter of King Edward the Elder (899 – 924). She became a nun at Nunnaminster, the nunnery of St Mary at Winchester, and was subsequently buried there after her death (Crook 2011: 86-7; Rollason 1989: 138). Various miracles occurred at her gravesite and so her uncorrupted body was translated inside the church at Nunnaminster (Ridyard 1988: 136). By the 12th century her feast day was recorded as the 15th June in at least 14 calendars, with the feast day of her translation on the 18th July also being observed (Rollason 1989: 139). Edith was also the daughter of a king, King Edgar (957 – 975), who took holy orders and became a nun. She was buried in her nunnery at Wilton, Salisbury, but thirteen years after her death in 984, she was translated into the church there, after miracles occurred at her gravesite (Rollason 1989: 139). Her translation was ordered, not by members of the ecclesiastical community, but by King Æthelred II (978 – 1016). This was unusual as, up to this point, translations and elevations were given authorisation by ecclesiastics alone (see Section (2.2.3)) (Ridyard 1988: 152-4).

These members of Anglo-Saxon royalty had taken holy orders and so their canonisation and recognition of their saintly status was not in question. The promotion of their cults and their translations could, however, have been manipulated by their royal descendants as a convenient way in

which to reinforce their legitimacy to rule, by having bloodline ancestors who were saints. Royal veneration of, and support for, the promotion of royal ecclesiastics to saintly status is evidence of political relationships between Church and state. The translation of Eadburg was ordered by Bishop Æthelwold, who was 'encouraged' by King Edgar in his monastic reforms of the 10th century (Crook 2011: 82-9). Æthelwold also arranged for renewing the cult of Æthelthryth of Ely, after King Edgar refounded it in c.970 (Crook 2011: 87). While the religious devotion of these saints, and that too of Æthelwold and Edgar to their faith, was genuine, the decision to elevate, translate or refocus attention on particular saints and particular churches was not arbitrary. Edgar supported the reforms brought about by Æthelwold and in return, Æthelwold supported and exalted specific royalty and favourites of Edgar. Perhaps not surprisingly, Æthelwold himself was canonised and translated in 996 (Crook 2011: 93).

(ii) Royal 'lay' saints

By the 12th century, royal individuals who had led saintly or virtuous lives were being regarded as saints, despite them not having been ordained or taken holy orders during their lives. This was a deliberate intention to create and establish saints and cults within the prevailing royal bloodline.

Ælfgifu was the wife of King Edmund, who reigned between 939 and 946 (Rollason 1989: 136: Crook 2011: 91). Although it is not clear if she herself took holy orders, she is attributed with the founding of the nunnery at Shaftesbury, (Dorset) (Ridyard 1988: 243; Rollason 1989: 137). It is also noted in the 12th-century writings of William of Malmesbury (1090 – 1143) that she performed numerous pious tasks and lived a virtuous life (Preest 2002). Details regarding her official canonisation are lacking, but by the late 11th century she was being regarded as a saint, her feast day falling on the 10th July (Rollason 1989: 138). This feast date is recorded in numerous calendars, but significantly it appears in the Winchester

calendar, Winchester at the time being the seat of the royal palace (Crook 1993).

Perhaps the most well-known example of a king-saint is that of King Edward, the Martyr. Edward was killed in an ambush at Corfe Castle (Dorset) in 978/979 (Crook 2011: 91). He was translated to Shaftesbury Nunnery (Dorset) a year after his burial at Wareham, near Corfe, possibly as his initial burial was conducted 'with no royal honours' (Whitelock 1961: 123). Miracles reportedly occurred at the tomb containing his translated remains and within a few years of his death, he was being revered as a saint (Rollason 1989: 142). In the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle Edward's death and translation from Wareham are mentioned and it is heavily implied that he was a martyred saint: 'Men murdered him, but God exalted him; In life he was an earthly king. But after death he is now a heavenly saint' (Whitelock 1961: 123). The Life of St Oswald, written between 995 and 1005, refers to Edward as *martyr Dei* meaning 'martyr of God' and mentions the miracles which supposedly happened at his tomb at Shaftesbury (Rollason 1989: 142). Other 11th-century texts also support the contention that Edward was a saint, including the law tracts of King Cnut (c.1020) where it is stipulated that Edward's feast day was to be celebrated throughout England (Rollason 1989: 142-3; Stafford 1981; O'Brien O'Keefe 1998). This observance of the 18th March as Edward's feast day, and the 13th February as his translation day, is also noted in 14 calendars that date to before the 12th century (Rollason 1989: 143).

King Edgar (943 – 975) was regarded as a saint, but only within the monastic community at Glastonbury, where he had been buried, and was translated c.1024 - 1053 (Rollason 1989: 140). The fact that he was held in such esteem at this particular religious establishment, and not at others, may be an indication of the political nature of affiliating certain royalty with certain locations. Edgar was closely involved with 10th-

century monastic reform and had the backing of the powerful and wealthy monastery of Glastonbury. He may be regarded as the earliest king to become canonised, but he does not appear to have been regarded as such by other religious establishments (Rollason 1989: 140-1). Edgar never took monastic orders. This crucial point may have dictated that, at this time period, he could not technically be sainted: 'in the eleventh and twelfth centuries the English church was not disposed to regard royal confessors as saints' (Rollason 1989: 141; Ridyard 1988: 240-8).

The same treatment that was accorded to Edgar is mirrored in the canonisation of Edward the Confessor (1003 – 1066). According to the 'Life of King Edward' written shortly after his death, Edward lived a pious life, performed miracles and could cure people by his touch (Rollason 1989: 141; Ridyard 1988: 154). Despite these saintly attributes, he, like Edgar, did not take holy orders, and it was not until the late 12th century that he was officially canonised, with papal support (Rollason 1989: 141). This was unusual, 'because the Papacy was reluctant to canonise royalty', and Edward was the last English king to be canonised (Nilson 1998: 10). The manner of death of some of these royal saints may have been the method by which it was justifiable to canonise them. The earliest shrines in Europe were dedicated to martyrs and the cult of saints developed from this practice (see Section (2.2.2)) (Rollason 1989: 3-6). Kings Oswald, Edward and Æthelwold were all murdered (Rollason 1982; Rollason 1986; Crook 1999; Crook 2011: 91-3). By defining these royals as martyrs as opposed to mere men, their cult could technically be justified: 'it was not necessary to be killed by heathens in order to be granted the reputation of martyrdom. Other murder victims were also enshrined as martyrs, mostly unofficially' (Nilson 1998: 11; Plumtree 2012).

(2.3.3) Saints' Relics & Shrines as Political Instruments

At the same time as royalty was affiliating itself with the Church and co-ordinating translations, their overall focus on primary, secondary, whole and partial relics was intensifying. Relics were utilised and exploited by royalty in 10th and 11th-century England. It was becoming 'fashionable' for kings to have a collection of relics, which were used in a variety of ways. The connection between royal and saint was escalating by the 10th century and relics were pervading many areas of royal proceedings (Rollason 1982: 96).

Relics were frequently used in legal matters. They were used in the swearing of oaths, as depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry, where Harold is shown with one hand on what has been interpreted as a portable reliquary, and the other on relics on an altar whilst swearing fealty (allegiance) to William (see Fig. 2.5) (Rollason 1982: 97). According to the *Life of King Alfred*, in 876 he demanded that the Danish army swear an oath of loyalty to him, on relics (Rollason 1989: 163; Rollason 1982: 97).

Fig. 2.5: Segment of the Bayeux Tapestry depicting Harold swearing fealty on relics (http://www.bayeuxtapestry.org.uk/)

Relics were also used in matters of ordeals, which essentially were divine tests, to determine if someone was guilty or innocent of a crime (Rollason 1989: 171-172).

Due to the divine power imbued in relics, they could be used to validate judgements (Rollason 1986: 96). Not only did these tests take place within a church, but saints were invoked and 'In five of the sixteen surviving texts of the ordeal rituals from early medieval England the use of relics is specifically prescribed' (Rollason 1989: 193).

Relics were taken out in battle, as a deterrent to the opposition. King Æthelred decreed that in response to imminent invasion by Vikings in the late 10th century, processions of relics were ordered to proceed to ward off the threat (Rollason 1982: 99; Rollason 1989: 194). The participation of the general public in the translation of relics has been noted (see Section (2.2.4) (iv)) but now the military and royalty were also intrinsically involved in these processions. Relics were believed to have had supernatural powers, the benefits of which were bestowed on royal leaders in battle, in return for their loyalty to that particular saint. The presence of relics in these processions and the general knowledge that they would be taken into battle must also have served an important role for kings (Geary 1978: 70). It is unlikely that the Viking invaders, for example, would have been deterred by the sight of relics, but their presence would undoubtedly have bolstered Æthelred's army's belief that they would be victorious. The monks of Ely also carried the relics of a St Wendred, with the army who marched against Cnut (Rollason 1982: 99). The use of relics in these circumstances, relics which were already revered by lay and ecclesiastical society, was an affirmation by the kings of the power of relics and of the saints from which they derived.

(2.3.4) The Winchester Cathedral Mortuary Boxes: A Legacy of Royal Translations
The prestige, reverence and awe shown to translated individuals by the general public and ecclesiastical communities was considerable. Translated saints were the closest connection a person on earth could have to God and heaven. The miracles attributed to their skeletal material or preserved bodies, was proof of a holy presence within the remains. The worship of these people, centuries after their death, combined with the continuous miraculous occurrences accredited to them, effectively made these people immortal. This must surely have been noted by the royal kings, who at the height of the translation cult in the 9th and 10th centuries were

vying for political domination of England (Rollason 1982; Rollason 1986; Rollason 1989; Hadley 2000b; Hadley & Richards 2001c). Seeing the state of reverence that was bestowed on saints, it must be no coincidence that kings desired the same for their bodies, post-mortem. To assure this post-depositional respect and guaranteed continued worship, not only must the king be Christian, but he must be remembered as a pious Christian king, one who may be regarded as saintly, even if he was not ordained (see Section (2.3.2) (ii)). In addition to offering patronage of certain wealthy and influential ecclesiastical establishments, kings, by likening themselves to saints, hoped to preserve the respect from the population that they received during life. Kings were chosen by God to rule, and so they inherently held a level of sanctity that all other people did not. This connection to God, holiness and saintliness set them apart from everyone else, while simultaneously equating them to canonised saints. The act of placing the deceased lay king's disarticulated skeleton in a chest and setting it inside a church was, in theory, a representation of a translation. By doing so, it must have been intended for that king to be regarded as being in the same category as translated saints. This act was not necessarily ordered by the king himself but was carried out by someone who also stood to gain by committing these acts of respect.

Such an act is exemplified by the six mortuary chests at Winchester Cathedral. These boxes supposedly contain the skeletal remains of kings (Crook 1999; Crook 2011: 174-6). In 1093-4 an unknown number of coffins containing the bodies of kings were brought inside the new Winchester Cathedral, from the Old Minster, and were placed between the piers of the choir arcade (Crook 1999: 202). This act of relocation of the kings' remains to the church interior, and their deposition in the choir by the altar, is in itself reminiscent of a translation procedure and must surely have been a deliberate and intentional act of association of the kings with saintliness (see Section (2.2.4) (vi)). This arrangement was altered in 1158 by Bishop Blois, who 'raised from a lowly place' additional kings' remains, placed them in lead boxes, and had them moved closer to the altar (Crook 1999: 202). Significantly, he simultaneously gathered the remnants of his predecessors at Winchester, and collectively placed their remains amongst those of the monarchs (Crook 1999). This act was a deliberate

and intentional association or comparison of the kings with the saints/saintly ecclesiastics: 'he thus initiated a prolonged sequence of arrangements for housing the remains of pre-Conquest individuals who, though not saints, were regarded as benefactors of the church of Winchester' (Crook 2011: 175). Both parties would gain esteem from the association; the monarchs were being compared to, and treated as, holy men, the ecclesiastics were deemed worthy to be in the vicinity of royalty, while both were being treated as saints. This act also affirmed the status of the kings and was a sign of loyalty to the past and current monarchy; the royal line had approval from the Church. Perhaps not coincidentally, Bishop Blois was also royal, and the younger brother of King Stephen of England (Davis 1990).

There is speculation as to who exactly is contained within the mortuary chests. Even by the 1150's the identities of the individuals within the boxes was not known, as the sarcophagi from which Bishop Henry obtained the royal and ecclesiastical bones were not inscribed (Crook 2011: 175). The presence of these prestigious people at Winchester was, it seems, the important issue, whether they were disarticulated and comingled was superfluous. The boxes and their contents resembled those of translated saints despite the bones not being of saints, and the intention was that they would be thought of and treated as such. It is still not definitively proven who is in the chests, or how many individuals are represented. The boxes' contents have never been osteologically examined, and the most recent osteological assessment of the bones within the chests was in 1991, conducted by an architectural historian and the cathedral curator (Crook 1999; 203). It has recently been announced, that the chests' contents are to be examined osteologically in a project involving the universities of Oxford and Bristol (http://www.winchester-cathedral.org.uk/2015/02/03/the-mortuary-chests/, accessed 15th February 2015).

The original number of chests and their form is not known, but it might be expected that they resembled shrines of translations, if this was how they were intended to be regarded. In 1642, Parliamentary soldiers violated the monuments within the choir of the cathedral, with accounts describing how they used the bones contained within the chests to break the glass windows of the cathedral (Crook 1999: 201). Prior to

this point, there may have been as many as ten mortuary chests (Crook 1999: 205). After the damage caused by Cromwell's soldiers, the bones were collected and rehoused in the six chests present today. It has been speculated that because the boxes each contain the remains of more than a single individual, that this is proof that there would once have been a container for each individual. However, the addition or inclusion of a portion or the whole skeleton of an individual to an existing tomb or box of a translated individual was not an uncommon occurrence (see Section (2.2.4) (vii)). The remains of multiples of individuals in a single mortuary chest does not necessarily indicate deliberate additions of people or a person to that specific box, as it would not have been possible to identify or differentiate between different disarticulated skeletons once they had been disturbed and comingled by the Parliamentary soldiers. In 1660 the cathedral and the chests underwent restoration, and the displaced bones were divided between two new chests, with an inscription of the 1642 destruction (Crook 1999: 205). The chests are now marked as follows, although the inscriptions have by no means been proven to be accurate: the easternmost chest on the north side of the choir supposedly contains the remains of Cynegils and Ethelwulf; the easternmost chest on the south side of the choir is marked as containing Edmund; the central chest on the north side is believed to contain Cynewulf's and Egbert's bones; the central chest on the south side is marked as containing Eadred; the two remaining chests are said to contain the remains of Rufus, Cnut, Emma, Hardacnut and numerous other unidentified kings (Crook 2011: 175).

2.4: Archaeological Evidence for Translations & Elevations

(2.4.1) Lesser Translations

Various archaeological sites have been identified as potentially exhibiting evidence for translations. These include the church of St Anne, Lewes (East Sussex), St Oswald's Priory (Gloucester), and St Gregory's Minster, Kirkdale (North Yorkshire), and the church of St Anne, the Carthusian Charterhouse, Coventry (West Midlands) and the Abbey of St Mary of Rushen (Isle of Man) (Butler 1988; Godfrey 1928; Heighway & Bryant 1999; Rahtz & Watts 1998; Watts *et al.* 1997; Soden 1995). None of these examples exhibit indisputable proof of translations, but they are considered as probable or possible based on some of their defining characteristics as outlined above (see Section (2.2.4)).

There are additional sites to these few examples which exhibit definitive translation evidence, but they are not considered to be translations of the form discussed so far (Sloane & Gilchrist 2005: 160-80). These translations were not the relocation of a saintly person in order that they may be considered canonised, but are examples of the reburial of 'ordinary' people due to other factors and motivations. Throughout the medieval period remains of people, whether skeletonised or not, were frequently moved or translated from one location to another for a variety of reasons. In the will of one Thomas of Arundel, dating to 1485, he states that he wishes his body to 'rest for a season' in the parish church of Edeson, or Addesdon (Buckinghamshire), but that after this 'season' was complete, his wife was to 'remove my bones and bring them to the Grey Friars of Dorchester and lay them in the middle of the choir…' (Orme 2007: 97-8). This is technically a request for a translation to occur, but it is devoid of the typical characteristics by which translations undertaken as part of the process of canonisation are defined (see Section (2.2.4)). Gilchrist and Sloane define this type of translation as examples of 'lesser translations … the deliberate removal and reburial of one (or more) individual(s) in a manner that suggests considerably more attention than that given to the reburial of charnel' (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 197).

There is also a distinct differentiation between those translations dating to the 7th-11th century and the lesser translations. The majority of the lesser translations occurred after the 11th century (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 197-199). It seems that in the early centuries it was mainly, if not only, saintly people who were translated, with comparatively little evidence for the lesser translations that Gilchrist and Sloane describe. From the 11th century onwards it was the remit of the papacy to grant permission for people to be translated (see Section (2.2.3)). Once this law was established, it may have altered how translations were regarded in general; the post-depositional movement of a person from one location to another need not now necessarily have represented their canonisation and so translations may have increased or developed for 'ordinary' people. These lesser translations will be discussed more extensively in Chapter 4 as part of the more general discussion on post-depositional movement of individuals.

(2.4.2) Potential Archaeological Sites of Translation & Elevation

(i) Saint Gregory's Minster, Kirkdale (North Yorkshire)

The church of Saint Gregory's Minster, Kirkdale (North Yorkshire) dates to the 11th century (Rahtz & Watts 1998; Watts *et al.* 1997). Inscriptions found on a sundial in the south porch of the church indicate that there was once an older church on the site, which was in a state of disrepair by the mid-11th century (Watts *et al.* 1997). Fragmentary pieces of an inscribed lead plaque were found during excavations to the north of the churchyard (see Fig. 2.6). The inscription on the six pieces of lead has been dated to between the late 7th and mid-10th centuries based on the letter forms (Watts *et al.* 1997). The plaque is not complete and consequently deciphering the inscription has been problematic (Watts *et al.* 1997: 63).
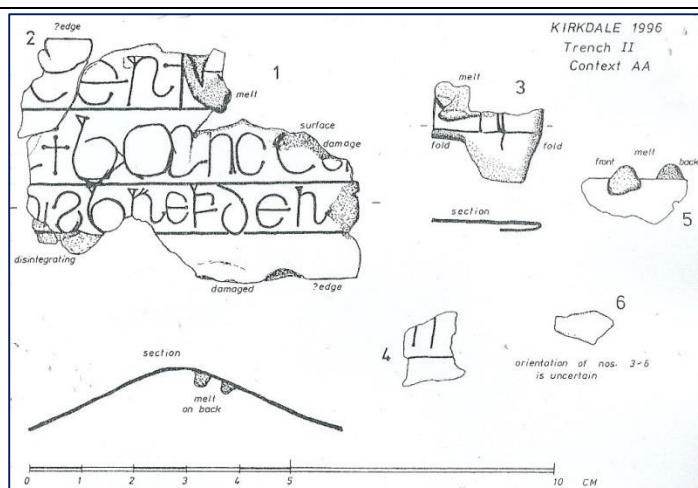
Fig. 2.6: The fragments of lead plaque excavated at Kirkdale Minster

(after Watts *et al.* 1997: 55)

The text has been interpreted as referring to a reliquary of some sort: 'the text could be interpreted as having contained the name(s) of one or more people buried, or deposited, in a *ban-c[yst]* "bone-chest" or "coffin"' (Watts *et al.* 1997: 64). The word 'cest' in Old English, which is interpreted as the language in which the inscription was written, is a derivative of the Latin word 'cista' meaning 'box': 'It will stand on its own as a term for a coffin or *theca* within which holy remains are or have been kept' (Watts *et al.* 1997: 65). The prefix of 'ban' meaning 'bone' strongly indicates that the plaque once referred to a chest of bones (Watts *et al.* 1997: 64-6). There is some speculation that the inscription might refer to the relics of St Birinus although this is tentative (Watts *et al.* 1997: 69). St Birinus died in 650 and was translated from Dorchester to Winchester c.980, after which King Cnut made a portable reliquary for his relics in 1035 (Watts *et al.* 1997: 70). There is also a remote possibility that the text may be interpreted as referring to a corpse as opposed to bones but general consensus advocates that this is not the most plausible interpretation (Watts *et al.* 1997: 74). There are strong indications in addition to the inscription, that this plaque may indeed once have been part of a translation. Although none of the references to translations in the documentary record mention plaques or inscribed shrines, it is

feasible to argue that some may have been marked in this manner. The shrine of St Wite, Whitchurch Canonicorum, for example, consists of a stone coffin containing a lead box in which are the supposed bones of saint Wite (see Section (2.2.4) (viii)). This box is inscribed with text referring to the contents; 'here rest the remains of St Wite' (Waters 1980; Syer 2005). A second indicator that there may once have been a translated burial at Kirkdale is in the form of two decorated slabs dating to the 8th and 9th centuries, which are now located under the north arcade of the 11th-century church. It is conceivable that these were once part of 'box shrines,' a type of shrine which held translated bones (Watts *et al.* 1997: 75). As the slabs are not in their original location and represent only one element of a shrine or tomb, it may be construed that they were in disrepair by the mid-11th century when the church was rebuilt, and were reused as part of the new church fabric. Other pre-11th-century masonry was reused in this manner, most notably the sundial stone in the south porch: 'the sundial stone is not *in situ* in its present location … the sundial stone is not a specially-made slab … but the side of a sarcophagus' (Watts *et al.* 1997: 89). It is plausible that the 8th- and 9th-century slabs once constituted shrines to translated individuals and that the lead plaque was also a part of these shrines. Parts of the plaque fragments show signs of melting. This, combined with the discovery of the lead pieces to the exterior of the churchyard's boundary wall (see Fig. 2.7), indicate that the plaque may have been discarded as rubbish, and the shrines to which it was connected dismantled, either at, or by the time of the church's rebuilding in the 11th century: 'Its [the plaque's] proximity to a concentrated area of metal-working debris may suggest that it had been gathered, when it was no longer useful' (Watts *et al.* 1997: 75). If the interpretation of the plaque's inscription is accurate, then it may be supposed that it would have originally been located inside the pre-11th-century church (see Section (2.2.4) (vi)). To the west of the church was a small charnel pit containing, amongst other disarticulated bones, three

crania (Rahtz & Watts 1998: 422). It is here suggested that these remains may represent the displaced contents of the potential bone casket.
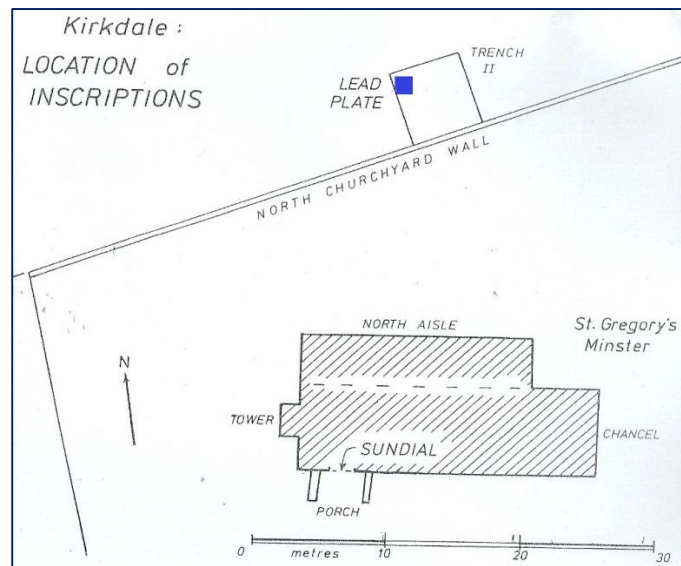
Fig. 2.7: Location of plaque fragments (highlighted in blue) excavated at Kirkdale Minster (after Watts *et al* 1997: 53)

(ii) St Oswald's Priory, Gloucester

A wooden box containing the complete disarticulated skeleton of an adult male was found during the excavations of the nave of St Oswald's Priory (Gloucester), in the late 1990s (Gilchrist & Sloane 205: 116). The reburial was dated to the late medieval period, c.1400 – 1540 (Heighway & Bryant 1999: 199, 205). The casket measured .68m x .24m x .25 m and had been nailed shut (see Fig. 2.8).
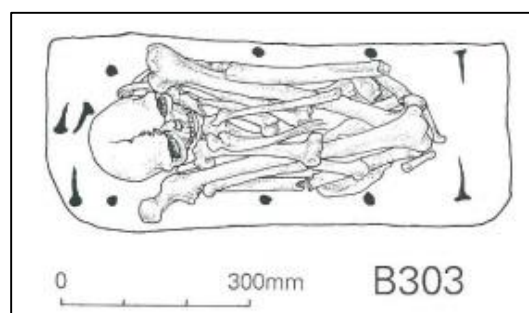
Fig. 2.8: The box reburial, St Oswald's Priory (after Heighway & Bryant 1999: 206)

The entire skeleton, including hands and feet bones, and teeth, was present in this box, which indicates a careful and complete translation of a single individual (Heighway & Bryant 1999: 205). The casket was oriented on an east-west alignment in the centre of the nave of the church (see Fig. 2.9), but there is no mention of there having been a grave cut into which the box was inserted. This is in contrast to the other archaeological examples of potential translations discussed here, which invariably were found within coffins or grave cuts. The reburial was interpreted by the excavators as being that of a high-status individual, mainly due to its location amongst other high-status interments in this area of the church (Heighway & Bryant 1999: 205-6). It is not insinuated in the site report that the reburial was that of a saintly person, in the manner of early medieval translations, but rather that this translation was necessary due to the disturbance of the original tomb by rebuilding works being carried out on the fabric of the church (Heighway & Bryant 1999: 206). The lack of a secondary container, in the form of a coffin, tomb, or grave, combined with the late date of the deposition, indicates that this is indeed a lesser translation.
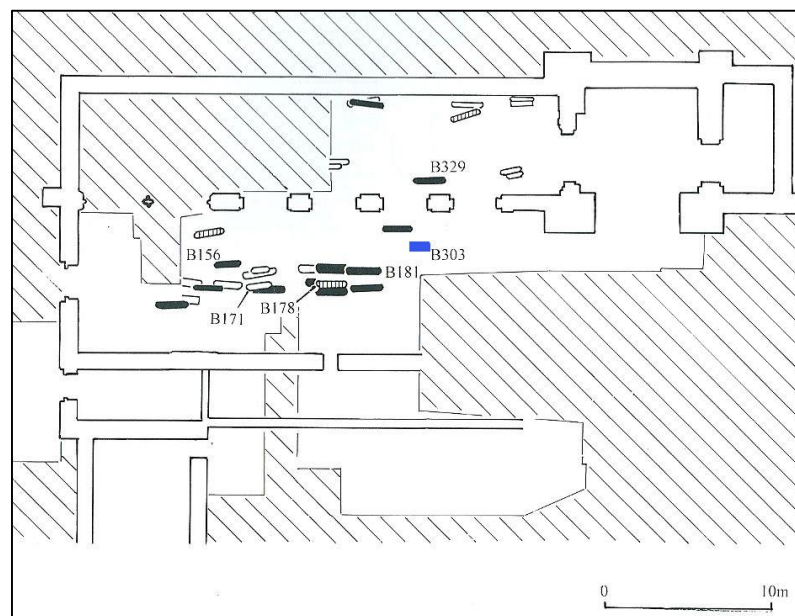
Fig.2.9: Location of the chest reburial (highlighted in blue) in the late medieval nave, St Oswald's Priory (after Heighway & Bryant 1999: 199)

(iii) St Anne's Charterhouse, Coventry (West Midlands)

The church of St Anne's, at the Carthusian Charterhouse, Coventry, was founded in 1385 (Soden 1995). Two casket reburials were identified during the excavations between 1968 and 1987. The first, Grave 23, was located in the choir, close to the altar, in a wide grave cut (2.4 m x 0.7m x 1.34m) (Soden 1995: 44, 69). At the east end of this full-sized grave, was a complete, disarticulated skeleton of a probable male, about 5'5" (see Fig. 2.10).
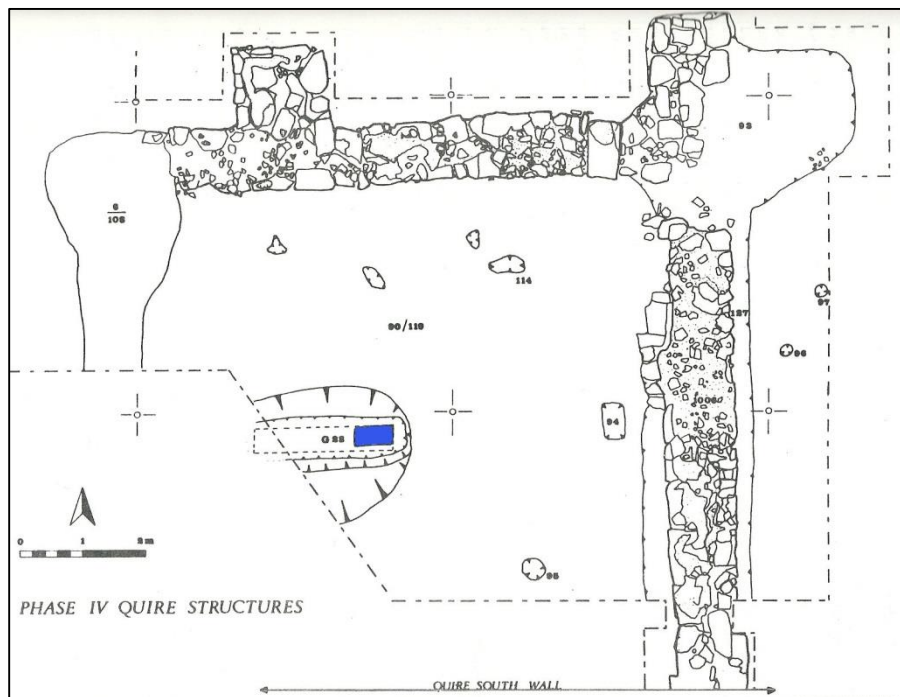
Fig. 2.10: Location of Grave 23 and the box reburial within it, the choir, St Anne's Charterhouse, Coventry (after Soden 1995: 45)

Although no casket or container was extant, the shape of the bones within the grave-cut indicated that they were once contained within a casket (Soden 1995: 69). The bones were in good condition compared to all the other burials at St Anne's and it was concluded that initially the skeleton had been buried at a different site, as the bones had not been degraded by the local acidic keuper marls as the other interments at the site had (Soden 1995: 69). The reburial was dated to after c.1475, the time at which the nave of the church was extended. It was interpreted as a reburial of a person of high status, possibly that of a member of the

church (Soden 1995: 44). The position of the reburial close to the altar, in the choir, does indicate a reburial of an ecclesiastic, as does the placing of the casket of bones in a full-sized grave (see Section (2.2.4), (4.3)). Many translations occurred after the dedication and completion of church building works (for example that of Augustine, Ethelburga, Aidan, Fursey, Cedd) and this may be why the reburial is dated to shortly after the nave extension of the church was completed, after 1475 (Soden 1995: 44; Colgrave & Mynors 1969). However, by this time period, the post-depositional translation of an individual did not necessarily represent the canonisation of that individual (see Section (2.4.1)) and the suggestion that this reburial represents that of a saintly translation must remain tentative.

The second reburial, Grave 32, was located in the nave extension of the church, and so dates to after 1475 (Soden 1995: 71). Like the first reburial, the bones were placed in a full-sized grave cut (1.3m x 0.6m x 0.28m) that extended beyond the boundary of excavation (see Fig. 2.11).
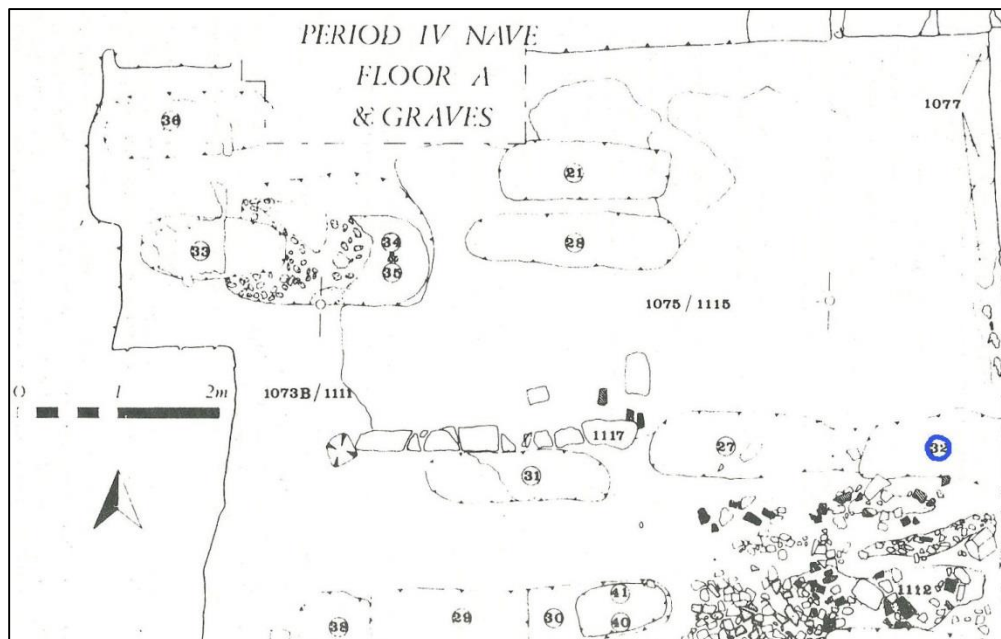
Fig. 2.11: Location of Grave 32 containing the box reburial, highlighted in blue, the nave, St Anne's Charterhouse, Coventry (after Soden 1995:49)

The arrangement of the bones indicated that they had been in a casket of some sort despite there being no remains of this container: 'the bones lay along two straight lines independent of the grave cut' (Soden 1995: 76). The disarticulated bones were that of a male 6' in height. This is unusually tall for a man of this time period (Roberts & Cox 2003: 248). The long bones are determined to have been deliberately damaged at the time of the translation, as they have been broken, presumably in order to fit them into the casket (Soden 1995: 76). Although this reburial technically constitutes a translation, it is here suggested that it represents a 'lesser translation' (see Section (2.4.1)), or the reburial of an individual but one which did not comprise canonisation. This is indicated by the location of the reburial in the nave, as opposed to the choir (see Section (2.2.4) (vi)). The reburial has also been dated to between 1475 and 1539, the time at which the nave of the church was being extended (Soden 1995: 54) and it is plausible that the primary interment site of the individual in Grave 32 was disturbed by these building works, and hence relocated to the new location due to necessity.

(iv) The Church of St Anne, Lewes (East Sussex)

In the early 20th century, what has been interpreted as an anchorite's cell was discovered at the Church of St Anne, Lewes (East Sussex) (Godfrey 1928). The cell was located beside the chancel and included a squint or slanted opening allowing visual access from the cell into the chancel (Godfrey 1928: 166). In this cell was a grave which contained a casket of bones placed underneath a stone inscribed with the words: '*Inclusa Sancte Marie de Westout*' (Godfrey 1928: 167). This appears to be reference to a woman, Marie de Westout, being 'enclosed' within the casket. The bones were identified as being that of a woman 'past middle age' but no further details are provided. This may tentatively be interpreted as representing a translation of a woman's bones. In form, the site marginally reflects that of the translation tombs or boxes

described above, where the box containing the bones of an individual were placed within an earth-cut grave, which exhibited signs of it having been modified to mimic a stone coffin: 'Below the squint the plaster of the recess continued to the bottom of the grave, which formed the back of the shaped coffin' (Schmidt & Voss 2000). It has also been claimed that the grave was once covered with a 'board or cover' (Godfrey 1928: 167). It is suggested that once this board decayed, the bones within the grave were disinterred and placed within the wooden box, which was then reinterred in the grave. Godfrey interpreted the site as having been the original grave of the anchoress, whom he presumed was represented by the bones in the box. It is here tentatively interpreted, that this site may represent a potential elevation, rather than a translation. It appears that the anchoress was originally buried in the grave within the cell of the church, below the squint. At some point her skeleton was disinterred and reinterred in a box back into the same grave. This reinterment, combined with the placing of a stone inscribed with details of the box's contents, indicates that the woman might have been elevated.

(v) St Mary of Rushen (Isle of Man)

One final site to be considered is that of the abbey of St Mary of Rushen (Isle of Man). The site was excavated between 1978 and 1979 (Butler 1988). The site dates to the 12th century when the church dedicated to St Mary of Rushen was founded (Butler 1988: 60). During the excavations, a stone coffin was discovered buried in the centre of the choir, the region which can also be known as the sanctuary (see Section (2.2.4) (vi)). The coffin was composed of mortared small (6") stones. The interior of the coffin held a wooden chest placed in the centre of the coffin, which contained the bones of three individuals. Apart from a bronze chain placed against one side of the box, the coffin was empty: 'a chest of bones had been placed in the centre of the coffin and three individuals were represented. A gilt bronze chain of 27 links lay against the north side of the chest' (Butler 1988: 74). No details are provided regarding how the

bones were arranged, if at all, within the chest, what the box's dimensions were, what specific bones were within the box, or if they were comingled. No evidence was recorded of any above-ground marker of the coffin, but as the exterior of the coffin had been disturbed during the Dissolution and in the 19th century, it is possible that one once existed. The excavator also noted that there was no cover to the coffin, but that 'some form of lid would have been necessary' (Butler 1988: 74). This burial may be considered as a translation as it conforms to some of the defining characteristics identified in Section (2.2.4). The coffin was buried in the choir, the region in front of the altar, which is the place to where numerous translations were relocated (see Section (2.2.4) (vi)). The grave comprised a 'typical' translation form; a box containing bones placed within a stone coffin, sunk into the floor near the altar of a church. The fact that three individuals were within the same box is also reminiscent of the translation of Bishops Eosterwine and Sigfrid by Bishop Acca (Farmer 2004: 208). Their bones were put into the same container which was then buried beside the coffin of a third bishop, Bishop Benedict, in front of the altar, and hence in the same region as the coffin in the church of St Mary of Rushen was buried. The bronze chain may also be an indication of the sacred nature of the coffin contents. Religious or valuable items were occasionally interred with the caskets of translated bones; Cuthbert's coffin contained textiles, a comb, a portable altar, and a cross (Battiscombe 1959: 2-17; Bonner *et al.* 1989: 231-366). It is also well documented that interments of ecclesiastics in the early medieval period often contained liturgical items (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 160-183; Daniell 1999; Hadley 2001). Although the chain is not described in any detail, its presence within the coffin may indicate the special status of the individuals within the wooden box. The precise location of the chain in relation to the box is unclear as it is merely stated that it 'lay against' the chest, but whether this was the exterior or interior of the box is not clarified (Butler 1988: 74).

(2.4.3) Articulated Versus Disarticulated Translations & Elevations

There does not appear to be a distinction for the form of shrine in which translated or elevated remains were reinterred, depending solely on whether the person was articulated and incorrupt, or disarticulated and fully skeletonised, at the time the translation or elevation was undertaken. In both cases, where stated, the translated remains were placed within a normal sized stone tomb or coffin. It was expected by those who translated the remains of Etheldreda, at Ely in 660, that she would be fully decomposed and therefore skeletonised (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 394-5). This is demonstrated by the surprise expressed by those committing the translation when they found her body to be uncorrupted (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 395). Yet when it was initially decided to perform the translation, sixteen years after the death of Æthelthryth, Sexburg ordered monks from the community at Ely to search for stone suitable with which to make a coffin. The intention must have been to build a full size coffin as the brethren returned with a sarcophagus (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 395). The body of Æthelthryth was reinterred in this sarcophagus, and as she was articulated, it must have been large enough to hold her body: 'the maidens … carried it [Æthelthryth's body] into the church, and placed it in the sarcophagus which they brought' (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 395). The disarticulated bones of St Wite are inside a box, itself set inside a full-sized stone coffin (see Fig. 2.2). As noted by Spurrell, 'a complete, but disarticulated, skeleton could be contained in quite a small container, as was St. Wita's [Wite's] at Whitchurch Canonicorum, but it was normally outwardly enshrined … in such a way as to suggest a complete skeleton or body properly laid out' (Spurrell 2000: 73). The shrine to St Bertram in Holy Cross Church, Ilam (Staffordshire), is believed to contain the disarticulated bones of St Bertram or Bertelin, which are inside a full-sized stone coffin, the 12th-century hogs-back cover of which is visible inside the shrine (see Figs 2.12 & 2.13) (Crook 2011: 243).

Figs 2.12 & 2.13: The shrine of St Bertram, Holy Cross Church, Ilam (left). Close up of the hog-back tomb cover inside the shrine (right) (Photographs author's own)

Frequently, shrines were constructed over the grave of the saintly person, whether the translation or elevation had already occurred. This is exemplified in the description of the grave and shrine of Chad. His body was translated inside the Church of St Peter, Lastingham (North Yorkshire) and a wooden structure was constructed over the original site of his grave, after his bones were removed. According to Bede, 'Chad's place of burial is a wooden coffin in the shape of a little house, having an aperture in its side, through which those who visit it out of devotion can insert their hands and take out a little of the dust' (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 347). Although the 'wooden tomb' is located over the emptied grave of Chad, it appears to be of the same form or type as the stone structures built over St Bertram's translated remains and under St Wite's coffin (see Figs 2.2, 2.12 & 2.13) (Crook 1990: 53). This particular style of shrine is referred to as a 'tomb-shrine' by Crook, which he describes as 'primarily constructed *over* graves considered worthy of veneration (whether occupied or empty), and their main feature was the provision of apertures allowing pilgrims contact with the sarcophagus itself' (Crook 1990: 50). The grave of St Swithun had a similar structure built over it, as recorded in contemporary chronicles (Crook 1990: 51). If someone's grave had such a structure erected over it prior to their translation, then relocating the whole tomb structure as well as the skeleton of that person would not only ensure recognition of the new site of

translation, but it would also explain why disarticulated bones were kept inside such an unnecessarily large container.

The addition of a tomb-shrine over the translation plus the placing of the bone casket inside a stone coffin may also have had practical reasons. The tomb containing the translated remains of St Thomas of Canterbury had a shrine similar to that of St Wite and Bertram, erected over the site, which it is recorded, was to protect the coffin while still permitting pilgrims to physically touch the saint's tomb (Crook 1990: 51). Having a large shrine would also allow more pilgrims at a time be in the vicinity of, to touch, and to pray at the saint's resting place, than if the bones were merely set inside a small box. The current form of the shrine of St Wite indicates that the tomb and tomb-shrine were both translated at the same time from their original location to the north transept of the church, to the right of the altar. The tomb-shrine contains three large apertures, to allow pilgrims physical contact with the coffin lid or ground above the coffin of St Wite (see Fig. 2.2). However, the stone coffin which contains the lead box of St Wite's bones is on top of the tomb-shrine, not underneath it, which defeats its purpose. It is believed that either at the time of translation or after its translation inside the church, the coffin was moved to its current position, above the tomb-shrine (Crook 1990: 53). It is probable that this was carried out in the 13th century when the shrine is thought to have been translated inside the church, but may be attributable to the 19th century when the tomb was opened by antiquarians (see Section (2.2.4) (viii)) (Waters 1980; Syer 2005).

2.5. Discussion: The Significance of Post-Depositional Disturbance in Relation to Translations

(2.5.1) How Were Translations Perceived Contemporarily?

According to contemporary writers in the early centuries of Christianity in Europe, the disturbance of graves was not something to be undertaken lightly. In 386 the Christian Roman Emperor Theodosius I stated that 'No person shall transfer a buried body to another place. No person shall sell the relic of a martyr; no person shall traffic in them. But if any of the saints had been buried in any place whatever, persons shall have it in their power to add whatever building they may wish in veneration of such a place, and such a building is to be called a *martyrium*' (Crook 2011: 7). The Romans viewed death as a contaminant and before the advent of Christianity bodies and graves were not disturbed, and cemeteries were deliberately located outside of city walls, away from the living (Rollason 1989: 9-11). Theodosius' opinion, and that of the Papacy and Rome, on post-depositional disturbance may have derived from this long-held Roman view. From the late 4th century, it was being suggested that secondary or non-corporeal relics of saints had virtually the same effect as corporeal relics and were being advocated by Rome as such, in order to prevent the disintegration and dispersal of primary relics and bodies of saints (Rollason 1989: 10-11). When the Byzantine empress Constantina requested Pope Gregory the Great to send her a portion of St Paul as a relic in 594, he was horrified, but instead offered to send her secondary relics, which purportedly held the same sacred value (Rollason 1989: 11; Crook 2011: 7).

By the 7th century, the rule of Rome over the matter of dismembering corporeal relics was dwindling. After the Synod of Whitby, 664, the bishop of Lindisfarne is recorded as having taken some of the bones of St Aidan back to Ireland with him (Rollason 1989: 27). The fact that some saints had been dismembered at death may have served as a justification for further dismemberment after their death. Oswald was murdered and dismembered in 642 by the pagan king Penda, after which his remains

were enshrined and revered at multiple locations in England (Rollason 1989: 28; Cox 2002: 270). The post-mortem segmentation of a deceased person may have been justifiable, but the actual *disinterment* of a person, post-deposition, was a different matter. Prior to Emperor Theodosius' decree in 386, Emperor Trajan had stated that the exhumation of tombs was acceptable, but only under exceptional circumstances such as flooding or the threat of permanent damage (Crook 2011: 6-7). The disinterment and relocation of bodies was occurring with greater frequency by the late 4th and 5th centuries in Eastern Europe, and the practice seems to have been adopted by England by at least the 7th century (Crook 2011: 6-11). It would appear that so long as the person was being disinterred and/or relocated in order to better preserve their memory or physical remains, then it was justifiable and was not viewed in a negative light.

There are various indications that it was believed that the saints themselves were requesting their own disinterment. Holy light beaming from heaven onto the grave of an individual is recorded numerous times in Lives of saints and in Bede (Colgrave & Mynors 1969; Farmer 2004). The holy status of Peter was revealed to the inhabitants of Ambleteuse, France after they had buried him unrecognised, via 'a heavenly light' that appeared over his grave every night (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 117). Peter's body was subsequently disinterred and reburied 'with all the honour due to so great a man' in a church of high standing, in Boulogne (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 117). The same light divinely indicated other 'lost' or unrecognised saints. The monks of Bardney Abbey were hesitant to accept the disinterred bones of King Oswald, until they witnessed a sign that they ought to be welcomed and revered, by 'a column of light' which shone skywards from the wagon which held Oswald's bones (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 247; Rollason 1982). Hewald the White and Hewald the Black were two priests and companions of Willibrord who were murdered whilst travelling in Frisia in 692 (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 481). The location of their bodies was highlighted by 'A great ray of light reaching to heaven' above the spot where the bodies had been hidden (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 483). The desire of God or of the saint themselves to be disinterred or relocated, justified the grave and bodily disturbance post-mortem. People also experienced visions of saints, who requested

their body to be translated, such as Swithun who appeared to a monk called Lantfred in a dream. Swithun ordered that the monk inform Bishop Æthelwold that he wished to be elevated (Crook 2011: 83). The saints' miraculous requests for their own translations were the basis for the medieval practice of relic-stealing. This was the belief that the successful attainment of a particular saint's remains, was due to that saint wishing to be obtained by those committing the robbery, so that they may be translated to a better and more deserving place of veneration: 'where the relics of a saint were in the possession of an unsuitable church, their theft by the representative of another church was not only permissible but constituted a divine indication that the saint considered the thief's church to be a more desirable resting-place' (Rollason 1989: 180; Geary 1978: 56, 76). The successful theft of relics was also a reflection on the churches in question; a church whose saint was happy for their relics to remains where they were signified the superior nature of that church and its patron over rivals (Geary 1978: 95, 109; Rollason 1989; 181).

The ability of a saint to control the fate of his own body post-mortem and post-deposition also worked in reverse. If a saint did not wish to be relocated or disturbed they could exact divine retribution on their disturbers. Fear or nervousness at the thought of disinterment or disturbance of saints' tombs and remains is often recorded in translation accounts. In 1091 the monks exhuming St Augustine's body apparently stopped and tried to replace the stone covering of his tomb from fear of celestial retribution, but were urged on to complete the act by the presiding abbot (Nilson 1998: 27). Fear was also expressed at the elevation of Cuthbert in 1104 in Durham. The monks were 'trembling and tearful' at the prospect of opening his tomb (Nilson 1998: 27). In the mid-10th century, Abbot Leofstan had examined the preserved body of St Edmund, including attempting to pull the miraculously re-attached once decapitated head off the remainder of Edmund's body. For this sacrilege, Leofstan was struck blind and dumb, and the hands which had touched the saint's head so irreverently, withered (Nilson 1998: 27-8). An unjustified post-mortem disturbance was swiftly dealt with by divine punishment of the perpetrator. These attitudes illustrate that there was some level of fear at unjustified disturbance of a dead body. It appears to have been believed that saints, particularly uncorrupted

saints, still retained an element of life. This same belief is evident in later medieval images and poems, which show or describe people 'alive' within graves (see Fig. 2.14) (see Chapter 6). There was also an early medieval belief that bodies could come alive and move around to avenge those who had wronged them in life (Joynes 2001).

Fig. 2.14: 15ᵗʰ century image from German Office of The Dead, of a deceased man talking to God (after Binski 1996: Plate VI)

Aside from this general acceptance of there being 'degrees' of death, the opinion of the lay communities regarding translations and the disturbance of graves is not recorded in as much detail as that of the ecclesiastics. Translations were an exclusive practice; only higher order ecclesiastics and royalty could be directly involved with the custom, and hagiographical and documentary accounts focus on the ecclesiastic or royal outlook and perceptions of grave disturbance in relation to translations (Farmer 2004; Colgrave & Mynors 1969; Keynes 2007). The attitudes of the lay or 'ordinary' person towards these acts are provided in later translation accounts, such as that of Erkenwald, Swithun and Thomas Becket (see Section (2.2.5)). Non-ecclesiastics also feature in numerous accounts of visions of saints who appeared to peasants or other lay members of society. Aside from these scant details it is difficult to assess the general public's opinion on the disinterment of saints, but as it was an accepted and reverent practice in the eyes of the clergy and the royalty, it cannot have been regarded with disdain by lay people, who comprised the majority of the

population. The fear or wariness expressed in some accounts of those partaking in the physical disinterment of a saint was probably also felt by the general population – if a saint could reprimand someone, let alone a member of clergy, from beyond the grave, then how a lowly peasant might expect to be treated in such a circumstance would be far worse.

Yet from the 7th century, translations were not the sole post-depositional occurrences that were practiced in England. There is evidence to suggest that various other types of intentional post-depositional disturbances were taking place, throughout England in the early centuries of Christianity, in relation to non-secular graves. It will be necessary to look at these other contemporary post-mortem activities in order to fully comprehend the magnitude and role of post-depositional funerary activity in the Christian Anglo-Saxon period. These behaviours and attitudes towards the buried dead may have derived from pre-Christian funerary practices, but with the concurrent initiation of translations and elevations, they may have been viewed as a justification for other disinterment activities to continue or escalate. Although documented reactions to translations is strikingly absent with regard to the lay population, the prevailing opinion may be ascertained via an exploration of the other contemporary post-depositional practices utilised from the 7th century onwards. This analysis will form the basis for the proceeding chapter.

2.6. Conclusion

The initiation in the 7th century of the translation of saints marks the first Christian structured post-depositional intentional disturbance of a burial in England. The exclusive practice of publicly identifying someone as a saint necessitated the act of disinterment. The opening and emptying of a grave was morally and liturgically justified as a means to an end; the exaltation of the person superseded any negativity and taboo regarding disinterment, and hence the desecration, of a grave. The act centred on the real physical remnants of an individual, indicating that a *representation* of bones was insufficient for appropriate reverence of a saint. The bones themselves were regarded as retaining an element of life, a crucial factor which can be traced in subsequent post-depositional practices of the medieval period (see Chapters 3-7). Each component of the translation ritual and procedure served a unique role in justifying the translation and maintaining its sacred nature. It is now apparent that even the very earliest examples conformed to a strict methodology, designed to preserve the dignity and sanctity of the person involved in the obtrusive and potentially sacrilegious act of disinterment.

Translations were introduced, practiced by and pertained to ecclesiastics. The act represents the first structured and regimented post-depositional treatment in Christian England. The fact that it was initiated by higher orders of society and was patronised by royalty, means that it was upheld by the most powerful and influential people in the country. The acceptance and perception of this act by the remainder of the country, the ordinary lay population, was potentially the basis by which additional and contemporary post-deposition activities were instigated and validated. These other forms of disturbance will be discussed in the proceeding chapters.

CHAPTER 3: EARLY MEDIEVAL POST-DEPOSITIONAL DISTURBANCE

3.1. Introduction

Post-depositional disturbance of buried human remains is defined as the intentional or accidental movement or complete displacement of an individual or part of an individual, within or from their original burial context to another location. As we have seen, physical interaction with the buried dead could be understood to be indicative of derogatory treatment (see Chapter 1), the implication being that displacing contents of graves signifies total disregard for the individuals concerned. Amongst osteoarchaeologists in particular, post-depositional disturbance is considered generally inconsequential, and disarticulated material regarded as not necessary to analyse, especially where time is a constraint (see Chapter 1). The post-burial disturbance of graves is frequently encountered during the excavation of early medieval (c. 600 – 1100) cemeteries in England. Despite the high frequency of secondary depositions and reburials across the period, these have been subject to little analysis, in comparison to the focus on funerary rites and the diversity of primary depositions. These post-burial incidences vary significantly in their manifestations and consistency between sites, with some exhibiting large-scale and numerous forms of disturbance, while others are relatively disturbance free, or exhibit limited modes of disturbance. When the term 'early medieval disturbance' is used throughout this thesis, it refers to post-depositional disturbance that took place during the early medieval period, and not the disturbance of early medieval burials, in the later medieval or post-medieval periods.

The purpose of this chapter is to identify and record each type of post-depositional disturbance reported in early medieval (7th – 12th century) cemeteries and to categorise those disturbances according to their defining characteristics. This classification will be achieved by examining how physical interaction with the dead was undertaken combined with analysis of the physical manifestations of disturbed material in redeposition contexts. Doing so is expected to ascertain the motivations

inherent in the disturbance of a grave and the disinterment of its occupant, to distinguish regulations or prohibitions inherent in the disturbance of the dead and to comprehend how these occurrences were regarded and justified (or not) by contemporary society. This classification will form the basis for comparison to the post-depositional disturbances of the later medieval period (c. 1100 – 1550), throughout which there is also substantial evidence for post-depositional disturbance. This catalogue will reveal which treatments and behaviours originated in the early medieval period, which persisted into the later medieval period and which are only evident during the early medieval period.

The crossover point between the early and later medieval period was a tumultuous time in England; after the conversion of the country to Christianity and the political changes of the 10th and 11th centuries (see Chapter 2 Section (2.3.2)), there was the Norman Conquest in 1066, followed by further political and social change into the 12th century (Thompson 2004: 35-40). At numerous sites discussed below there are burials that date to this crossover period. Where the majority of the burials belong to an early medieval phase (11th century or early 12th century) they have classed for the purposes of this thesis as early medieval burials. Where the majority of burials date to the later 12th century and afterwards they have been classed as later medieval burials.

3.2: Post-Depositional Disturbance in Early Medieval England

(3.2.1) Research to Date

This catalogue of post-burial activity will be directly compared to later medieval examples of post-depositional disturbance, to ascertain which, if any, manners of disturbance were continued and discontinued, and to distinguish how and why conduct in relation to displaced skeletal material varied and evolved throughout the entire medieval period. This comparative analysis will comprise Section (4.3), Chapter 4.

Numerous forms of post-burial movement and disturbance of graves and their contents have been identified at various early medieval cemeteries (see Table 3.1). Although some of these occurrences have been reported in detail within individual site reports, the topic of post-depositional disturbance is rarely discussed collectively as a subject in its own right. One notable exception to this is the study of post-depositional disturbance in early medieval Wessex by Annia Cherryson, in which she highlights the frequency of occurrence of disturbances across a range of cemetery types (Cherryson 2005; 2007). Cherryson emphasises the normalcy and significance of early medieval post-depositional behaviour and provides insights into motivations behind the occurrences.

Despite the relatively high number of cemetery sites exhibiting incidences of post-depositional disturbance, no attempt has previously been made to categorise those examples. This may partly be due to the potential determination that any post-depositional disturbance was both disrespectful and unavoidable, it taking place as a consequence of other primary liturgical, funerary, or functional considerations; 'the re-use of graves is generally characterised by a lack of respect towards the original occupant' (Cherryson 2005: 76). Incidences of disturbance are generally regarded as indicators of the cemetery in which the disturbances occurred becoming 'full' (Boddington 1996: 49; Adams 1996: 182; Cherryson 2007: 133 & 136). By this it is meant that there was no empty cemetery space available in which to continue

burying the dead or conduct building works, without disturbing or displacing already buried individuals within that cemetery. Many, though certainly not all, cases of disturbance occurred in the years leading up to and after cemeteries were being 'bound' or enclosed, which happened around the $10^{th} - 11^{th}$ century (Hadley & Buckberry 2005: 130; Zadora-Rio 2003; Adams 1996: 181-183; Boddington 1996: 49). The extent of the burial grounds was delineated, thus limiting the geographical space in which people could be interred, and thereby necessitating burial space to be re-used (Gittos 2002). The same explanation is provided for incidences of post-depositional disturbances in later medieval graveyards (see Chapters 4, 5 & 7). While these processes may explain why some of the disturbances occurred, it does not elucidate how the physical disturbance of the dead was regarded by early medieval communities, who could feasibly have personally known every individual interred, and disinterred, within their cemetery. Nor does it account for the various manifestations of disinterred human material which have been identified in graves and pits at numerous different sites. The important consideration which has not been addressed thus far, is how this disturbed skeletal material was treated. The manner in which disinterred remains were subsequently reinterred requires analysis. This will be achieved by identifying defining characteristics indicative of each of these forms of disturbance, to permit the categorisation of early medieval post-depositional disturbance as a whole. It is intended that this classification will permit insights into, not only how disturbance was regarded, but also how the seemingly unavoidable question of disinterment was resolved, and whether any additional considerations besides issues of limited space, were integral in the displacement of the dead.

Table 3.1: Examples of post-depositional disturbance mentioned in-text.

Site	Site Type	Date	Age & M/F	Disturbance
St Andrew Fishergate, York	Church & Priory	Period 4: 11th/12th C.	12-14 juvenile	Wrapped after advanced decomposition had taken place and redeposited in wide grave (1847)
		Period 4: 11th/12th C.	Adult F	Wrapped prior to decomposition and redeposited when decomposition was advanced (6412)
		Period 4: 11th/12th C.	12 Adults (4?M 1?F), 1 Adolescent, 1 child	Charnel deposit (1919), in fill of grave (1922)
		Period 4: 11th/12th C.	4 Adults (2?M 1?F), 1 child	Charnel pit (1900)
		Period 4: 11th/12th C.	1 Adult (?M)	Charnel Pit (2427)
		Period 4: 11th/12th C.	1 Adult 1 Subadult	Charnel Pit (6122)
Ailcy Hill, Ripon	Cemetery	Phase 1a	-	Charnel (right and left Tibiae, left fibula)
		Phase 1b	3 Adults 2M 1?F, 1 Juvenile <13	Charnel in fill of (1015)
		Phase 1b	1 Adult M, 1 Juvenile <13	Charnel in fill of (1026)
		Phase 1b	1Adult M	Charnel in fill of (1037)
		Phase 1b	3 Adults, 1 Juvenile	Charnel laid against S edge of grave cut (1095)
		Phase 1b		Charnel in backfill grave (2010). 1M represented by all major bones except lower legs. 1? Had metopic suture
		Phase 2	4 Adults (3M, ?1)	Charnel deposit (1005)
		Phase 2	-	Charnel in gravefill grave (1043), a possible chest burial
		Phase 2	3 Adults (1 ?F, 1 Juvenile)	Charnel in fill of grave (1045), a possible chest burial
		Phase 2	5 Adults, 2 juveniles	Charnel deposit (1050)
		Phase 2	4 Adult M	Charnel in backfill of Grave (1065)
		Phase 2	5 Adults, 2 Juveniles	Charnel in backfill grave (1073). Many long bones arranged around sides of (1073)/'framed' (1073)
		Phase 2	3 Adults, 2 Juveniles	Charnel in backfill grave (1092)
		Phase 2	Fragments 2 Adult skulls	Charnel in fill of grave (2006), a prone burial. Metopic suture
		Phase 2	4 Adults, 4 M	Charnel in fill of Grave (2011)
		Phase 3a	2 Adults	Charnel in backfill (1048)
		Phase 3a	4 Adults , 1Juvenile	Charnel in fill of grave (1051)
		Phase 3b	2 Adults (1F), 1 Juvenile (10-12)	Charnel in fill of grave (1023)
		Phase 2 7th-11th C.	1 Adult, (F)	29 Discrete groups of disarticulated bone incorporated within graves of 11 articulated burials
		Phase 3 7th-11th C.		Triple burial (1023, 1022, 1019) disturbed and mostly removed Phase 2 underlying skeleton (1979)
St Peter's Church, Barton-On-Humber	Church & Cemetery	Pre-9th C.-Late A-S	-	At least 35 graves completely emptied prior to construction of church
		Late A-S	-	At least 2 emptied graves

Table 3.1: Examples of post-depositional disturbance mentioned in-text (continued).

Site	Type	Date	Sex/Age (ID)	Description
Addingham, West Yorkshire	Church & Cemetery	8th–10th C.	-	9 emptied graves
				Grave F259 of disarticulated/secondary interment (A265) reopened for deposition of articulated interment (A261)
		8th–10th C.	-	Grave F35 of primary interment (A45), reopened and charnel of 6 individuals added, above (A45)
		8th–10th C.	-	Grave F140 contained 5 incomplete individuals in a single fill. Secondary interment (A166), followed by articulated interment (A144 and (A143), followed by 2 secondary interments
		8th–10th C.	-	Grave F113 contained more than 1 articulated/primary interment
		8th–10th C.	-	Grave F140 contained more than 1 articulated/primary interment
		8th–10th C.	-	27 primary interments contained secondary depositions of 14 individuals
		8th–10th C.	-	Articulated (A151) had bones (A150) arranged around it
		8th–10th C.	-	Grave F145 of burial (A147) had 2 skulls and bones deposited at foot of grave
Raunds Furnells, Northamptonshire	Church & Cemetery	10th–12th C.	M Adult (5128)	(5128) in triangular arrangement at feet of (5076)
		10th–12th C.		Femora of (5129) arranged at shoulders of (5127), the other bones alongside burial (5127)
		10th–12th C.		(5078) arranged alongside (5118), a coffined burial
		10th–12th C.	M 45+ (5156)	(5157)'s skull used with stones to lift (5156) off grave bottom. (5156) tightly wrapped at time of deposition
		10th–12th C.	F 25–35	(5239) reburial in 'sack'
		10th–12th C.		Bones of 3 burials in bottom of church construction trench
		10th–12th C.		3 individuals redeposited in 2 pits against N wall of 2nd church. Presumed to be from stone coffins (5094A) (M), (5094B) (F), (5236) (F)
		10th–12th C.		(5282) may be articulated interment in stone coffin after it was emptied
		10th–12th C.		Emptied grave of burial (5188), which was reburied in pit
		10th–12th C.		(5200) had dislocated left humerus, possibly while grave being emptied, which was ceased. May have been in advanced state of decomposition
		10th–12th C.		Possible emptied grave north of church
Bevis Grave, Hampshire	Rural Cemetery	7th–10th C.		Grave 42 reopened at least once, with original occupants arranged around last articulated insertion
				Grave 49 reopened twice, with original occupants arranged around last articulated insertion
Portsdown II, Hampshire	Rural Cemetery	7th C.		Grave 5 reopened for second burial, original occupant redeposited in grave fill
Pontefract, West Yorkshire	Rural Cemetery	7th–9th/10th C.		Graves with articulated burials inserted into grave, original occupant/s reinterred around new insertion
SOU 13, Hampshire	Urban Cemetery	8th–9th C.		Burial 30's skull disturbed by digging of pit, put back in its coffin/coffin space
				2 skulls redeposited beside eachother in pit which disturbed burial 30. One skull probably from Grave 33
				Burial 17 reopened numerous times, 8 individuals arranged around Burial 17

Bath Abbey, Somerset	Urban Cathedral & Cemetery	Late Saxon	33 Adults	Charnel pit containing 33 adults
Barnstaple, Devon	Urban Cemetery, Possible Church	Late Saxon		9 empty/emptied graves
				Grave 8 contained 3 disarticulated individuals redeposited in single context. Broken skulls were at west end, long bones arranged in diamond pattern at east, remainder of bones deposited in the centre.
Wells Cathedral, Somerset	Urban Cathedral & Cemetery	Middle-Late Saxon		Burials 99 & 100 reopened for second burial, original occupant arranged around last articulated insertion
				Roman mausoleum/9th-10th C. building contained 41 individuals deposited over long period of time prior to being sealed in 10th C.
Trowbridge, Wiltshire	Church & Cemetery	10th-12th C.		Skulls used as 'pillow' stones in 6 burials
St Mary Stadium, Hampshire	Rural Cemetery	7th-8th C.		8 graves disturbed by pit digging, 1 emptied with contents redeposited in pit
Winchester Cathedral, Hampshire	Urban Cathedral & Cemetery	8th-11th C.		1000 individuals redeposited in robber trench
Portchester Castle, Hampshire	Urban Cemetery	7th- 11th C.		2 charnel pits containing 2 redeposited burials
Hereford Catheral, Herefordshire	Urban Cathedral & Cemetery	8th-11th C.	5000+ individuals	Charnel pit containing an estimated 5000 individuals

(3.2.2) Categories of Post-Depositional Disturbance

The term 'post-depositional disturbance' refers to the movement or displacement of an individual or part of that individual, within or from their initial burial location, at some point after their interment, and generally after complete decomposition and disarticulation had transpired. The disturbance may have been large scale, involving multiple individuals or may have only affected a single individual and interment at a time. The ensuing categories of disturbance have been divided into two subheadings on this basis. Disturbances frequently caused the complete displacement of the individual from their grave and their redeposition in another, unidentifiable, location. The disturbance of a large number of individuals, however, frequently involved only movement of the skeletal remains within the same grave cut with no elements being removed from the grave (See Table 3.1). It is apparent from this lengthy and convoluted definition that post-depositional disturbance encompassed a wide variety of behaviours in relation to interred individuals during the early medieval period. Despite this, little attempt has been made to distinguish between the various manifestations of disturbance at numerous different sites. This may, in part, be due to a lack of recognition of the frequency of occurrence of disturbances, resulting in instances of disturbed remains being marginalised in favour of investigation of articulated burials. The lack of detail in publications concerning disarticulated material reflects, perhaps, a lack of interest and an assumption that it is of little use and relevance to cemetery interpretations. The often limited descriptions of disturbed burials and skeletal material may also have served to downplay the quantity, intensity and variety of disturbances.

The manner by which the individual came to be disturbed, how disturbed bones were subsequently treated, and how those disturbed remains are manifested in the re-deposition context, are important factors in determining categories of disturbance. These factors demonstrate some degree of care and attention accorded to disturbed material, in addition to the necessity of continuing to respectfully inter the deceased at the sites in question. This in turn indicates that skeletal material comprising deceased individual/s was not solely, if at all, regarded as rubbish and its disturbance

a nuisance. It additionally reveals substantial evidence in relation to early medieval cemetery management.

There now follows a detailed account and classification of all post-depositional disturbances dating to the early medieval period in England that have been identified in this course of research for the present study.

1) Disturbance of Single Individuals

    (i) Translations & Elevations

Translations and elevations were the deliberate and intentional removal of a person's remains from their grave, in order to relocate those bones or preserved body to a church's interior, where they could be revered more appropriately in a sanctified location, as relics (see Chapter 2). This act of disinterring a grave signifies the first incidence of *structured* post-depositional disturbance in relation to Christian practices, in that there was a prescribed set of procedures to adhere to in order to complete the translation correctly (see (2.2.4)). Translations were initially reserved for ecclesiastics, but in later centuries also included royalty, signifying that the act was an exclusive one. This category of post-depositional disturbance is discussed fully in the preceding chapter (see Chapter 2).

    (ii) Emptied & Empty Graves

During numerous early medieval cemetery excavations, grave cuts have been identified without an inhumation being extant. The two interpretations postulated for these occurrences are that the graves had once been occupied but the inhumation was disinterred for some unknown reason, or that the graves were dug in preparation for future and imminent burials (Adams 1996: 163; Miles 1986: 68; Rodwell & Rodwell 1982: 294). A total of nine empty graves were excavated at Addingham (West Yorkshire), three of which lay partially outside the area under excavation and were not conclusively determined to be devoid of skeletal remains. A fourth, Grave F205, may have been the grave of an

infant whose skeletal remains did not survive to be excavated (Adams 1996: 163). The five remaining graves were determined as being empty when they were filled in. This infilling is presumed to have taken place in a single event, as opposed to the grave having been left open for any extended period and filled in in stages or by natural deposition. This is due to there being no inclusions within the graves' fills that may indicate that they were left open for periods of time, so that the fill gradually accumulated. As discussed in (vi) below, there were many graves at Addingham which contained the remains of more than one individual, who were deposited at different times, meaning that the graves had been reopened on at least one occasion. It is postulated by the excavators that the former occupants of the empty graves were deliberately disinterred, whether articulated or disarticulated, and redeposited in these reopened graves; 'given the number of graves containing multiple interments … individuals were removed from these five graves (and, perhaps, others which have not been located), and redeposited in different graves as secondary interments' (Adams 1996: 163). There is no indication whether all the graves, which are in the same area of the cemetery (see Fig. 3.1), were disinterred simultaneously or if they were emptied *ad hoc*, when another burial was taking place elsewhere in the cemetery, and which could then accommodate that disinterred individual.
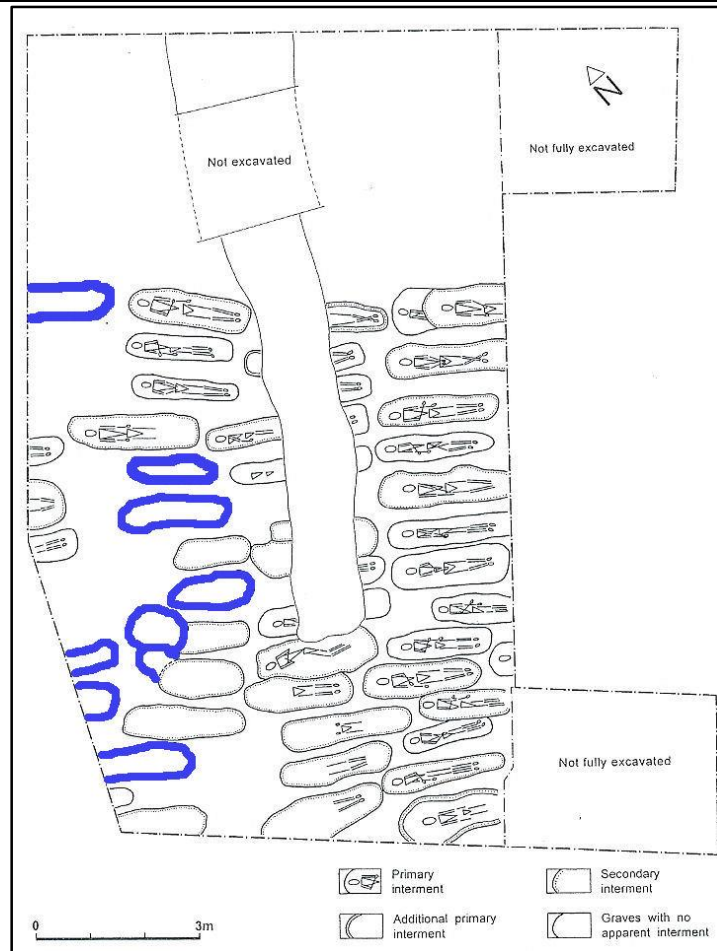
Fig. 3.1: Excavation plan of Addingham, (West Yorkshire), depicting the emptied graves (outlined in blue), all located in the north-west of the cemetery (after Adams 1996: 162, Fig.6)

St Peter's Church, Barton-Upon-Humber (Lincolnshire), also exhibited emptied graves. The occupants of at least thirty-five graves were systematically disinterred and their graves refilled prior to a new church being constructed over them in the 11th century (Rodwell & Rodwell 1982: 294). Further empty graves were excavated east of the chancel of the church and south of the tower (Rodwell & Rodwell 1982: 301). At Barnstaple (Devon), prior to the Norman castle being constructed, nine graves were excavated which were completely devoid of human skeletal material (Miles 1986: 68). At Raunds Furnells (Northamptonshire), two graves are described as being 'abandoned,' presumably mid-way through the creation of the grave, although this is not wholly apparent in the excavation report. Two graves and interments are described as having

been disturbed, at which point the new grave digging ceased, with 'the disturbed bones being neatly laid in the pit (5188, G1512).' (Boddington 1996: 28). The 'pit' referred to here is assumed to represent the unfinished grave. A second grave was abandoned 'after dislocation of the left humerus of 5200 (G1011)' (Boddington 1996: 28). Although not proposed by Boddington, it is here suggested that the inhumation within G1011 was still in articulation and not fully decomposed, thus necessitating it being left *in situ* and causing the new grave to be abandoned mid-construction (see (3.2.2) (v) and (3.3.2)).

The emptying of graves is also mentioned in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, and a reason for the disinterments is provided. Sometime in the 7th century, the abbess Hildilid of Barking ordered the mass disinterment of an unknown number of individuals buried in the religious community's cemetery: 'As the site on which the monastery was built was very limited, she decided that the bones of the servants and handmaidens of Christ which had been buried there should all be taken up and transferred to the church of the blessed Mother of God and buried there in one place' (Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 363-364, IV. 10). This example of large scale disinterment is earlier than the disinterments discussed thus far and occurred at a religious house as opposed to at the cemeteries of parish churches. This is one of the few documented examples of disinterment where the reason for grave disturbance is specifically recorded.

(iii) Wrapped Decomposing Bodies

These are burials of individuals who were placed in their graves in a state of advanced decomposition. This has been determined by the physical position of the skeleton within the grave, which must have been very tightly bound for the bones to display such extreme constriction (see Figs 3.2 & 3.3). There are numerous explanations for this type of burial. The individual may have died without the knowledge of anybody else and were only found once in a state of decomposition, at which point they

were wrapped to contain the decaying body, and transported to the cemetery for burial. It may equally have been the case that the individual died far away from the cemetery, and had to be transported a long distance, hence the body was decomposing by the time of burial came about. A third explanation may be that the person requested to be buried at a particular cemetery, which necessitated the body being taken a long distance, and by the time the cemetery was reached, was in an advanced state of decay. Finally, it could also be that the person was initially buried, in the same cemetery or another, and was disinterred from their 'first' grave. At the cemetery of St Andrew Fishergate, York (North Yorkshire), Burial (6412), an adult female was interpreted as having been wrapped 'such that the bones were not lost' (see Fig. 3.2) (Stroud & Kemp 1993: 159). This may have been a consideration, but it is more plausible that the body was wrapped to make movement easier, or to prevent body fluids from escaping. Both burials were tentatively dated to Period 4b of the site, the 11th/12th century. It is postulated by the excavators, that the burials may have been disturbed in a later period, 4d (Stroud & Kemp 1993: 159).
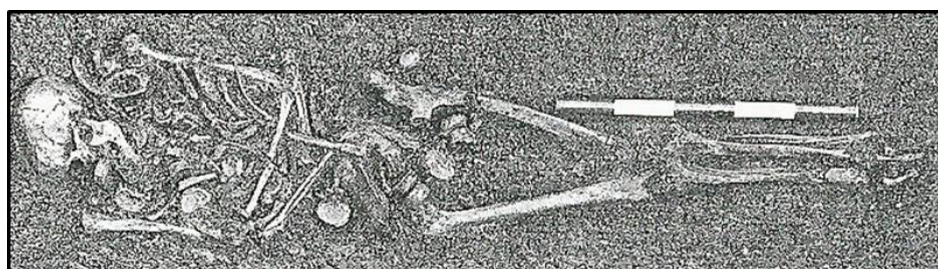
Fig. 3.2: Burial 6412, of a tightly wrapped individual, an adult female, from the early medieval phase 4b (10th – early 12th centuries), St Andrew Fishergate. Note the constricted position of the skeleton (after Stroud & Kemp 1993: 148, Fig.42, j)

It is possible that these individuals may have been wrapped and re-wrapped more than once. Where this occurred, it is likely to have been done for practical reasons of replacing binding or wrapping which was soaked in decaying matter and was causing leakage of body fluids (see

Chapter 6 Section (6.2)). In some cases, it is clear that the wrapping or binding had to have occurred after decomposition had begun, as noted for a second wrapped burial (1847) at St Andrew Fishergate (see Fig. 3.3) (Stroud & Kemp 1993: 159).

Fig. 3.3: Burial 1548, of a tightly wrapped individual, aged 12-14 years, from the early medieval phase 4b (10th – early 12th centuries), St Andrew Fishergate. Note the constricted position of the skeleton (after Stroud & Kemp 1993: 148, Fig.42)

The burial was of a juvenile, between 12 and 14 years of age (Stroud & Kemp 1993: 131). Despite there not being any emptied graves noted in the cemetery dating to this period, it is speculated by the excavators that 'this body had been lifted from a grave before being placed in the shroud and was then redeposited' (Stroud & Kemp 1993: 159). The burial had been placed in a very wide grave. This is an odd treatment, as the burial was laid on its side, as if to take up as little space as possible, negating the requirement of making a grave of this size (Stroud & Kemp 1993: 148-149). It may have been intended to add more individuals to this grave, which for some reason did not occur.

The second site to exhibit a wrapped burial is that of Raunds Furnells. Burial (5156), a male aged about 45, was deemed to have been tightly wrapped prior to burial due to the obvious constriction of the skeleton; '[Burial 5156] is so tightly parallel-sided that it was almost certainly buried in a tightly wrapped shroud' (see Fig. 3.4) (Boddington 1996: 28).

Fig. 3.4: Burial 5156, of an adult male, who was tightly wrapped prior to burial. Note how the skeleton is constricted, and lies on a cranium and stones (after Boddington 1996: 29, Fig.31)

The body had also been placed on top of both stones and the cranium of (5157), whose grave the burial intercut. Stone additions to graves were identified in over half of the graves at Raunds Furnells, were not restricted to adults or juveniles and were also in both male and female graves. According to the excavators, 'Stones placed within the graves served one or both of two functions: to support the body, particularly the head, and to protect against the earth backfill and later intrusions' (Boddington 1996: 38). The stones and crania under the wrapped body of (5156) did not, however, serve either of these functions. It appears that the intention was to prop the body off the grave floor, although the necessity of doing this is not apparent. It may have been a preventative measure to avoid the decomposing matter from coming into contact with the earth, as with the wrapping of the bodies at St Andrew Fishergate. On certain occasions, blood and other bodily fluids were regarded as contaminating to consecrated ground during the later medieval period, requiring re-consecration of the cemetery and associated church prior to any further burials or liturgical practices being performed (see Chapter 6 Section (6.2)) (Daniell 1999: 94; Hadley 2001: 176). It has not been verified if this specific observance was in place in the early medieval period, although there were certainly beliefs pertaining to decomposing body matter and the disturbance and treatment of the dead. These may be interpreted as the precursor to the initiation of more structured

regulations concerning burial and disturbance of decomposing bodies in consecrated ground.

(iv) Sack Reburials

Reburials of disarticulated individuals in sacks or bags have been identified at later medieval sites although only one has been noted from an early medieval site, that of Raunds Furnells (Boddington 1996: 28-29). A reburial in this manner has been identified at the later medieval hospital site of Partney (Lincolnshire) (see Chapter 4 Section (4.2.2) 1) (iv)). In both cases, it was determined that these reburials were fully disarticulated at the time of the secondary deposition. The example from Raunds Furnells contained the entire skeleton of an adult female, including the bones of the hands and feet (see Fig. 3.5) (Boddington 1996: 28-29).
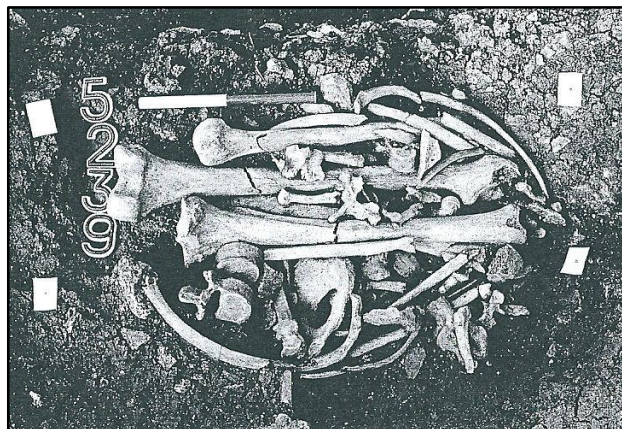
Fig. 3.5: Sack or bag reburial of complete adult female skeleton (after Boddington 1996: 29, Fig.30)

The bones were redeposited in the northern part of the cemetery in a small pit which was seemingly dug for the purpose of reburial, instead of being inserted into a grave. Judging by the shape of the bones within the pit, it was speculated that the individual's skeleton was placed in a bag or sack of some description, prior to being reburied in a small hole (Boddington 1996: 28). The excavators suggested that this reburial

represents an interment displaced by the construction of the second church at the site, but no interpretation is provided for why the bones were placed in a bag, when other displaced individuals were not (Boddington 1996: 28). It may be that this person was not initially buried within the Raunds cemetery but was transported to this secondary location for reburial, hence necessitating the need for a vessel of some description, to contain the bones during transportation. Cases of individuals' skeletal remains being moved from one location to another, after burial and disarticulation, do occur in the early medieval period, but these are generally in relation to translations of people regarded as saints (see (i) & Chapter 2). In the later medieval period, occasionally the bodies of people who died abroad were boiled to separate bones from flesh, so as to facilitate their transport back to England for burial. This was normally the remit of knights or royalty, or of people who died whilst on pilgrimage (Daniell 1999: 87). Others were disarticulated for the purpose of viscera burials, where a person's body was 'shared' by numerous ecclesiastic establishments, so that their patronage could extend to more than one church after their death (see Chapter 4 Section (4.2.2) 1) (v)) (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 80, 159-160). Others still, requested in wills that their bodies be disinterred and relocated after a specific time had elapsed (Orme 2007: 97-98). It might be that this sack reburial represents one of these post-depositional treatments. If so, it is one of the earliest recorded examples of such behaviour.

2) Disturbance of Multiple Individuals

(v) Articulated Insertions Into Reopened Graves

This act is defined as the addition of an articulated individual into an already occupied grave which was deliberately reopened to accommodate the new burial. The same grave may be targeted and reopened on numerous successive occasions. At the time of each new insertion, the original occupant was removed, permitting the newly inserted additional burial to have full contact with and rest on the grave

floor. In no case is it recorded that the new insertion was placed directly on top of the original occupant or that any part of the original occupant was left *in situ* prior to the new inhumation being inserted. Large quantities, though not all, of the skeleton/s of the original graves' occupant/s were subsequently replaced into the reopened graves, after their disturbance. These were either redeposited in the fill of the grave, as at Grave 5 at the rural 7th-century cemetery at Portsdown II (Hampshire) (Cherryson 2005: 76), or more usually, the bones were arranged around the additional burial. At least one grave from the Bowl Hole cemetery, at Bamburgh Castle (Northumberland) exhibited evidence of the secondary addition of an individual into a grave (Groves 2003). An elderly male individual was moved to the sides of a cist grave, after decomposition had occurred, and a middle-aged female was inserted into the cist (Craig 2009: 125). The same pattern of inserting individuals into an old grave that was already occupied was also noted by Craig to have occurred at the 7th-11th-century cemetery at Jarrow (Durham) and the 7th – 10th centuries at Thwing (east Yorkshire), and Norton Bishopsmill School (Durham) (Craig 2009: 224-225). At Thwing, it was noted that 'a significant number of graves were dug directly over others, disturbing the interments below' (Craig 2009: 125). It is difficult to clarify, however, if this constituted the deliberate targeting of specific graves for additional insertions, or if it represents the digging of graves that happened to disturb older graves beneath them (Craig 2009: 179). Graves 42 and 49 at Bevis Grave (Hampshire), were both reopened at least twice, on each occasion the original occupant was disinterred and rearranged – disarticulated – around the newly interred individual (see Fig. 3.6) (Cherryson 2005: 76; 2007: 132). The same was noted for an unknown number of burials at Wells Cathedral (Somerset) (see Fig. 3.7) (Cherryson 2005: 78). The cemetery at Addingham (West Yorkshire), also exhibited this practice of grave reopening, with at least two graves reopened for a second burial, one of which, Grave F35, had the remains of at least six individuals surrounding the new interment (see Table 3.1)

(Adams 1996: 167). Grave F259 constituted a deposit of disarticulated bones (A265) in a full-sized grave, which was subsequently reopened to accommodate an articulated burial, (A261) (Adams 1996: 165).

Single graves of this category may contain skeletal components of up to eight individuals, such as Burial 17 at SOU 13, Southampton (Hampshire) (see Fig. 3.8) (Cherryson 2007: 134). This may be due to the grave having been reopened on eight separate occasions, or may represent a single or multiple reopening event/s, at which time the remains of a number or all eight individuals were added to the grave, from a single or many different contexts. In some cases, stone coffins were reopened to accommodate a new insertion. In these circumstances the original occupant was displaced and relocated elsewhere, instead of being reinterred back into the coffin with the new occupant. Burial (5282) at Raunds Furnells was interred inside a stone coffin. Although the coffin cover had been *in situ* over the interment, it was damaged and inverted, indicating that it had been reused, and the occupant was not the original interment (Boddington 1996: 43). At Raunds Furnells, one grave had the bones of an individual (5078) arranged around the probable coffin of burial (5118) (Boddington 1996: 28). The same treatment has also been noted at Pontefract (West Yorkshire), where at least one grave, 608, had been reopened more than once, for the insertion of an articulated burial, the initial occupant/s being rearranged around this new insertion (see Fig. 3.9) (Craig 2009: 225; Hadley 2001: 66). An alternative interpretation may be that this grave 608 was not being repeatedly targeted and reopened for additional burials, but that in digging it and other later graves, older graves located beneath them were partially disturbed, and the disarticulated material was subsequently re-interred in the newer graves (Craig 2009: 123, 225).

Figs 3.6-3.9: Grave 42, Bevis Grave, of an individual inserted into the grave, which has been opened on more than one occasion, the original occupants of the grave surround the newest insertion (top left) (after Cherryson 2005:124, Fig.5.20). Burial from Wells Cathedral, showing an individual with the remains of at least one other individual surrounding the burial within the grave (top right) (after Cherryson 2005: 78, Fig. 4.17). Burial 17, SOU Southampton, showing the bones of up to eight individuals arranged around the latest insertion into the grave (bottom left) (after Cherryson 2007:134, Fig.5). Burial inserted into grave of at least one other individual, Pontefract (bottom right) (after Hadley 2003: 66, Fig. 22)

It would appear from limited descriptive information and photographic records in archaeological reports, that the original occupants of these graves were always fully decomposed at the time of the grave being reopened. The elements depicted arranged alongside the new insertion to the grave are disarticulated and not in corresponding anatomical position to any other elements (see Figs 3.6-3.9). It is assumed that these elements represent the original occupant/s of the graves, hence indicating that the occupant was skeletonised at the time of disturbance. An alternative interpretation may be that the original occupant was sufficiently articulated to allow complete removal and secondary deposition elsewhere. Given that these reopened graves contain *dis*articulated elements, however, this latter hypothesis is less probable than the former.

(vi) Disarticulated Elements Inserted &/Or Arranged Into New Graves

This category constitutes graves that in addition to the original occupant, also contain disarticulated skeletal elements and/or fragments of an additional individual/s, which were deposited at the time of burial of the grave's principal occupant. In the majority of cases, these collections of charnel are normally redeposited in the grave fill and tend not to exhibit any demonstrable pattern of deposition. At Pontefract (West Yorkshire), charnel comprising at least two individuals was inserted into grave 608, between the edge of the grave cut and the chest or coffin of the burial (Craig 2009: 225). The grave appeared to have been widened on its south side in order to accommodate a second charnel deposit comprising four individuals. Iron objects were excavated from the surrounds of the charnel deposit, indicating that the charnel may have been redeposited in a box of some description (Craig 2009: 225). This is one of the few examples identified for this thesis where the disturbed remains were articulated at the time of their redeposition; according to the excavator, the charnel on the south side of grave 608 contained an articulated lower limb (Craig 2009: 225). At Norton Bishopsmill (Durham) pit 295 contained

disarticulated material representing two individuals, the remains of one of which 'had been positioned so that the long bones crossed under the skull … reminiscent of a skull and crossbones arrangement' (Craig 2009: 224). At Ailcy Hill (North Yorkshire), 13 separate graves were recorded as having charnel incorporated within the grave fill (Hall & Whyman 1996). At St Andrew Fishergate, a deposit of charnel comprising 12 adults and two juveniles was included in the fill of Grave (1922) (Stroud & Kemp 1993: 133 & 276). At each of these sites, the fragments of skeletons are redeposited at the time of interment of the articulated burial in the disturbing grave. It is therefore assumed that the bones derive from portions of other graves which were partially intercut by the creation of these new graves, the disturbed pieces being collected for reinterment within the grave that initially intercut and disturbed them. However, neither the origin of these charnels nor the assumption that they derive from intercut graves is definitive. Where it has been recorded and excavation plans are provided, some of the graves cited as containing additional charnel do not actually intercut other recorded contemporary burials (see Figs 3.1 & 3.10).
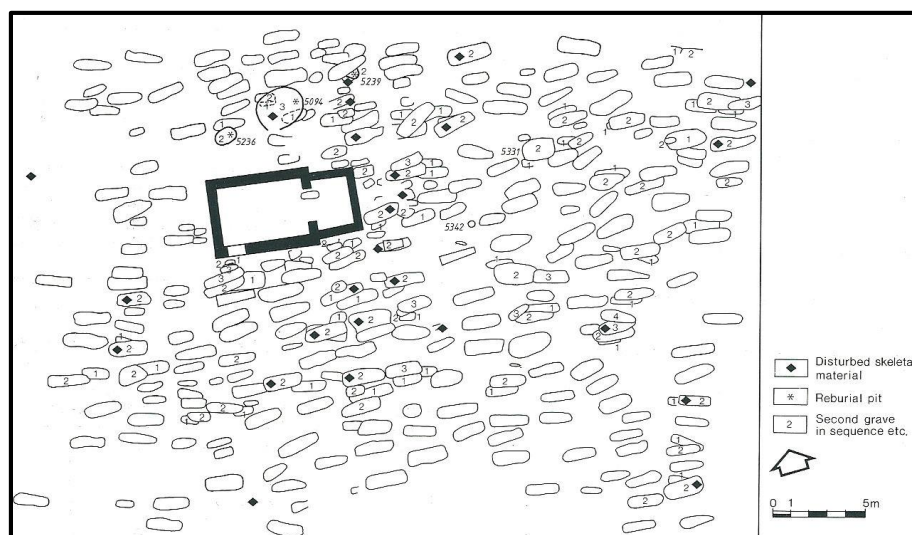
Fig. 3.10: Excavation plan of Raunds Furnells, showing the lack of intercutting between some graves which exhibit charnel in the graves (after Boddington 1996: 32, Fig.34)

Occasionally, the additional disarticulated elements are arranged in distinctive shapes or neat bundles in the grave, prior to it being infilled. For example, grave F145 at Addingham, contained articulated burial (A147), which had 'two skulls and some other bones … clearly deposited at the foot end.' (Adams 1996: 167). At Ailcy Hill, Grave (1073) was defined in outline by some of the charnel which was also present in the grave fill; 'many of the long bones (1076) had been arranged around the sides of the grave cut (1077), 'framing' the burial' (Hall & Whyman 1996: 88). Grave (1095) also contained charnel representing at least three adults and one juvenile which was 'laid against the S. edge of the grave cut' (Hall & Whyman 1996: 84). Phase 2 Burial (1403) contained at its western end, a pair of tibiae and a portion of left fibula. One of the tibiae was determined to have been *in situ*, from a pre-Phase 1 N-S orientated interment. The remaining tibia and the fibula were disturbed whilst Burial (1403) was being dug, and were placed back in the ground in rough anatomical position (Hall & Whyman 1996: 74). The most striking examples of arranged additional bones within a grave are from Raunds Furnells. A small quantity of fragmented and disarticulated bones of an adult male (5128) were set neatly on the feet of an adult female inhumation (5076) (see Fig. 3.11). In another grave, the occupant (5127) was surrounded by bones of an individual (5129), except for their femora, which were placed at the shoulders of (5127), in a manner the excavators describe as 'wing-like positions' (Boddington 1996: 28).

As noted in (v) above, these elements or portions of elements appear to have been fully skeletonised at the time of disturbance, judging by the lack of articulation and anatomical correspondence between the skeletal fragments within the graves, as depicted in the limited photographic evidence available (see Fig. 3.11).

Fig. 3.11: Disarticulated bones of an adult male (5128) arranged on the feet of (5076), an adult female, Raunds Furnells (after Boddington 1996: 30, Fig.32)

(vii) Crania Utilised as 'Pillow Stones'

At numerous sites disarticulated crania were re-used in a manner which has been described as mimicking 'pillow stones'. The use of stones placed either side of the head of deceased individuals was relatively commonplace in early medieval burials (Hadley 2001: 100). It is thought that these additional grave inclusions were intended as some form of head stabiliser as they are located on either side of the head of the deceased individual, as if to keep it in place with the face positioned forwards (Foxhall-Forbes 2013: 271). 101 graves at Raunds Furnells contained stones which had been deliberately placed at the head: 'The stone supports propping the head into a more aesthetic position were also clearly intended to prevent soil being thrown directly on to the face during the filling of the grave' (Boddington 1996: 39). Six burials at the manorial cemetery at Trowbridge had displaced crania positioned on either side of the heads of the deceased (Cherryson 2007: 136). It is not stated whether or not any other disarticulated material was also reinterred in these six graves. If the crania were the only additional bones within the graves, then it would be unusual compared to all the other examples of inclusions of disturbed material in graves in this study; in the

cases discussed thus far, all the disturbed elements were replaced within the grave that caused the disturbance, or its fill, unless they were redeposited in a charnel pit, of which there is no mention at Trowbridge. It is possible that the crania were deliberately sought out and removed from graves in order to serve as pillow stones in new burials, leaving the rest of the individual *in situ* in their grave, undisturbed. However, no *in situ* graves were reported at Trowbridge as being complete except for their crania and so it is doubtful that this is how the crania were obtained. Although it is not explicitly stated, it is assumed that all the crania were disarticulated and fully defleshed at the time of their disinterment and insertion into the graves.

(viii) Intercutting Graves

Intercutting occurs when a grave in the process of being dug, encroaches, or cuts into a grave which was already in existence. In most excavation reports and publications, a distinction is not made between *graves* which were intercut, and *interments* which were intercut. This is potentially an important discrepancy, particularly in relation to post-depositional analysis. Intercutting is recorded at all of the sites utilised in this study, in varying degrees of intensity, and so might be considered the most frequently occurring type of post-depositional disturbance, yet it is not established whether each instance of intercutting actually disturbed the graves' occupants. This has implications for interpreting the intentionality inherent in the disturbance of graves and their contents, and also for assessing graveyard management (see (3.3.2) & Chapter 7). At Raunds Furnells, 21% or 72 of the 363 graves were intercut. Significantly, only 36 of these 72 graves exhibited disturbance to the associated inhumation, equivalent to 10% of the total number of graves (Boddington 1996: 32). At Addingham (West Yorkshire), the level of intercutting was low, with only a few graves exhibiting disturbance of this kind, for example grave (F58) which intercut grave (F106), although specific numbers of intercut graves and inhumations are lacking (Adams

1996: 165 & 185). There is also no information provided as to whether the intercutting disturbed the inhumation or simply the grave cut. The area excavated was determined to have been approximately one fifth of the entire cemetery, meaning there may have been further intercutting and disturbances in the unexcavated portions of the site, as opposed to Raunds Furnells, where it is believed that the entire cemetery was excavated (Adams 1996: 185-6; Boddington 1996). Ailcy Hill (North Yorkshire) exhibited a high degree of intercutting of graves; 'The burials are clearly laid out with no consideration for preceding arrangements' (Hall & Whyman 1996: 122). Disturbed Phase 1 inhumations were identified as charnel in Phase 2 and Phase 3 graves; 'a minimum of 66 individuals who must have been buried in Phase 1a or 1b were represented as disarticulated bone in graves of Phases 1b, 2 and 3. These represented a minimum of 55 adults, 9 juveniles, and 2 infants' (Hall & Whyman 1996: 95). Phase 1 inhumations also contained substantial quantities of charnel, which are interpreted as deriving from the intercutting of pre-existing non-Christian burials on the hill (Hall & Whyman 1996: 73). As a cautionary note it must be added that these statistics in relation to Ailcy Hill include examples of the deliberate disturbance and movement of skeletal remains as a result of other types of post-depositional disturbance discussed below, and are not all directly resultant from intercutting graves; the precise number of intercutting graves is not recorded.

(ix) Charnel Pits

Charnel pits are manmade holes which have been dug into the ground of cemeteries, and contain disarticulated and disinterred human skeletal material. It is believed that pits were created intentionally, expressly for the purpose of accommodating disturbed bones displaced from graves, via intercutting or construction works. Information regarding charnel pits is limited, as although the presence and location of charnel pits are generally recorded in archaeological reports, in the majority of cases no

further evidence is provided. The composition of pits is occasionally stipulated, including the MNI (Minimum Number of Individuals present), the sex of the material, and the age of the identifiable fragments. Additional information, such as the specific measurements of the pits, the level of degradation of the bones, taphonomic information, degree of fragmentation, or identification of elements present, is less frequently and consistently recorded. This makes comparative analyses difficult and negates attempts at deciphering pits' purpose and role. Based on the limited descriptions, charnel pits seem only to contain fully decomposed material (see Fig. 3.12). As noted for points (iii) to (vii) above, none of the fragments or elements appear in anatomical association with any others, but are entirely disarticulated. However, as most charnel pits are not described in detail, if at all, nor are photographs provided in many reports, this is not an absolutely confident assertion.
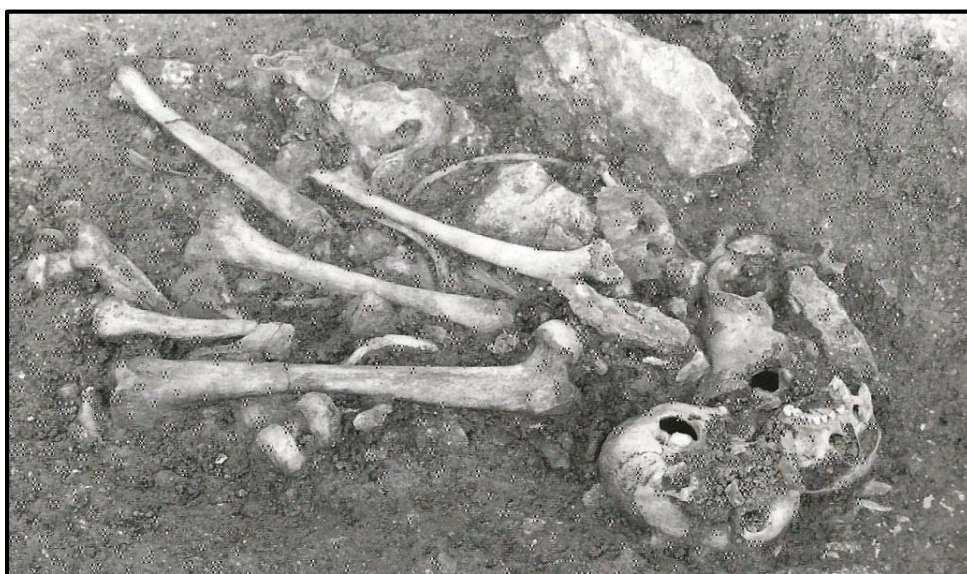
Fig. 3.12: Charnel pit in the 10th-1th century cemetery, north of the church, containing two complete and disarticulated individuals, possibly displaced from two stone coffins (after Boddington 1996: 28, Fig.29)

There is no standard number of individuals redeposited in charnel pits, nor is there any obvious consistency in the various elements and fragments represented therein. Both males and females of all ages are

found comingled in the same pits, just as they are in other forms of charnel deposit (see Table 3.1). It is difficult to state with absolute certainty that there are no significant statistics regarding male/female and adult/juvenile representation in pits, since their contents are not systematically reported. The term 'pit' implies the definition 'rubbish/refuse.' This interpretation of charnel pits may explain why neither they nor their contents are consistently analysed to any significant degree. The implication is that the bones in pits were not accorded respect of any description, with phrases such as 'dumped' frequently used to describe the process of redepositing these disturbed bones (Boddington 1996: 28).

Charnel pits do not conform to a standard shape. Where descriptions are provided or their shape is recorded on site plans, many pits tend to be roughly circular in shape, such as at Raunds Furnells, while others, such as the pit at Barnstaple, were constructed in the shape of a grave (see below) (Boddington 1996: 28 & 32; Miles 1986: 66).

Some sites exhibit both charnel pits and graves with redeposited bone (see Table 3.1). It is not apparent why charnel pits were created in some circumstances, while in others it was seemingly not deemed necessary. Cherryson advocates that charnel pits were only constructed if there was no other 'convenient hole' in which to redeposit disturbed remains; 'If there was nothing available, then pits may have been dug to take the displaced remains, such as at Portchester Castle where two burials thought to have been disturbed by the rebuilding of a masonry structure were reburied in small pits' (Cherryson 2005: 82). The motivations for deciding to reinter bones in graves or grave fills instead of in a pit must have differed depending on as yet unrecognised circumstances. At Ailcy Hill, levels of intercutting and post-depositional disturbance were very high, yet only two distinct charnel pits were identified (Hall & Whyman 1996: 84). Why it was decided to make two pits on these occasions when

100

in all others the bones were redeposited in graves, is not clear. At Raunds Furnells, both charnel pits and graves in which charnel had been inserted have been identified. At this particular site, the charnel pits' contents are thought to represent the displaced skeletons from three stone coffins; 'Three skeletons were dumped in two large pits against the north wall of the second church; presumably these were cleared from stone coffins' (see Fig. 3.12) (Boddington 1996: 28). Stone coffins are indicative of high-status burials (Hadley 2001: 179; Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 147-151). In this particular scenario it might have been deemed more appropriate to rebury these disturbed high-status individuals in pits, as opposed to reinterring them in graves. In general, however, there does not appear to have been any element of selectivity or exclusivity regarding who was interred in charnel pits. An alternative interpretation may be that there were not any open graves in which to insert the coffins' occupants at the time of their disinterment, especially if they were displaced from stone coffins, which would not necessarily require a grave to be dug. Instead, pits were dug to hold the displaced remains. If correct, this implies that it was important to rebury the bones immediately, as opposed to leaving them on the cemetery surface, or elsewhere, until such a time as they could be conveniently redeposited. None of the sites utilised in this study exhibited disinterred bones as surface scatter, indicating that it may have been a general regulation to rebury any disturbed and displaced bones as soon as possible. Perhaps unusually, there is no evidence for charnel pits having been reopened in order to accommodate additional charnel inclusions. If it was known that by digging new graves, bones might be encountered, then the most practical solution would have been to have a cemetery pit, which could be reopened time and again, as opposed to having to dig numerous smaller pits on each separate occasion. This methodology does not, however, appear to have been utilised at these sites.

An assumption in relation to the previous point, is that pits' contents always derived from the associated cemetery. Evidence in favour of this has been identified at Raunds Furnells, where the contents of the charnel pits were 'matched' to the three emptied stone coffins (see above). This conclusion was based on the composition of the pits. The charnel represented nearly the entirety of the three skeletons, including the small bones of the hands and feet; 'Given the presence of most of the smaller bones, it is likely that these reburials result from exhumations from stone coffins, rather than earth graves from which smaller bones are less likely to have been retrieved' (Boddington 1996: 27). This interpretation may be accurate, although when the same logic is applied to other sites, such as Addingham, it cannot be applied so easily. Here, the nine empty graves representing disinterred burials had not been in stone coffins, but yet were completely exhumed, with only a few graves exhibiting residual traces of human material (see (ii) above) (Hall & Whyman 1996:163). Although no charnel pits were identified at Addingham, it is speculated by the excavators that the contents of the emptied graves were redeposited as charnel in other burials at the site (Adams 1996:182-184).

One of the Raunds Furnells charnel pits measured approximately 2m in diameter, far larger than was necessary to accommodate the two disarticulated skeletons reinterred inside. Although it is not mentioned in the publication, judging from the photograph of the pit, it is clear that there were some large stones amongst the bones (see Fig. 3.12) (Boddington 1996: 27-28). It may have been that this pit was intended for some other purpose but was considered a convenient location to dispose of disinterments and was used for this purpose instead of its original one. No other finds or inclusions were reported as deriving from the pit, indicating that it may not have been thought appropriate to include anything else along with the interments. Despite dimensions of charnel pits not being included in archaeological reports, it is evident that pits

varied greatly in size, based on the estimated MNIs and the plotting of pits on excavation plans. The largest charnel pits recorded during the early medieval period relate to sites which underwent construction works to their churches or cemetery as part of 10th-/11th-century church and monastic reform. The construction of the Norman cathedral at Winchester caused approximately 1000 graves to be disinterred, the skeletal remains of which were redeposited in one of the robber trenches of the Anglo-Saxon Minster (Cherryson 2005: 81). A charnel pit was also partially excavated at Bath Abbey, which represented an MNI of at least 33 adults (Cherryson 2005: 82). A mass charnel pit uncovered at Hereford Cathedral was not analysed, but is thought to have contained up to 5000 individuals, disinterred prior to construction of the new Norman cathedral over the site's cemetery (Stone & Appleton-Fox 1996: 58-59). In these circumstances it seems that areas of the cemetery were systematically cleared, with the disinterred disarticulated bones removed to a single charnel pit.

In all but one example identified, the bones were not displayed or arranged in any form or pattern but were placed in the pits haphazardly with no structure or order. The single example of an arranged charnel pit is that of Barnstaple Castle. Here, a charnel pit was created in the form of a grave, with the excavators recording it as Grave 38, as opposed to referring to it as a charnel pit (Miles 1986: 66). The pit is described as being oval in shape with sloping sides, containing the remains of three individuals. The material was redeposited, with the skulls of the individuals placed together, albeit in fragments, at the west end of the pit. The long bones were arranged in a diamond pattern to the east of the grave, with the remaining skeletal elements redeposited in the centre of the pit. This deposit is interpreted as representing the contents of three graves which had been disturbed by the construction of a moat. An additional six graves had been 'emptied' (see (ii) above), although their occupants appear not to have been afforded the same treatment.

(x) Wells Cathedral Charnel House

At Wells Cathedral a structure was excavated which contained the remains of 41 disarticulated individuals (Cherryson 2005: 83). The building was initially interpreted as a Roman mausoleum, re-used for the deposition and storage of disinterred human material during the early medieval period (Rodwell 2001: 75). A second interpretation, offered by John Blair, is that the mausoleum was actually constructed in the 9th or 10th century, although he provides no reasoning for his assertion (Blair 2004: 136). If this is true, then this is potentially the earliest example of a purpose-built ossuary. Ossuaries and charnel chapels will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5. The bones were thought to have been deposited in stages as opposed to representing a single episode of deposition, prior to the building being sealed in the 10th century (Cherryson 2005: 83; 2007: 136). This is the sole example of all the post-depositional behaviour discussed here, where disinterred human skeletal material was stored above ground, out of the earth. Charnel houses were common in the later medieval period (see Chapters 4 & 5), but do not appear to have been in existence prior to the 13th century. It is not clear if the Wells charnel house served any liturgical purpose, which is a crucial characteristic of the later medieval examples. The Wells example also differs, in that it was permanently closed after the depositions, whereas later medieval charnel houses remained open and accessible throughout the period (see Chapter 5). Despite these differences, the use of the mausoleum as an ossuary indicates a deliberate intention of protecting displaced bones, which was one of the primary roles of later medieval charnel houses.

3.3: Analysis & Discussion

(3.3.1) Regulated Versus Unregulated Post-Depositional Disturbance

A post-depositional activity which exhibits a consistent methodology in how it was carried out on each occasion, is here defined as having been structured or regulated. By this it is meant that the act of grave disturbance had a specific and prescribed manner of execution by which it ought to be performed on each occasion, and significantly, dictated what should happen to the disturbed and disinterred remains. The identification of such regularity indicates a desire, duty or intention to perform the act correctly and to do so to accepted standards. In turn, this structured treatment of disturbing the dead signifies that the concept of grave disturbance was not necessarily disrespectful, but was justifiable in certain circumstances provided the correct precautions were taken.

The majority of the examples of post-depositional disturbance discussed here do not exhibit regulated or prescribed methodology. Instead, it is the *response* to the act of disturbance rather than the act of disturbance itself which appears to have been somewhat regulated. In the majority of cases, the graves of individuals do not appear to have been disturbed with the intention of utilising the disturbed bones for a specific post-burial purpose or ritual. It is, however, apparent that there was an established post-disturbance observance at the sites exhibiting such behaviour, whether it was expected that burials would be disturbed, or if the disturbance was not foreseen. That response was to rebury the disturbed bones. Only one form of post-depositional disturbance, that of translations and elevations, was determined to have been a highly structured activity with defining methodology for exacting the procedure correctly. This was also the sole act of disturbance where cemetery size constraints, necessitating the re-use of limited burial space, was categorically not a factor in the disinterment of the deceased in question. Individuals' graves were deliberately disinterred in order that the act of translation or elevation could occur, as opposed to individuals in the other categories of disturbance, who were disturbed in order that an additional burial or construction works could occur. This is a critical distinction. Translations and elevations involved the targeting and disinterment of a

specific grave for the sole purpose of enacting further liturgical observances in relation to the disturbed bones. All other instances of post-depositional disturbance identified do not exhibit evidence for this post-disturbance liturgical factor. The disturbed remains may have been accorded care and respect, but they do not appear to have been targeted for disinterment for the purpose of specific post-burial liturgical acts. Both the motivations for translations and elevations, and the process itself have been evaluated and assessed in detail in the preceding chapter.

An important observation is that the Church does not appear to have influenced or prohibited the disturbance of skeletal material in cemeteries or to have dictated how disturbed graves and their contents ought to be treated. It is not until the 10th century that even highly structured disturbance, that of translations and elevations, came under the control of the Church. Prior to this point they were not under the jurisdiction of the papacy, but were governed by individual ecclesiastical communities (See Chapter 2). Regulation and control over treatment of skeletal material appears to have been the remit of each ecclesiastic community and the lay members of society who managed and used cemeteries for Christian burial (Geake 2002: 153; Thompson 2002). This accounts for the differing treatments and manifestations of disturbed and disinterred remains at each site. Burial in the early medieval period was highly varied, with no all-encompassing manner by which a person ought to be interred (Hadley 2002; Hadley & Buckberry 2005; Foxhall Forbes 2013: 274; Thompson 2002). Consequently, it is not surprising that there was no standard post-disinterment practice or behaviour in relation to bones, across all early medieval cemetery sites. When post-depositional disturbance took place, the common response seems to have been to rebury skeletal material, whether in the disturbing graves or as a separate deposit within the graveyard. Crucially, variety of post-disturbance manifestations does not equate to the act of disinterment being indicative of callousness or lack of respect towards the deceased.

(3.3.2) Desire to Avoid Disturbance

Some significant observations may be drawn concerning why disturbance of the dead was undertaken and how it was regarded by the associated communities. Despite

the frequency with which post-depositional disturbance occurred in the early medieval period (see Section (3.2.2)), the evidence indicates that at many sites disturbance was avoided where feasibly possible. There are indications of forms of 'contingency plans' to prevent disturbance, and also for when it was inevitable that graves and interments would be disturbed. The response to this predicament was evidently one of respect.

(i) Intercutting Graves

Cherryson noted in her study of early medieval cemeteries in Wessex that 'low levels of intercutting were observed in a few of the field cemeteries, high levels were generally the preserve of the larger late churchyard cemeteries.' (Cherryson 2005: 76 & 79). This pattern may be due to there being small communities utilising the cemeteries and also that these earlier field cemeteries were not being enclosed, thus allowing burials to take place in an 'unlimited' area, negating the need for intercutting. It is probable that much of the later intercutting is also in part due to an increased desire to be buried in specific regions of cemeteries, such as close to a saint's grave or the church, thus resulting in densely crowded inhumations in that portion of land (Cherryson 2005: 76). It may alternatively be an indicator of an intentional avoidance of deliberately and unnecessarily disturbing graves and their inhumations, whether related to early or later phases of deposition. The number of graves which have encroached into already existing graves during the early medieval period is low when compared to levels in later medieval graveyards (see Chapters 4 & 5). Cherryson noted that only nine out of 21 early medieval Wessex cemeteries comprising her study exhibited intercutting graves (Cherryson 2005). As noted in (3.2.2) (viii) above, levels of intercutting at Raunds Furnells were low, with burials being positioned so that even if the grave cut encroached into extant graves, the interments within were left undisturbed in the majority of cases; 'intercutting derived from the need to squeeze the maximum number of burials into the available space without disturbing prior inhumations.' (See Section (3.2.2) (viii))

(Boddington 1996: 50). Adams determined that the 8th-to 10th-century cemetery at Addingham was 'clearly well laid out with little evidence for intercutting; there is a marked respect for other graves' (Adams 1996: 181). This lack of intercutting may be resultant from the relatively short chronology of the site, yet excavation plans depict a fairly densely packed graveyard, and other forms of intense disturbance were recorded (see Section (3.2.2)) (see Fig. 3.1). Some of the deceased were interred on their sides in very narrow grave slots positioned in between full sized graves; 'many of the graves had been cut so narrow … that bodies must have been laid on their side' (Adams 1996: 163). It is here suggested that this signifies a deliberate attempt not to intercut already existing graves located in immediate proximity; 'the main characteristic was the narrowness of the graves, and the closeness of the spacing between them' (Adams 1996: 165). The same was noted at Monkwearmouth (Durham), where the second period graves in the densely filled cemetery were narrow, necessitating the individuals be buried on their side (Cramp 1969: 34). These burials were also inserted 'on average less than 1 ft. [0.3m] below the surface,' and are not reported as having intercut the underlying earlier graves (Cramp 1969: 34). A similar scenario is evident at the 10th- to 12th-century manorial cemetery at Trowbridge (Wiltshire), where later burials were interred in the spaces between graves of earlier burials in a process which 'led to parts of the earlier burials being disturbed' (Cherryson 2005: 79). This preference not to disturb graves is also evident at the Late Saxon cemetery at Barnstaple Castle. The later graves were very shallow, rarely more than 0.6m deep with most considerably shallower. Where these graves intercut those earlier interments beneath them, the preparation of the new grave was abandoned mid-process once it was apparent that an unexpected inhumation was already present; 'where a late grave cut an earlier one, presumably accidentally, the grave-diggers had stopped immediately above the body, so later graves only occasionally interfered with the bones of earlier burials' (Miles 1986: 62). The 9th- to 11th-century burials

at St Peter's Church, Holton-le-Clay were also described as being carefully spaced out, to ensure intercutting did not occur (Sills 1982).

At numerous sites, certain graves' occupants were completely disinterred and redeposited elsewhere (see (3.2.2) (ii) and (vi)). Removal of interments permitted new graves to be excavated without having to dig narrow graves in between extant ones. Burying the dead in full size graves may have been regarded as a more respectful manner of burial than squeezing inhumations into tight spaces. A second motivation may have been that the option of complete disinterment and reburial of skeletal remains was preferable to partially disturbing inhumations.

It is also noted that at some early medieval cemeteries, located under the eaves of churches in very close proximity to the church walls, are what have traditionally been interpreted as 'eaves-drip' burials of infants (Craig-Atkins pers. comm. 2012; Craig-Atkins 2014; Daniell 1999: 92; Lapidge *et al.* 2000: 106). It is believed that the infants were deliberately buried in these specific positions in order that they might benefit from the hallowed water dripping from the roofs onto their graves. At Raunds Furnells, Zone 1b constituted only infant burials in an 'exclusion zone around the church' of up to 1.5m (Boddington 1996: 54). It is here tentatively suggested that in addition to the advantage of continued post-mortem 'baptism', the infants were additionally being buried in these restrictive places, as their graves were small enough to fit between the wall of the church and other graves, whereas adult graves would be too big to fit, without intercutting other graves in the locality or burying people in narrow grave cuts (see Fig. 3.13).
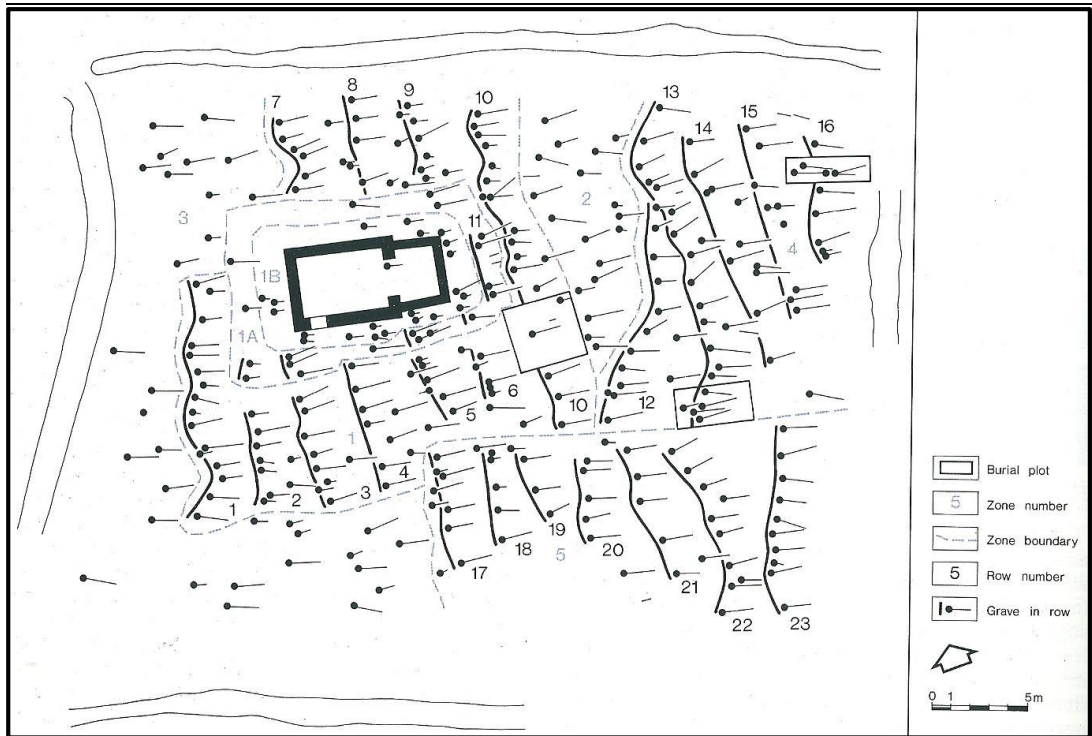
Fig. 3.13: Plan of Raunds Furnells burial Zones, note Zone 1b of infant burials, surrounding the church (after Boddington 1996: 54, fig.66)

(ii) Emptied Graves & Cleared Areas of Cemeteries

Many of the cemeteries utilised in this study exhibited areas which had once held inhumations but were cleared of these burials in later phases (see (3.2.2) (ii)). This is particularly indicative of late Saxon cemeteries, where 10th-century monastic reform combined with the 11th-century Norman Conquest led to the initiation of building works within cemeteries, sometimes necessitating the complete obliteration of parts of that cemetery (Hadley 2001: 143; Craig-Atkins: In press). The assumption is that because these areas were intended for other purposes (construction of new churches or cathedrals, boundaries, or domestic buildings), the burials were deliberately removed, this being a more respectful option than simply constructing a building directly over and into the human remains. The siting of new buildings, whether ecclesiastical or otherwise, on pre-existing Saxon cemeteries might also be understood as representing the deliberate emphasis of the new reforms, via the destruction and callous treatment of pre-10th-century

burials and commemorative monuments. Although in many cases the land was cleared and the disinterred inhumations reburied in charnel pits (see (3.2.2) (ix)), it remains unclear whether this would have been regarded as a sympathetic act or an offensive one to people who had conducted the burials and now witnessed their relatives displaced and their cemetery destroyed by others.

Where sections of cemeteries were cleared, it seems that great care was taken to remove all traces of inhumations. This could be due to practical reasons relating to building large stone structures, or may be indicative of something else. At Barton-Upon-Humber, a minimum of 35 graves lay in the way of the proposed new late Saxon church (Rodwell & Rodwell 1982: 293-294). These burials were 'cleanly exhumed, leaving not a single human bone behind,' in a manner the excavators describe as 'cleansing' the area (Rodwell & Rodwell 1982: 294). It is not known where the disinterred bones were reinterred. Only one burial was left *in situ* and consequently was cut through by a foundation trench of the new church. The construction of Winchester Cathedral's Norman nave necessitated the displacement of approximately 1000 inhumations (Cherryson 2005: 81). These were reinterred in a robber trench of the Anglo-Saxon Minster. The treatment of the charnel in this circumstance could be interpreted as being disrespectful, it being 'dumped' in a convenient pit, but nonetheless, the bone was redeposited in consecrated ground, when it might just as easily have been dumped in rubbish pits or reused as building material. At York Minster the 11th century transept was built over the pre-Norman cemetery (Phillips & Heywood 1995: 77-9). The burials were sealed by a cobbled yard (Phillips & Heywood 1995: 78). This may be interpreted in two ways; firstly, that it was intended to appropriate the cemetery site and prevent access to it by covering it, or it may have been a respectful act to ensure that the burials were preserved. This covering of the cemetery also occurred at The Church and Priory of St Andrew FIshergate where the 11th/12th century Period 4b graves were

covered by a stone layer before more graves were added above in Period 4d (see Section (7.2.2) 2). The mass charnel pit uncovered at Hereford Cathedral was also located on consecrated ground, in a pit which had been dug for quarrying purposes for the new cathedral (Stone & Appleton-Fox 1996: 22-23). The charnel room at Wells Cathedral was also on consecrated ground (Cherryson 2005: 83). This may have been an important consideration. When the Abbess Hildilid at Barking Abbey ordered the disinterment of multiple graves, her motivation was directly due to a need to re-use burial space for future interments (see (3.2.2) (ii)). However, she makes arrangements for the preservation of the skeletal material, which was to be redeposited inside the church. The transfer of deceased individuals, whether articulated or disarticulated, from an exterior grave to the interior of religious buildings, was a highly respectful act (see Chapters 2 & 5) and so ought not to be perceived as a disrespectful or purely functional treatment. Secondly, there do not appear to have been any negative connotations associated with such treatment, or with the comingling of various individuals, whether male or female.

The cases discussed above represent the largest displacement of individuals from graves in this study. Emptied graves and clearances on smaller scales at other sites are less easy to explain. At Barnstaple Castle, nine of the 105 graves had been emptied leaving behind no traces of bone, coffin or nails (Miles 1986: 68). The bailey bank for the Norman castle was constructed over the cemetery, including these emptied graves. No attempt had been made to remove any of the other remaining burials prior to the bank's construction, making the disinterment of these particular nine graves unusual. In this context it is postulated by the excavator that the graves may have been emptied by family members prior to the construction of the bank which would have destroyed the inhumations, or at least prevented access to the graves (Miles 1986: 68). At Addingham, all of the nine emptied graves were located in the north-

west edge of the excavated area and cemetery, although it is believed that the cemetery continued west beyond the limits of excavation (Adams 1996: 182). In the north-east of the cemetery, there was a 'clear, though possibly unmarked, boundary to the cemetery,' which appeared to extend to enclose the whole northern area (Adams 1996: 182). It is probable that this boundary was in place for the entire duration of the 8th- to 10th-century cemetery. If this boundary had been continued or extended to the west at a later stage, it may be that the nine graves represent those burials which would lie to the exterior of the bounded area or were potentially going to be disturbed. In preparation for the cemetery to be enclosed, the occupants were hence disinterred for their relocation elsewhere. However, the space which had been emptied of burials was not subsequently built over, making this theory unlikely. Adams offers an alternative explanation, which is that the graves were disinterred so that the individuals could be reburied further south, where graves were more densely packed and included graves with multiple insertions (see (3.2.2) (vi)). This area is thought to have been a focal point for burial, possibly being the location of a monument or grave of distinction; 'possible focal alignment and reinterment in graves to the E. … suggest strongly that there was competition for space in this cemetery, and that a position as close as possible to something which lay to the E. was desirable' (Adams 1996: 182-3).

(iii) Deliberate Targeting of Specific Graves: Familial or Convenient?

Many of the occurrences of post-depositional disturbance identified in this study comprise multiple depositions of both articulated and disarticulated remains inserted into graves (see (3.2.2) (v), (vi) and (vii)). The primary explanation for these depositions has been one of convenience or functionality; that these acts coincide with, or were deliberately undertaken, at the same time as another event taking place in the cemetery (Cherryson 2005: 79). In such circumstances, it is thought that grave plots had to be reused due to the lack of empty burial space in

the cemetery area, with either the disarticulated original occupant of a grave displaced in favour of a new inhumation, or else new burial plots were utilised for the redeposition of bones from graves which had to be emptied. Both of these explanations are plausible, but inherent in the scenarios presented is a belief that these movements constitute a lack of compassion towards the dead, as Annia Cherryson notes; 'the re-use of graves is generally characterised by a lack of respect towards the original occupant' (Cherryson 2005: 76). Although it may not be evident in all examples, sufficient number of burials exhibit care or respect for both the articulated and disarticulated dead, that it may be argued, on the contrary, that physical interaction with deceased individuals was a solemn undertaking. In cases of articulated individuals being interred in the grave of another individual, the newly inserted burial is not simply placed on top of the original inhumation. Instead, the original occupant is typically fully removed from the grave, only to be redeposited around the fresh burial (see (vi)). On other occasions the articulated burial is inserted into the grave above or beside the original interment, with a layer of soil separating the two interments and thus preventing disturbance of the primary burial (Stoodley 2002). It has been suggested that these types of multiple burials represent familial burial plots, as the material which has been disturbed is treated with respect that otherwise it would not be accorded (Stoodley 2002). Many of these types of disturbance occurred in single phase, or short-lived cemeteries, utilised by a small living population. For example, it is estimated that Raunds Furnells had a contributing population of about 40 individuals from roughly the 6th to the 9th centuries (Boddington 1996: 31). It could be argued, therefore, that all of those interred within such cemeteries had living relatives or extended family to ensure care of their remains and who would have prevented disrespectful treatment of the deceased. Under these circumstances, the re-use of graves and other acts of post-depositional activity must have been regarded as acceptable, whether

there was a familial link between secondary depositions and primary interments, or not.

A scenario involving both practical and respectful considerations is the most credible to account for these inclusions of either primary or secondary depositions; if it was deemed necessary to cause disturbance or complete disinterment of a body for whatever reason, then those disturbed remains would be collected and redeposited in another grave. This multiple occupation of a single grave does not appear to have been a negative concept, either for the original occupant or for the new insertion, given its frequency of occurrence. Such collections and reinterments may have been planned, to cause as little disturbance as possible, by deliberately coinciding displacements with articulated burials. When inhumations are disturbed, the affected bones tend to be reburied immediately within the encroaching grave, such as at Addingham; 'the frequent survival of intact long bones and complete skull orbits amongst the disarticulated material confirmed that it had been reburied immediately after its disturbance and had not remained for long above the ground.' (Adams 1996: 70).

An explanation for the presence of disarticulated material in the grave cut or fill of graves has been explored in relation to Section (3.3.2) (i) above, where intercutting graves may have disturbed parts of individuals, who were immediately reinterred in the new grave's fill. These remains might simply constitute bones displaced as a consequence of intercutting which were subsequently redeposited back into the disturbing grave. However, as so many of these cases do not appear to have intercut graves with inhumations, or encroached on burials at all, there must have been another method for how disarticulated material came to be deposited in these graves (see Figs 3.1 and 3.10).

It has been suggested that one cause of some of the cases of disturbance might be grave-robbing (Cherryson 2005: 81). A grave that was disturbed by the digging of a pit at St Mary's Stadium, Southampton, was completely disinterred of human remains and the disarticulated skeletal material redeposited within the pit

(Cherryson 2005: 81). It is thought that the grave was disturbed accidentally, and was then emptied 'probably in the search for grave goods' (Cherryson 2005: 81). This is a plausible scenario but not a compelling one. There is little evidence for the practice of grave robbing in early medieval England, and when it is identified it is in relation to pre-Christian cemeteries, such as Winnall Down II (Aspöck 2011; Klevnäs 2010). There are also significant defining characteristics pertaining to the identification of robbed graves, none of which are evident in the emptied grave at St Mary Stadium, or in any of the other examples cited in this study (Aspöck 2011: 302-5; Klevnäs 2010: 109-13). These characteristics are defined by Aspöck and Klevnäs as 1) evidence of pits having been dug into graves, recognisable as dark areas with a higher content of organic material, 2) evidence of disturbance of an individual within their grave, 3) movement of finds within the grave and its' fill (Aspöck 2011: 301-8; Klevnäs 2010: 109-13).

(3.3.3) Graveyard Management

Numerous authors have discussed graveyard management in the early medieval period, in relation to the spatial geography of cemeteries, the primary inhumations, their commemoration, the initiation of certain burial practices, and churchyard burial becoming conventional (Buckberry 2007; 2010; Cherryson 2005; Cherryson 2010; Gittos 2002; Groves 2007; Hadley 2000; 2001; 2002; 2007; Hadley & Buckberry 2005; Hoggett 2007). This research also provides much information concerning post-depositional behaviour; by analysing the evolution of cemeteries and early medieval funerary practice, the methods by which burials came to be disturbed can be ascertained, and contemporary concerns and attitudes towards post-depositional disturbance perceived.

It is clear that at many of the sites examined in this study, the primary inhumations of articulated individuals were interred in burial rows, and that zones for burial existed which were systematically opened according to burial density and the rates at which these zones became 'full'. The prime example is that of Raunds Furnells, where it is believed that the entire cemetery was excavated providing a complete plan of the inhumations. Twenty-three rows of burial were identified, although some

of these are not obvious and are subject to visual interpretation bias (see Fig. 3.13) (Boddington 1996: 53). These rows were not homogenous; 'Some of these rows were straight, others curved, some well-defined, others nebulous, some evenly spaced, others erratically spaced' (Boddington 1996: 53). Burial rows were regularly laid out at Addingham, with rows to the east created first followed by additional rows to the west, 'each row being decreasingly well organised' (see Fig. 3.1) (Adams 1996: 182-183). 'Slight indications of graves forming rows,' was noted at the late Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Barton-Upon-Humber (Rodwell & Rodwell 1982: 299). Small rows were identified at Ailcy Hill, described as 'strings' of two or three burials by the excavators (Hall & Whyman 1996: 122). Rows were not recorded at Barnstaple Castle, although the cemetery may have been divided into zones, as juvenile burials were only found in one region, Trench A (Miles 1986: 66). The earliest phase of burial at St Andrew Fishergate comprised 60 interments which were arranged in rows (Stroud & Kemp 1993: 131).

The identification of these burial rows and successive opening of zones reveals significant evidence of planning, and that the siting of inhumations was not a haphazard or random decision. This also implies that there was no choice involved about who was to be buried where, with each fresh burial simply being added to the rows in the next available space. That decision may have been the remit of those conducting the burial, and could potentially indicate that there were one or more individuals solely responsible for digging graves and managing cemeteries. According to individual reports, in later phases, this strict adherence to orderly layout and progressive burial rows and zones appear to decrease in intensity (although this was disputed by Buckberry (2010), who concluded that conversion period cemeteries were more organised than earlier ones (2010: 2, 18). This may be due to a number of contributing factors. As the cemeteries were becoming full, it became increasingly difficult to create new rows or organised zones, there being no fresh ground left available. This necessitated new burials to be positioned in between other, older, graves, and are identifiable as the narrow grave cuts with bodies interred on their sides, as noted at Addingham, Monkwearmouth, Trowbridge and Barnstaple Castle (see (3.2.2) (i)). Secondly, in later phases, some cemeteries may have acquired a

significant focal point which made burial in its proximity desirable. Individuals were also moved post-deposition to these prominent locations, perhaps at the behest of surviving family members, as suggested by Max Adams in relation to Addingham (Adams 1996: 182-183). This movement also conveniently vacated a grave plot which could subsequently be reused. Many cemeteries are single-generation, in that they were not used for burial over successive and multiple generations, such as Raunds Furnells. It has been assumed that these cemeteries and others were 'abandoned' due to the new monastic and church reforms which instigated the creation of new cemeteries (Buckberry 2010; Cherryson 2010; Hadley 2007; Hadley & Buckberry 2005: 125-126; McClain 2014). The decision to abandon a cemetery may also have been connected to the incapacity of that cemetery to accommodate future inhumations and the inability to maintain orderly burials, without causing post-depositional disturbance. This is also insinuated by Max Adams; 'It is possible that at Addingham there was not simply one continuous area of ground devoted to burial, but that discrete cemeteries were opened at different periods' (Adams 1996: 185). There are substantial indications, therefore, that disturbance to graves was avoided where possible. On occasion, it appears that some inhumations were disturbed unintentionally, and the response to this is particularly interesting. At Barnstaple Castle, when grave digging in later phases cut into a grave of an earlier phase, digging ceased mid-process (Miles 1986: 62). Two graves were 'abandoned' at Raunds Furnells, apparently upon discovery that they encroached on other interments (see (3.2.2) (ii)) (Boddington 1996: 28). A pit dug in the cemetery of SOU 13, Southampton, cut into the grave of an individual, whose cranium was displaced in the process (Cherryson 2005: 81). Cherryson describes how the cranium was 'pushed' back into its coffin space, implying that this treatment was disrespectful, but it might be considered to have been a deferential act, instead of discarding the crania or incorporating it within the fill of the pit as waste material (Cherryson 2005: 81; Cherryson 2007: 134).

Averting grave disturbance could only have been possible if there was a means to identify inhumations, whether by above ground markers, or by having a limited number of individuals to perform the grave digging and siting of each grave. These

people would know the location of inhumations, having dug them, and would develop the ability to recognise older, less obvious, graves after settling of the soil, through experience (Stuart Prior, pers. comm. 2012, 2014). A total of 36 graves at Raunds Furnells were definitively marked above ground by slabs, crosses, slots, stones or posts (Boddington 1996: 46), and while no markers were identified at Barton-Upon-Humber, it is noted that the emptied graves could only have been recognised 'if the graves were visibly marked on the surface' (Rodwell & Rodwell 1982: 294). No specific individual markers were excavated at Addingham, but it is stated that 'some form of marking enabled rows to be regularly laid out' (Adams 1996: 182). This concept will be further explored in Chapters 5 and 7.

It is noted in Section (2.2) (iv)-(xi) that the skeletal material in graves and grave fills appears from the limited photographic evidence and descriptive accounts to be disarticulated. It is here suggested that there was a regulation in place, or a consistent belief, that only disarticulated and decomposed inhumations may be disturbed, post-deposition. This would account for or contribute towards the need for managed cemeteries, to prevent the accidental disinterment of an individual still in a state of decomposition. Very few examples of disturbance are recorded which exhibit any evidence for the individual still being in articulation. Adams points out that the emptied graves to the north-west of the cemetery were only disinterred 'At a stage after the disarticulation of the body' (Adams 1996: 183-184). Burial (5200) at Raunds Furnells was disturbed, but only in relation to its left humerus (Boddington 1996: 28). It is described as being 'dislocated' which implies articulation of the limb. Significantly, this case constitutes one of the examples of abandoned graves described above, leaving the remainder of (5200) intact. The reasons why decomposing corpses may not have been appropriate to disturb is discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, and relates to bodily fluids being regarded as contaminants to consecrated ground. It has not been established whether this view was held in the early medieval period, but may explain why decomposing individuals were wrapped so tightly for burial, and why Burial (5156) at Raunds Furnells was prevented from fully coming into contact with the grave floor (see (3.2.2) (iii)). This reasoning may

also account for why in some graves comprising multiple articulated individuals, the original occupants are not disturbed by new insertions (see (3.3.1) (iii)).

3.4: Conclusion

Deciphering post-depositional disturbance in early medieval England is fraught with complications. There is a lack of consistency in how individuals came to be disturbed, and in how the disturbed material is treated, subsequent to disturbance. Detail is consistently scarce in descriptions of disturbance, as are photographs of the disturbance, making it difficult to identify patterns of redeposition or to derive conclusive definitions by which to recognise future incidences. The extreme variety in the form of disturbance belie there ever having been a single standard practice for treatment and representation of disturbed material. The exception to this concerns disturbance of individuals of a certain status, that of ecclesiastics deemed to be saintly. Their disturbance was a highly deferential act, with strict methodology and considerations involved in their disinterment. These translations and elevations were committed in order that further additional liturgical benefits might be bestowed on that person (see Chapter 2). All other disturbances relate to ordinary inhabitants, or the laity. Neither the modes of disturbance nor the treatment of disturbed material exhibit any element of exclusivity, with both males and females, juveniles and adults being affected.

Despite this lack of standardisation, and the perceivably haphazard nature of disturbance, three primary concerns are identifiable in relation to the reopening of a grave and the post-burial movement of individuals:

1) The prevention of physical disturbance of the dead post-burial was paramount.

2) When disturbance was unavoidable or necessary, the disturbed material was to be reburied in an appropriately respectful manner, these treatments being the remit of the society conducting the disturbance.

3) Articulated inhumations still undergoing the process of decomposition were not to be disturbed where possible, and in particular, were not to be disarticulated while still fleshed.

The consistent adherence to these regulations indicate that there were accepted opinions in relation to cemeteries, the deceased, and grave disturbance, which negated against the physical disturbance of the dead, except in exceptional and unavoidable circumstances. There is little evidence of Church decree governing disturbance, although the complicated manner in which saintly individuals were disinterred indicates that in general, disturbance of the dead was taboo. Opening a grave and disturbing the skeletal remains of an individual was not a desecration, providing no other alternatives were available and the three fundamental guidelines were adhered to.

The disciplined management of cemeteries, the manner by which disturbance occurred and the treatments exacted on disturbed individuals, all indicate that while there may not have been liturgical motivations for *causing* disturbance, there were liturgical reasons for *not* disturbing inhumations. Far from representing a disrespectful and callous regard for the dead, early medieval post-depositional disturbance was actually a controlled and restricted practice, motivated by necessity, and performed with reverence.

CHAPTER 4: LATER MEDIEVAL POST-DEPOSITIONAL DISTURBANCE

4.1. Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 3 (3.1), post-depositional disturbance of burials involved an intentional or accidental physical interaction with the dead, after the burial of an individual had taken place. It includes any movement of fleshed or skeletal material within the original depositional context, and may also constitute the removal and relocation of part or all of the buried individual/s to a new or secondary context. Post-depositional disturbance during the early medieval (c.600-1100) period has been discussed in Chapter 3, and this chapter will analyse disturbances dating to the later medieval period (c.1100-1550).

In England, physical interaction with the buried dead has been engaged in from at least the advent of Christianity (c.600), throughout the medieval period and into the post-medieval period (c.1550). Yet, despite this, no meaningful attempt has been made to collate the evidence for medieval post-depositional disturbance. Neither has there been any significant effort made to understand how and why disturbance took place, which has resulted in incidences of the practice being routinely dismissed as insignificant in terms of medieval funerary activity (See Chapter 1) (Klemperer & Boothroyd 2004: 40-1, 131; Soden 2010: 14; Grainger 2011: 103; Thomas *et al.* 1997: 40, 117-18). This chapter, in accordance with Chapter 3, aims to identify all recognisable forms of medieval post-depositional disturbance and to categorise these occurrences. Emphasising the prevalence of interaction with physical remains of the buried dead throughout the medieval period and at a variety of cemetery site types, will illustrate that such interaction was neither unusual nor callous. The cataloguing of post-depositional events will equally demonstrate that each mode of disturbance was undertaken for specific reasons, potentially unique to each circumstance in which it occurred, encompassing practical and religious motivations and reasoning. The emotive nature of post-depositional disturbance will be explored

in Chapter 6. Analysis of each of the defined categories will exemplify that interaction with the dead was regulated, either to prevent its unnecessary occurrence or to mitigate how it was to be undertaken. Where it is evident, the level of structure or organisation inherent in post-depositional disturbances will also be discussed, the implications of which will form the basis of Chapter 7. Certain categories, for example charnel chapels or translations and elevations, are sufficiently frequent, and provide evidence of structure, as to merit a chapter of their own, and are not discussed in detail at this point (see Chapters 2 & 5).

4.2: Post-Depositional Disturbance in Later Medieval England

(4.2.1) Research to Date

This section will identify and categorise each type of post-depositional disturbance that occurred during the later medieval period in England (see Table 4.1). It will also assess what, if any, investigation into these occurrences has been undertaken. Although abundant examples of disturbance have been excavated at cemetery sites throughout England, and have been identified at a variety of ecclesiastical site types including cathedrals, parish churches, abbeys and hospitals, little research has been undertaken that attempts to collate or analyse all the available evidence. The seminal work *Requiem*, by Gilchrist and Sloane, published in 2005, documented a large volume of data concerning such behaviours and interactions with the dead. It was primarily concerned, however, with investigating *burial* as opposed to *post-burial* activities and incidences. In addition, the authors focussed on monastic complexes, not including evidence derived from parish churchyards. In the decade since its publication, no other large-scale attempt has been made to identify or analyse medieval post-burial activities. As with analyses of the early medieval burials, discussions of later medieval disturbances of the dead in archaeological reports tend to be brief, if included at all, with the associated implication that they are inconsequential to current funerary studies (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 194-6; Horrox 1996: 104-5; Miller & Saxby 2007: 148-56). This gives the impression that excavators and researchers are dismissive of the possibility that post-burial activities might reflect medieval concern with, and curation of, the dead, but instead have deduced that such engagement with the buried dead was possibly callous and regarded contemporarily as insignificant. Examples of later medieval burial disturbances tend to be explained in such pragmatic terms only, with limited explanations of the occurrences, particularly when compared to discussion of articulated burials within the same reports (Brown & Howard-Davis 2008; Grainger 2011; Jackson 2006; Miller & Saxby 2007; Sloane & Malcolm 2004; Thomas *et al.* 1997). It is occasionally explicitly stated, but normally merely insinuated, that these incidences were engaged in haphazardly and are not indicative of systematic treatment of, and care for, the

buried dead (Jackson 2007; Miller & Saxby 2007). Little attention is paid to the motivations inherent in engaging in such interactions. Where this is discussed, the intimation is that they largely constituted unavoidable physical interactions with the dead, but that these were generally not liturgical nor served a primary purpose themselves, being merely the by-product of other intentional funerary activities (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 194-9). Certain post-depositional occurrences were, however, clearly deliberately undertaken for a specific purpose in relation to the deceased individual, for example viscera burials or translations (see Section (4.2.2) 1) (i) & (v)). These types of activities may be defined as structured, in that there was a specific reason to explain their occurrence, in addition to an apparently standard method by which the disturbance ought to be undertaken (see Section (4.3)). Although not all instances of post-depositional disturbance exhibit such systematic methodology, this is not in itself evidence that they were disrespectful or insignificant. By documenting their occurrence, describing their manifestation archaeologically, and comparing them to early medieval examples of disturbance, it is expected that the medieval funerary practice of physical interaction with the dead may be elucidated. Moreover, it is hoped that, when examined in conjunction with additionally under-researched aspects of medieval cemetery and funerary activities, such as graveyard management and contemporary attitudes towards the dead (see Chapters 6 & 7), the phenomenon of post-depositional disturbance might be given the credence and recognition it deserves.

Table 4.1: Some examples of later medieval post-depositional disturbance, mentioned in-text.

Site	Site Type	Date	Disturbance
St Mary Rushen, Isle of Man	Church & Cemetery	10th - 15th C.	Charnel pit comprising 30-80 disarticulated adults
		10th - 15th C.	Grave B28 contained multiple burial of 6-7 individuals
		10th - 15th C.	Emptied stone lined grave
St Andrew Fishergate, York	Church & Cemetery	13th - 16th C.	34 charnel pits in total
		13th - 16th C.	Empty grave 5344 from Gilbertine Priory of St. Andrew
		13th - 16th C.	Partial stone coffin 5058 empty, from Gilbertine Priory of St. Andrew
		13th - 16th C.	Empty Roman sarcophagus (central nave) disturbed during Period 6c
		13th - 16th C.	Broken stone coffins 2065 & 2068 in period 6d church were empty
		13th - 16th C.	Empty grave cut 2107 in period 6d church
St Helen-on-the-Walls, York	Church & Cemetery	12th - 16th C.	Charnel pit 1044 comprised remains of about 70 individuals
		12th - 16th C.	Charnel pit 648 (not analysed)
		12th - 16th C.	Charnel pit 1112 (south-eastern area of cemetery) comprised minimum 2 adults
		12th - 16th C.	Charnel pit 552 comprised of 7 skulls
		12th - 16th C.	Charnel pit 5260 (nave of 5th church) comprised 5 individuals. The tibiae, femora and humeri were arranged into a square
		12th - 16th C.	Grave 5021 contained additional bones and skulls
St. Swithun's Parish Church, London	Church & Cemetery	13th C.	13th C. viscera burial of heart of Joan wife of Fulke de St. Edmund
St Mary Merton, Surrey	Church & Cemetery	13th C.	Charnel pit with bones arranged with skulls together at one end of pit, long bones at the other end.
St Mary Graces, East Smithfield, London	Church & Cemetery	12th - 16th C.	Charnel pit 13788 (not analysed); ;
		1400-1539	In Eastern cemetery charnel comprising 47 individuals deposited in upper fill of grave with individual (not analysed)
		1400-1539	In convent garden 2 empty graves contemporary to unanalysed charnel pit 13788
		1539-1560	In presbytery grave 12477 disinterred
		1494	Philippa wife of Sir Thomas Montgomery exhumed from Falkbourne Manor to Lady Chapel in 1494
Bath Abbey, Somerset	Benedictine Monastery		At least 333 adults comprising charnel pit (location unknown) possibly disturbed burials during construction of Norman abbey
St Anne's Carthusian Charterhouse, Coventry	Carthusian Monastery	15-16th C.	Juvenile buried with long bones and skull in shape of cross
St Margaret's Leper House, Huntington	Leper Hospital		50-60 individuals comprising 2 charnel pits located 100m apart
St. James & St. Mary Magdalen, Chichester	Hospital		Charnel pit 668 comprising minimum 8 adults & juveniles.
St John of Jerusalem, Clerkenwell, London	Priory & Hospital	1480-1540	Charnel pit in Cemetery OA17, 16 contexts comprising 13 individuals
		1480-1540	D[520], possible decaying individual 13-15 years wrapped in shroud
St Mary Spital, London	Priory & Hospital	12th - 16th C.	Non-specified disarticulated remains in cemeteries OA5 and OA2
		13th - 16th C.	Adult buried with two additional ulnae in cross on chest
		14th C.	Grave C8 contained partly disarticulated juvenile, decomposing at time of burial
			Disarticulated bones added to tomb Burial E[379] (period M5) in church. Long bones placed carefully around primary burial, cranium placed beside head niche
		1350 - 1400	Viscera burial in wicker basket, from Building 1

Table 1: Some examples of later medieval post-depositional disturbance, mentioned in-text (continued).

Site	Type	Date	Description
St Mary Magdalen, Partney, Lincolnshire	Hospital	12th – mid 15th C.	Disarticulated individual in quarry pit
		12th – mid 15th C.	Burial 13 inserted directly above Burial 16
		12th – mid 15th C.	Burial 14 comprised 4 fills indicating either successive re-opening of grave/gradual accumulation of grave fill
		12th – mid 15th C.	Burial 8 included sack burial at feet of burial, containing disarticulated skull, leg and arm bones.
Crayke, North Yorkshire	Church & Cemetery	Pre-14th C.	From Phase IV, MNI 3 individuals in pit, long bones forming 3 sides of square, skull remains in centre
Norton Priory, Cheshire	Augustinian Priory		Grave 1504 comprised minimum 3 badly disturbed individuals, 1 M, 1 F and 1 juvenile
			Grave 1514 had Burial 1513 inserted above original occupant in coffin, M skull and F skull plus loose bones in association
			Charnel pit 1520 in nave, not analysed
		Late 12th C. & 14th C.	Late 12th C. Grave 132 in nave contained additional charnel comprising some loose bones, added in 14th C.
		14th C.	Grave 141 (14th C.) intercut Grave 142. Fill of 141 contained loose bones, 2 skulls placed at feet of Grave 141 occupant.
			Grave 101, (outside church to west) comprised disturbed limb bones and a skull.
			Grave 96 (outside church to west) contained adult M reburied in topsoil with remains of at least 3 individuals
			Grave 1644 (in east chapel/reliquary) disturbed by charnel comprising 5 individuals
			Graves 1672 & 1669 (in east chapel/reliquary)comprised partial disarticulated remains of single individuals, probably disturbed in situ
			Grave 1034 (north transept chapel) monolithic coffin. Adult M within possibly moved while decaying or re-used coffin, as was minus cranium, feet, and included animal and juvenile bones
			Grave 952 (in north transept) contained remains of Grave/Burial 978, plus later additions of topsoil and unspecified charnel
			Grave 999 (in entrance to chapel) M missing cranium and feet, possibly moved while decaying or grave re-opened
			Grave 3989 (in eastern row) incomplete F with charnel added
			Stone monolithic coffins 909 & 913 were empty
		Post 14th/15th C.	Stone monolithis coffin 932 of M had unspecified additional charnel inserted
			Stone coffin (eastern cell) of M1815 had charnel of 4 individuals inserted
			Grave 566 continues into charnel pit 9no additional details) and cuts through graves 578 & 587 (in northern cloister walk)
			Grave 1185 (in eastern cloister walk) contained charnel/disarticulated remains of Grave 1188
Cluniac Priory, Thetford, Norfolk	Cluniac Priory	Mid 14th C.	Bones wrapped in textile/monk's habit
St. James Priory, Bristol	Benedictine Priory	13th – 16th C.	Coffin burial had femurs in shape of cross over chest area
Franciscan Monastery, Hartlepool	Franciscan Monastery	1290 - 1538	F burial in nave had 6 skulls arranged around body.
		1290 - 1538	Burial of F in walking place had unspecified number of skulls at feet
St. Saviour's, Bermondsey, Surrey	Cluniac Priory & Abbey	12th C.	Four emptied graves in newly built infirmary region, one grave contained articulated left arm.

128

(4.2.2) Categories of Post-Depositional Disturbance

Chapter 3 presented a lengthy and detailed definition of early medieval post-depositional disturbance (see Section (3.2.2)). This definition is equally applicable to later medieval disturbances and need not be repeated nor elaborated on here. All identified forms of movement or physical interaction with the buried dead that have been dated to the later medieval period will be included in the following discussion, and similarities with the earlier medieval period will emerge. In addition, categories of disturbance that did not occur in the early medieval period will also be discussed. A similar approach to that implemented in relation to the early medieval types of disturbance in Chapter 3 will be adopted, with later medieval categories of post-depositional disturbance defined according to various criteria; the physical manifestation of the disturbed material in archaeological contexts; how the material came to be disturbed; and the manner in which the disturbed were redeposited and/or treated. It is expected that the following classification of types of disturbance will highlight distinctions and similarities between the various recorded examples, which in turn ought to clarify any inherent motivation for undertaking physical interaction with the buried dead.

1) Disturbance of Single Individuals

(i) Translations & Elevations

Translations and elevations, as forms of post-depositional disturbance of individuals, have been discussed at length in relation to both the early and later medieval periods (see Section (3.2.2) 1 (i)), and a detailed examination of the practice comprises Chapter 2. Translations and elevations were the deliberate and intentional removal of a person's remains from their grave, in order to relocate those bones or preserved body to a church's interior, representing the canonisation of the individual.

(ii) Emptied & Empty Graves

Just as numerous graves were identified during the early medieval period that had no extant burials within them (see Chapter 2 Section (2.2.2) (ii)), there are also a number of graves dating to the later medieval period that exhibit evidence for having once been occupied and the burials disinterred at a later date. At the priory and hospital of St Mary Spital (London), grave F[389] in cemetery OA2 (1197-1235) was empty, but the fill of the grave contained teeth and fragments of human bone, suggesting that a burial may have been disinterred at some point after, or during, advanced decomposition (Thomas *et al.* 1997: 23). The individual may have been deliberately exhumed some time at or after the cessation of burial within this area (c.1235) to relocate it elsewhere in the new cemetery OA5 (1235-1280). At St Saviour's Cluniac priory, Bermondsey (Surrey), four exhumed graves were located in region OA2 which was later the site of the 12th-century infirmary (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 197). These graves dated to period M3 (1050-1100) (Dyson *et al.* 2011: 21). One grave contained the left humerus, radius and ulna in anatomical position (see Fig. 4.1), which were most likely left behind accidentally during the disinterment.

Fig. 4.1: Emptied graves in the cemetery of St Saviour's Cluniac Priory, Surrey. Note left behind within the right-hand grave, the left humerus, radius and ulna, in anatomical position (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 198)

Gilchrist and Sloane (2005: 197) speculate that these four graves may have been those of the founding monks, who were sent from La Charité sur Loire, France, in the 1090s to establish the priory. This would indeed explain the necessity of disinterring these specific graves, moving the remains of the founders of the priory, in order to prevent their disturbance or destruction during subsequent construction work. A further ten empty graves located in cemetery OA6, dating to between periods M4 and M8 (c.1100-1430) had been exhumed during period M9 (c.1430-1538), again, due to building works in that area (Dyson *et al.* 2011: 84). In the nave of the 1350 church at St Mary Graces, East Smithfield (London), a grave-shaped cut, (13682), contained no burial or evidence of human material within it or the fill (Grainger 2011: 44). It is not clear if the grave was dug in expectation of a burial that was

subsequently interred elsewhere, or if the grave had been occupied but was fully exhumed leaving no archaeological trace of the occupant. A further two empty graves were located in the convent garden (OA10) (Grainger 2011: 55). In the south-east chapel in the south transept of the church at Norton Priory (Cheshire), two monolithic stone coffins, 909 and 913, dating to the mid to late 13th century, were found to be empty of burials (Brown *et al.* 2008: 133). It must be presumed that the coffins were once occupied, but the reason for them being emptied remains unknown, as does the location to which they were removed.

An empty grave, 5344, was also excavated from the presbytery of the 14th-century church at the Priory of St Andrew, Fishergate (Stroud & Kemp 1993: 137). The grave was dated to Phase 6a/b (the early 14th century), and so may have been exhumed in order to avoid its disturbance by the demolition and subsequent rebuilding of the church, which was begun in the mid-14th century (Stroud & Kemp 1993: 134). At Hulton Abbey, grave F316 in the north transept of the church was empty aside from 'a few bones on the grave bed, including two teeth, a complete sacrum, one vertebra and some smaller fragments' (Klemperer & Boothroyd 2004: 41). The excavators note that 'perhaps the body was exhumed for some reason, but it seems rather unlikely that … a complete sacrum would have been left behind in the grave and it is assumed that this bone and the few fragments of spine and ribcage are the disturbed remains of an individual' (Klemperer & Boothroyd 2004: 115). A description or photograph detailing the location of these elements within the grave may help in deciphering this; if they were redeposited material, but placed in the general correct anatomical location, then it would be a highly unusual case of redeposition. Occasionally, it is apparent that graves were dug but were never occupied, for reasons unknown. In the western cloister of the Dominican Priory, Oxford, a grave had been dug through clay, although there was no evidence that it had ever been used (Lambrick & Woods 1976: 193).

There are various accounts of exhumations having taken place at numerous later medieval sites, by reason of the illegal nature of their burial in cemeteries that had no burial rites, or due to conflict over where the deceased ought to have been buried. In 1108 the Bishop of Hereford ordered a number of people to exhume a local parishioner who had been buried in Gloucester, as he believed Hereford had the exclusive right to bury the man (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 196). One strong motivation for such behaviour must relate to the fees or burial dues collected by the associated church for burial of an individual in their cemetery. In 1396 at least 67 individuals were exhumed from the newly established cemetery adjacent to St Helen's parish church, Abingdon (Oxfordshire), during a dispute concerning ownership of the land (Daniel 1999: 91-2; Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 196). Similar exhumations may also have taken place at Manchester in 1403 and Bristol (date not provided) when arguments and accusations between rival religious establishments took place concerning which church had legitimate claim to, and therefore right to bury, which deceased parishioner. Ownership of this right to bury also meant that the Church authorities in question could receive the burial money owed to them (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 196). As Christian burial could only take place within consecrated ground (see Chapter 6), individuals were occasionally disinterred for reburial if it was deemed that the original place of burial did not have burial rites (Daniell 1999: Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 199). From the years 1208-1214, England was under an Interdict by Pope Innocent III after the refusal by King John to accept the Pope's nomination for the position of archbishop of Canterbury (Daniell 1999: 103; Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 46-7). All ecclesiastical services were forbidden in England, meaning burial in consecrated cemeteries could not take place. A plaque discovered at Lindisfarne Priory (Northumberland), was engraved as follows: 'AD 1215: Three monks, Silvester, Robert and Elias, were translated from the garden of the monks to this place' (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 199). This inscription has been

interpreted as commemorating the translation of three burials from an illicit burial ground, established during the Interdict, to the consecrated cemetery at Lindisfarne, after the Interdict was lifted.

In addition to the reasons outlined above for the deliberate disinterment of an individual from their grave, superstitious motivations, such as the belief that a deceased, interred individual was in fact a revenant, may account for some of the emptied and empty graves identified archaeologically. This form of post-depositional disturbance will be discussed at length in Chapter 6.

(iii) Wrapped Decomposing Bodies

At the priory and hospital of St John of Jerusalem, Clerkenwell (London), Burial D[520] comprised a young adult, aged between 13 and 15 years old, who had been wrapped in a shroud (Sloane 2004). The constricted nature of the skeleton and the very narrow grave cut indicated that the body may have been in an advanced state of decomposition at the time of interment (Sloane 2004: 185). It is suggested by the excavators of the Cistercian Abbey of St Mary Stratford (Essex), that an unspecified number of burials may have been 'tightly wrapped or bound' prior to burial, although they do not hypothesise that this was due to them being in an advanced state of decomposition (Barber *et al.* 2004: 48). During the research undertaken for this study, more examples of burials of decomposing individuals were identified dating to the early medieval period than to later centuries (see Chapter 3 Section (3.2.2) (iii)). The reasons for late or delayed burial of individuals, resulting in them being badly decomposing at the time of burial, were discussed in Chapter 3.

(iv) Sack Reburials

A single example of an individual having been reburied in a bag or sack, after complete disarticulation had been completed, was identified at the medieval hospital site of St Mary Magdalen, Partney (Lincolnshire)

(Atkins & Popescu 2003: 223). Burial 8 comprised the burial of Skeleton 26, an elderly male. In the fill of the grave, partly above his feet, was a collection of disarticulated bones, Skeleton 1 (see Fig. 4.2).
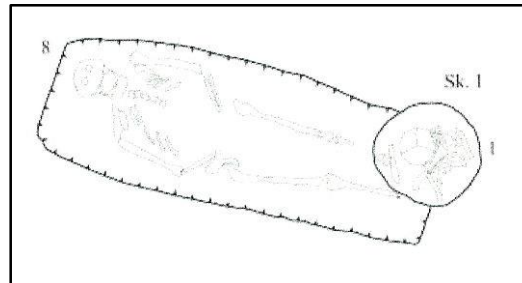
Fig. 4.2: The redeposited 'bag' of partial skeleton of an individual, Skeleton 1, within the grave of primary burial, Skeleton 26, from the Hospital of Mary Magdalen, Partney, Lincolnshire (Atkins & Popescu 2003: 221, Fig.9)

These did not constitute an entire individual, comprising only the cranium, upper and lower limb bones, and not including the pelvis, vertebrae or ribs. The reburial was radiocarbon dated to ad 1030–1220 AD (−19.5 ± 0.2), while the underlying skeleton was dated to 1150–1280 AD (−22.3 ± 0.2) (Atkins & Popescu 2003: 223). The excavators suggested that the disarticulated material may have been in a bag, although their reasoning is not made abundantly clear: 'The very regular erosion pattern on the front of the skull may suggest that the remains were placed in a sack or other textile within the backfill of the later burial' (Atkins & Popescu 2003: 223). Certain ecclesiastical communities laid out their dead on sackcloth prior to burial, including Cistercians, Augustinians and Benedictines (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 23). Wearing sackcloth was also used as a sign of penance or humility, during the later medieval period (Neale & Webb 1843: 142). It is feasible that the remains of Skeleton 1 were placed and reburied within a bag or sack in order to reflect these beliefs, but it may just as equally have been a convenient container and method of transporting the bones. The cemetery at Partney contained a total of 43 burials, which were evenly spread out with little intercutting

(see Chapter 7 Section (7.2.2) 2) (xi)). There was, in addition, unused space within the complex to accommodate future burials. It, therefore, seems unlikely that Skeleton 1 was disinterred in order to make way for Skeleton 26 to be buried within the same grave cut. The missing elements of Skeleton 1 were not located within the grave (Burial 8), nor were a collection of adult male vertebrae, ribs and pelvis excavated in any other grave or region of the cemetery. The partial remains may have been transported from another location altogether and deliberately reburied with Skeleton 26 in particular. Reasons and motivations for intentional disinterment or fragmentation of the body for multiple burial are discussed in (v) below. The bones may equally have been redeposited in Burial 8 out of convenience at the time of Skeleton 26's burial, although there is no indication that any of the cemetery's graves had previously been disturbed, necessitating reburial.

During the later medieval period, lesser translations were occasionally reinterred not in solid boxes or containers as saintly translations were, but simply wrapped in cloth (see Chapter 2 Section (2.4.1)). At the Cluniac priory of Thetford (Norfolk), the disarticulated remains of two males were reinterred in the chapter house in the mid-14th century, wrapped in what appeared to be a monk's habit, made of dark wool (Robertson-Mackay 1957: 98). There is growing evidence of monks, nuns and pious lay people being buried in habits during the later medieval period, and the reburial of translated or disturbed remains in ecclesiastical clothing or sackcloth may tentatively be construed as an extension of this practice (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 80-7).

(v) Viscera Burials

Viscera burials are defined as the burial of the internal organ/s of an individual in a container, by itself, in isolation from the remainder of the individual's body (Binski 1996: 64-7; Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 80). According to Bynum (1995: 203), these type of burials originated

amongst aristocratic families in northern Europe by the 12th century. The archaeological evidence for viscera burials all dates to the 12th to 14th centuries, with the majority dating to the 12th or 13th centuries (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 159-60). No evidence could be found regarding viscera burials dating to the early medieval period, which substantiates the argument that they were a later medieval practice (see Chapter 3 Section (3.2.2) 1)). Viscera burials are generally accepted as reflecting a desire by the individual to express their patronage or loyalty to more than one religious institution, after their death (Binski 1996: 64-5). The co-founder of the Great Hospital, Norwich, recorded in his will that if he died far away, 'his body was to be opened and his heart conveyed to the hospital chapel to be buried in a niche in a wall there' (Thomas *et al.* 2004: 123). During the later medieval period, the burial of the head was regarded to have been the individual's primary burial, while burial of other portions of the body in alternative and/or multiple locations constituted secondary burials (Binski 1996: 64; Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 80). Binski (1996: 64-5) has argued that viscera burials of hearts reflected piety of the deceased individual. It is here suggested that it may also be in reference to the 'sacred heart' of Jesus, a medieval and modern Catholic symbol of Jesus' devotion and love of humanity (Anonymous 1971).

Viscera burials have been excavated and recorded in a variety of forms. There does not appear to have been a standard receptacle for containment of the organs for burial, nor a consistent method of burial, as they have been found in wicker containers, ceramic pots, miniature cist graves, and lead vessels (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 159; Thomas *et al.* 1997: 69). Gilchrist and Sloane have collated eight examples of viscera burials from across England. At the Cistercian abbey of Beaulieu (Hampshire), a miniature stone coffin (0.6m long, 0.36 – 0.3m wide) was excavated in which were two niches, one of which held a green-glazed pot, for the heart and other organs (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 159). In this case, the organs were placed in a small receptacle, itself placed inside a

coffin-like container. All other viscera burials discussed here were similarly placed in a form of vessel, prior to being placed within a second burial container. At St Albans abbey church (Hertfordshire), two sandstone blocks formed a circular cist like grave, covered by a wooden lid. In this cist was a wooden box, believed to have once contained the heart of Abbot Roger de Norton who died in 1290 (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 159). A second possible heart burial was found at St Albans, also in the form described above, although this example has not been associated with any identified individual. In the northern aisle of the crossing of the M6 (1350-1400) church at St Mary Spital, a 'negative impression' of a wickerwork basket E[174] was excavated (Thomas *et al.* 1997: 69). This remnant of a container measured 0.46m in diameter by 0.19m deep and had been placed within a cut 0.6-0.7m square. The excavators deduce that this may have been a viscera burial, as analysis of the material inside the 'basket' indicated it may have contained haemoglobin (Thomas *et al.* 1997: 69). At the parish church of Ewyas Harold (Herefordshire), a hollow was carved into a stone slab, into which was inserted a metal bowl lined with textile, prior to being covered by a larger slab and an effigy of a woman. This form of viscera burial was also noted at All Saints parish church, Holbrook (Suffolk), where a slab measuring 0.46m in length covered a second slab with a hemispherical hollow, in which was a metal container, directly below the effigy's breast. The burial was located under a niche in the north aisle and has been dated to the late 13th to early 14th centuries. All of the other viscera burials identified have been marked by a plaque or engraved burial slab detailing the specific organ buried and to whom they belonged. In St Swithun's church, Canon Street (London) a late 13th-century floor slab is inscribed with the following epitaph: 'The heart of Joan, wife of Fulke de St Edmund lies here. Pray for her soul' (Thomas *et al.* 1997: 122). The dimensions of the slab are similar to those of the cut in which the potential viscera burial was excavated at St Mary Spital, perhaps increasing the likelihood that it was, indeed, an organ burial of some kind.

Only a single definitive example could be sourced of a skeleton exhibiting indications of bodily disturbance for the purpose of a viscera burial. This is the case of Robert the Bruce, whose grave was thought to have been identified in 1818 in the church of the Benedictine abbey at Dunfermline, Fife (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 80). The skeleton was 'divided along the line of the sternum' which was taken as evidence that the deceased had his heart removed after death (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 80). His heart was intended to be buried in the Holy Land but was eventually buried at Melrose Abbey, Roxburghshire (Scotland) (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 80).

In 1299, Pope Boniface VIII issued the Papal Bull, *Detestande feritatis,* which forbade the partitioning of a deceased individual's body after death of the individual (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 80; Horrox 1996: 101; Litten 1992: 37). The motivations for issuing this Bull are discussed in Chapter 6 Section (3.1). The issuing of this Bull resulted in the reduction, if not cessation, of the practice of bodily division for multiple burials, as few viscera burials post-date this time period.

2) Disturbance of Multiple Individuals

(vi) Articulated Insertions Into Reopened Graves

The practice of inserting articulated bodies into reopened graves originated in the early medieval period (see Section 3.2.2 2 (v)). This particular type of post-depositional disturbance appears to have been relatively common and was noted to have occurred in at least 9 different cemeteries (see Chapter 3 Section (3.2.2) 2) (v)). Where articulated individuals were inserted into a reopened grave during the later medieval period, the practice manifests slightly differently. Instead of removing the original occupant prior to the insertion of the new burial, bodies were either placed directly on top of the original burial, or with a small quantity of soil separating the interments. Only a single example of a burial being entirely removed prior to a secondary insertion into the same grave was

identified, that of F1036 in the interior of the medieval church of Hulton Abbey (Staffordshire) (Klemperer & Boothroyd 2004: 25). The female skeleton 50004 was inserted into the grave of an adult skeleton 50003, whose disarticulated skeleton was redeposited in the fill. In the vast majority of cases, the original occupant was not disturbed, as at the Hospital of St Leonard, Newark, where an unspecified number of graves had been reopened to insert a secondary individual (Bishop 1983: 29-30). Here, the excavators note that 'The superimposition was so exact … as to suggest deliberate re-opening of the "original" grave' perhaps indicating a familial relationship (Bishop 1983: 30).

At Whithorn Priory, Galloway (Scotland), a perinatal skeleton was excavated which had been inserted into the 13th to 16th-century grave of an adult female (see (vi) below) (Hill 1997: 551). This additional burial was placed directly on top of the original occupant's torso. It is presumed that the adult female was fully decomposed at the time of the neonate's insertion, as her humeri were rearranged into the shape of a cross over the juvenile's body. The cemetery at the medieval hospital of St Mary Magdalen, Partney, also had a grave that had been reopened and a new burial inserted. Burial 16 contained two skeletons, 13 and 16, both of which were interpreted as ecclesiastical burials, based on the differences in grave type and grave goods (see Chapter 7, Section (7.2.2) 2)) (Atkins & Popescu 2010: 218 & 243). Skeleton 52 was an adult male, and the original occupant of the grave. Skeleton 45 was a possible male who had been inserted directly above Skeleton 52, separated by 0.1m of soil (Atkins & Popescu 2010: 220). At Norton Priory (Cheshire), Grave 96 located to the west of the church contained an adult male skeleton, who had been reburied in the topsoil of the grave with the additional remains of at least 3 other individuals. A second grave, 1514, had also been reopened to accommodate a new burial. Burial 1513 had been inserted into the fill above the original coffin burial 1513, along with a number of crania and other non-specified elements (Brown & Howard-Davis 2008:

120). In none of these cases is any motivation for the deliberate targeting of the graves speculated upon by the excavators. The fourth example of a grave that had been reopened to accommodate a second burial was within the cemetery of Ss James and Mary Magdalene, Chichester, although no detail is provided beyond stating that 'there was at least one example … of a grave having been deliberately re-opened to take a second body' (Lee & Magilton 1989: 276; Magilton *et al.* 2008). One case of an articulated insertion into an existing and occupied grave was excavated at Malmesbury Abbey (Wiltshire) (Hart & Holbrook 2011: 177). Burials 16 and 24 overlay each other within the same grave cut, Burial 16 having been inserted at some stage after Burial 24, which dated to between the early 13th and late 14th centuries. Later insertions of articulated individuals into already occupied graves were also excavated at the Cistercian abbey of St Mary Graces (London). Many of these were located in the period B3 (c.1400-1539) nave of the church, west of the rood screen. As burial in church interiors was normally restricted to those wealthy enough to afford it, and location as close as possible to the altar was desirable (see Chapter 2 Section (2.2.4) (vi)) the excavators suggest that the graves may have been reopened to accommodate new burials in a region that was popular for burial and that there may have been a familial relationship between the burials (Grainger 2011: 42-3). Burial [12410] was of an adolescent, and had been inserted above the burial of an adult male [12424], which itself overlay Burial [12403], another adult male (Grainger 2011: 42-3). Other graves in this region of the church had also been reopened for later insertions; burials [13970] and [16253], and burials [16122] and [16122] were described as having a 'similar relationship' as that of the triple burial, although no further detail is provided. Reopened graves were also found in the Period B3 porch of the church, burial [13675] overlay and partially disturbed burial [13778] underneath it (Grainger 2011: 49). The excavators note that 'In several cases one burial was superimposed over another, but only in one instance did a later burial disturb the skeleton from an earlier interment'

(Grainger 2011: 51). A familial relationship was also postulated for a cist burial in the cemetery of Rochester Cathedral, where a juvenile SK 44 had been inserted into the cist of SK53, separated by a few centimetres of soil (Ward & Anderson 1990: 94).

Grave B28, from the Cistercian Abbey of St Mary Rushen (Isle of Man), contained multiple individuals: 'There was also evidence of multiple burial in B28 which contained six or seven individuals, all inserted in one grave' (Butler 1988: 74). This description is not elaborated on by the excavators, and it remains unclear whether the individuals were articulated burials all deposited within a single grave, or if the remains were disarticulated, incomplete, and inserted into the grave at the time of a primary burial. However, the use of the term 'multiple burial' as opposed to 'secondary' or 'disarticulated' burial implies articulated individuals.

(vii) Disarticulated Elements Inserted &/Or Arranged Into New Graves

Numerous cases of these secondary deposits within a primary context date to the later medieval period. Occasionally, the bones are arranged in patterns or including religious iconography, such as crosses. At St Anne's Carthusian Charter House, a juvenile was buried with what the excavators describe as a 'skull and crossbones' placed directly on top of the body (Soden 1995: 78). Unfortunately, no images or further detail were provided, and the bones used to form the cross are not described. This burial was dated to the late 15th or early 16th century. Other examples of bones of a second individual being arranged in the rudimentary shape of a cross, on the body of the primary burial, also date to the end of the medieval period. In all cases, detail pertaining to the arrangements is lacking, and, thus, it remains unclear as to the exact positioning of the bones, or even which bones were used in most cases.

At Whithorn Priory, a perinatal juvenile was placed on the torso of a female burial, whose humeri had been arranged to form a cross on top of the perinatal's body (Hill 1997: 551). The female burial was dated to between the 13th and 16th centuries, although no date was provided for when the juvenile was inserted, or for what reason. A familial relationship between the two individuals may be suggested, given that the female's grave appears to have been deliberately targeted for the burial of the perinatal juvenile. At St Mary Spital, two ulnae were placed in the shape of a cross on the body of an unsexed adult (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 181). It is not apparent from where these ulnae derived, no other disarticulated material is recorded from the grave and the grave did not intercut another burial. The burial is also dated to between the 13th and 16th centuries, as at Whithorn discussed above. At St James Priory, Bristol, the bones arranged into a cross shape over the pelvic region of an unsexed adult burial may have belonged to the burial itself, as the excavation report is ambiguous regarding their origin: 'Both femurs placed across pelvis in a cross. Hands across pelvis' (Jackson 2006: 84).

In the period M5 (1320-1350) church at the hospital and priory of St Mary Spital, (London), a cist grave was excavated, that contained the burial E[379] of a mature male individual (Thomas *et al.* 2004: 66). During the subsequent period, M6 (1350-1400), the cist was reopened and a quantity of disarticulated material deposited neatly beside the original male occupant: 'Some care was taken to place the long bones alongside those of the primary burial, and a skull was placed just beside the head niche' (Thomas *et al.* 2004: 69). Additional information concerning these disarticulated bones was not provided, including MNI, sex, taphonomic condition, or which particular elements were present. The deliberate placement of disarticulated skeletal elements was also identified in the Franciscan church of St Hilda, Hartlepool (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 180). Six crania were placed around the burial of a young female in the nave, although it is not clear if these were deposited at the time of her burial,

or if her grave was reopened specifically for the reinterment of the material. A second burial of a mature female in the walking place also contained additional crania, which were placed at her feet. Again, no further information was provided and it is not apparent if these were included at the time of her burial or afterwards. A final example of this category is that of Skeleton 5021 at St Helen-on-the-Walls, York. This was the burial of an adult male, who had two crania plus long bones placed on and beside his lower legs (Dawes & Magilton 1980: Plate IIIa).

(viii) Crania Utilised as 'Pillow Stones'

The placing of disarticulated crania on either side of the head of the deceased individual within the grave, was a common practice during the early medieval period, especially in the 10th and 11th centuries (see Chapter 3 Section (3.2.2) 2) (vii)). Although the motivation for doing so is not entirely apparent, it was likely intended to keep the face of the deceased facing upright or forwards, stabilising the head and preventing it from lolling to one side or another during the burial. Gilchrist and Sloane (2005: 126) identified three later medieval examples of this practice, one at the Cluniac priory of St Saviour, Bermondsey, and two from the Benedictine Priory of St James, Bristol. All three were in the graves of elderly males in 'external cemeteries' (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 126). The burial at St Saviour was dated to between the mid-13th to the mid-14th centuries and was located in the southern cemetery, although no mention of this burial could be located in the official archaeological publication and report (Dyson 2001; Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 126). All burials with crania utilised as pillow stones were located within Site 1, the monastic cemetery, at St James Priory, which dates to c.1129 to the mid-13th century (Jackson 2006: 32, 95). Skeleton 110 was buried with two crania on either side of his head. These were presumed to have been from disturbed burials, as the grave also contained an unanalysed quantity of disarticulated material redeposited at the skeleton's lower legs and within the fill of the grave (Jackson 2006: 95). Skeleton 159 also

had two crania placed on either side of the head, with long bones deposited at his lower legs (Jackson 2006: 81). A third burial, Skeleton 143, had the disturbed cranial fragments of Skeleton 142, a juvenile, placed by their skull (Jackson 2006: 80). Since this burial only had a single cranium positioned beside that of the deceased, it might indicate that the interpretation of this practice as being similar to the earlier use of 'pillow stones' to provide stabilisation of the head is incorrect; the specific positioning of disarticulated crania beside the head at the east end of the grave may have had an additional but, as of yet, unrecognised, spiritual function.

Crania were also found located at the head of the primary burial of skeleton 50029 in the church of Hulton Abbey (Klemperer & Boothroyd 2004: 41). Three crania had been placed to the east and south of the occupant's skull, with additional long bones at their feet. Crania also appear to have been treated differently from other disarticulated material at the Augustinian Priory of Gisborough, Cleveland, where two burials are recorded as 'Skull in empty grave with burial' (Heslop 1995: 105). This description is difficult to decipher, however, as both the graves are described as being 'empty' and yet as having a burial within them. The precise positioning of disarticulated crania together inside charnel pits, and at the heads of later burials has also been noted (see Section (4.2.2) 2) (vi) and (ix)).

(ix) Intercutting Graves

Intercutting graves will be extensively discussed in Chapter 7, in relation to cemetery management. As has been noted in Chapter 3, in excavation reports a distinction is not always made between graves that intercut and burials that intercut (see Chapter 3 Section (3.2.2) 2) (viii) & Chapter 7 Section (7.2.2)). It is hence not consistently apparent if the buried dead were actually being disturbed, or if it was merely the periphery of their grave cut that was encroached upon. This has important implications for

interpreting the archaeological record of medieval post-depositional disturbance, specifically in relation to recognising intentionality or apathy towards the concept and consequences of post-depositional disturbance. If it can be demonstrated that interments were consistently not being disturbed while their graves were, it illustrates that there was a deliberate and conscious effort being made not to unnecessarily engage in post-depositional movement and disturbance of human remains.

(x) Charnel Pits

The definition provided in Chapter 3 Section (3.2.2) 2) (ix) for early medieval charnel pits, is equally applicable to later medieval charnel pits. These cemetery features are also common in later medieval cemeteries. At St Helen-on-the-Walls a single charnel pit 1044 contained an MNI of c.70, while a second, pit 1112, comprised the remains of only two individuals (Dawes & Magilton 1980: 17). There does not appear to have been any restrictions regarding who or what could be placed within pits based on age, sex or element. At the hospital of Ss James and Mary Magdalen (Chichester), charnel pit 668 comprised a minimum of eight adults and juveniles, and several of the pits at St Andrew Fishergate contained adult, juvenile, male and female remains (see Table 4.2) (Magilton *et al.* 2008: 88-9: Stroud & Kemp 1993: 276-7). Pit 552 at St Helen-on-the-Walls consisted only of crania, seven in total, while other pits at this and other sites (see below) contained elements from the entire skeleton (Dawes & Magilton 1980: 17). Detailed analyses of pits' contents are rare, and descriptions are usually limited to an MNI and basic sexing and/or ageing information.

Table 4.2: Example of descriptions of charnel pits in the cemeteries of

St Andrew Fishergate, York (Stroud & Kemp 1992: 276-7)

Context	Period	Phase	Site Location	Min. no. of individuals	Comments
2067	7a	225	Nave (no cut)	–	Not examined
2089	7a	225	Nave (no cut)	3 adults (incl. 1 ?M)	Impacted 3rd molar
2108	6b/c	220	Nave (grave fill of 2104)	1 female, nearly complete 1 child	Porotic hyperostosis
2140	6d	222	Nave (pit 2141)	1 adult (?M)	
2180	6d	222	Nave (grave fill of 2178)	1 adult	
2203	6c	216	Nave (pit 2204)	1 male, nearly complete	Some form of erosive arthropathy
2319	6a	210	Nave (post-hole 2320)	–	Not examined
2427	4b	206	(?pit 2428)	1 adult (?M)	
3130	6a	316	N trans. chapel (ditch 3132)	2 adults	Blade injury, cranium
3223	6b	323	E cloister alley (grave fill of 3221)	1 adult	
3251	4a	312	(no cut)	–	Not examined
4654	6a	410	N of refectory (no cut)	1 adult	
5061	6a/b	531	E cemetery (pit 5087)	5 adults (incl. 3 ?M)	Periostitis, fibula shaft
5065	6a/b	531	E cemetery (no cut)	1 adult	
5066	6a/b	531	E cemetery (no cut)	3 adults (incl. 2 ?M) 1 adolescent	
5077	6a/b	531	E cemetery (no cut)	2 adults (incl. 1 ?M) 1 adolescent	
5085	6a/b	531	E cemetery (pit 5160)	2 adults (both ?M)	Forrestier's disease, thoracic vertebrae
5146	6c	519	E of nave (pit 5148)	2 adults (both ?M) 1 adolescent	
5298	6b	518	Crossing (pit 5299)	1 adult	
5358	6a/b	531	E cemetery (no cut)	2 adults	
5375	6a	517	Crossing (not recognised as a charnel deposit)	1 adult	Blade injury
6122	4b	206	(pit 6123)	1 adult 1 subadult	
6131	7a	137	S of nave (pit 6175)	12 adults (incl. 3 ?M, 3 ?F) 1 adolescent 1 child 1 infant	
6132	6a	132	S of nave (pit 6133)	5 adults (incl. 1 ?M, 1 ?F) 1 subadult	
6393	6a	117	S of nave (pit 6424)	infant (nearly complete)	
7017	6a	708	Cloister garth (pit 7028)	4 adults (incl. 1 ?M) 1 subadult	
7051	6a	708	Cloister garth (grave fill of 7050)	–	Not examined
7083	6a	708	Cloister garth (pit 7094)	1 adult	Blade injury
10267	6a/b	531	E cemetery (grave fill of 10266)	1 adult 1 adolescent	

A total of 37 charnel pits were recorded in the cemeteries of St Andrew
Fishergate, York (Stroud & Kemp 1993: 159 & 276). Thirty-three of these
dated to between 1195 and the late 16th century, with four recorded as
not examined (Stroud & Kemp 1993: 277). No images were provided of
any of the pits, and descriptions of pits and their contents were all very
limited (see Table 4.2) (Stroud & Kemp 1993: 276-7).

A charnel pit at Norton Priory, in the nave of the 15th century church, was
also recorded as 'not analysed', as was a pit from St Mary Graces, East
Smithfield (Brown & Howard-Davis 2008; Grainger 2011). When medieval
charnel pits are described in detail or a photographic record is included

in archaeological reports, it tends to relate to when the material within them had been redeposited and arranged into a pattern. In the Phase IV cemetery of Crayke (North Yorkshire), a minimum of three individuals were represented in a charnel pit (Adams 1990: 38-9). Long bones had been used to form three sides of a square, with fragments of crania placed in the centre. No dates were included in the report for this phase of the 'pre-fourteenth century' cemetery (Adams 1990: 29). A 13th-century charnel pit with arranged bones was also excavated at the Augustinian priory of St Mary Merton (Surrey) (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 195; Miller & Saxby 2007). Here, fragmented long bones were placed neatly beside each other with three crania lining one end of the pit. From the photograph provided, it appears that the crania were arranged to face into the pit, although no orientation of the pit or its contents were noted (see Fig. 4.3).

Fig. 4.3: Arranged charnel within 13th-century pit within the cemetery of the priory of Mary Merton, (Surrey) (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 195)

Charnel was arranged within Pit 5260 in the nave of the 15th-century church at St Helen-on-the-Walls (York) (Magilton & Dawes 1980: 17). The material comprised five individuals, whose tibiae, femora and humeri are described as having been arranged into a square, although the photograph of the pit does not quite meet this description (see Fig. 4.4). Instead of the bones forming four sides of a square, they had been neatly placed beside and on top of each other, mostly in the same orientation,

with additional complete and fragmented bones to either side in the opposite orientation. There also appears to be an articulated undisturbed tibia and fibula to the north of the pit.
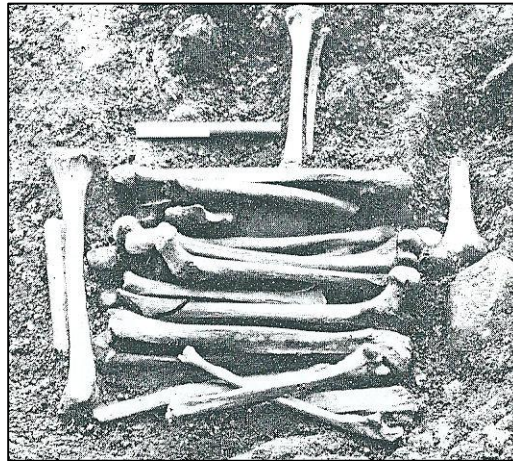
Fig. 4.4: Charnel arranged neatly within the nave of the church at St Helen-on-the-Walls, Aldwark (Dawes & Magilton 1980: Plate Vc)

One exception to this dearth of descriptive analysis of pits, derives from the Hospital of Ss James and Mary Magdalene, where charnel pit 668 was discussed in detail (Magilton *et al.* 2008: 88-9). Intriguingly, the excavators initiate this discussion by stating pit 668 'may for convenience be described as a charnel pit' (Magilton *et al.* 2008: 88). It measured 2m in depth and at least 3m in breadth, from west to east although a proportion lay beyond the extent of the excavation. The pit was only partially full, and had been 'capped' by mortar and gravel. Layers of bone were excavated, each of which had been covered by layers of gravel and loam. The MNI of the pit's contents was estimated to be representative of eight individuals, including juveniles (Magilton *et al.* 2008: 89). It is stated that 'as might have been expected' the bones were not in any particular arrangement, and skulls predominated, although this is not evident in the photograph provided (see Fig. 4.5). It is speculated by the excavators that the pit was dug very deeply, in expectation of there being large quantities of bone to rebury, although this necessity never came to

fruition, the pit only being filled to a depth of 1m (Magilton *et al.* 2008: 89).

Fig. 4.5: Charnel pit 668 from the Hospital of Ss James & Mary Magdalene (Magilton *et al.* 2008: 89)

Charnel pits are assumed to have been created when the digging of graves or building works disturbed burials, and so the disinterred material was redeposited in a new pit. As no taphonomic information was provided in any of the cases of charnel pits discussed in Chapter 3 or here, it is not possible to determine if these remains were reinterred immediately after being disturbed, or if they had remained on the cemetery surface for any length of time. What also remains unclear are the motivations for why charnel pits were made on particular occasions, while at other times disturbed material was simply redeposited back in the fill of graves. For example, graves 4 and 5 at the medieval cemetery at St Faith's Lane, Norwich, were disturbed by construction works, and their disarticulated bones were seemingly immediately redeposited in a charnel pit (125), located adjacent to grave 4 (Soden 2010: 20). The same occurred in the cemetery of St Mark's church, Lincoln, where three charnel pits (ACL, 392 and 363) dating to Period IX (mid-11th-mid 12th

century) were interpreted as representing 'the remains of single individuals disinterred during gravedigging' (Gilmour & Stocker 1986: 20). At the majority of sites included in this study, sites exhibiting charnel pits also had disarticulated bones excavated from grave fills. In the eastern cemetery at St Mary Graces, for example, charnel comprising 47 individuals was deposited in the upper fill of a grave, yet the site also exhibited separate charnel pits, for example, pit 13788, which was thought to contain the remains of disinterred individuals from two contemporary emptied graves in the convent garden.

It is feasible that certain charnel pits represent the burial of individuals who had viscera burials, which would account for pits that contained near whole disarticulated skeletons (see 1) (v) above). However, the majority of charnel pits, where information on their contents is provided, comprise multiple elements or fragments from more than one individual (see above). More charnel pits dating to the later medieval period were identified during the research for this thesis than for the early medieval period. This may be due to later medieval cemeteries generally having been used for longer periods and over more centuries than were early medieval cemeteries, hence more burials were partially disturbed and required reburial. This may seem a rather simplistic interpretation, yet without detailed analyses of pits and their contents, it is difficult to surmise more specific reasons for their creation and role in medieval funerary practices.

(xi) Charnel Chapels

Charnel chapels are medieval ecclesiastical buildings constructed in England from the early 13th century to the Reformation in the mid-16th century. Charnel chapels appeared and proliferated throughout Europe and England from the early 13th century and were known contemporarily by a variety of names, including ossuaries, charnel houses, Le charnel or *carnarium* (Bynum 1995). Both forms – free-standing, two-storeyed

buildings and those built below churches – were located within lay cemeteries of ecclesiastical complexes. All structures had a semi-subterranean room for the purpose of storing disarticulated disinterred skeletal material. Their purpose consisted of far more than a functional storage facility, and the funerary role of charnel chapels was complex. Links to penance and prayer, pilgrimage, and commemoration have all been noted by the author. An extensive discussion and analysis of medieval charnel chapels will comprise Chapter 5.

4.3: Analysis & Discussion

(4.3.1) Regulated Versus Unregulated Post-Depositional Disturbance

Any post-depositional activity that exhibits a consistent methodology in how it was carried out on each occasion has been defined in this thesis as having been structured or regulated (see Chapter 3 Section (3.2.3)). By this it is meant that the act of grave disturbance had a specific and prescribed manner of execution that was expected to be adhered to. Significantly, these regularity guidelines dictated what should subsequently happen to the disturbed and disinterred remains. The ability to identify archaeologically the implication of these rules in relation to the buried dead indicates that there was a desire, duty or intention to perform the act correctly and to do so to accepted standards. In turn, this structured treatment of disturbing the dead signifies that the concept of grave disturbance was not necessarily disrespectful, but was justifiable in certain circumstances provided the correct precautions were taken before, during and after completion of the act.

The definition provided in Chapter 3 for early medieval regulated and unregulated post-depositional disturbance, is equally valid for later medieval disturbances. It was concluded in Chapter 3, that the majority of incidences of post-depositional disturbance that occurred during the early medieval period were neither overtly structured nor regulated. Aside from elevations and translations, or the use of charnel chapels, which exhibit strict adherence to specific regulatory criteria (see Chapters 2 & 5), both early and later medieval interaction with the buried dead appears disorganised, with particular graves or individuals disturbed in a multitude of ways. Although these disturbances can be categorised (articulated insertions into graves, bag reburials, emptied graves etc.), the overall impression gained from their analysis is that they were less strictly controlled and organised than were translations. Disturbance of an 'ordinary' individual did not have the same spiritual consequences as disturbance of a saintly individual, and was not undertaken for such a momentous religious and/or political occasion as the making of a saint (see Chapter 2). Potential disturbance of non-saintly burials hence may not have been regarded as

requiring as intense control as elevations and translations demanded, by the status of the individual who was to be disturbed.

In all the categories identified, bar those already mentioned, the motivation for disturbing a buried individual varied, including, for example, a desire to inter the recently deceased with an already buried individual, or the movement of an individual to avoid their destruction via building works. The overriding impression is that although there may not have been specific rules defining and controlling how every possible type of disturbance was carried out, the act of disturbance itself was conducted for a legitimate and justifiable reason, even if it was not officially regulated by Church authorities. It is important to note that non-structured disturbance is not equated to *mal*treatment of the disturbed dead. The manner in which skeletal material was treated following its disturbance throughout the medieval period, reveals much regarding the attitude of medieval people towards their recently and long buried dead. There may not have been strict rules in place, dictating specifically how to disinter skeletal material, or alternatively, any such organisation may simply not have been recognised archaeologically. Nevertheless, there is a strong implication that there was at least some stipulation for preventing unnecessary disturbance and for how to deal correctly with disinterred material, should burials be disturbed. Skeletal material was treated systematically, in that it was consistently reburied in consecrated ground. Therefore, although each form of disturbance may not be described as being structured, the fate of the disturbed material was reburial, and hence its treatment *after* disturbance, was structured and regulated. The crucial point appears to be that it was to be reburied, despite there seemingly having been no rules as to what method was employed; disturbed material could be reburied in graves, tombs, charnel pits or relocated to charnel chapels. It is also significant that there was an 'ideal' regulatory system in place for the management of cemeteries and ordered burial. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

(4.3.2) Differences and changes between early and later medieval disturbances

Some early medieval post-depositional activities discussed in Chapter 3 are not as prevalent during the later medieval period, for example, bag reburials. Equally, certain other forms of disturbance were only initiated during the later medieval period, such as charnel chapels or viscera burials. Others seem to have been modified or altered in their execution, the most notable being the reopening of graves for the insertion of an additional, articulated individual. Examples of this form of disturbance dating to the early medieval period involve the targeting of an already occupied grave on one or more occasion, with the original occupant being entirely disinterred and displaced to make room for the new burial, before being reinserted in disarticulation, around the new occupant (see Chapter 3 Section (3.2.2) 2) (v)). Although in all excavation reports, these graves are described as having been reopened, there is a remote possibility that the articulated individual represents the original occupant, who was buried with disarticulated material, or whose grave was reopened in order to accommodate disarticulated material, at a later date/s. In later medieval examples of reopened graves with later additions of burials, there is a distinct difference to earlier cases. The original occupant is left *in situ* within the grave, and the new occupant is inserted above them, usually separated by a thin layer of earth. In a minority of cases, the original occupant's skeleton is disturbed (see Section (4.2.2) 2) (vi) & (vii)). This does not appear to have been done deliberately, given that the majority are carefully left untouched, or where they have been disturbed, their elements have been arranged into a religious symbol over the later insertion (see Section (4.2.2) 2) (vi) & (vii)). All cases dating to the early medieval period involved the graves of individuals who were fully decomposed (see Chapter 3 Section (3.2.2) 2) (v)). It is not entirely possible to determine if all the original occupants of the reopened graves that date to the later medieval period were articulated or not, since their state of preservation or detailed description of the original occupants are not consistently provided. However, it may be surmised, based on later medieval attitudes concerning the sentience of fleshed decomposing bodies (see Chapter 6) that the original occupants were either fully decomposed, or that their lack of disturbance indicates a conscious effort was being made not to disturb them during

the reopening and new insertion, expressly *because* they were still in a state of decomposition.

The subtle differences between the early and later manifestations of disturbance may be accounted for by the Church reforms of the 10th and 11th centuries (see Chapter 2 Section (2.3.1) & Chapter 7 Section (7.3.2) (vi)). These reforms instigated stricter regulation and control by the Church over ecclesiastical matters, institutions and practices, including burial of the dead and management of cemeteries (Hadley 2001: 143; McClain 2011b; 2014; Zadora-Rio 2003). As laws were decreed and rules were being made and enforced, aspects of certain post-depositional practices may have been deemed unlawful, whilst others were accepted or modified to conform to the new reforms, and hence were regulated. The changes introduced in relation to translations and elevations have been discussed in Chapter 2 and the differences between those of the early compared to the later medieval periods have been documented by the author (see Section (2.2.5) & (2.3.1)). Evidence for the increase in cemetery control and management increases after the 11th century (see Chapter 7 Section (7.3.2) (vi)) and so it ought not to be surprising that this coincided with an increase in control and management of the buried dead.

4.4: Conclusion

It is clear from the examples of post-depositional disturbance discussed in this chapter, that physical interaction with the buried dead was frequently engaged in by the living, deliberately, and at a large variety of site types. A significant point is that on no occasion throughout the entire medieval period was post-depositional disturbance outlawed or forbidden. It continued and even increased in frequency in later centuries with more elaborations and forms of disturbance than were evident in the early medieval period. While one form of disturbance was modified and strictly regulated, that of viscera burials in the 13th century, it must be remembered that this was the ruling of one Pope, whose Papal Bull was effectively rescinded by later Church leaders (Binski 1992: 67-8; Daniell 1999: 122-3; Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 80; Horrox 1996: 101). Clearly there was never any doctrinal stipulation in place that completely prevented physical interaction with the buried dead. Instead, how that interaction was to be achieved and engaged in was moderated. Post-depositional disturbance was abundantly respectful and interaction was regulated in order that disrespectful and unnecessary disturbance could be prevented. In fact, the only acts of disturbance identified by the author that could be understood to exhibit disrespect are when large numbers of burials were built over, removed or destroyed due to large-scale construction works in relation to the Norman conquest, as occurred at Barnstaple Castle, York Minster, Winchester Cathedral and Hereford Cathedral (see Chapter 3 Section (3.3.1) (ii)) (Cherryson 2005: 81; Phillips & Heywood 1995; Miles 1986; Stone & Appleton-Fox 1996). This particular form of disturbance might be understood as having been deliberately undertaken with the aim of disrespecting the community being conquered, by deliberately physically disturbing and destroying their dead.

The management of medieval cemeteries in order to prevent unnecessary or disrespectful disturbance of the dead has been noted in relation to both early and later medieval periods, and will be discussed in detail in Chapter 7. It is also important to understand the attitudes of medieval people towards the buried dead, in order to

157

identify why certain types of disturbance were avoided, while others were actively and deliberately undertaken. The findings of that research comprise Chapter 6. It must be concluded that later medieval interaction with the buried dead was neither callous nor undertaken lightly. Post-depositional disturbance was not tantamount to desecration of the dead, so long as it was undertaken for justifiable reasons and was committed with respect and according to prescribed methodology. Where particular categories of disturbance do not exhibit overt structure in how they were to be achieved, regulatory stipulations regarding the fate of the disturbed material were still in place, in that any skeletal material was to be reburied. It has been demonstrated that all forms of post-depositional disturbance may be categorised according to the physical manifestation of skeletal material within archaeological contexts, and the means by which buried individuals came to be disturbed. The ability to classify interactions with the buried dead illustrates the complex nature of disturbance and negates the idea that it was callously and haphazardly undertaken. It is now evident that, contrary to general archaeological consensus that post-depositional interaction with the buried dead is not worthy of study, nor indicative of funerary practice, it was a disciplined and important part of medieval curation of the dead.

CHAPTER 5: LATER MEDIEVAL CHARNELLING PRACTICES: OSSUARIES & CHARNEL CHAPELS

5.1: Introduction

This chapter will focus on the nature and role of charnel chapels. Charnel chapels are medieval ecclesiastical buildings that were constructed in England from the early 13th century to the Reformation in the mid-16th century. They also proliferated throughout medieval Europe, where they continue to be used to the present day. There are two forms of charnel chapel: free-standing, two-storeyed buildings and those built below churches. Both structural types primarily consist of a semi-subterranean vault or chamber for the purpose of storing disturbed and displaced bones from the surrounding graveyards. Free-standing examples had a chapel built directly on top of these partially underground chambers and in the majority of cases those charnel chapels built below churches were located under chapels within the church. Medieval charnelling, which is the collection, storage and curation of disinterred bones from graveyards, was first referred to in Germany in the 1160's and by the 13th century was practiced in many European Christian countries. Charnel chapels were known by a variety of names, including ossuaries, charnel houses, or *carnarium* (Bynum 1995). The aims of this chapter are to provide a comprehensive list of charnel chapels and, in particular, to identify their architectural attributes, which will enable future identification of additional sites, even where documentary evidence is lacking.

To date charnel chapels have remained a neglected area of funerary archaeology. No comprehensive attempt has been made to collectively investigate their significance or determine the quantity constructed nationally. This has resulted in charnel chapels being deemed to have been of less importance within English medieval religion than was the case in contemporary European countries. Little research has been undertaken regarding the role charnel chapels had in relation to the dead, either physically or ideologically. The use of charnel chapels as a storage facility for

disinterred bones has been interpreted as a minor function, secondary to their assumed main purpose as private chantry chapels (Orme 1991). Chantries were buildings inside or attached to churches or cathedrals where priests were paid to pray regularly and perform masses for the soul/s of the person/s who established the chantry. Only two charnel chapels have been extensively studied: those at the cathedral complexes of Exeter in Devon and Norwich in Norfolk (Gilchrist 2005; Orme 1991; 1996). Both of these charnel chapels have been discussed in isolation in these studies without comparative analyses to other charnel chapels.

Instances of post-depositional activity in medieval England are generally deemed insignificant, small scale, and explicable on pragmatic terms. Medieval burial frequently resulted in the disturbance of skeletal remains as existing graves and their contents were cut into in the creation of a new grave or during church construction works. Up to the early 13th century the disturbed bones from intercutting were typically reburied in pits or inserted into newly dug graves. The emergence of charnel chapels in 13th-century England signifies the first time in the medieval period that human skeletal remains were permanently kept above ground in large quantities. The motives for the initiation of a new form of post-burial treatment and storage of disinterred bones during the course of the 13th century are connected to contemporary changes in medieval ideology, such as the official recognition of Purgatory in 1254. For centuries prior to its acceptance by the Church, Purgatory was believed to be a place where the souls of people not fit for immediate ascension to heaven because of sins committed during life, would reside until their sins were purged. The duration of this purgation depended on the level and quantity of sins not repented for prior to death but could be lessened by prayers offered by the living on behalf of these souls (Bynum 1995; Daniell 1997; Burgess 1987; Horrox 1999).

This chapter will demonstrate the importance of recognising charnel chapels as a significant part of medieval funerary practice. It will be argued that the role of charnel chapels will be inherently connected to all other aspects of medieval charnelling practices, whether individual or group related.

5.2: Research to Date

(5.2.1) Current Perceptions

Charnel chapels were a type of medieval religious structure located within the confines of the cemetery of ecclesiastical complexes, including abbeys, cathedrals, hospitals, monasteries and parish churches. Written sources suggest that charnel chapels were mainly constructed in the 13th century, both in England and in mainland Europe, but continued to be founded into the 14th and 15th centuries (Ariès 1981; Bynum 1995; Gilchrist & Sloane 2005).

Charnel chapels generally consisted of two rooms or chambers, one built directly on top of the other. Initially the upper room served as a chapel, but by the mid-15th century in many examples these spaces were also utilised as libraries, schools or meeting places for guilds (Orme 1991; Orme and Lepine 2003; Gilchrist 2005). The lower room or basement was used to store disinterred bones, which had been disturbed from the surrounding graveyards. For a long time, only buildings that were free-standing were classified as charnel chapels, despite there being many examples of similar structures located underneath church buildings (see Section (5.3.1)) which display identical architectural features, and which also housed disinterred bones. This latter group of structures have previously been considered only as ossuaries, defined as large quantities of disarticulated disinterred bones stored in rooms underneath church buildings (Ariès 1981; Garland *et al.* 1984; Roberts 1982). It will be demonstrated in this chapter that these ossuaries ought to be re-classed as a second form of charnel chapel and they will be considered as such for the remainder of this chapter.

The proliferation of charnel chapels dating to the medieval period has not been fully recognised. Various authors have recorded charnel chapels as having existed in cathedral and abbey complexes, and to a lesser degree in graveyards of parish churches. However, the examples listed in each publication are not consistent between these studies and there are numerous additional examples of charnel chapels which have not been cited in reviews of charnel practices (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1: Charnel chapels mentioned by various authors in publications on charnelling practices. Note how the examples are not consistently cited, nor is the precise location of each site recorded (Bloxam 1855; Orme 1991: 162; Harding 1992: 134; Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 41-2).

Author	Charnel Chapel
Bloxam	Rothwell parish church (Northamptonshire)
	Hythe (Kent)
	Folkestone parish church (Kent)
	Ripon Cathedral, Ripon (North Yorkshire)
	Tamworth church (Staffordshire)
	Church of St Michael, Oxford (Oxfordshire)
	Abbey church, Waltham (Essex)
	Parish church of Stratford-Upon-Avon (Warwickshire)
	Narborough church (Northamptonshire)
	Worcester Cathedral (Worcestershire)
	St Paul's Cathedral (London)
	Bury St Edmunds (Suffolk)
	Norwich Cathedral, Norwich (Norfolk)
	St Gregory's church, Norwich (Norfolk)
	Durham monastery/church (Durham)
Orme	Exeter Cathedral (Devon)
	St Paul's Cathedral (London)
	Norwich Cathedral, Norwich (Norfolk)
	Worcester Cathedral (Worcestershire)
	Winchester Cathedral (Hampshire)
	Bury St Edmunds Cathedral (Suffolk)
	Collegiate College of Beverley (Yorkshire)
	St Mary Without Bishopsgate (London)
	Bodmin parish church (Devon)
	Holy Trinity parish church, Coventry (Warwickshire)
	St Alphege parish church, Cripplegate (London)
Harding	St Andrew Hubbard (London)
	St Dunstan in the West (London)
	St Michael Cornhill (London)
	St Martin Outwich (London)
	St Mary Aldermary (London)
	St Thomas the Apostle (London)
	St Dunstan in the East (London) (Tentative)
Gilchrist & Sloane	Worcester Cathedral (Worcestershire)
	St Paul's Cathedral (London)
	Norwich Cathedral, Norwich (Norfolk)
	St Alban's Abbey (Hertfordshire)
	Great Yarmouth parish church (Norfolk)
	King's Lynn parish church (Norfolk)
	St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury (Kent)
	St Mary Spital (London)
	St Andrew Hubbard (London)
	St Dunstan in the West (London)
	St Michael Cornhill (London)
	St Martin Outwich (London)
	St Mary Aldermary (London)
	St Thomas the Apostle (London)
	St Dunstan in the East (London) (Tentative)

In the 19th century Bloxam recorded fifteen ecclesiastic sites with charnel chapels (Bloxam 1855). In a more recent study, Orme, however, noted only twelve charnel chapels (Orme 1991: 162). Yet, in a survey published at roughly the same time Harding records seven examples in London alone (Harding 1992: 134). Most recently, Gilchrist and Sloane (2005: 41-2) cite fifteen examples across England. In these surveys the majority of charnel chapels are only mentioned by site name and are not discussed or described in any way but are merely listed. In some cases, only a district or town name is provided for where a charnel chapel once existed. Previous analyses have concentrated on a single example of charnel chapel assessed in isolation, for example Gilchrist's publication on Norwich charnel chapel and Orme's publications on Exeter charnel chapel (Gilchrist 2005; Orme 1991; Orme & Lepine 2003). This chapter will collectively and comparatively discuss the available evidence for all identified charnel chapels with the intention of establishing their role in medieval commemoration of the dead. This role has to date been largely unrecognised. The additional charnel chapels noted in this chapter that have not been mentioned by the above authors, were identified by searching the online databases Pastscape (http://pastscape.org.uk/) and Heritage Gateway (www.heritagegateway.org.uk). Others were identified in site reports or in articles on well-established charnel house sites, such as that of St Leonard's Church, Hythe (Kent), where other known of charnel houses were cited (Stoessiger & Morant 1932). This list of sites may not be a completely comprehensive list of all charnel chapels that once existed in medieval England. They represent those that were possible to be identified within the remit of time constraints involved in the completion of this thesis. It is probable that more sites may also be identified by future excavations of cemetery complexes or by a systematic survey of medieval parish churches.

In a recent survey by Gilchrist and Sloane (2005:41) it was stated that the earliest known free-standing English example of a charnel chapel at a religious house was that of St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury (Kent), which was established in 1287. However, earlier examples were in existence prior to this date which were not noted by Gilchrist and Sloane. Examples include Malmesbury Abbey (Wiltshire), where a charnel chapel was in existence from 1267 (Pugh & Crittall 1956: 228) while Exeter

Cathedral 'acquired such a storehouse in 1286 in a form that was common elsewhere: a subterranean chamber with a small detached chapel above it' (Lepine & Orme 2003: 23). Other examples of early foundations include the charnel chapels at Worcester Cathedral, which was built in 1224 (Green 1796: 54; Willis-Bund and Page 1924), and St Paul's Cathedral which was established by 1282 (Stow 1598: 329). Hereford Cathedral's charnel chapel was built between 1220 and 1246 (Fisher 1898), and that of Holy Trinity Church in Rothwell (Northamptonshire) was constructed in the mid-13th century (Garland *et al.* 1988: 23) (See Tables 5.2-5.5).

Table 5.2: English free-standing charnel chapels with verified dates of construction (Blomefield 1806; Gilchrist 2005; Gilchrist and Sloane 2005; Green 1796; Lloyd *at al.* 2004*;* Orme 1991; Page 1906; Page 1923; Page 1924; Willis-Bund and Page 1906)

Site	Date of Construction	Location
Worcester Cathedral	1224	In the lay cemetery of cathedral complex
Malmesbury Abbey	1267	In the lay cemetery of cathedral complex
St. Paul's Cathedral	1282	In the Pardon Churchyard
Exeter Cathedral	1286	In the lay cemetery of cathedral complex
St. Augustine's Abbey	1287	In the lay cemetery of cathedral complex
Bury St. Edmunds	1301	In the lay cemetery of cathedral complex
Ely Cathedral and Abbey	1301	In the lay cemetery of the cathedral complex
Norwich Cathedral	1316	In the lay cemetery of cathedral complex
St. Mary Abbey Church, Winchester	1319	To the north of the church
St. Mary Spital London	1310-1325	In the lay cemetery of the Augustinian Priory and Hospital
Evesham Abbey	1344-1367	In the lay cemetery of the abbey complex
St. Albans Abbey	1381	In the lay cemetery of the abbey complex
Scarborough Parish Church	By 1394	In the graveyard
Carew Cheriton Parish Church Pembrokeshire	1300s	In the north-west part of the cemetery
Church of St. Peter & St. Mary Magdalene, Barnstaple	1300s	In the eastern part of the cemetery
Bodmin Parish Church, Cornwall	1300s	In the eastern part of the cemetery
Winchester Cathedral	1300s	In the graveyard of St. Swithun's Priory

Table 5.3: English charnel chapels underneath churches with verified dates of construction (Barker 1998; Fisher 1898; Garland *et al.* 1984; Orme)

Site	Date of Construction	Location
Hereford Cathedral	1220-1246	Underneath Lady Chapel, east of chancel
St. Andrew's Church, Northborough	1330-1350	Underneath a chantry chapel on south side of church
All Saints Church, Maldon, Essex	1330	Underneath the south aisle
Parish Church of Westbury-On-Trym, Bristol	1300s	Underneath the south aisle
Narborough Parish Church, Northamptonshire	1300s	Underneath south tranceptal chapel
Church of St. Leonard, Hythe, Kent	Mid 1300s	Underneath the chancel
Church of the Holy Trinity, Rothwell, Northamptonshire	Mid 1300s	underneath the south tranceptal aisle
Burford Church, Oxford	1300s	Underneath St. Thomas' Chapel in south aisle
St.Margaret's Church, King's Lynn	c.1400	North-west angle of the church

Table 5.4: Collated evidence concerning charnel chapels mentioned in this chapter

Charnel Chapel	Location	Construction Date	Dedication	Date of Destruction/Re-Use
Abbey Church, Waltham, Essex	In the lay cemetery of cathedral complex	-	-	-
All Saints Church, Maldon, Essex	Underneath the south aisle	1330	-	-
Bodmin Parish Church, Cornwall	In the eastern part of the cemetery	1300s	Mary & Peter	-
Burford Church, Oxford	Underneath St. Thomas' Chapel in south aisle	1300s	-	-
Bury St. Edmunds	In the lay cemetery of cathedral complex	1301	-	-
Carew Cheriton Parish Church Pembrokeshire	In the north-west part of the cemetery	1300s	-	-
Church of St. Leonard, Hythe, Kent	Underneath the chancel	Mid 1200s	-	Unknown when closed, rediscovered c.1700
Church of St Michael, Oxford, Oxfordshire	-	-	-	-
Church of St. Peter & St. Mary Magdalene, Barnstaple	In the eastern part of the cemetery	1300s	Anne	-
The Collegiate Church of Beverley, Yorkshire	-	-	-	-
Durham Monastery/Church, Durham	-	-	-	-
Ely Cathedral and Abbey	In the lay cemetery of cathedral complex	1301	Peter	Demolished by 1539
Evesham Abbey	In the lay cemetery of the abbey complex	1344-1367	-	-
Exeter Cathedral	In the lay cemetery of cathedral complex	1286	Edward the Confessor, later Mary	Dismantled by 1553
Folkestone Parish Church, Kent	-	-	-	-
Grantham Parish Church, Norfolk	-	-	-	-
Great Yarmouth Parish Church, Norfolk	-	-	-	-
Hereford Cathedral	Underneath Lady Chapel, east of chancel	1220-1246	Anne	-
Holy Trinity Parish Church, Cambridge	-	-	-	-
Holy Trinity, Rothwell, Northamptonshire	Underneath the south aisle westernmost chapel	Mid 1200s	Chapel above dedicated to Mary	Unknown when closed, rediscovered c.1700
King's Lynn parish Church, Norfolk	-	1267	John	-
Malmesbury Abbey	-	1300s	-	-
Narborough Parish Church, Northamptonshire	Underneath south tranceptal chapel	-	-	-
Norwich Cathedral	In the lay cemetery of cathedral complex	1316	John the Evangelist	Charnel room emptied and let for use by 1550
Parish Church of Stratford-Upon-Avon, Warwickshire	-	-	-	-
Parish Church of Westbury-On-Trym, Bristol	Underneath the south aisle	-	-	-
Ripon Cathedral (North Yorkshire)	-	-	-	-
Scarborough Parish Church	In the cemetery	By 1394	Mary Magdalene	-

Table 5.4 (continued)

Name	Date	Dedication	Location	Notes
St Albans Abbey	1381	-	In the lay cemetery of the abbey complex	-
St Alphege Parish Church, Cripplegate, London	-	-	-	-
St Andrew's Church, Northborough	1330-1350	-	Underneath a chantry chapel on south side of church	-
St Andrew Hubbard, London	-	-	-	-
St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury	1287	Mary	In the lay cemetery of cathedral complex	-
St Dunstan in the East, London	-	-	-	-
St Dunstan in the West, London	-	-	-	-
St Gregory's Church, Norwich, Norfolk	-	-	-	Charnel room let for use after Dissolution
St Margaret's Church, King's Lynn	c.1400	-	Underneath north-west angle of the church	Pulled down in 1779
St Mary Abbey Church, Winchester	1319	The Holy Trinity	To the north of the church	-
St Mary Aldermary, London	-	-	-	-
St Mary's charnel chapel, Barnstaple, Devon	-	-	-	-
St Mary's Parish Church, Safron Walden	-	-	-	-
St Mary Spital London	1319-1325	Mary Magdalene & Edmund the Bishop	In the lay cemetery of the Augustinian Priory and Hospital	-
St Mary Without Bishopsgate, London	-	Edmund of Abingdon & Mary Magdalene	-	-
St Michael Cornhill, London	-	-	-	-
St Michael Outwich, London	-	-	-	-
St Michael's Parish Church, Coventry, Warwickshire	-	-	-	-
St Nicholas Church, Newcastle-upon-Tyne	-	-	Under St George's porch	Unknown when closed, rediscovered in 1824
St Paul's Cathedral	1282	Mary & All Saints	In the Pardon Churchyard	1549 converted to house and sheds, bones removed
St Peter's Church, Colchester, Essex	-	-	-	-
St Thomas the Apostle, London	-	-	-	-
Tamworth Church, Stafford, Staffordshire	-	-	-	-
Westbury-On-Trym, Bristol	1300s	-	-	-
Winchester Cathedral	1300s	Mary	In the cemetery of St. Swithun's Priory	-
Worcester Cathedral	1224	Mary & Thomas Becket	-	Emptied and let for use after dissolution of Priory in 1542. Chapel dismantled in 1677 and charnel room buried

Table 5.5: English charnel chapels either free-standing or beneath churches, without verified dates of construction, dating to the medieval period (Cooper *et al.* 1994; Cox 2011; Dixon 2000; Gnanaratnam 2005; 2006; Hamilton Thompson 1911; Harding 1992; Hillen 1907; Leland 1964; Orme 1991; Orme and Cannon 2010)

Site
Folkestone Parish Church, Kent
Church of St Michael, Oxford, Oxfordshire
Tamworth Church, Stafford, Staffordshire
Abbey Church, Waltham, Essex
Parish Church of Stratford-Upon-Avon, Warwickshire
St Gregory's Church, Norwich, Norfolk
Durham Monastery/Church, Durham
The Collegiate Church of Beverley, Yorkshire
St Mary Without Bishopsgate, London
St Alphege Parish Church, Cripplegate, London
Holy Trinity Parish Church, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire
St. Michael's Parish Church, Coventry, Warwickshire
St Andrew Hubbard, London
St Dunstan in the West, London
St Michael Cornhill, London
St Michael Outwich, London
St Mary Aldermary, London
St Thomas the Apostle, London
St Dunstan in the East, London
St Mary's Parish Church, Safron Walden
Great Yarmouth Parish Church, Norfolk
Grantham Parish Church, Norfolk
Westbury-On-Trym, Bristol
St Peter's Church, Colchester, Essex
St Mary's charnel chapel, Barnstaple, Devon
King's Lynn parish Church, Norfolk
Ripon Cathedral (North Yorkshire)

It is unclear why Gilchrist and Sloane did not mention these examples in their volume. It may be that they were either unaware of the studies cited above detailing the foundation and existence of these charnel chapels, or that they did not consider these examples to be charnel chapel structures.

Recognition of charnel chapels as potentially representing a significant aspect of medieval post-burial activity has not occurred. Gilchrist and Sloane (2005: 195), for example, claim that 'Provision of a charnel house was rare in monastic and parochial context'. Yet, the evidence provided in Tables 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4 contradicts this assertion. Discussions of charnel chapels have been rather dismissive of their ideological connotations and their function in relation to commemoration of the

dead. It is implied that charnel chapels served two completely unconnected roles; the lower chambers were simply required as a means for storing disinterred bones, while the upper chambers were a convenient location for a chantry chapel. Indeed, Orme (1991: 162) has stated that 'In short, the chapels had a variety of characteristics and uses, rather than uniform ones, and the name "charnel chapel" appears to refer to their siting rather than their function'. Consequently, interpretations of charnel chapels' function have tended to focus separately on each of the two chambers which comprise the buildings. The purposes of these two rooms are treated in isolation, rather than the buildings being viewed as a whole. Although Gilchrist and Sloane acknowledge that charnel chapels were utilised and constructed in part for respectfully storing disinterred bones, they argue that they were additionally built for other distinct and unrelated purposes: 'Charnel houses also performed separate liturgical functions as chantry chapels' (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 42). In publications to date, no demonstrative connection has been sought or ascertained between the charnel and the chapels, perhaps due to a lack of investigation rather than basing these claims on any pertinent evidence: 'I know of no evidence that the Exeter one [chapel above the charnel chamber] was particularly used for anything to do with the dead' (Orme, pers. comm., May 2, 2012). No comparative or collective studies of all the identified charnel chapels have been undertaken. Consequently, numerous architectural characteristics common at all charnel chapels have been overlooked, as have their potential ideological resonances. It is these characteristics which demonstrate the inherent connection between the charnel and the chapels and the role of these structures in their entirety, in the commemoration of the dead.

A comprehensive review to ascertain the number of charnel chapels constructed during the medieval period, the motivations behind their sudden appearance and proliferation, and whether their establishment was driven purely by the need for storage places to house disinterred bones has not been undertaken by any of the authors who have produced publications on English charnel chapels (Gilchrist 2005; Gilchrist & Sloane 2005; Harding 1992, 2002; Henderson & Bidwell 1982; Lepine & Orme 2003; Orme 1991; Rousseau 2011). Neither has a detailed assessment of their precise role, both individually and collectively, within medieval religion and society

been attempted. Charnel chapels signal the first example in England of large quantities of human bones being curated above ground, out of the earth and in a manner which could be described as a display, being purposefully visible and accessible. Their appearance also coincides with the official recognition of Purgatory as a real place in 1254 (Daniell 1997: 11, 178) and the initiation and proliferation of private chantry chapels (Morgan 1999: 137-8). It is here proposed that these observations are significant and fundamental in deciphering charnel chapels' status and role as a post-depositional phenomenon within medieval secular and lay society.

5.3: Defining Charnel Chapels

(5.3.1) Architectural Attributes

A large number of charnel chapels are known to have existed at various ecclesiastical sites, mainly due to antiquarian reports or evidence in the foundation charters of these chapels (Blomefield 1806; Bloxam 1855; Green 1796; Page 1906; 1907; 1912; 1923; Pugh 1953; Pugh & Crittall 1956). Despite this recognition there has been no attempt to determine defining architectural attributes of these buildings in order to enable their categorisation as a distinct class of building which would serve to identify other, undocumented, examples. Descriptions of charnel chapels tend to lack specific detail and are relatively brief; typical is the observation by Gilchrist and Sloane (2005: 41) that 'the most common form appears to have been a split-level building with several bays, comprising a charnel undercroft for storage of disturbed bones, with a chamber, often a chapel, above'. This observation appears to have been based only on architectural or archaeological evidence from cathedral and large ecclesiastical complexes, where charnel chapels are referred to as such in associated documentary sources such as foundation charters. Yet, there are numerous sites throughout England where structures beneath churches have been referred to as 'bone-houses', 'ossuaries', or 'charnel chambers' (Bloxam 1855; Parsons 1908; Stoessiger & Morant 1932). It is here contended that these examples ought to be considered as a second or alternative form of charnel chapel. As will be demonstrated, both the sites beneath churches and those that are free-standing exhibit identical architectural characteristics, differing only in that those below churches are not structurally independent. The recognition of charnel chapels has largely relied on documentary sources. This is mainly because so few survive to be analysed architecturally and those that do survive, and that have been analysed and verified by documentary sources, are of the free-standing variety. This has resulted in an expectation that they were always located within churchyards and that they were normally free-standing: 'The usual site was in the cemetery, north of the church ... or west of it' (Orme 1991: 162). Harding (1992: 134) has pointed out that 'several charnels are only known from chance references in churchwardens' accounts', while Gilchrist and Sloane (2005: 41)

170

note that 'The form taken by parish charnels remains unknown'. The location and form of these parish charnels may have gone unrecognised, as it was expected that they would be free-standing structures when in fact they were situated underneath church buildings. The lack of research into, and knowledge regarding, charnel chapels is highlighted by Gilchrist and Sloane (2005: 43), who advocate that 'a national synthesis of the nature and chronology of these structures would be of high value'.

Whether free-standing or below churches, all charnel chapel structures seem to conform to a prescribed template, with striking continuity of specific features noted at all sites where descriptions are provided, or the buildings themselves are still extant. Below follows an outline of these identifying features:

(i) Location below a sanctified building

The primary characteristic is the siting of the charnel chamber below a sanctified building, whether an existing church or a deliberately constructed chapel (See Tables 5.2-5.4). This appears to have been of paramount importance. Where charnel chambers are located below churches, they are nearly all directly underneath a chantry chapel, just as the charnel chambers are always below chapels in the free-standing examples. The charnel chambers at the church of St. Andrew at Northborough (Serjeantson *et al.* 1906), at Hereford Cathedral (Fisher 1898), the Priory of St Bartholomew (Webb 1908) and St Bride's church (London) (Milne 1996: 14-18), are located beneath the Lady Chapel of the respective church. That at Narborough parish church was located below the south transept chapel (Bloxam 1855: 3-4). Others are beneath the chancel, and hence the main altar, such as those at St Leonard's church in Hythe (Kent) (see Fig. 5.1) (Leland 1964: 64-5) and St Gregory's church in Norwich (Blomefield 1806). The remainder are below the south aisle, such as at Holy Trinity Church, Rothwell (Northamptonshire) (see Fig. 5.1).
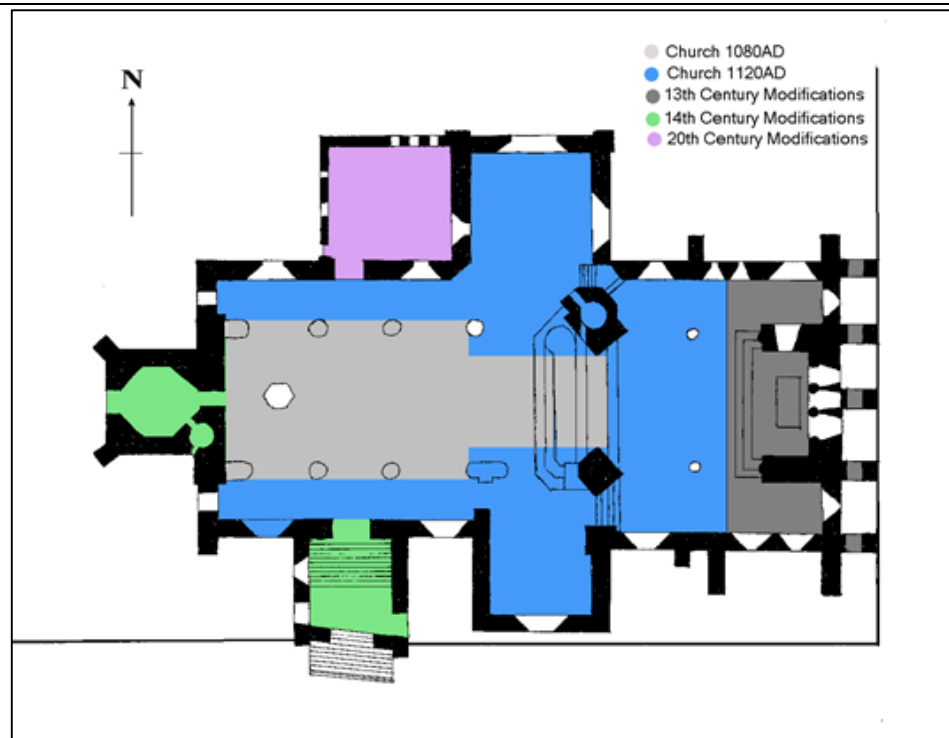
Fig. 5.1: Plan of St Leonard's Church, Hythe (Kent) detailing the location of the charnel chamber beneath the altar, highlighted in dark grey (Crangle 2009: 97).

Where charnel chambers beneath churches are not in spatial association with a chapel directly overhead, they do exhibit characteristics or features indicative of chapels, implying that the charnel room itself served the chapel function. For example, in 1842 below the south porch at St Nicholas church, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, a charnel chamber was discovered, in the south wall of which was a piscina, described as 'part of a bason, for holy water' (MacKenzie 1827). In Norwich's charnel room 'at the entrance, on the right hand, was a holy-water stone; and on the other side, a niche, where formerly an image stood' (Blomefield 1806: 58), while the eastern wall of Rothwell's charnel chamber retains traces of medieval wall painting. Although now barely visible, it is evident that most of this eastern wall was once painted (see Figs 5.2 & 5.3). According to 19th-century sources, the painting was of the Resurrection (Bloxam 1855: 2; Cypher 1865: 42).
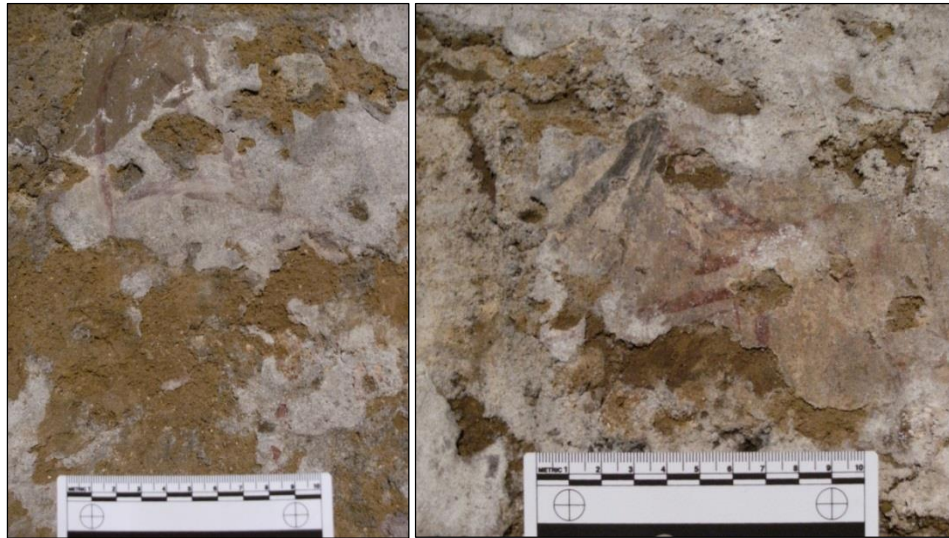
Figs 5.2 & 5.3: Remnants of medieval wall paintings on the eastern wall of the charnel chamber below the south aisle of The Church of the Holy Trinity, Rothwell (Northamptonshire) (Photographs author's own)

(ii) Semi-subterranean charnel chambers

Charnel chambers below churches and the lower chambers of free-standing charnel chapels are always semi-subterranean, not fully underground. All sites have windows or openings in the gap between the upper chamber and the ground level to the exterior. This combination of windows and the partially underground nature of the charnel rooms was clearly intended as a deliberate architectural feature. In the majority of cases, these windows were inserted into the south and/or east walls. Examples include those at St Mary Spital (London) (Gilchrist and Sloane 2005: 42-43), Worcester Cathedral (Green 1796: 56), Carew Cheriton (Pembrokeshire) (Lloyd *et al.* 2004: 160), Hereford Cathedral (Fisher 1898), St Anne's in Barnstaple (Devon) (Cox 2001), Narborough (Northamptonshire) (Bloxam 1855: 3-4), Rothwell (Northamptonshire) (Garland *et al* 1988: 237), and the church of St Mary the Virgin, Upchurch (Kent) (English Heritage Listed Building ID 176207).

Fig. 5.4: St Anne's charnel chapel, Barnstaple from the east (Cox 2001:

7). Note the large east facing windows on both levels and deliberate

slanting of ground level surrounding the building to allow light to enter

the lower level and highlight the room from the exterior.

The charnel chambers below churches have been constructed so that their south and/or east walls are directly in line with the south and/or east wall foundations of the church building, permitting openings or windows to be made to the exterior just as at the free-standing sites. The exact siting and placement of these rooms, hence, appears to have been of substantial importance. These structural attributes are also mirrored in contemporary European examples (see Figs 5.4-5.8)

Figs 5.5 & 5.6: One of the southern windows of Rothwell charnel

chamber from the exterior (Reproduced with permission from Rothwell

Holy Church authorities) (left); section through chamber showing the

position of windows (Adapted from Garland *et al* 1984: 237). Note the

deliberately lowered ground level to the exterior allowing light to enter

and making the chamber and contents visible from the exterior.

**Figs 5.7 & 5.8: The charnel chapels of Kutná Hora, Czech Republic (left)
and Oppenheim, Germany (right), both founded in 1400. Note the
same architectural features of windows into the lower charnel rooms
as in the English examples in Fig. 5.4. The upper levels of these
buildings also served as chapels, with disarticulated bones stored in the
lower rooms (Photographs author's own)**

These rooms were designed to allow natural light to enter. This implies that importance was attached to the visibility of the interiors and their contents, and that windows were not simply incorporated to permit those who cached the bones inside to do so in a well-lit environment. Visibility appears to have been paramount to their purpose, both to see inside from the exterior, but also to view the interior and contents once inside (see Section (5.4.3)). In this respect, the use of light is reminiscent of the practice in churches, where carefully placed windows drew attention to specific regions and focal points (McNeill 2006).

(iii) Accessibility

Both the free-standing charnel chapels and those chambers beneath churches also have their own permanent entrances through the western

or southern walls, with those examples beneath churches accessed from the exterior of the church building in all but three cases (Narborough, Grantham and St. Bertelin's church, Stafford). Of the sites for which information is available on their architectural form, five had doorways in the south wall, three in the west wall, with only one, St Mary Spital (London), with a doorway in the east wall (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 42). Direct access between the upper and lower rooms of charnel chapels located within churches is only evident at one site, Narborough in Northamptonshire, where the charnel chamber was below the eastern part of the Lady Chapel, itself in the south aisle of the church. Access was via a winding staircase leading from the south west corner of the chapel (Bloxam 1855: 4). Of the charnel chambers located below churches, two had access via the church interior, St Bertelin's church at St Mary's Gate, Stafford (Staffordshire) (Oswald 1955) and Grantham parish church (Hamilton Thompson 1911). This ease of access to the charnel chambers, both physically and visually, is discussed further below in Section (4.3).

(iv) Dimensions

Where measurements could be ascertained, structural dimensions fall within the range of a rough ratio of 2:1 or 3:1 east-west by north-south. Exeter's charnel chapel measured 6.5m in width and 12m in length (Orme 1991: 162; Henderson & Bidwell 1982: 169), while the dimensions of the charnel chapel at Norwich are 21m x 9m (Gilchrist 2005: 101), and the charnel chapel at St Mary Spital (London) was 11m in width and 5.6m in length (Gilchrist and Sloane 2005: 41). Worcester's charnel chapel measured 17.35m in width x 6.7m in length (Green 1796: 56), Stratford-upon-Avon parish church, as recorded by Bloxam in 1855, measured 9.14m wide x 4.57m long (Bloxam 1855: 3) and the charnel chamber at Holy Trinity church, Rothwell is 9m wide x 4.5m long (see Appendix 2) (Garland *et al.* 1984: 237). St Bartholomew's Priory West Smithfield is unusual as its dimensions are 7.24m in width x 7.77m in length, meaning that it was roughly square in form (Webb 1921). All of the charnel

chapels, both free-standing and those located underneath churches, were orientated on an east-west alignment, except that of St. Bride's which is aligned north-south, as was the Lady Chapel under which it is located (Milne 1997). The interpretation of this chamber is, however, highly tentative (see Section (5.4.4)).

(v) Prominent locations within complexes

A key feature of large ecclesiastical complexes is the siting of the charnel chapels in areas of existing public thoroughfares which were frequented on a regular basis within the cemeteries used for burial of the laity. The location chosen for the charnel chapel at Norwich Cathedral was the west part of the lay cemetery. This was the location for regular markets and fairs at certain times of the year such as Pentecost or the Feast of Whitsun, the seven weeks after Easter Sunday (Gilchrist 2005: 189). Various craft guilds were also located in the lay cemetery such as the Guild of St Luke, associated with bell-founders, pewterers and glaziers (Gilchrist 2005: 189). The charnel chapel was in a prominent and highly visible location as it had to be passed by if entering the lay cemetery from the western Erpingham Gate (see Fig. 5.9) (Gilchrist 2005: 100, 189).
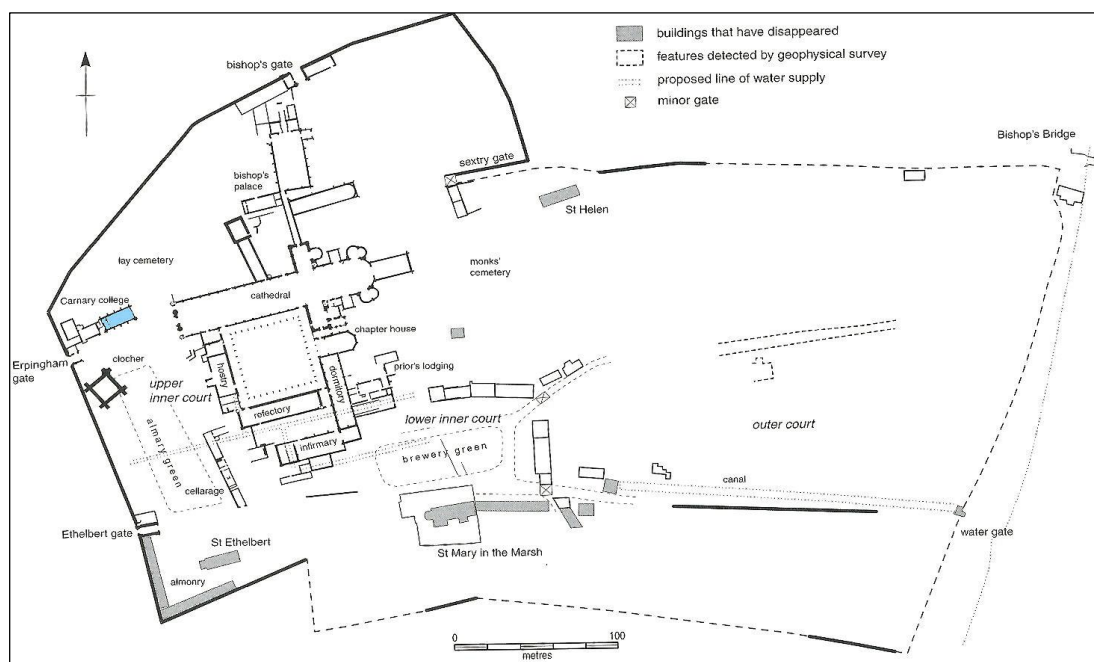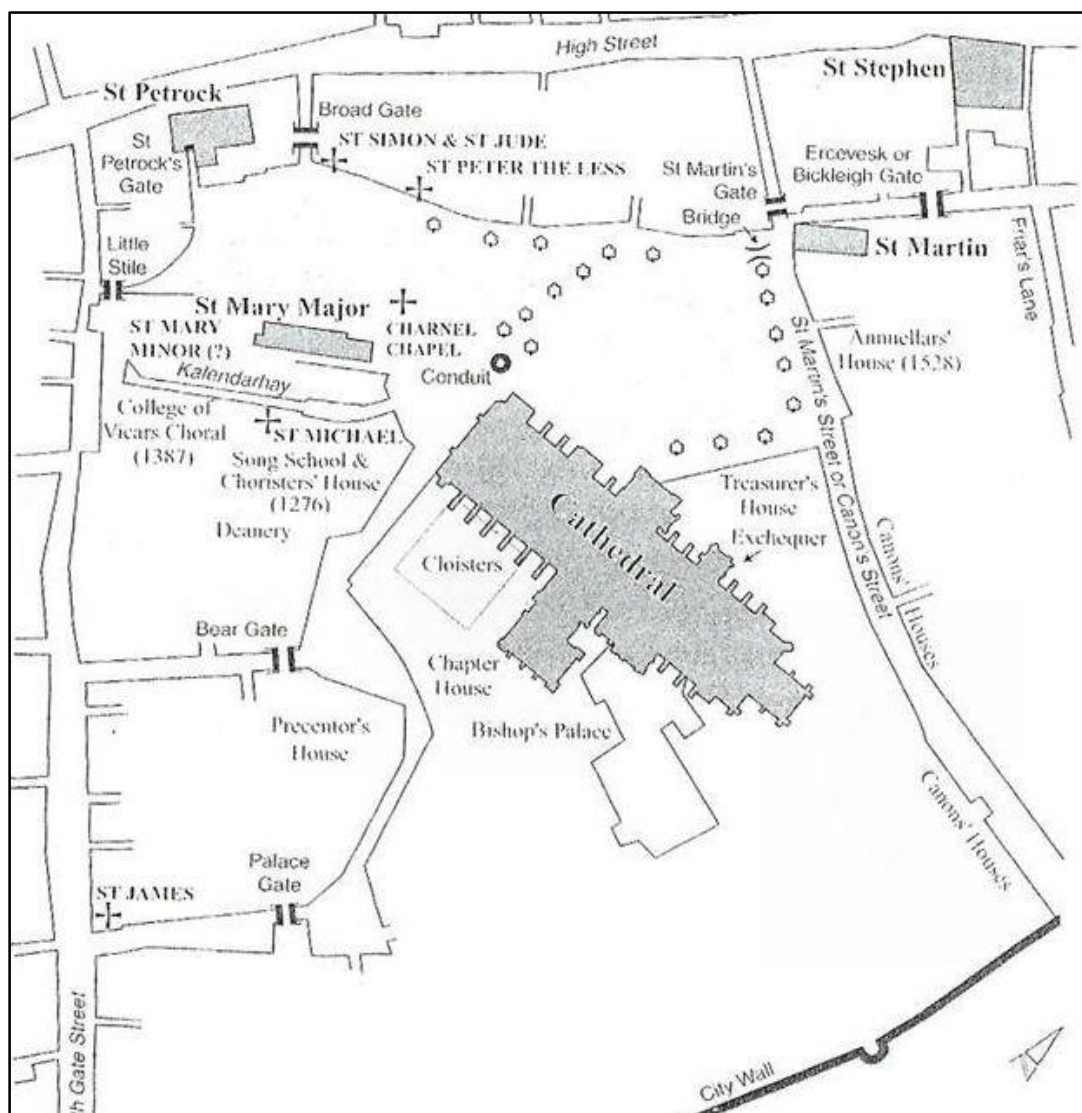
Figs 5.9 & 5.10: Location of Norwich charnel chapel within the cathedral complex (shown in blue) (top) (Adapted from Gilchrist 2005: 42); Location of Exeter's charnel chapel within the cathedral complex (highlighted in blue) (bottom) (adapted from Lepine and Orme 2003: 5)

Exeter's charnel chapel was located amongst a network of pathways, close to the well and conduit, in the northern region of the lay cemetery of the church of St Mary Major (see Fig. 5.10) (Lepine & Orme 2003: 17).

The charnel chapel of Ely Cathedral and Priory was directly beside Stepil Gate, the main entrance from the town into the lay cemetery, and just to the north of the cathedral itself (see Fig. 5.11) (Pugh 1953: 78, 81).
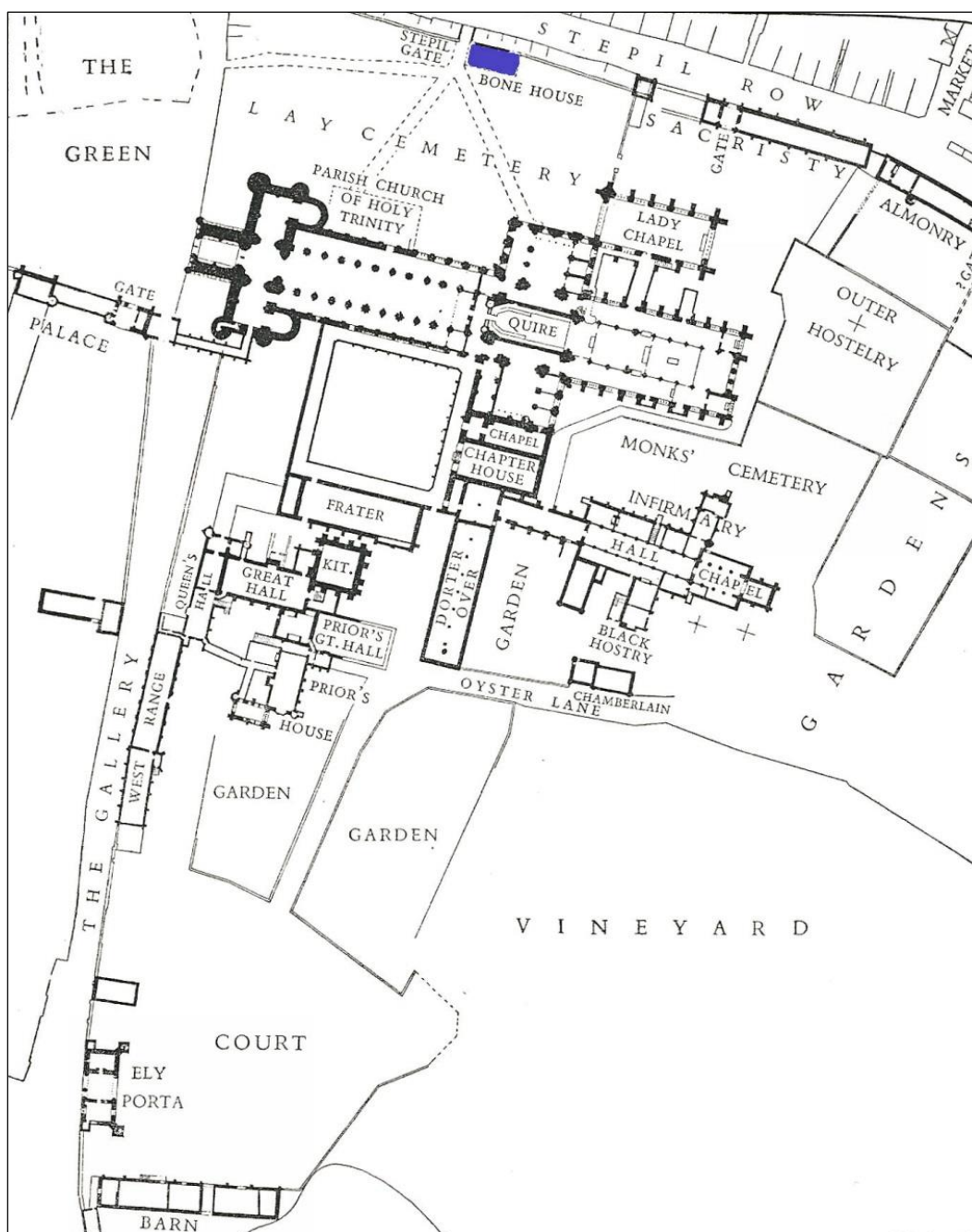
Fig. 5.11: Location of Ely's charnel chapel within the cathedral and priory complex (shown in blue) (adapted from Pugh 1953: 78). The term 'bone house' is one of many descriptive terms in the 19th century to describe charnel houses and chapels

Worcester's charnel chapel was constructed in the lay cemetery, close to the north porch entrance to the cathedral (see Fig. 5.12), while Evesham Abbey's charnel chapel was situated beside the Great Gatehouse in the lay cemetery (see Fig. 5.13).
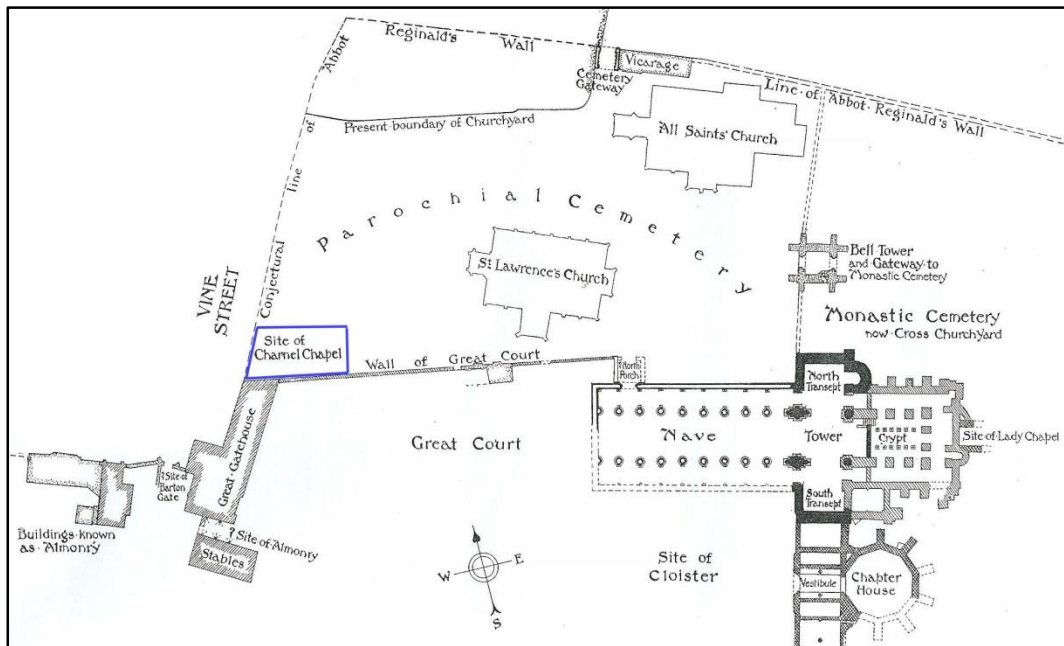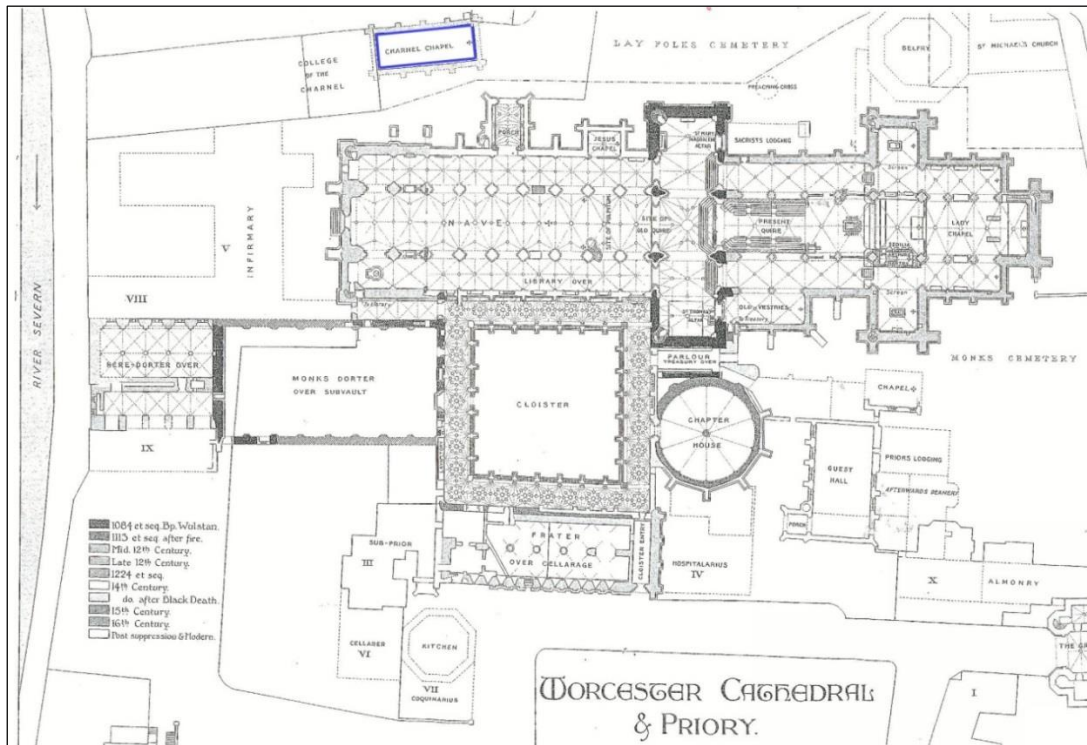
Figs 5.12 & 5.13: Location of Worcester charnel chapel within the cathedral complex (highlighted in blue) (top) (Page 1924); Location of Evesham Abbey's charnel chapel within the abbey complex (highlighted in blue) (bottom) (Willis-Bund & Page: 1971).

The regions within the lay cemeteries of cathedral complexes where charnel chapels were sited were used for markets, fairs and guild meeting

places, and they continued in this role throughout the medieval period. For example, the area between the charnel chapel and the Bishop's palace at Norwich became known as 'green yard,' a preaching space for delivering outdoor sermons: 'Green yard became a preaching area with a permanently constructed pulpit and civic dignitaries as early as 1469' (see Fig. 5.9) (Gilchrist 2005: 100-101). The association between charnel chapels and preaching is noted at other sites; an external pulpit and gallery were constructed by the early 1500s at the centre of the cemetery of St Mary Spital, to the south of the charnel chapel (Gilchrist and Sloane 2005: 41). St Mary-without-Bishopsgate (London) also had an open-air pulpit and two-storey gallery by the early 16th century (Orme 1991: 168; Stow 1598: 166-7), as did Exeter's charnel chapel by 1534 (Orme 1991: 168). Although these are quite late medieval additions to the charnel chapel buildings, it is apparent that the charnel chapels were regarded as appropriate places for public preaching and assembly.

Those charnel chapels located below churches also tend to be in similarly prominent positions as those in cathedral complexes, such as close to the main entrance to the church itself or to the south porch as at St Mary's church (Essex) (Dixon 2000), Holy Trinity church in Rothwell (Northamptonshire) (Barker 1998), or Westbury-on-Trym in Bristol (Orme & Cannon 2010) (See Table 5.3).

One other important observation is that all the identified charnel chapels in ecclesiastical complexes were in the lay part of the cemeteries. Access to these places was clearly intended to be open to all members of society, whether lay or otherwise.

(vi) Construction Dates

Where dates of construction could be ascertained, charnel chambers below churches were built at the same time as the majority of the free-standing charnel buildings (see Tables 5.1 & 5.2). For example, Hythe's

charnel chapel was constructed in the early 13th century (Barker 1998) as was Rothwell's (Roberts 1982: 119; Garland *et al.* 1988: 236) and Westbury-On-Trym's charnel chapels (Orme & Cannon 2010: 128). St Andrew's church in Northborough was built between 1330 and 1350 (Serjeantson *et al.* 1906) and Hereford Cathedral's charnel chapel built in 1220 (Fisher 1898: 67). This dating evidence, combined with the structural characteristics, strengthens the argument that the two forms described above belong to the same class of building.

(vii) Dedications to saints

Many of the charnel chapels also share the same dedications (see Table 5.4).

Table 5.6: Charnel chapels' dedications, where it could be verified

Sites	Dedication
Norwich	John the Evangelist
St. Margaret's Church, King's Lynn	John
Scarborough Parish Church	Mary Magdalene
St. Augustine's Abbey	Mary
Winchester Cathedral	Mary
St. Paul's Cathedral	Mary & All Saints
Worcester Cathedral	Mary & Thomas Becket
Bodmin Parish Church	Mary & Peter
St. Mary Spital	Mary Magdalene & Edmund the Bishop
St. Mary-Without-Bishopsgate, London	Edmund of Abingdon & Mary Magdalene
Ely Cathedral and Abbey	Peter
Hereford Cathedral	Anne
Church of St. Peter & St. Mary Magdalene, Barnstaple	Anne
St. Mary Abbey Church, Winchester	The Holy Trinity
Exeter	Edward the Confessor, later Mary

Orme has previously played down the importance of the dedications, implying that as 'There was no standard patron saint of charnel chapels' (Orme 1991: 162), the dedications applied only to the chapel rooms and not to the charnel rooms of charnel chapel buildings. Orme's statement contradicts his own admission that both charnel and chapel were referred to collectively as one: 'Charnel chapels … were often simply known as "charners" or "charnels" without the addition of "chapel"' (Orme 1991: 162). He asserts that dedications of chapels to different

saints meant that there was no universal purpose or function of charnel chapels. His argument seems unfounded, however, as churches, just like charnel chapels, were dedicated to a variety of saints but served the same overall function.

(5.3.2) Identification of charnel chapels by documentary sources alone

There are contemporary references to chaplains or priests of the charnel at churches where no free-standing charnel chapels have been identified archaeologically. In 1510, the will of one Thomas Thoresby specified that an endowment was to be left to the charnel priest at the church of St Margaret in King's Lynn (Norfolk) (Page 1906: 455). The only other evidence for there having been a charnel chapel at this church relates to baptisms taking place 'in the charnel' in 1506 and the pulling down of the 'Charnell' in 1779 (Hillen 1907: 53). There are no further references to charnel priests, nor is there any architectural or archaeological evidence to indicate whether there once existed a free-standing charnel chapel or a charnel chamber beneath this church. Harding identified up to seven sites within London alone by references to charnels in churchwardens' accounts and wills such as that of John Gaylard in 1480, requesting burial in 'the chernell alowe under the auter' at the church of St Thomas the Apostle (Harding 1992: 134). Stow recorded that at the parish church of Saint Marie Woolnoth, 'Sir Hugh Brice … builded in this church a Chappell, called the charnel' (Stow 1598: 204). He also notes that at the mercers Chappell or Hospital of St Thomas of Acon/Acors 'There was a Charnell and a Chappell over it of S. Nicholas and S. Stephen' (Stow 1598: 269).

(5.3.3) The correlation between sites and charnel chapel types

The previous section of this chapter demonstrated that the main – or only – difference between free-standing charnel chapels and charnel chambers under churches is in their location. The construction of a free-standing building would probably have been more expensive than the creation of a chamber beneath an existing church. The availability of space to erect a building in some graveyards may also have been a constraining factor on where a charnel chapel could be built. In places where space was already limited, constructing a charnel chamber beneath a

church required using up no additional graveyard space. It is, perhaps, not surprising that the majority of free-standing charnel chapels are in large ecclesiastical complexes where space for burial was not so much of an issue as at smaller graveyards (see Tables 5.2, 5.3 & 5.4). In addition, larger cathedral, abbey or monastic complexes would have had patrons who could dedicate money to be spent on constructing free-standing buildings, whereas smaller churches without wealthy patrons could not have readily afforded to do so. It is notable that the dates of construction of charnel chapels located beneath churches coincide with building works or extensions to the fabric of the church itself. For example, the charnel chamber beneath the chancel at St Leonard's church in Hythe (Kent) was constructed in the mid-1200s at the same time as the west tower and a new choir and sanctuary were built (Barker 1998; Stoessiger & Morant 1932: 150). The charnel chamber at Holy Trinity Church, Rothwell was constructed in the early 1200s just before the chancel was extended and the transepts were constructed (see Section (5.4.4)) (Garland *et al.* 1984).

Some charnel chapels seem to have been created to house charnel from churchyards other than the one in which they were located. The clearest example of this comes from Norwich Cathedral, where a charnel chapel was founded in 1316 by Bishop Salmon. Whatever his motivations for this foundation, it was certainly not a need to house charnel from the cathedral itself since it 'was never a major burial ground for the city's dead' (Gilchrist 2005: 101). Accordingly, the bishop had to fill the charnel chamber below his chapel with charnel from the city's parish churchyards (Gilchrist 2005: 34 & 105). In other instances, the suggestion that charnel was acquired from elsewhere is largely circumstantial. For example, Harding expresses surprise that a charnel chapel was located at St Mary Spital since 'there is so little in the documentary record to indicate that St Mary Spital was a major place of burial in medieval London' (Harding 2002: 94), and in trying to explain this Gilchrist and Sloane (2005: 42) note that certain churches, such as St Mary Spital, may have served as the primary storage location for charnel as the original churchyards from which it derived were too small or their associated churches were too poor to provide a charnel facility themselves. Such a practice may have been behind the origin of the charnel

which Bishop Salmon secured from parish churches in Norwich (see Section (5.4.1)) and it has also been speculated that the charnel at St Leonard's Church, in Hythe (Kent) may have been collected from the other four parish churches in Hythe after they fell into decline some time before 1400 (Stoessiger and Morant 1932: 149). These examples of movement of charnel mean that charnel chapels and chambers need not necessarily reflect the density of burial, population or mortality rates at the sites where they are located. There was an evident element of prestige associated with possession of a charnel chapel, and as a result the creation of such structures may have had more to do with their significance as a marker of status than them representing a response to a pressing requirement for charnel curation (see Section (5.4.1)).

5.4: The purpose of charnel chapels: new research

(5.4.1) Private chantries or something more?

The upper chambers of all identified free-standing charnel chapels were built to serve as chapels (See Section (5.3.1)). However, it has been argued that they were *chantry* chapels, private sources of prayer for the wealthy benefactors who paid for their construction as opposed to chapels intended to commemorate multitudes of dead (Gilchrist 2005; Gilchrist & Sloane 2005; Orme 1991; 1996; Orme and Lepine 2003). According to Gilchrist (2005: 104-105), the charnel chapel, or Carnary chapel as it was called, at Norwich Cathedral served only as a private chantry and was a college staffed by secular priests who lived communally and were to pray daily for the soul of the bishop in the chapel of the charnel chapel (Gilchrist 2005: 100-105; Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 42). However, there is, in fact, evidence that the chapel was not solely built for this purpose. As we have already seen (above, Section (5.3.3)), there was no need to construct a charnel storage facility at the cathedral, because it was not a major place of burial, and the bishop could, thus, simply have built a chantry chapel with an associated college of priests, and need not have included the charnel chamber in its design or name. The bishop must have been aware that if he relocated charnel from Norwich parish churchyards to his cathedral complex that people would come to his charnel chapel to view, visit or pray at the charnel in its new location, and this may have motivated his decision. By the early 14th century it was common practice to offer 'indulgences' or to pay priests to pray for the souls of the dead (Daniell 1997: 23). The choice to construct a charnel chapel structure as opposed to a chantry chapel without a charnel chamber indicates that there was an intention or expectation that the chapel would be a place where visitors to the charnel could pay for indulgences or prayers for the dead. It is here proposed that the bishop's chantry chapel above the charnel chamber served both as his private chantry but also as a chapel for the public to commemorate the dead. It is unclear whether Bishop Salmon erected the charnel chapel as a 'gift' to the lay people or was more interested in the revenue the prayers for the souls of the deceased comprising the charnel would bring to his cathedral.

Chantry chapels were mainly founded by lay persons or families (Orme 1996), but, in the few examples where the foundation details are recorded, free-standing charnel chapels appear to have had episcopal foundations. The charnel chapel at Norwich Cathedral was, as we have seen, established by Bishop Salmon (Gilchrist 2005), that at Worcester was started by Bishop Blois and completed by Bishop de Cantelupe (Green 1796), that at Bury St Edmunds' was founded by Abbot John de Northwold (Page 1907), while the chantry chapel at Exeter was founded by John de Lechlade, treasurer of the cathedral and possibly its dean (Lepine & Orme 1991). The motive for the establishment of these particular charnel chapels pertains specifically to housing disinterred bones. The 1316 foundation charter for the charnel chapel at Norwich stated that 'in the carnary beneath the said Chapel of St. John we wish that human bones, completely stripped of flesh, be preserved seemly to the time of the general Resurrection' (Blomefield 1806; Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 42). When planning to extend Worcester Cathedral's nave Bishop Blois knew that it would disturb numerous burials, and so he established 'a subterraneous vault for their reception, over which he raised a chapel, called Capella Carnariae, or the chapel of the charnel house' (Green 1796: 54).

In large ecclesiastical complexes, the chapel portions of charnel chapel buildings appear to have been constructed as chantry chapels, but for the intended use and benefit of ordinary people as well as for wealthy individuals or families. It is here proposed that this charnel-related form of chantry chapel served as a communal chantry for large numbers of people who could not afford to build their own private chantry. The episcopal foundation and funding of the constructions of charnel chapels may be understood as the fulfilment of the seventh Corporal Act of Mercy, which was the requirement to bury the dead. The Seven Corporal Acts of Mercy were six charitable works or acts mentioned by Christ plus the act of burial which was mentioned in the Book of Tobit (Daniell 1997: 20; Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 19). Undertaking good works such as the Corporeal Acts of Mercy was encouraged throughout the medieval period. The addition of the act of burial into these acts of humility is evidence of the importance that care of the dead signified to medieval

people and of the reciprocal relationship between living and dead communities. Fulfilment of these charitable works was believed to benefit one's own soul and the souls of others after death (Daniell 1997: 20).

(5.4.2) Prayers for the dead, chantries for the people

The evidence for some charnel chambers having chapel functions (as outlined in Section (5.3.1)), and the links between the charnel chambers and the associated chapels seem not to have been noticed by some authors who have researched specific charnel chapels. It has been assumed by these authors, such as Orme in relation to Exeter charnel chapel that the liturgical functions of the chapel did not extend to the charnel chamber. According to Orme (1991: 165), Exeter's chapel lacked a distinct role in relation to commemoration of the dead in general: 'there is no mention … of any body resting or being buried inside the chapel, or any funeral taking place there or funeral offerings being made'. As he did not find specific documentary evidence stating that the chapel was used for funerary activity, Orme states that the chapel at Exeter 'seems to have had no general public role with regard to the dead' (Orme, personal communication, 2nd May 2012). There are, however, various links between the chapels and penance or prayer, in addition to numerous references for masses specifically for large numbers of the dead as opposed to deceased individuals which indicate the chapel did serve a role with regard to the dead. It has been established that the charnel chapel at Exeter was built in 1286 at the expense of John of Exeter, as a penance for the murder of Walter de Lechlade (Lepine & Orme 2003: 23-4; Orme 1991: 164-5). The charnel chapel was dedicated to St Edward the Confessor, possibly in recognition of the need for John of Exeter to publicly mark his admission of guilt and to make a public 'confession' of his sin (see Section (5.2.2)). When Bishop Stapledon founded his chantry in the charnel chapel in 1322, the first chantry priest 'was told to help the subdean [who was penitentiary of the cathedral] in hearing confessions and imposing penances' (Orme 1991: 165). It is, however, unclear whether confession took place in the cathedral or in the charnel chapel.

Other sites and sources indicate that confession and penance were associated with charnel chapels. In 1379 the charnel chapel at St. Paul's Cathedral was in need of repair, and the Archbishop of Canterbury Simon Sudbury promised 'a great pardon' to all those who contributed towards its restoration (Harding 2002: 86; Rousseau 2011: 76). As a result of this call for help and promise of a pardon of sins, the Fraternity of All Saints was founded, whose aim was to repair and maintain the building (Rousseau 2011: 76). Similar roles in relation to penance and confession are noted at some contemporary European sites: Sedlec in Kutná Hora in the Czech Republic had confessionals within the charnel room up to the 1970s. Confessionals are small wooden stalls with two partitions, one for a priest to sit and hear confession, the other for a parishioner to kneel while confessing sins (see Fig. 5.14).
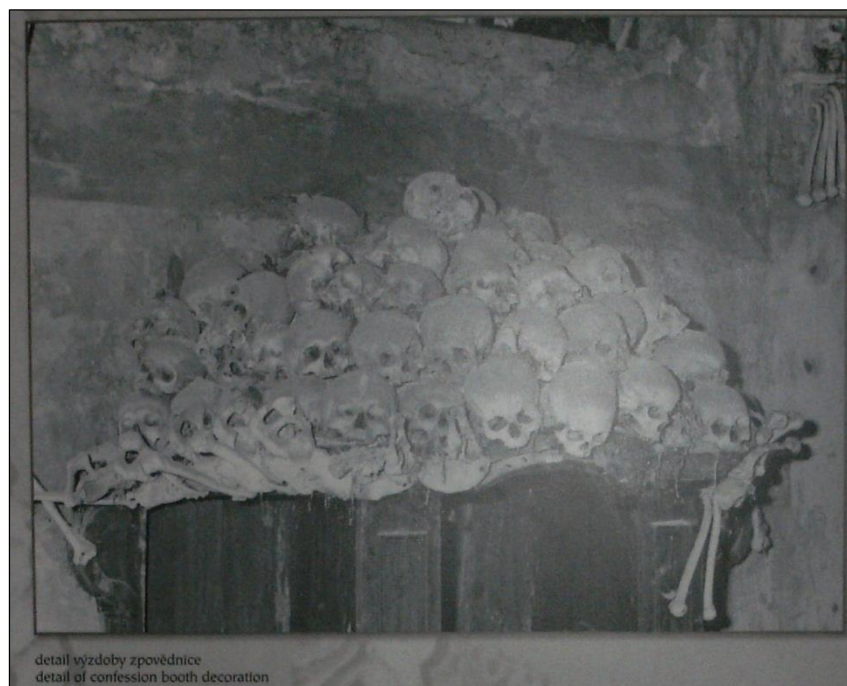
Fig. 5.14: Photograph in the chapel of Sedlec charnel chapel, Kutná Hora, depicting charnel on top of a confessional within the charnel chamber (Photograph author's own)

Further references to the duties of the chaplains in relation to the commemoration of the collective dead are recorded. From 1451 at Exeter various members of the vicars choral were fined for being absent from the 'mass of benefactors in the charnel,' for absence from the 'charnel mass' or from the mass 'in the charnel.' (Orme

1991: 166). In the years after the charnel chapel was established at Worcester, four chaplains were appointed by Bishop de Cantelupe's successor, Bishop de Blois (Green 1796). The duties of these chaplains were to celebrate 'one mass for the day in the chapel, before their teaching in the schools, and afterwards three others were daily celebrated for the dead' (Green 1796: 54). Precise details are lacking regarding specifically who 'the dead' entailed. Gilchrist (2005: 102) notes that at the charnel chapel at Norwich Cathedral, 'The charnel vault beneath the chapel was administered directly by the sacrist, and he received a large share of the offerings made in the upper chapel'. This implies that it was not always solely the chaplains who had roles or responsibilities in relation to care of the dead. Blomefield (1806: 56) records that at Norwich charnel chapel in the early 1300s, the 'keeper of the lower charnel' plus other chaplains, officiated daily for the benefit of the bishop's soul, the souls of the bishop's parents, and the souls of the previous bishops of Norwich. These chaplains were also to pray for 'all the dead in general; and in particular for the souls of all those whose bones were reposited in the vault of this charnel', which indicates that, as at the charnel chapels of Worcester and Exeter, the charnel chaplains were responsible for prayers and commemoration of all the dead and not solely the founders of the charnel chapels (Blomefield 1806: 56). The most convincing example of chapels in charnel chapels being directly related to the charnel in the lower chambers comes from St Paul's Cathedral. Rousseau (2011: 75) notes that in 1282 the mayor of London and the commonality of the city paid for the 'communal chantry' chapel to be built over the charnel chamber and to maintain a chaplain there who would pray for 'all the faithful departed'. In 1302 the chaplain was required to open the charnel house to pilgrims 'who were to have access to the charnel house every Friday and on certain days, such as the Feast of the Dedication of the cathedral, three days after Whitsun, and the Feast of the Relics' (Rousseau 2011: 75).

The inherent connection between chapel and charnel rooms is evident in how the charnel chapels were referred to by contemporary people. In many cases charnel chapels were not known by their official name and saint's dedication but were colloquially called after the charnel which was housed in the lower chambers. This

lack of specificity implies that the two rooms constituting charnel chapels were not viewed as separate entities, but instead were inextricably linked in their overall function. Orme points out the inclination to refer to the buildings simply as 'charnere', or other variations on the word (Orme 1991: 165): for example, the charnel chapel at Bury St Edmunds was referred to as 'La Charnere' (Page 1907), that at Norwich was known as 'Le Charnel' within a few decades of its foundation (Gilchrist 2005: 101), and St Mary's charnel chapel in Scarborough was by 1394 referred to only as 'Le Charnel' (Page 1923).

(5.4.3) Accessibility and visibility

Accessibility and visibility of the charnel room of charnel chapels was fundamental to their design (see Section (5.3.1)). Charnel chambers were intended to be visible from the exterior of the charnel chapel building and were also designed so that the chambers could be easily accessed. The incorporation of these two architectural attributes into all charnel chambers implies that at the time of their construction it was known that people wanted to see and be able to access the charnel. Alternatively, it may have been that charnel chambers were designed to be accessible and visible in order to develop a public interest in viewing and visiting charnel. People visiting the charnel may have paid the chaplains or priests of the charnel chapels to pray for souls of the dead (see Section (5.4.1)). If so, then the aim of building a charnel chapel may be regarded as a manipulation of a reverence for human bones in order to gain money for the church or ecclesiastical complex through the sale of indulgences and prayers.

Gilchrist (2005: 105, 250-1) notes with reference to the Norwich charnel chapel that not only is the building highly visible within the cathedral complex, but that it is similar both in style and function to a reliquary: 'its architecture possessed an additional iconographic meaning connected with its purpose as a repository for charnel ... the circular windows to the undercroft of the Carnary chapel allowed visitors to the precinct to peer into the crypt ... in keeping with contemporary traditions for shrines and reliquaries' (see Fig. 5.15 & Chapter 2).

Fig. 5.15: Norwich charnel chapel (Gilchrist 2005: 104)

This resemblance of Norwich charnel chapel to a reliquary is not elaborated on by Gilchrist by comparison to other charnel chapels (Gilchrist 2005: 105). All charnel chapels have windows opening into the lower chamber containing charnel and the design of Norwich charnel chapel is not a unique instance in resembling a reliquary (see Section (5.3.1)). The form of charnel chapels replicated the form of reliquaries which were a familiar sight to medieval people. The practice of above ground storage of human skeletal remains may have been justified and made acceptable via the association with an already accepted post-burial practice. Both charnel chambers and reliquaries held the same contents except that charnel chapels housed large quantities of bones instead of bones of a single individual, and they were in association with 'ordinary' people as opposed to saints.

As the rooms and the contents were clearly intended to be visible and accessible, situating them below the ground as opposed to at ground level seems an unusual decision. The underground nature of the charnel rooms implies it was imperative that the disturbed bones be stored below ground level. Even at St Peter's church in Leicester, where the charnel room is adjacent to the chancel area and not directly

underneath it, the room is still sunken (Gnanaratnam 2005: 7; 2006: 26-7). It may be speculated that this semi-subterranean form reflected the nature of the bones themselves. Looking into the charnel room may have been like looking into a grave; it was a place of the dead but one which was accessible to the living. Seeing bones within this 'grave' may have been intended to remind people of the Resurrection when God would literally raise skeletons from their graves, re-flesh them and allow them to ascend to heaven or descend to hell. As has been noted in Section (5.3.1), the charnel chamber at the church of the Holy Trinity, Rothwell (Northamptonshire) has the remains of a wall painting on its east wall, which was described in the 19th century as being of the Resurrection (see Section (5.4.4)) (Cypher 1865). In the foundation charter of Norwich charnel chapel it is stated that the bones in the charnel chamber 'be preserved seemly to the time of the general Resurrection' (Saunders in Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 42). The act of going below ground level may have also been intended to be reminiscent of the process of entering Purgatory, itself neither one place nor the other, and at the time of the introduction of charnel chapels, a newly accepted and important feature of medieval Christian belief.

(5.4.4) Case Study: Rothwell Ossuary & Charnel Chapel

The following is a detailed analysis of a site that has, to date, not been interpreted as a charnel chapel, but merely a crypt and ossuary, or charnel house (Roberts 1982; Garland *et al* 1988). This case study is intended to illustrate how charnel chapels may be identified archaeologically, by utilising the template outlined above, and applying it to a potential site. Rothwell is a unique site, being one of only two medieval charnel chapels remaining in England that still contain charnel, the second being that of St Leonard's Church, Hythe (Kent) (Crangle 2009). As such, the site at Rothwell can potentially provide crucial information regarding how charnel chapels were utilised by contemporary medieval communities. By establishing that the crypt beneath the south aisle of Holy Trinity Church is indeed a medieval charnel chapel, it will permit further research to be conducted relating to this funerary and commemorative medieval site type.

1: Introduction

Holy Trinity Church, Rothwell, Northamptonshire, dates to the early 12th century, when a Norman church was built, located where the present chancel now stands (see Fig.5.16) (Franklin 2013: 57). The majority of the church was constructed in the 13th century, when north and south transepts were added to the nave, which was itself nearly doubled in length (Franklin 2013: 58-9; Rouse 1952-3: 210). The cost of this was funded by the Abbots of Cirencester, the De Clare family and Earls of Gloucester, all of whom were patrons of the church (Franklin 2013: 58). These building works co-incided with increasing prosperity of Rothwell, perhaps indicating the necessity for the church to be enlarged in order to cater for the local population and visitors to the town. Rothwell had been granted a charter by King John I in 1204 to hold a weekly market and an annual fair, for five days from the eve of Holy Trinity (the first Sunday after Pentecost) (Coggins 2013 pers. comm.; Franklin 2013: 208). This would have attracted many people to the town, with traders coming from as far away as Wales to sell horses, sheep and cattle (Franklin 2013: 208-9).

2: Previous research & analysis of the crypt & charnel

The earliest documented mention of there being a crypt below Holy Trinity church that has been identified by the author is by John Morton, rector of Oxendon, Northamptonshire, in 1712, in his book 'The Natural History of Northampton-shire; with Some Account of the Antiquities.' He refers to 'the great Multitude of Men and Women's Sculls that lye heap'd up in the famous Charnel-House at *Rowel*' (Morton 1712: 474). The use of the word 'famous' implies that the site had been known of for a considerable length of time by this date or that it quickly became renowned as an unusual site, shortly after its discovery. Supposedly, the crypt and bones were discovered c.1700; 'About 150 years ago … some workmen in digging for a grave in the south aisle of the nave of this church broke through the crown of a vault and discovered – what had long before hid in oblivion – a vaulted crypt, in which were piled up or ranged at the east end, and on either side, extending to the west end, a collection of human sculls and bones to the height of upwards of four feet, and of the same width' (Bloxam 1855: 2). Bloxam's article, published in 1855, is the next

chronological mention of a charnel house located in Rothwell after Morton's in 1712. Following Bloxam's article a spate of publications focussing on the crypt and charnel ensued. The next article was presented to the Committee for Local Antiquaries in Northampton in 1862 by Samuel Sharp, and published in The Archaeological Journal in 1879. Sharp's 'The Rothwell Crypt and Bones' mainly concentrated on estimating the number of individuals comprising the charnel (Sharp 1862). In 1865 Paul Cypher wrote briefly about the 'bone cavern' of Rothwell in his lengthy publication 'History of Rothwell in the County of Northampton' (Cypher 1865). Busk wrote in 1870 about a sample of crania that had been taken by a Mr. Grove from 'an enormous collection contained in a subterranean vaulted chamber in the parish of Rothwell' (Busk 1870: xci). These crania were analysed osteologically, although the results of this analysis and the fate of the remains is not recorded. Wallis, in 1888, wrote about his visit to the crypt in *Olla Podrida*, a then monthly publication on Northamptonshire (Wallis 1888). This article was subsequently published in 1903 as a pamphlet entitled 'All About the Rothwell Bones' (Wallis 1903). Up to this date, little osteological analysis of the skeletal material had been undertaken, with speculation on the origin of the skeletal material being the primary concern or point of interest. Theories of the bones representing male battle victims from nearby Naseby where a battle was fought in 1645, or that the bones represented Viking warriors, were repeated in each publication despite Bloxam's claim that they derived from the associated cemetery of Holy Trinity Church (Bloxam 1855: 8; Cypher 1865: 53; Sharp 1879: 56; Wallis 1888: 34). These origin theories of battle victims are remarkably similar to those pertaining to the charnel in the ossuary at St Leonard's Church, Hythe, Kent (Crangle 2009: 39-48). In 1910, Parsons conducted an osteological analysis of the crania at Rothwell, having published his analysis of the Hythe crania in 1906 (Parsons 1906). He makes some interesting observations, such as 'At the east end are some faint traces of fresco work which makes it probable that this crypt was once a chapel. This I believe is the usual history of crypts' (1910: 485). He concluded that the charnel was 'contemporary with the Hythe bones, and as being the remains of English men, women, and children, most of whom lived in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries' (1910: 485).

After Parsons' publication, Bull published a brief article on the now re-arranged charnel, which had been re-stacked on the advice of Parsons, in 1911; 'If the money could be procured the bones should at once be restacked on two or three layers of bricks with air spaces between them, and removed from contact with the outside wall in the same way' (Parsons 1910: 485). Clive-Rouse in 1952 wrote briefly about the fragments of wall painting on the east wall of the crypt in his publication on the church (Clive-Rouse 1952). Trevor published a pamphlet in 1967, 'Rothwell Parish Church Northants. The Bone Crypt.' He noted two distinct cranial shapes, which he named Rothwell I consisting of 'short and high' heads and Rothwell II, 'fairly long and low headed' (Trevor 1967: 4). Trevor claimed that because the first group were white in colour and the second were brown, with frequent staining he attributed to copper coffin nails, he deduced that the latter group must have all been interred in coffins. He further concluded that these crania must date to after the sixteenth century as 'it is known that wooden coffins did not come into general use in England before the sixteenth century' (Trevor 1967: 4). Although it has been since demonstrated that this view is erroneous (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005), in 1976 Bryan Doughty, Holy Trinity Church warden, utilised this conclusion to propose that the brown crania represented interments exhumed from their coffins in the late 16th century when the Jesus Hospital was constructed, as it encroached onto the cemetery of the church where these interments were located (Doughty 1977: 3-4). This conclusion, would mean firstly, that these brown stained crania were all buried in coffins, in the same region of the cemetery that the hospital subsequently encroached on, and secondly, that they were all exhumed shortly after burial, as the Hospital was constructed in 1585 (Franklin 2013: 50). There is, however, no definitive evidence to indicate the extent of the cemetery at the time of the Hospital's construction, or that burial in coffins stains skeletal material brown (Boddington 1987: 13, 20).

Charlotte Roberts conducted her undergraduate dissertation on a sample of the femurs in 1982, the results of which were published in the International Journal for Skeletal Research (Roberts 1982). In 1988 a joint publication by Garland, Janaway and Roberts further explored the decay processes of the human remains at Rothwell (Garland *et al.* 1988). All the publications since Parsons in 1910 express concern

regarding the damp conditions of the crypt and the subsequent detrimental effect on the preservation and curation of the bones. They also all state that the bones derive from the associated cemetery to Holy Trinity church, and that medieval charnel houses were merely receptacles for charnel that had to be removed from the cemetery in order to make way for building works or further burials to take place.

Since 1988, little research has been undertaken or publications produced in relation to Rothwell's crypt. The most recent has been by Paul Koudounaris in 2011 in his book 'Empire of Death,' which is essentially a photographic encyclopaedia of ossuaries worldwide, from an art historian's perspective. Koudounaris photographed the crypt and charnel but did not conduct any research on either the charnel or the room itself. William Franklin published 'Rothwell with Orton. A History of a Midland Market Town' in 2013 which included a very brief mention of the crypt (Franklin 2013: 73). Others, including Roberta Gilchrist, Nicholas Orme and David Lepine, have all cited the crypt in various publications, although none include any research additional to what had been noted previously (2005; 2003; 1991: 162-71). In 2013, research concerning the skeletal material was conducted by four Masters students from the Department of Archaeology, University of Sheffield, in relation to the Departmental Project, 'The Rothwell Charnel Chapel Project' and a fifth Master student is currently undertaking research at the time of this thesis (Gonissen 2013; Johnson 2013; Maclean 2013; McGinn 2015; Proctor 2013). The Rothwell Charnel Chapel Project was established in 2012 in association with/by the Department of Archaeology, University of Sheffield. This project aims to substantially research the crypt, charnel and medieval Rothwell using a multi-disciplinary approach, including osteology, archaeology and history, combined with local community outreach and public engagement.

3: Current Research:

1) New analysis of the crypt: an assessment of the crypt's function

In none of the accounts of the crypt, outlined above, has it ever been described as a charnel chapel. This may be attributed to the fact that crypts beneath churches that

also contain or contained charnel have not, to date, been recognised as potentially fulfilling the same role as free-standing charnel chapels (see Sections (5.2.1) & (5.3.1) (i)). Sharp and Parsons both noted that the crypt most likely served some form of chapel function; 'The fresco at the east end and the windows in the south wall indicate that at some time the crypt was used as a chapel and for the holding of services (Sharp 1879: 65). Parsons noted in 1910 that Rothwell's crypt exhibits elements of chapels, but does not use the term 'charnel chapel' itself to describe the crypt. Although no documentary sources such as a foundation record of the crypt could be ascertained by the author to authenticate the reason for its construction, it is here suggested that Rothwell's crypt was designed and built for the purpose of, and served as, a charnel chapel. A template of identifying architectural features of medieval charnel chapels was formulated by the author and outlined in detail in Section (5.5.2). Below follows an analysis of each of the identifying features of charnel chapels' template in relation to Rothwell's crypt, to assess the likelihood of it having served as a charnel chapel.

(i) **Location below a sanctified building:**

The crypt is located underneath the south aisle of the present church, towards the west end. The south wall of the crypt is in line with the south wall of the aisle (see Fig.5.16).
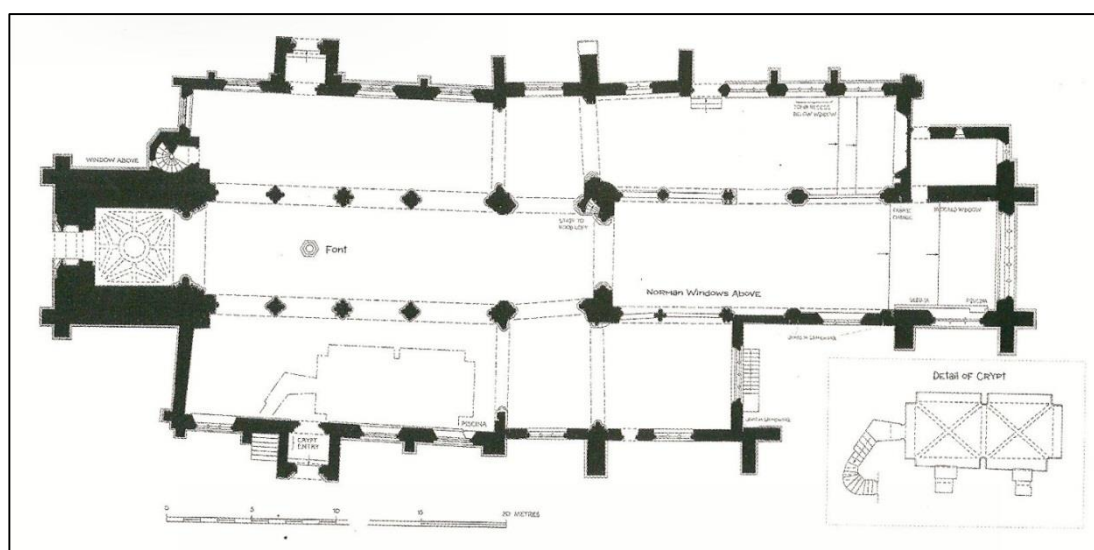
Fig. 5.16: Plan of the present church including the location of the subterranean crypt (Franklin 2013: 74).

(ii) Semi-subterranean charnel chamber:

The crypt is fully underground. The floor of the south aisle, directly above the crypt, was not raised in any manner to accommodate the room to be built, as occurred at St Leonard's Church, Hythe, when the charnel room or crypt was constructed below the chancel area of the church (Crangle 2009: 34). The crypt does, however, have two windows inserted in its south wall, one in the centre of each bay, which would have permitted light into the room and give the impression of being partially above ground (see Fig. 5.17). This is due to the windows both extending above the height of the external current ground level of the church (see Fig.5.18).

Figs 5.17 & 5.18: The westernmost of the two windows in the south wall of the crypt. Note how the window aperture extends upwards above the height of the crypt ceiling (top). The exterior of the south wall of the church showing the top of the now blocked up westernmost window into the crypt, highlighted in blue (bottom) (Photographs author's own).

Visibility was a key component of charnel chapels, both in terms of allowing natural light to illuminate the room but also to permit the room's interior and charnel to be seen from the exterior of the structure (see Section (5.3.1)). In 1999 a ventilation system was inserted into the crypt via the two windows (Chris Stephenson May 2015, pers. comm.). As can be seen from Figs 5.19 and 5.20, photographs taken at the time of the system being put in place, the interior of the crypt is readily visible from a distance of c.2 meters south of the window, and would have been visible from even further south, away from the church building. Descriptions of the arrangement of the charnel in the 19th century imply that more charnel was stacked against the south wall than the north or east, perhaps deliberately, so that it might more readily be seen from the crypt and church's exterior.
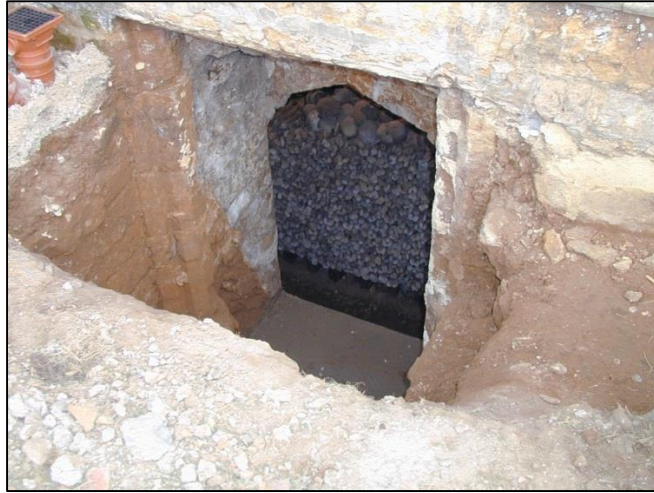
Figs. 5.19 & 5.20: The westernmost window into the crypt at the time the current ventilation system was installed (mid 1990's). Note the masonry extending outwards from the window and chamfered stonework and frame of the window (above). The stonework is visible from a depth of c. .3-.5 meters below current surface level of the cemetery and the interior of the crypt is visible from a significant distance away from the windows (below) (Photographs reproduced with permission of Rothwell Holy Trinity church authorities).

It is also clear that the windows were chamfered and decorated, with stonework extending at least 0.5 meters south of the building into the churchyard. This stonework is c. 0.3-0.5 meters below the current surface level of the cemetery, indicating that the 13th century medieval cemetery surface level, contemporary to the construction of the crypt, was also at this level. The design and decoration of the windows was clearly

deliberate and demonstrates that the crypt was intended to be highly visible. The windows are also both triple-arched at their apex, as is the archway over the original entrance doorway (see below) (see Fig. 5.21).

Fig. 5.21: One of the two windows in the south wall of the crypt, with the triple arches at their apex highlighted. Note the brickwork between the first and second arches that has not been dated but may ate to the porch construction in the 19th century, as it is of the same material (Photograph author's own)

(iii) Accessibility

The crypt is accessible via a covered staircase of 17 steps that originate from the exterior of the south wall of the church and crypt and curve non-uniformly clockwise to enter the crypt in the centre of its' west wall (see Fig. 5.16). The earliest mention of these stairs was in 1855, when Bloxam describes the entrance as 'at the west end, and a narrow winding passage, with a descent of 17 steps, lead from the porch down' (1855: 2). The porch dates to the 19th or early 20th century (Soden pers. comm. April 2013) and an annex adjoining the porch encloses 8 of the 17 steps (see Figs 5.22 & 5.23.
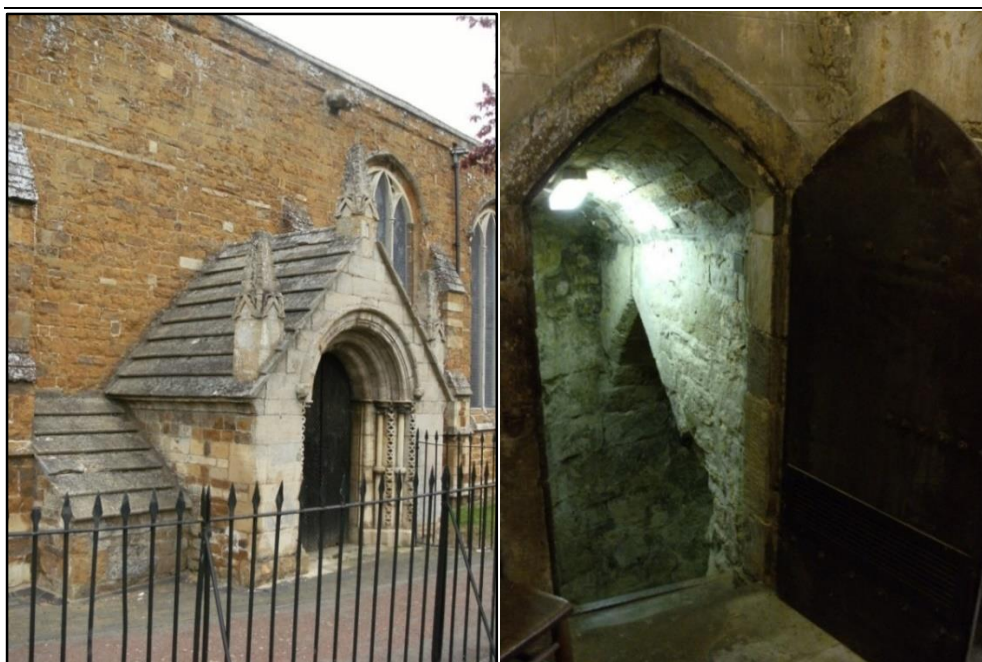
Figs 5.22 & 5.23: The 19th century porch and annex from the exterior (left) and the interior, showing the 19th century doorway leading to the steps (right) (Photographs author's own)

The remainder are fully beneath ground level, below the aisle of the church. This 'tunnel' of steps dates to the 13th century (Soden pers. comm. April 2013) although it has been modified on numerous occasions as is evident from the masonry lining the tunnel (see Fig. 5.24).

Fig. 5.24: The tunnel of steps leading to the crypt. Note the modifications to the walls above the steps (Photograph author's own).

It is not apparent if the steps covered by the porch date to the 13th century and are therefore contemporary with the construction of the crypt, or if they were built at the time of the porch's construction. However, the wall that borders these steps is medieval in date (Soden 2013 pers. comm.) and is at the same height as the stonework visible to the exterior of the windows (see Figs 5.25, 5.26 & 5.27).

Fig. 5.25: The wall bordering the steps inside the porch annex, with the height of the medieval masonry highlighted with arrow. Note the medieval arched doorway that leads to the tunnel and remainder of steps (Photograph author's own).

It is not known if prior to the 19th/20th century porch there was a medieval porch and entrance into the church, although the interior of the doorway into the church through the current porch has clearly been modified at some point (see Fig. 5.26). If indeed there was a 13th-century entrance where this doorway is located, constructed contemporary to the crypt,

then it must have been designed deliberately in this manner, to focus the attention of people entering the church onto the crypt. As has been noted above in (ii), it would have been possible to clearly see into the crypt through the two windows from a significant distance away, and the entrance into the church is situated between the windows and the doorway to the tunnel and crypt. This means that it would have been impossible not to see the crypt as the church was entered into via this entrance, as one passes directly over the crypt upon entering.

Fig. 5.26: The current doorway leading from the church interior to the porch interior. Note the stone arch above the door is not in its original position. It is also rounded, yet the arch from the interior of the porch is pointed (Photograph author's own).

The arched doorway in the south wall leading to the tunnel of steps is 13th century in date (Soden pers. comm. 2013) and is also triple-ached, like the two windows (see Fig. 5.27). The apex of the doorway is also at the same height as the apex of the two windows.

Fig. 5.27: The triple-arches of the 13th century doorway leading to the remainder of the stairs and tunnel (Photograph author's own)

(iv) Dimensions

The crypt measures exactly 9 meters east to west, and 4.5 meters north to south. This ratio of exactly 2:1 is the same as has been noted for five other charnel chapel sites whose dimensions could be ascertained (see Section (5.3.1) (iv)).

(v) Prominent locations within complexes

As has been discussed above (see (ii) & (iii)), the location of the crypt appears to have been deliberately and specifically sited beneath the south aisle of the church. If there had been an entrance into the church in the location of the current doorway (see Fig. 5.16) then the crypt and charnel could not have been ignored by anyone as they entered the building; they would have passed directly over the room, above and between the entrance to the crypt to the left and the windows to the right.

(vi) Construction dates

The crypt dates to between the mid-12th century to the mid-13th century (Franklin 2013: 73; Soden 2013 pers. comm.). This falls firmly within the period that charnel chapels began to be constructed and the practice proliferated throughout England (see Section (5.3.1) (vi)). The earliest date that has been suggested for the crypt's construction is c.1180, although this has not been substantiated (Parsons 1910: 483). The construction of the crypt coincided with other extensive construction works undertaken on the fabric of the church in the 12th and 13th centuries (Franklin 2013). Between c.1170 and the end of the 13th century the nave was lengthened on the west side of the church, north and south transepts were built, and the west tower was constructed (Franklin 2013: 73). The transepts were pulled down in 1673 due to their dilapidated state and partial damage sustained when the spire of the west tower fell down onto the south transept in 1660 (Franklin 2013: 72). The specific location of the south transept cannot be ascertained, and no plans or images of the church prior to the demolition of the transepts are known to exist. It is possible that the entrance and windows to the crypt were enclosed within the south transept, although this seems unlikely, as it would not have been visible from the exterior of the church, negating the point of having two windows in its south wall. There are however, architectural traces on the exterior and interior of the eastern south aisle of the church that indicate that this was the location of the south transept. There are also no such traces of architectural alterations to the fabric of the building in the vicinity of the porch over the crypt, signifying that the crypt entrance was never built over or blocked (see Figs 5.28 & 5.29). It is not apparent if the crypt was built prior to the transepts' construction and nave's extension, or afterwards. All of these modifications to the church were, however, undertaken within the same period of about 150 years.

Figs 5.28 & 5.29: The eastern portion of the south exterior wall of the church. Note the extensive rebuilding works and evidence of architectural changes to the building fabric (left); the western portion of the south wall of the church and the porch over the crypt entrance. Note the lack of architectural structural amendments to the wall (Photographs author's own)

(vii) Dedications to saints

It could not be ascertained to whom the crypt was dedicated.

(3.2)   Elements of chapels within the crypt

As noted in Section (5.3.1), (i), many charnel chapels that are not free-standing exhibit various elements of chapels within the charnel room itself. The crypt at Rothwell contains architectural characteristics that indicate that it once fulfilled a chapel function. At the end of the staircase on the west wall is a blocked up niche (see Fig. 5.30).

Fig. 5.30: The blocked up niche at the end of the staircase leading to the crypt (location indicated by arrow) (Photograph author's own)

This niche was first mentioned in 1888 by Wallis. He describes how it was pointed out to him on his initial visit by the crypt's guide, who implied it was a blocked tunnel that once led to the nunnery, located c. 200m north west of the church (Franklin 2013: 80-3; Wallis 1888: 34). A blocked up niche was also noted at Norwich charnel chapel, at the entrance to the charnel room, on the left hand side (Blomefield 1806: 58). This is the same location as the niche at Rothwell. Although it cannot be determined what was once within this niche, the fact that it was blocked up some time in the late medieval period (Soden pers. comm., April 2013) indicates that it held some sort of religious icon or image, that necessitated being removed, perhaps coinciding with the cessation of use of the crypt. Judging by the destruction of other charnel chapels that occurred at the time of the suppression of the monasteries and the Reformation, it is here tentatively proposed that this is when Rothwell's crypt was put out of use (see Section (5.6)).

On the east wall of the crypt are the faint traces of a wall painting (see Figs 5.2 & 5.3). Despite only fragments of painting remaining to be seen, these details extend over a

large quantity of the east wall and it is probable that the whole of this wall was once covered by a large painting. The painting is mentioned by numerous authors in their descriptions of the crypt, the earliest of which by Bloxam in 1855 describes it as 'some remains of painting on the wall, not very clearly developed, but said to be that of the Resurrection' (Bloxam 1855: 2). It is referred to as depicting the Resurrection by various writers, including Sharp, Cypher and Wallis (1879: 58; 1865: 56; 1888: 36). Unfortunately, no drawings of the painting as it appeared in the 18th, 19th or early 20th centuries were recorded by these authors, and so it is not possible to determine if it indeed did depict the Resurrection, or Doom, as it was commonly known during the medieval period (www.paintedchurch.org). The location of this wall painting on the east wall, is directly below a piscina, inserted into the south wall of the church (see Fig. 5.15). The date of this piscina has not been determined, but indicates that an altar once stood directly above the east wall of the crypt. An indent in the centre of the junction of the crypt's east wall and ceiling may once have been a vent or aperture, permitting light from the church above to shine directly onto the wall painting below, or to allow the masses said at the altar to be seen while in the crypt (see Fig.31).

Fig. 5.31: Aperture in the ceiling at the east wall of the crypt
(Photograph author's own)

This aperture, allowing light into the crypt in addition to the two windows, would have focussed visitors' attention onto the wall painting on entering the room. The current arrangement of the charnel, in two central stacks with crania placed on

shelves on the north and south walls, dates to 1911, when they were rearranged on the advice of Parsons (see Section (1.3)). Prior to this arrangement, the bones were stacked up against the north, east and south walls, leaving the centre of the crypt empty from the entrance way to the east end (see Figs 5.32-5.34).
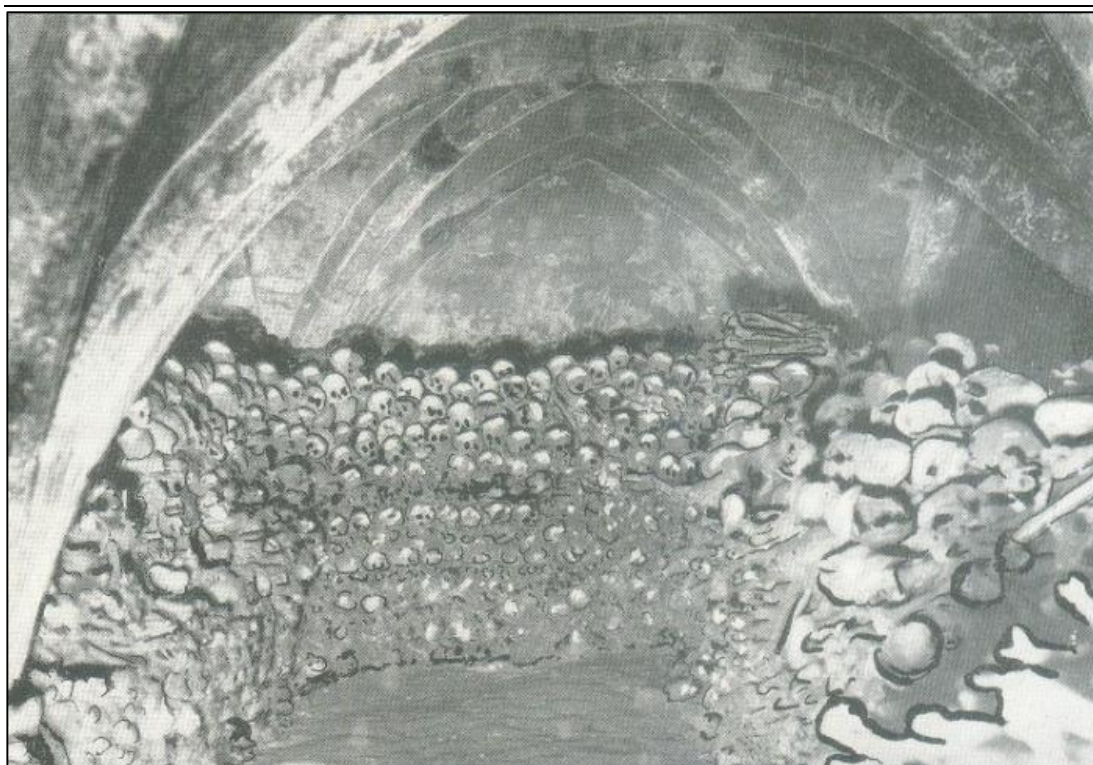
Figs 5.32-5.34: The arrangement of the charnel within the crypt prior to its restacking in 1911 (Roberts 1982; Percival 1915)

This is the same arrangement of charnel as has been noted at other charnel chapel sites, including Worcester Cathedral and St Peter's church, Leicester, (see Chapter 5 Section (5.2)) (Green 1796: 58; Gnanaratnam 2006: 26-27). In the earliest documented description of the crypt and charnel, that of Bloxam's in 1855, he describes how the charnel was 'piled up or ranged at the east end, and on either side, extending to the west end, a collection of human sculls and bones to the height of upwards of four feet, and of the same width' (1855: 2). This description is repeated by subsequent writers, with Sharp's in 1879 including further detail:

'The bones are stacked along the north and south sides and at the eastern end of the crypt, to an average height of not more than 5 feet … to the greatest height at the back of the stack abutting upon the south wall; their height here may reach, but does not exceed 5 feet 6 inches. The bones are stacked with the most level front at the east end; and here the width of the stack is four feet 6 inches from back to front. The stack on the south side is very irregular, ranging in width from 5 feet to

6 feet 6 inches; an average of 6 feet will be amply sufficient to represent the width of the stack on this side. The width of the stack in the eastern division of the north side is 2 feet 6 inches, and that of the stack in the western division of the same side is 2 feet only' (Sharp 1879: 59).

Sharp's detailed description matches the appearance of the charnel in Figs 5.32-5.34, which were taken c.1911, and so it seems unlikely that the charnel had been rearranged since Bloxam's first account in 1855 and its restacking in 1911. Whether the bones were moved after their discovery c.1700 and prior to the time Bloxam visited in 1855 cannot be determined. The quantity of charnel currently present in the crypt may be significantly less than was present prior to the restacking, as compared to the volume of charnel described and illustrated in the Figs 5.32 & 5.34, the remaining charnel constitutes a far lesser quantity. An unspecified quantity of the smaller bones and crushed fragments were discarded at the time of restacking and reburied elsewhere, exact location unknown; 'All the contents were removed … and the majority of the bones were reverently replaced. The small bones were reburied in the churchyard, near the south wall' (Percival 1915: 7).

4: Conclusion

The similarities discussed above, between the crypt at Rothwell's Holy Trinity church and medieval charnel chapels, strongly support a conclusion that the crypt was designed and built to function as a charnel chapel. The crypt architecturally conforms to all the attributes outlined in the template for identifying a charnel chapel, and also contains additional elements indicative of a chapel (see (1.4) above). When the charnel was placed inside the crypt and when the room ceased to be used cannot be ascertained and is merely surmised. Prior to its rediscovery c.1700 it appears that the crypt's existence had long been forgotten. If the room fell out of use by the time of the Reformation, then this allows c.150 years for any knowledge of it and its' purpose to have been forgotten. It is possible that the crypt had already ceased to be used earlier than the date of the Reformation, as there are records that by at least 1570 the church was in a state of advanced disrepair (Franklin 2013: 63). A Bishop Sampler

visited the church in this year and recorded that 'the glasse windows are broken, the rood lofte standing, and the churchyard walls in decaye, and the church like a duffcote' (Franklin 2013: 63). The nunnery in Rothwell was suppressed in 1536 under the Dissolution of the Monasteries Act (Franklin 2013: 82), and it is possible that some of the damage recorded to the church in 1570 dates to this time. Other charnel chapels were destroyed or hidden from view with access to them blocked at this time and it may be surmised that the same occurred at Rothwell (see Section (5.5.6)).

5.5: Deciphering charnel chapels: spiritual attributes

(5.5.1) 'Reburying' the disturbed dead

Just as bodies that did not decay as was expected were regarded as saintly or incorruptible (Daniell & Thompson 1999: 77-9), perhaps the fact that bones did not return to ashes as flesh did was interpreted as a sign that all persons retained an element of incorruptibility (see Chapters 2 & 6). In this sense, they would still require protection and insurance against destruction, ought to be respected, and kept in or on consecrated ground. A tantalising piece of evidence for how disturbed bones comprising charnel may have been generally regarded is exemplified in the foundation charter of the charnel chapel at Bury St Edmunds. This account is crucial in establishing the motives inherent in the foundation of at least some charnel chapels or chambers:

> "lately passing over the cemetery allotted for the burial of the common people", the abbot had observed, "not without sorrow of heart and pressure of vehement grief", how very many of the graves had been violated by the multiplied burials of bodies and the bones of the buried "indecently cast forth and left". He therefore directed a chapel to be built "covered with stone competently, under the cavity of which the buried bones may be laid up, or buried reverentially and decently in future" and that "the place shall happily be rendered most famous by the perpetual celebration of the masses of two chaplains" (Timms in Bloxam 1855: 5).

There are numerous points of interest contained in this brief account. Firstly, it demonstrates that the abbot, John de Northwold, considered bones in a charnel chamber to be 'buried', which may account for why these rooms are, without fail, of a semi-subterranean nature. No sites have been excavated nor has any evidence come to light to illustrate that bones within charnel chambers were ever covered with earth during the medieval period and so the 'burying' of which the Abbot speaks

must have been a symbolic reinterment. It would seem that by placing the bones within a sunken chamber, technically below ground level and inserted into the graveyard soil itself, that this was tantamount to burial. By not covering the bones with earth it also ensured that they were still visible (see Section (5.4.3)). Secondly, the foundation charter proves that the founding of a chapel was fundamental to the structure of charnel chambers. The provision of masses by chaplains was important both in terms of spiritual reverence for the sacred nature of the site but also in ensuring a public recognition of the charnel chapel. Thirdly, the abbot's reaction to the state of the lay cemetery is interesting; he is aggrieved by how graves had been 'violated,' both by the insertion into and disturbance of the original grave, but also by how the disturbed bones were treated disrespectfully. It would seem that it was not so much that the intercutting of graves was regarded as indecent, but rather the affront was the manner in which the disturbed remains were subsequently treated (see Chapters 6 & 7). The fact that he only knew of this state of affairs by personally viewing the lay graveyard himself indicates that he may not have been accustomed to such activity occurring in the monastic cemetery, with which he was more familiar. The charnel chapel's foundation charter further highlights that the charnel chapel was conceived of, and constructed for, lay people. This may have been something that was common to all charnel chapels, given that they are consistently located within the lay cemeteries of cathedral complexes as opposed to the corresponding monastic cemeteries (for example, Norwich, Exeter, Worcester, Evesham and Ely).

It might similarly be deduced that the charnel chapel at Exeter was for the direct benefit of the lay community, in that it was established as a penance following a murder (Lepine & Orme 2003; Orme 1991). As the spilling of blood would have meant a suspension of the use of the cemetery for burial until it could be re-consecrated (see Chapter 7 Section (7.2.2)) (Daniell 1997: 89-90; Lepine and Orme 2003: 18), the 'gift' of a charnel chapel to the general public may have helped to make reparations towards the community, an act that was reminiscent of the seventh Corporeal Act of Mercy (see Section (5.4.1)).

A further indication of how the 'reburying' of bones was viewed is evident in accounts from the foundation of Worcester Cathedral's charnel chapel. The account gives the reason for why the charnel chapel was built, which was to house bones disturbed from the burials where the new nave of the cathedral was to be constructed. According to Strype's 17th-century *Annals of the Reformation*, Bishop Blois 'provided a subterraneous vault for their reception, over which he raised a chapel' (Green 1796: 54). However, it seems that once this charnel chapel was constructed it was used *in addition* for the storage of displaced bones from other graves: 'on the opening of this crypt, the bones that were occasionally displaced on the preparing of new graves, were also deposited in this general sepulchre: a practice not objected to, under the persuasion of participating in the spiritual advantages to be derived from the devotional purposes of its chapel' (Green 1796: 54). This account provided by Green is also derived from Strype's *Annals* and may reflect Strype's opinion on the use of Worcester charnel chapel as opposed to the views of Bishop Blois. If it does represent an accurate description of the use of the charnel chapel then it demonstrates that although the structure was initially constructed for the bones which it was known new building works would disturb, adding further bones from casual disturbance was justifiable. They would be treated equally as the other bones would on spiritual terms, and would gain the same benefit and protection of prayers, which were directly and expressly offered for the souls of the bones in the charnel room by three chaplains who were established on the charnel chapel's foundation to perform daily services for the souls of the deceased whose bones were to be kept within the charnel chamber (Green 1796: 54).

In light of the aforementioned examples of the foundation charters from Worcester, Bury St Edmunds and Norwich (see Section (5.4.1)), charnel chapels can be interpreted as reflecting a benefaction for the 'common' people who ought to be looked after in death via prayers for their souls, just as the wealthy could ensure prayers for their souls through their private chantries. The founding of these charnel chapels may also be interpreted as a self-serving act which would ingratiate the founder with the lay community, and possibly gain them additional prayers for their own soul.

(5.5.2) Arranging the charnel

Abbot de Northwold does not dictate how the bones were to be arranged, if at all, within the charnel room, only that they ought to be kept reverently (Bloxam 1855: 5). There is only limited information regarding the appearance of charnels, as such descriptions are not provided in contemporary records, nor are they given in accounts of the dismantling of charnels around the time of the Reformation (see Section (5.5.6)). Instead, information about the arrangement of bones in charnels has to be derived from antiquarian accounts of sites where charnel was still *in situ* into the post-medieval period, or from excavation reports of more recently discovered sites. In both cases, descriptions are brief but strikingly consistent. At Worcester charnel chapel, the appearance of the bones in the 18th century is described as follows: they 'seem to have been curiously assorted, and piled up in two rows along its sides, leaving a passage between them from its west entrance … to its east end' (Green 1796: 58). The charnel at Rothwell Holy Trinity church is described in the mid-19th century as having been 'piled up or ranged at the east end, and on either side, extending to the west end, a collection of human sculls and bones to the height of upwards of four feet, and of the same width' (Bloxam 1855: 2). The charnel chamber of the charnel chapel at Exeter was excavated between 1971 and 1976 (Henderson & Bidwell 1982). The excavators describe the bones in the lower chamber as follows: 'The floor of the crypt was covered with a mass of bones about a metre in depth. Occasional distinct groups of leg and arm bones could be discerned and in one place there was a collection of ten skulls' (Henderson & Bidwell 1982: 169). As the building had been robbed substantially, and the bones were covered with a layer of fill containing 16th-century pottery, it is possible that the original arrangement of the bones was disturbed during the robbing of the walls, and by the infilling of the site. The survival of these distinct groups of similar elements is significant as it may represent that charnel was arranged in a very specific manner during the medieval period.

The recently excavated church and cemetery of St Peter, Leicester contained a charnel chamber, adjacent to the south wall of the east chancel. This room was not

below the church building itself, and so is identified tentatively as a variant of a charnel chamber. This charnel room at Leicester was semi-subterranean, and the bones within were *in situ*, apparently undisturbed since about 1573, when the church was dismantled (Gnanaratnam 2006: 26-27). Although the complete excavation report is not yet available, pictures taken during the excavation of the charnel house show two rows of bones on either side of the room, leaving a passage through the centre to the back wall, where bones were also stacked (see Figs 5.35 & 5.36) (Gnanaratnam 2005).

Figs. 5.35 & 5.36: The charnel within the charnel chamber at St Peter's church, Leicester (from http://www.le.ac.uk/ulas/gallery/saint_margarets/photo2.html; Gnanaratnam 2005: 7)

The charnel comprised 'small' bones in addition to the larger ones (Gnanaratnam 2005: 7). The charnel chambers at Holy Trinity church in Rothwell and St Leonard's church in Hythe still contain large quantities of charnel (Crangle 2009). It has been claimed in various articles that the charnel is comprised of only femurs and skulls

(Wallis 1888: 34; Garland *et al.* 1988: 238) and it is claimed by the authors that this is because medieval people believed that only the femurs and skulls were required to get to heaven (Garland *et al.* 1988: 239). However, medieval Christian doctrine taught that all bones were necessary for ascension to heaven but they did not have to be articulated (Bynum 1995; Horrox 1999: 101). This is an example of how inaccurate and unverified assumptions have dictated interpretations of charnel chapels and their contents. In actuality, at both Rothwell and Hythe charnel chambers most bones of the skeleton are still present and identifiable, albeit with the small bones in much smaller numbers compared to larger skeletal elements. There is, furthermore, evidence to suggest that the proportion of small bones among the charnel was once much greater, because when the bones at both of these churches were restacked in the 1800s, the majority of the smaller bones were removed and reburied (Percival 1915: 7; Stoessiger & Morant 1932).

If the charnel chapels of Worcester, Exeter, Rothwell and Leicester are indicative of the layout of charnel at all charnel chapels, then bones were normally packed up against the north, south and east walls, and did not fully extend over the floor space. The manner in which they accumulated is unknown and possibly varied at each site, but whether collected gradually over many years, or mostly in one movement, the bones were stored in some degree of order. This is not surprising, given the focus on reverence and decency in the foundation records (see Section (5.5.1)), but also in the provision of a chaplain or priest to oversee the affairs of the chapels. The layout of the charnel further makes sense if the rooms were intended to be visited, as it allowed access into the whole room. It has been noted that there is usually a 'passage' from the west to the east, indicative of an intention or expectation that people ought to be capable of moving undisturbed from the entrance to the east wall. In no case does it appear that bones were simply shoved haphazardly inside. This would be at odds with the available evidence and attitudes of patrons such as Abbot de Northwold and Bishop Blois (see Section (5.5.1)). Displaced and disturbed bones were to be kept respectfully and reverently, in a peaceful existence much like a grave. This aim was fulfilled by 'burying' them and siting them beneath a chapel

served by its own chaplains; the charnel was not simply inserted into the lower room and then forgotten.

The person/s responsible for graveyard maintenance will be discussed fully in a succeeding chapter, but occasionally it fell under the remit of the sacrist or the treasurer, as at Exeter (see Chapter 7) (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 130-1; Lepine & Orme 2003: 17). The relocation of bones to the charnel chamber may also have fallen under their jurisdiction. Just as the priest or chaplain of the charnel was responsible for the spiritual necessities, it may have been equally important to establish someone who would be responsible for the physical requirements of charnel, both its creation and curation. At Norwich it was the sacrist who kept the key to the vault, but the 'keeper of the lower vault' is also documented and he appears to have been someone other than the sacrist (Blomefield 1806: 56). At Worcester in the time of Henry VI (1421-1471) the charnel chapel was also being referred to as the charnel house (Abingdon in Green 1796: 55). The statutes relating to the charnel chapel state 'the sacrist of the cathedral (to whose office it was still annexed) was to maintain in the charnel house one chaplain', which implies that the overall maintenance of the building and contents were the obligations of the sacrist (Green 1796: 55). By 1305 Norwich cemetery had its own 'fosser', possibly meaning 'gravedigger' who was paid an annual fee (Orme & Lepine 2003: 21). However, little is known about the processes of grave digging (see Chapter 7) (Thompson 2004: 46). It is unknown if each churchyard employed its own permanent gravedigger or whether the gravedigger would have had any role in charnelling. Where grave-digging has been depicted in medieval manuscript illuminations, it is being undertaken by men dressed in non-ecclesiastical dress, who are also shown placing the body within the grave (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 180-1). In descriptions of burial the grave was initially marked out by the priest or possibly the gravedigger (see Chapter 7), and dug by the sexton, members of a burial guild or a hired lay person, whilst the requiem mass was being held (Litten 1991: 150; Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 24). It may be the case that prior to the initiation of charnel structures such as charnel chapels, no single person was responsible for the maintenance of disinterred bones.

(5.5.3) Perceptions of post-depositional disturbance

It is clear from certain charnel chapel foundation charters that disturbed bones were meant to be protected (see Section (5.5.1)). Significantly, in the case of Worcester, at least, evidence from the foundation charter demonstrates graveyard surface clearance and relocation of skeletal remains was not merely something that was undertaken to enable future burials to take place more feasibly. It appears that although there was nothing inherently wrong with human bones being exposed to the surface instead of remaining below the earth, as it is depicted in nearly all medieval pictures of cemeteries (see Figs. 7.40-7.46), their collective storage in association with a religious structure and source of prayers was preferred. The manner and means of doing this is not elaborated on, nor is there much evidence of who was charged with the actual task of clearance and storage. One significant reference, however, indicates that it was only acceptable to disinter and relocate bones that were in a particular state. In the 1316 foundation charter for Norwich charnel chapel, it is stated that 'in the carnary beneath the said Chapel of St John we wish that human bones, *completely stripped of flesh*, be preserved seemly to the time of the general Resurrection' (Saunders cited in Gilchrist and Sloane 2005: 42). This decree that the bones be dry prior to their admission to the charnel building is understandable; remains still in a state of decomposition, in large numbers and open to scavenging would have been repugnant. However, it is also understandable on ideological terms. Given that blood was viewed as a contaminant to consecrated ground, the disturbance and disarticulation of a still fleshed corpse could have been tantamount to contamination of the graveyard (see Chapter 6) (Horrox 1999: 103). Movement of bodies whilst still in a state of decomposition undoubtedly occurred throughout the medieval period (see Chapters 2-4), but the disarticulation of these bodies and subsequent retention on the ground surface as partly fleshed charnel is not recorded. References of unpleasant and putrid graveyards only appear and become commonplace after the Reformation up to the initiation of the landscape cemeteries in the mid-19th century. These were cemeteries which were established in 'green' areas or areas which had not previously been used for burial and were not associated with a church (Gittings 1984: 139; Houlbrooke 1999: 120-1; Litten 1991).

It is likely that medieval graveyard usage involving charnelling and intercutting of graves was strictly limited to completely skeletonised remains (see Chapters 6 & 7). In transferring human remains to charnel chapels, there was an emphasis on not only post-*depositional* movement, but crucially, on post-*decompositional* movement. Even today in modern Catholic societies who practice charnelling, bones are not moved or brought above the earth until they are defleshed (Goody & Poppi 1994). This may relate to the belief that a soul may linger in the vicinity of a grave for up to a year after the death of its body, which was accepted by at least the 15th century (Daniell 1997: 61-2; Foxhall Forbes 2013: 293). The lack of evidence for disturbance prior to decomposition may further reflect the belief that a body may in some way retain an element of life whilst fleshed, and the general acceptance that it took about a year for a body to fully decompose (see Chapter 6) (Horrox 1999: 101). It was decreed in 1299 by Pope Boniface VIII, that once bodies had returned to ash, there was no objection to their being displaced from the grave or their being relocated (Horrox 1999: 101).

(5.5.4) Renown of charnel chapels

Numerous wills request burial inside charnel chapels and houses, which together with the founding of chantries in charnel rooms, must be regarded as an indicator of the esteem possessed by charnel chapels amongst contemporary society. Specific details are lacking, but it might be assumed that those people who requested burial inside a charnel room would have had a tomb raised for them, as witnessed by Stow at St. Paul's Cathedral; a Londoner, Henry Barton, who died in 1435 requested burial 'in the charnel house' there, and his tomb was still present in the charnel chamber when Stow visited it prior to 1603 (Rousseau 2011: 76). Yet there is scant evidence for how these burials were to be carried out. It can be tentatively suggested that in some cases requests for burial in the charnel, may literally have referred to the *reburial* of the person's bones amongst the charnel in the charnel chapel, exhumed from the churchyard after decomposition.

Numerous other examples of requests to be buried in association with charnel chambers are evident from wills. Henry de Edelmeton requested to be buried in St

Paul's charnel chapel and his chantry to be established in All Hallows charnel house (Rousseau 2011: 69). The 1434 will of Margarette Asshcombe 'commande … my body to be buried anenest ['amongst'] the charnel of Paul's in Pouleschurcheyerd between two trees' (Furnivall 1882: 96). In Exeter in 1477, the will of John Hammond requests that he be buried 'on the east and south side of the chapel called the charnelhouse' (Lepine & Orme 2003: 75) as does a William Veysey, who died in 1535 and requested his burial to be at the end of the cathedral cemetery near the charnel house (Lepine & Orme 2003: 114). In 1451 Walter Whytefeld willed to be buried 'in the cemetery of the Priory of St Bartholomew before the entrance to the charnel house … outside the processional path in West Smythfeld' (Webb 1921). What is evident from these wills is the sacrosanct nature of charnel in general as people wanted to be in spatial association with charnel after their deaths. It will also be noted in Chapter 7 that burial proliferated in the cemetery of the Augustinian priory and hospital of St Mary Spital (London) only after the construction of a charnel chapel, and that the burials were arranged around the charnel chapel in neat regular rows (see Chapter 7 Section (7.2.2) (2) (ix)).

In addition to burials, various chantries were also established within charnel chapels, and in some occasions within the charnel chamber itself. This popularity of the charnel chapel building as a place for personal commemoration and remembrance is evidence of their regard amongst society. The Wodehouse Chantry was established in the charnel chamber of Norwich's charnel chapel in 1421 (Blomefield 1806: 55; Gilchrist 2005: 105). In 1394 Sir Robert Percehay was granted licence to found the chantry of St Mary Magdalene in the charnel of the charnel chapel at Scarborough parish church (Page 1923). This indicates that not only was the charnel frequented by the public, but also that a charnel room itself was a suitable site for a private chantry (see Section (5.5.4)). St Mary's charnel chapel in Scarborough had two chantries established by 1394, but whether they were in the upper chapel or the lower charnel room is unclear, as the site is simply referred to as 'le Charnel.' (Page 1923). The indistinction between the two rooms of the charnel chapel is indicative of the manner in which the structures were regarded; burial and the foundation of chantries was equally acceptable in either room. In 1396 Richard II also founded a

chantry 'in the chapel of house called "le Charnel"' (Rowntree 1931). Walter Stapledon founded his chantry in the Exeter charnel chapel in 1322 (Orme 1991: 165) and Litten cites chantries established within the charnel chambers at the parish church of Grantham and at the church of St Nicholas, Bristol, although no original documents are cited to verify this information (Litten 1991: 8). Roger Beywin and his wife Isabelle founded a chantry in the charnel room of the charnel house of St Paul's in 1278, as did Aveline of St Olave in 1282/3 (Rousseau 2011: 75). Stow mentions how a Janken Carpenter was given licence for a chaplain to be established 'upon the said charnel' at St Paul's Cathedral (Stow 1598: 329).

Certain societies and guilds were associated with charnel and charnel chapels. The charnel chapel at St Paul's Cathedral was the favoured burial location of the skinners guild by 1416, as it was at Exeter by 1426 (Orme 1991: 166; Rousseau 2011: 76). Orme speculates that as skinners were involved with carcasses and bones, charnel was an apt location for burial of members of skinners guilds (Orme 1991: 166). No evidence could be found to verify or disprove this theory.

(5.5.5) What can account for the appearance and proliferation of charnel chapels?
Chantries developed in Europe from the late 12th century with the first examples in England founded during the early decades of the 13th century (Daniell 1997: 179-80). The majority were constructed from the late 1200's, however, and they continued to be established throughout the following centuries, with the highest concentration of endowments in the 1300s (see Tables 5.1 & 5.2) (Litten 1991: 8). Chantries were buildings or chapels within churches that were funded by endowments for prayers and masses for the soul of the person who founded them. Prayers were said for the souls of these founders at either an existing altar within a church, or for those who could afford it, at a privately constructed altar or chantry chapel attached to or within the church (Daniell 1997: 14-15; Horrox 1999: 110). Occasionally a whole college of priests was established which included accommodation for those who prayed for the benefactors' soul, as was established at Norwich Cathedral's charnel chapel (Daniell 1997: 15; Gilchrist 2005). They emerged in response to a combination of the acceptance of Purgatory into official religious doctrine and an overwhelming need to

regulate the demand on religious establishments to record, pray for and remember the dead (Daniell 1997: 179; Litten 1991: 6-8).

Up to the beginning of the 12th century, Church doctrine taught that there were three places comprising the afterlife; Heaven, Hell and Abraham's Bosom (Daniell 1997; Horrox 1999: 111). The souls of the good went to Heaven, the bad to Hell, but only at Judgement Day and the Resurrection. What happened between burial and this point was a matter of conjecture. Some believed that souls might rest in Abraham's Bosom, a place of peace that was suitable for 'storing' good souls. However, certain souls required purgation or cleansing prior to ascending to heaven, usually by a type of fire, a belief derived from various biblical passages (Daniell 1997: 177). This cleansing process could be accelerated by the living through prayers for these souls. It was this place of purgation which was officially recognised by Pope Innocent IV in 1254 (Daniell 1997: 178; Horrox 1999: 90). With this, the pre-existing belief in the power of the intervention of prayer in the fate of the dead escalated and the demand for remembrance intensified. Previously, names of the dead were written down in bederolls or *Liber Vitae*, the Book of Life (Daniell 1997: 179). Such records not only cemented remembrance of each individual but also ensured that for every name recorded, the corresponding soul would be prayed for annually. As years progressed and lists grew, this became cumbersome and impractical and an alternative was required. As chantries provided a constant and private source of prayer as opposed to a collective remembrance in a yearly anniversary mass, their attractiveness for families who could afford them was obvious.

With the advent of Purgatory and chantries, the initiation of charnel chapels for the benefit of souls may be understood; one building with a single chaplain could now take care of vast multitudes of souls simultaneously. What is not justified by either Purgatory or chantries is the post-mortem movement of the physical remains of these people from the grave to become housed within these structures: additional reasoning must have been put in place in accordance with these two new developments. With the formalisation of the liturgical belief in Purgatory, it was now believed that the soul no longer resided within the grave after decomposition had

occurred but immediately on death ascended or descended to the requisite place (Bynum 1995: 14). Occasionally a soul may become confused regarding its state, hence the repetition of anniversary masses a week, a month and a year after the death of the person (Daniell 1997: 61-2). These 'reminded' or made any lingering souls in the vicinity of the deceased aware of their circumstance and allowed the soul to progress to wherever it was destined (Foxhall Forbes 2013: 320). It was also accepted that a skeleton did not need to be preserved 'whole', as God could reunite a person on Judgement Day no matter how disarticulated and separated the remains may have become (Bynum 1995: 30-5). Once these precautions had been taken and it was ensured that the grave was spiritually empty, then the disturbance of the physical contents could be comprehended and validated.

The attraction of a charnel chapel to an institution can now be recognised; not only did it ease the pressure on the church from the prayers demanded of it, but it also justified large scale post-depositional movement of the dead. It must be no coincidence that church building works necessitating mass disturbance of graves occurred in the wake of the official recognition of the state of Purgatory and the foundation and proliferation of charnel chapels. It has previously been accepted that charnel chapels served merely as a receptacle for bones with some unknown ritual significance attached, and that they were no more than convenient sites for private chantry foundations (see Section (5.2.1)). The foregoing discussion suggests that the full range of roles that charnel chapels fulfilled has been overlooked.

5.6: The fate of charnel chapels

What still remains elusive is the exact manner in which people interacted with charnel remains and to what extent human bones featured in medieval religion and ritual (see Chapter 6). Some of the crania within the charnel at both Hythe and Rothwell have been repeatedly touched, as evidenced by small shiny areas or patches of bone on the cranias' frontals (see Fig. 5.37). When these bones were repeatedly interacted with is, however, unknown, although the same has been noted at European charnel chapels that date to the medieval period (see Fig. 5.38). The purpose of touching certain bones is also not known, but is reminiscent of the practise of touching relics (see Chapter 2). It also reiterates the point that charnel chapels were visited by people on numerous successive occasions.

Figs 5.37 & 5.38: Cranium from Hythe whose frontal exhibits evidence of having been repeatedly touched (left) and three crania within the charnel chapel at Oppenheim who also have patches of different colour from having been repeatedly touched (right).

Clues to the ritualistic role that charnel chapels fulfilled amongst society and religious practice are evident from various accounts (see Sections (5.3-5.5)). The fact that

pilgrims wished to visit the charnel room at St Paul's Cathedral specifically is evidence of this sacred attribute (see Section (5.4.2)). This ritualistic nature of charnel chambers is alluded to by various authors but no comprehensive attempts have been made to decipher precisely how this ritual manifested or what it entailed (Gilchrist 2005; Orme 1991: 169). It may be expected that on particular days of specific religious observance that charnel and charnel chapels may have featured heavily. The charnel chamber of St Paul's was opened to the public on certain days including the Feast of the Relics, the designated day of the year when relics of saints were celebrated (Ariès 1981; Bynum 1995; Rousseau 2011:75). All Souls Day was widely celebrated on the second of November with a Requiem mass for all those in Purgatory, and could conceivably have involved charnel itself as representative of these souls (Daniell 1997: 12).

Contemporary attitudes towards charnel remains can be deduced from evidence for the removal of charnel collections from charnel chapels at the Reformation. The most infamous example of charnel destruction occurred at St Paul's Cathedral. Stow records that in 1549 the charnel chapel was converted into a house, warehouses and sheds, and 'The bones of the dead couched up in a Charnill under the chappell were conveyed from thence into Finsbury field' (Stow 1598: 329). Exeter's charnel chapel was no longer in existence by 1553 (Orme 1991: 169). The chapel portion of the building was dismantled to ground level and the charnel chamber filled with earth and various materials, as if to deliberately remove the bones from sight and prevent access to the room, both of which things were evidently hugely important to charnel chapels' use and function (see Section (5.3.1)) (Henderson & Bidwell 1982: 169). The same process has been noted at St Bride's church London (see Section (5.6.1)) (see Fig. 5.39).

Fig. 5.39: Charnel and debris in the chamber St Bride's upon its rediscovery in the 1950 excavations (Milne 1997:14)

At St Nicholas church, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, the medieval charnel chamber underneath St George's porch was rediscovered in 1824; filling it to the brim were rubbish and human bones (MacKenzie 1827). The charnel chapel at Ely Priory was demolished in 1539 during the Dissolution (Pugh 1953). The charnel vault under the chancel of St. Gregory's church, Norwich was let out by the churchwardens after the Dissolution (Blomefield 1806). In 1550, the chapel room of Norwich's charnel chapel was purchased by the Great Hospital, but was by 1554 used as a school, with the lower charnel room let to grocers and wine merchants (Gilchrist 2005: 208); what became of the charnel is not known. Worcester's charnel chapel, like that of Norwich, was also not immediately destroyed, but rather re-used. Upon the dissolution of the priory of Worcester in 1542, it ceased to function as a chapel, was re-used briefly as a school from 1636, subsequently allowed to go to ruin, and finally dismantled and built upon in 1677 (Green 1796: 56). Intriguingly, the vault was not granted to the new owner of the site, the Lord Bishop of Worcester, and permission was given only to 'take down the walls of the charnel house to the stools of the windows' (Green 1796: 56). The Lord Bishop granted the charnel chapel to the dean and chapter of Worcester, who gave the lease to a John Price. The charnel itself was left within the charnel chamber, but was made inaccessible. By removing charnel from sight, it became erased from memory. The existence of many sites under churches was completely unknown prior to their accidental discovery, normally by gravediggers

from the late 17th century onwards, for example at Holy Trinity church in Rothwell (Bloxam 1855). Prior to these rediscoveries there appear not to have been any common knowledge or record amongst local populations that there ever existed a charnel chapel, for example as at St Leonard's church, Hythe (Parsons 1908). Many references to charnel chapels are made in the 18th and 19th centuries by antiquarians who do not always specify the exact location of the chambers beneath churches, or even to which particular church they are referring. In most cases where these locations can be verified by documentary or architectural evidence, the charnel is no longer within the charnel room, having been removed at some point after the dates of the initial reference. It seems that once the chambers and charnels were closed and were deemed unacceptable as part of post-Reformation religion, they quickly fell out of memory.

As charnel rooms were closed off, being in the vicinity of the bones was now impossible for medieval people. There was clearly more involved in the eradication of charnel chapels than a desire to end the 'Popish' practice of charnelling due to unspecified ritualistic connotations. Reformers felt it necessary to eliminate all possibility of being amongst charnel, and even of seeing it. Due to this combination of the destruction of charnel collections and a cessation of the practice of charnelling co-incident with the Reformation, much evidence regarding the contents of charnel chapels has been permanently lost. The apparent vigour with which sites were destroyed, emptied or concealed in the mid to late 1500s is indicative of the lack of regard and respect for charnel within the new prevailing Protestant religion. It is also testament to the extent to which charnel featured in pre-Reformation religious ideology and the communal mind-set as it was deemed important to Reformers to either destroy charnel collections or cease access and visibility to them.

(5.6.1) Case Study 2: St Bride's Church, Fleet Street, (London): The Charnel

The following is a detailed investigation of the charnel and crypt that is located beneath the church of St Bride's, on Fleet Street, London. It will be demonstrated that this site is of post-medieval date and origin, and therefore is not considered to be a charnel chapel. It is, however, an example of how charnel was treated in the

post-medieval period and in more recent decades. This case study will serve to illustrate the differences between medieval charnelling, as discussed above, and that of the post-medieval period in England.

1) Introduction

The church of St Bride is located just west of Fleet Street, in central London. There has been a church on this site since the 4th century, when a small Roman apsidal building was constructed, discovered during the excavation of the 1950s (Milne 1997: 99; Milne & Reynolds 1994: 146). The earliest documented record referring to a church at this location was during the reign of Henry II (1154 – 1189) in a grant issued to the Knights Templars (Cobb 1951: 4). The church was modified on numerous different occasions throughout the medieval period and 17th century. It was completely destroyed in the Great Fire of London, 1666, and again during the Blitz in WWII (Milne 1997: 48, 87-88). A number of subterranean crypts or 'vaults' were constructed below the church, both during the medieval period and also at the time of the church's rebuilding by Christopher Wren after the Great Fire. The medieval crypt is located underneath the 14th century Lady Chapel located in the north-east corner of the church (see Fig. 5.40).
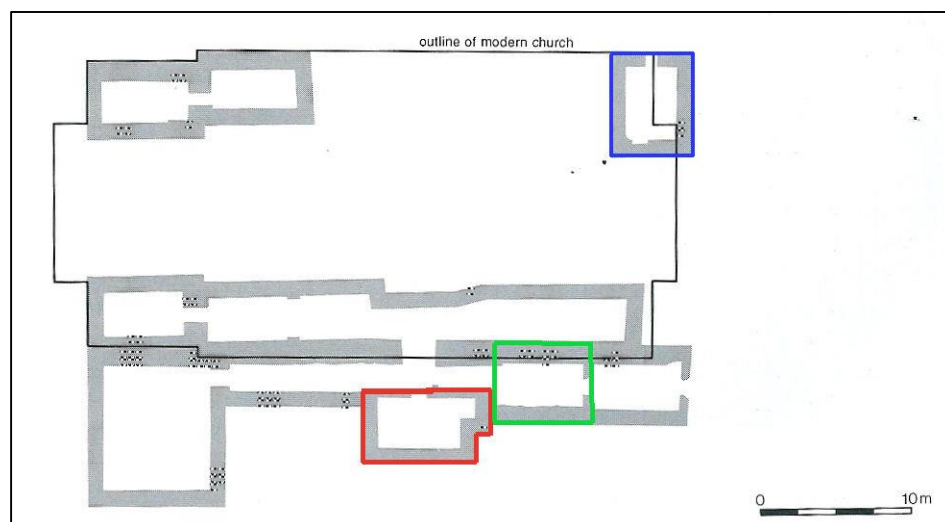
Fig. 5.40: Plan of St Bride's Church, depicting location of the crypts that contained charnel or coffins at the time of the 1950s excavations by Milne; the medieval crypt (highlighted in blue), the vault with charnel

The medieval crypt was constructed shortly after the construction of the Lady Chapel, in the late 13th or very early 14th century (Milne 1997: 38-40). It has been suggested by Milne & Reynolds that the roof of the vault was deliberately constructed 1m higher than the floor of the Lady Chapel above it, creating 'a raised dais upon which the altar to Our Lady would have been set, reached by a flight of steps' (1994: 148). As has been noted above, however, all charnel rooms beneath churches that have been identified by the author were deliberately constructed as semi-subterranean basements. Since the Lady Chapel was built prior to the crypt at St Bride's, it is here suggested that the Lady Chapel had to be 'raised' so as to permit windows to be inserted into the crypt. It has also been noted, that many medieval crypts with ossuaries were located below Lady Chapels. It may be that this vault had initially been a medieval charnel chapel which had contained charnel. The room does conform to the template of medieval charnel chapels as identified and outlined by the author. Although no specific purpose of the crypt has been identified thus far, it is certainly possible that it was constructed to house disinterred charnel. The Lady Chapel was constructed and used by the Guild and Brotherhood of St Mary and both the Brotherhood and the chantry of the Lady Chapel were dissolved in 1545 by Henry VIII (Milne & Reynolds 1994: 145). It is stated that 'the crypt was used as a burial vault until it was sealed up in the mid-19th century' although it is not clear if this purpose was initiated from the time of the dissolving of the Lady Chapel or later on (Milne & Reynolds 1994: 145). At the time of the excavations in 1952-60 the crypt was filled with lead coffins which had been covered with a layer of soil (see Fig. 5.41) (1955: 136-7). The crypt was included in a plan of the church created by John Pridden, curate of the church from 1783 – 1803, but no mention of its use at this time is mentioned (Milne & Reynolds 1994: 143). No copy of this drawing could be obtained by the author.
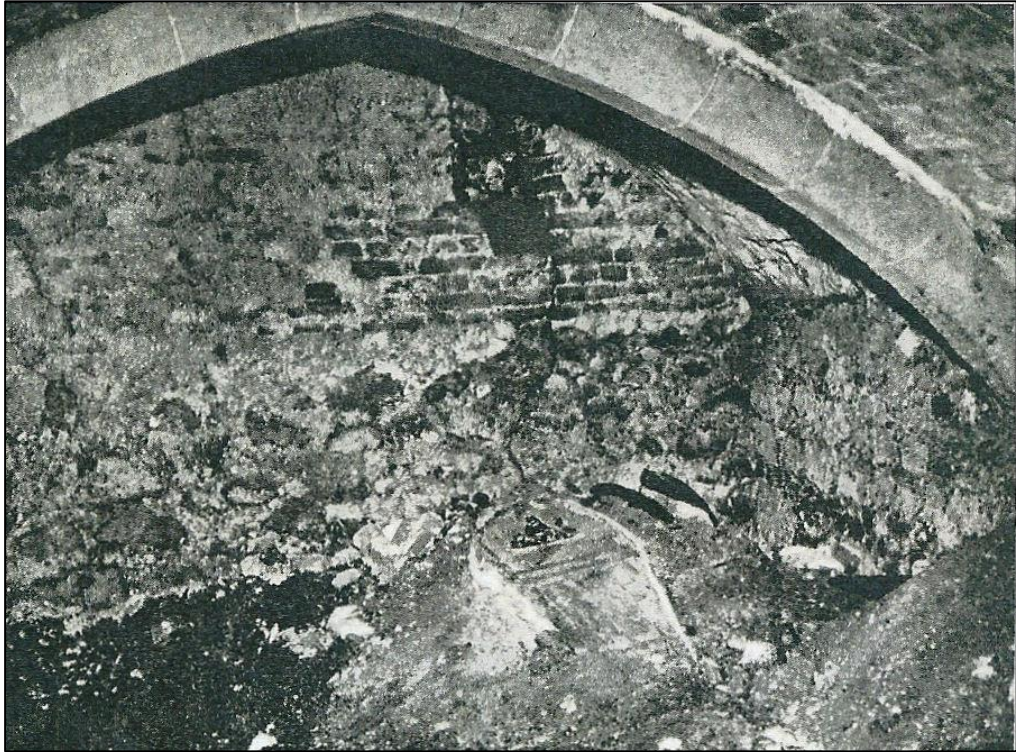
Fig. 5.41: The crypt below the Lady Chapel upon its discovery in 1955

(ILN 1952: 656).

In the same drawing by Pridden, a second vault is drawn, labelled 'bone-house' (Milne 1951: 14; Redpath 1955: 136). This refers to a fully subterranean barrel-vaulted room located off the subterranean south aisle that was constructed by Wren between 1671-5 (Cobb 1951: 9). No dating evidence exists for this room although the brickwork negates it being medieval in date (Tibbles pers. comm. April 2012). It is possible that it was constructed at the same time as the north and south subterranean aisles, but it may equally have been built prior to this date, or indeed, afterwards. Upon opening this vault, it is stated that 'Under a layer of soil we found about 300 hundred skeletons laid out in three feet squares of skulls and longbones, like a chessboard, and under each square of skulls was a layer of longbones, and under the square of long bones, a square of skulls' (1955: 136). These 'skeletons' are not complete or in anatomical position, but are disarticulated charnel, and are still mostly in the same position as when discovered, albeit with a 1 metre-wide north-south 'trench' inserted down the centre of the room to ground level (see Figs. 5.42 & 5.43).

Figs 5.42 & 5.43: The appearance of the charnel in the crypt when it was discovered in 1955 (top) (ILN 1952: 656); The current appearance of the charnel (Photograph author's own)

This vault and the treatment of the charnel within it is indicative of post-medieval charnelling practice. The vault has no windows or apertures to the exterior of the church of any kind, and it was sealed after the charnel was deposited within, preventing future access. It was also covered with a layer of soil, meaning the charnel was completely removed from sight. This removal of access and visibility to the charnel may be regarded as permanent reburial of the material.

A second post-medieval brick-lined vault was uncovered during the 1952-60 excavations which also contained charnel, albeit in no arranged pattern. Some confusion surrounds the precise location of this vault, as it is described in Milne as being located on the north side of the church but in Redpath and the Illustrated London Times as being on the south (Milne 1997: 14; Redpath 1955: 136; ILN 1952: 656). Judging by the plans provided in Milne (1997) and by the descriptions provided of finding each of the vaults successively, it may be surmised that the vault referred to was on the south side of the church, as indicated in Fig. 5.40. There are very limited descriptions of the charnel within this room. It is described in Redpath as 'several hundreds of skulls, like an avalanche, filled the barrel vault to its roof' (1955: 136). From the photographs obtained that were taken at the opening of the vault, it is clear that much debris was also included in the charnel and that it did not solely comprise crania (see Figs 5.39 and 5.44). No further detail is provided relating to this charnel, nor is any dating evidence of the vault itself postulated by the excavators.
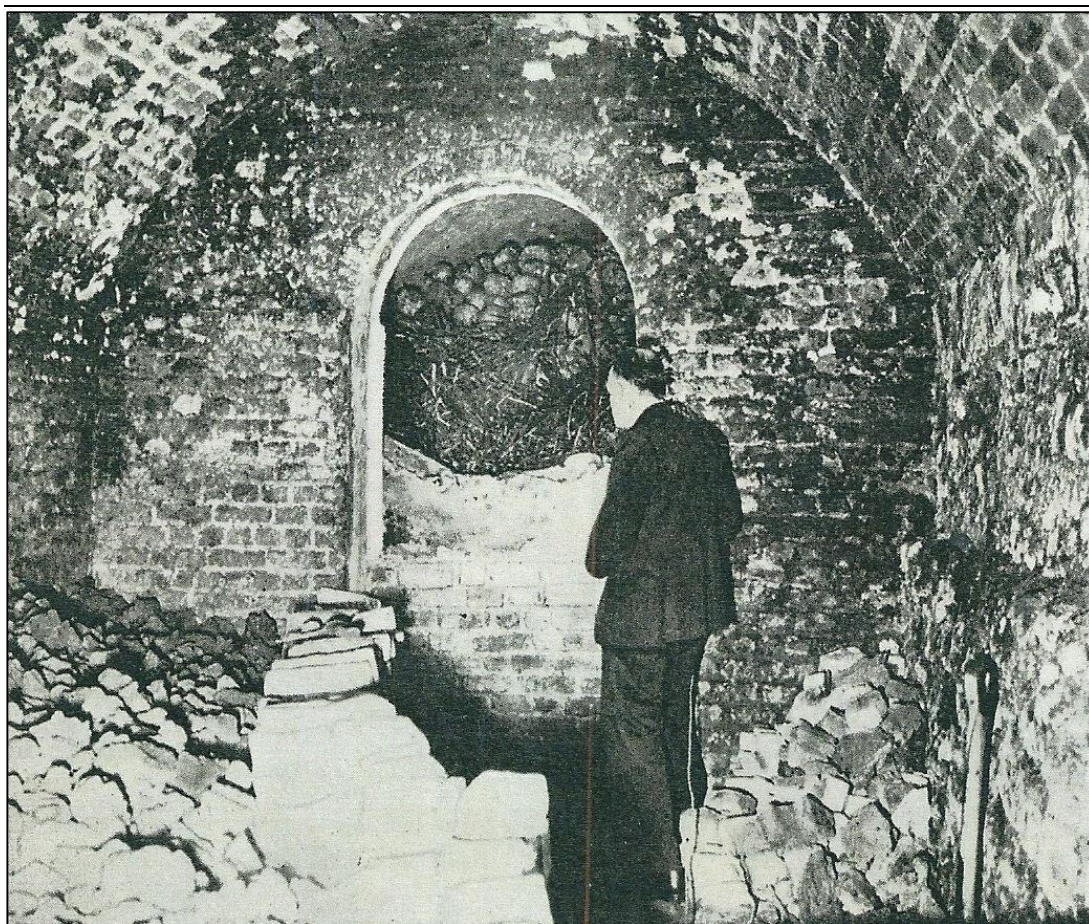
Fig 5.44: The charnel and debris inside the vault upon its discovery in 1955 (top) (ILN 1952: 656).

The second brick-lined vault was not included in the drawing by Pridden, yet the first vault was, referred to as the 'bone-house' (see above). It seems unusual that one charnel room is recorded while the other is not. The reason for this may be derived to the manner in which the charnel is arranged within the two rooms, although the following discussion must be regarded tentatively. The charnel in the second vault was not arranged in any particular manner, judging by the two photographs that could be obtained by the author (see Figs. 5.39 & 5.44). There is clearly also a large amount of twigs and inclusions amongst the bones. This is in compete contrast to the charnel within the 'bone-house' which is arranged in patterns and covered with earth. Three potential scenarios may be postulated as to the origin of both deposits of charnel;

1) The bones may have been collected from one of the surrounding charnel houses in London, of which there were many, at the time of the Dissolution, for redeposition beneath St Bride's. At the time of the Dissolution, charnel was treated rather disrespectfully by reformers, which could explain why the bones in the second vault were stacked in disorder to the ceiling of the vault, and included debris such as twigs. If they were sealed within and no record was made, it may explain why the vault is not mentioned by Pridden, as he did not know it existed.

2) The charnel within the 'bone-house' may once have been curated within the crypt beneath the Lady Chapel and left in place but without access or sealed within. When the crypt was to be used for private burial the charnel was removed to the purpose-built 'bone-house'.

3) The bones within the 'bone-house' are deposited in a very ashy layer of earth (see Fig. 5.43). They may have been collected after the Great Fire and the destruction of the church, either from St Bride's itself and/or from surrounding churches, for respectful redeposition, hence the difference layout and arrangement of the charnel compared to that of the second vault.

The origin of the charnel in either of the two vaults and their date of deposition has not been discussed by the excavators 1952-60 or subsequently by other authors. The only human skeletal material that is recorded to have been studied from St Bride's relates to the complete skeletons excavated from lead coffins (Redpath 1955: 134-5). Skeletal and decomposing remains of over 2000 skeletons were excavated and taken to Cambridge, on condition that they were returned to the church post-analysis (Redpath 1955: 133). Presumably some of these were either not returned to St Bride's or were reburied, as the collection currently numbers only a couple of hundred skeletons, stored in the northern subterranean Wren aisle (Bekvalac pers. comm. 2011; 2012). No mention is made in any of the source material obtained by the author regarding the charnel that was discovered in the second vault, and so it may be surmised that the contents of the southern aisle boxes comprise this charnel.

Currently, there are numerous boxes of charnel stacked along the walls of the southern subterranean aisle built by Wren.

5.7: Conclusion

The quantity and proliferation of charnel chapels constructed in medieval England had previously not been recognised, but has now been established in this chapter. Having assessed all the available evidence for English charnel chapels, some significant points may be made with regard to their construction and function. The construction of charnel chapels did not necessarily occur in direct response to the level of intercutting of graves or intensity of burial, as there are many graveyards across England which exhibit extreme density of inhumations but there is no corresponding evidence for a charnel chapel having existed at the same graveyard or church (see Chapter 7). In addition, there are instances of charnel chapels which were built in ecclesiastical complexes or churchyards, but whose archaeological or documentary evidence does not indicate that they were a prolific burial ground during the medieval period (see Section (5.4.1)). Charnel chapels appear to have been constructed in any given parish churchyard or ecclesiastic complex irrespective of the fullness of the associated graveyard.

Substantial importance was given to the specific design of the charnel chapel, so that it conformed to the accepted template or list of architectural attributes identified in Section (3.1). Their construction may be compared to that of churches or chapels which could be built in any location, but had to contain certain specific characteristics. The fact that there were rules in relation to the design and layout of charnel chapels which had to be adhered to when establishing one is indicative of their symbolic nature and ritual purpose. It is here proposed that these strict guidelines, which were adhered to in all charnel chapels identified and discussed in this chapter, were established due to the intended purpose of charnel chapels as receptacles for human bones. Contrary to previous assertions by various authors regarding the treatment of disturbed human skeletal remains (see Chapter 7), charnelling in medieval England such as storing of bones in charnel chapels can now be claimed to have been a prolific, regulated and spiritually meaningful practice.

In order to illuminate these charnel chapels further it is necessary to examine the charnel deposits they contained. Where possible, osteological examination of the charnel ought to be undertaken and results compared to charnel reburied in charnel pits as well as charnel created as a result of intercutting of graves which was not collectively reburied (see Chapters 6 & 7). In many European countries, not only have charnel chapels survived, continued to be established and evolved over the centuries following the English Reformation, but the ritual nature of post-depositional activity is more fully understood (see Chapter 8) (Koudounaris 2011). This understanding may largely be attributed to the continuation of Catholicism as the prevailing religion in these countries from the end of the medieval period into the post-medieval period and modern centuries. The theological changes introduced during and after the Reformation in mid-16th-century England resulted in a cessation of charnelling activities as they had been practiced and developed for centuries, while European countries which retained Catholicism continued to engage in and evolve charnelling practices up to the present day.

Charnel chapels were not a solitary example of post-depositional involvement with the dead in medieval England. They did not represent an isolated practice of movement and curation of skeletal remains. Arguments purporting that charnel chapels had no significant ritual dimension are now untenable as are claims that the chapel element of the buildings were unconnected in function and ideology to the charnel in their underground chambers.

Charnel chapels represent only one aspect of a swathe of post-burial customs, noted continuously from the advent of Christianity in England right up to the mid-16th century (see Chapters 2-4 & 6-7). As such they must be investigated in the context of these other treatments and occurrences of post-depositional disturbance. As will be demonstrated in the proceeding chapters, charnel chapels and their contents were intrinsically connected to the dead, to the living, to ritual and religion and fundamentally were interrelated with the other variants of post-depositional activity.

CHAPTER 6: THE SENTIENT DEAD

6.1: Introduction

The prevailing attitudes of archaeologists and osteoarchaeologists towards medieval disturbance of the buried dead has been discussed above (see Chapter 1). This chapter will investigate medieval peoples' attitudes towards the act of grave disturbance, examine how the physical dead were perceived and portrayed by the living, and will determine whether there were any regulations dictating how and when disturbance of a grave and its contents could be interacted with.

There were three principles on which the medieval belief system concerning disturbance of the dead was based: 1) liturgical; 2) practical; and 3) superstitious. Liturgical reasoning was based on concerns about the physical and spiritual pollution of consecrated ground. As shall be demonstrated below, the medieval Christian concept of blood contamination has previously only been believed to relate to blood spilled due to violence, from the bodies of live individuals. Yet, in fact, doctrinal understanding of blood pollution and corpse contamination was complex, and also incorporated non-essential disturbance of all buried corpses. Medieval funerary and burial processes combined liturgical requirements with practical considerations, centred on medieval understanding of illness, disease and the spread of contagion. Putrefaction represented an intermediary stage between life and death, and so both doctrinal and prosaic attitudes towards decomposing human flesh dictated if and how disturbance of the dead was to be undertaken. Finally, we see from accounts of encounters with corpses, and visual depictions of the dead, that they reflect theological and practical reasoning about corpses. These images and tales also reflect superstitious opinions regarding the dead, which are not derived from the liturgical or practical logic and rules for interacting with the dead. The combined evidence from the belief system outlined above, indicates that interaction with the dead and how such contact was to be undertaken was well regulated according to specific and justified reasoning.

In addition, as we shall see, attitudes towards *fleshed* dead and *skeletonised* dead were intensely disparate. For medieval people, there were different levels or ranks of death; in essence, a recently deceased individual was 'less dead' than a long buried or fully decomposed and skeletonised individual. These beliefs dictated how and under what circumstances a deceased person may be disturbed. Contrary to general consensus concerning treatment of the buried dead throughout the medieval period, these beliefs demonstrate that post-mortem and/or post-depositional disturbance of a body was strictly regulated according to a multitude of diverse and inter-related theological doctrines, rational considerations and folkloric superstitions (see Chapter 7).

6.2. Liturgical Reasoning

(6.2.1) Blood contamination: definition and consequences

During the medieval period, certain individuals were excluded from burial in consecrated ground because they were regarded as being capable of effectively 'desanctifying' consecrated ground by its polluted nature, including women who died in childbirth, and were still with the foetus in utero, people killed in a tournament or duel, unrepentant sinners, excommunicates, suicides, usurers, and known criminals (Daniell 1999: 44, 103-6; Neale & Webb 1843: 105-7, 134). Human blood that had been spilled in violence or anger inside consecrated buildings or on consecrated land was also regarded as contaminating or polluting, even if no deaths resulted from the bloodshed (Neale & Webb 1843: 132). The most detailed account of the polluting nature of bodily fluids was written by Gulielmus Durandus, bishop of Mende, France, sometime between 1237 and 1296 (Neale & Webb 1843). According to Durandus, the precise nature of this pollution was complicated, as was the means by which to rectify the contamination. If, for example, blood was spilt in a church due to violence, then not only the church, but also its associated cemetery had to be reconsecrated. Despite cemeteries not always being adjacent to their churches, both were considered to be equally polluted by the same act of pollution, whether it occurred in the church or cemetery (Neale & Webb 1843: 133-5). Merely the intent to commit a mortal sin on consecrated ground, even if it would not cause blood to be spilt, was nonetheless deemed to be polluting: 'the intention and design of sinning mortally therein do cause a church to be reconciled' (Neale & Webb 1843: 134).

The most significant consequence of blood pollution was that the affected church and cemetery could not be used for liturgical purposes until they had been reconciled (Daniell 1999: 89-90). The reconciliation could only be carried out by an archbishop or bishop, who had to be paid for their services (Daniell 1999: 90; Neale & Webb 1843: 131). As obtaining the services of a bishop or an archbishop was costly and could be difficult to arrange, blood pollution was a serious issue. Occasionally churches and cemeteries remained unreconciled for years, meaning no burials,

masses or other liturgical practices could take place within them for the duration of the contamination (Daniell 1999: 90). For example, in 1306, Beverley Minster was reconciled after a period of two years had passed, following bloodshed in the Minster Yard (Daniell 1999: 90). In addition to the distress caused to people who were unable to obtain masses or prayers for their deceased loved ones, they were also unable to participate in the essential and daily services provided by the church in question, such as attending mass or going to confession. Alternative burial places had to be sought for those who died during this interim period. Those other cemeteries may not have been readily accessible, or required the deceased to be transported long distances for burial. The polluted church also lost all revenue which would have been gained from burial and funerary fees whilst it remained unreconciled (Daniell 1999: 89).

The severity of the crime causing blood to be spilt appears to have determined the terms of the reconsecration. Durandus implies that the presiding bishop had judgement on whether polluted churches and cemeteries were to be 'solemnly reconciled' or if it was sufficient to be 'washed by the Priest with exorcised water at the command of the Bishop' (Neale & Webb 1843: 133). Presumably there were occasions when it was deemed unnecessary for a full reconsecration to take place, in order to avoid loss of revenue and to prevent disruption to both the church and the people who relied on it to fulfil their religious devotions. For example, when boisterous wrestling descended into a large fight involving scores of men in the cemetery of Bury St Edmunds on Christmas Day, in 1197, blood was shed, but no-one died (Clarke 1903: 139). It is not recorded if Abbot Samson ordered a reconciliation of the church and cemetery, but he did order the perpetrators of the brawl to commit penance within the cemetery which had been affected, after threatening to excommunicate them (Clarke 1903: 140-1). This may indicate that because no lives were lost, a full reconciliation was not required. In what may be a similar example of partial reconciliation, the charnel chapel at Exeter Cathedral was built in 1286 by John of Exeter as a penance for the murder of the cathedral's precenter, Walter de Lechlade, which had taken place in the grounds of the cathedral complex (Lepine & Orme 2003: 23-4; Orme 1991: 164-5). There is no specific evidence of reconciliation of either the cathedral or cemetery, but the perpetrator of the violence was obliged

to pay or perform a large penance. Reparation for committing the violence which led to pollution was a key factor in the reconciliation process (Daniell 1999: 89; Neale & Webb 1843: 132 & 134). Crucially, this penance had to be carried out publicly, presumably so the community who used the church and cemetery could see that the pollution had been rectified, but also perhaps to dissuade people from committing violent acts on consecrated land by reinforcing the severity of the crime and its consequences. Daniell states that the penance could not merely be a monetary donation, but had to be a public act of contrition, performed by the perpetrator (Daniell 1999: 89).

Durandus describes in detail what constituted blood pollution, but does not describe the reconciliation process itself. This may be because reconsecration constituted the same process and ritual as consecration, which he describes in great detail, prior to his discussion on reconciliation. Some aspects of the reconsecration ceremony carried out at Beverley Minster in 1306 (see above) are known, where the archbishop blessed water for sprinkling, presumably at the corners of the cemetery, as was required to be done for the initial consecration of cemeteries (Daniell 1999: 90; Neale & Webb 1843: 115-16).

(6.2.2): 'Dead' blood contamination

It was the manner by which the blood of an individual came to be spilled that was crucial for determining if pollution had occurred. Thus, unless the blood was spilt by an aggressive act, it was not deemed to be polluting (Neale & Webb 1843: 130-3). Yet it was not only the living who were capable of being the victims of violence that was understood as polluting consecrated spaces: 'if any one, slain without the church, be shortly borne into the church, and there the murderer or any one else … should inflict on his yet warm body a blow causing blood to flow; then the church must be reconciled' (Neale & Webb 1843: 133-4). This passage raises some interesting issues concerning the potentially polluting nature of the blood of buried corpses. If blood-spilling violence perpetrated against a deceased individual resulted in pollution, then it might be argued that any violent acts which caused a corpse to 'bleed', even within a grave, might equally have been regarded as constituting a form

of contamination. In the aforementioned scenario described by Durandus, it is not merely 'live' blood which was contaminating, but also 'dead' blood. Although he refers to 'warm' corpses, or the very recently dead, Durandus further states that reconciliation is required 'as well by reason of the horror and abomination, as of the violence and intention of sinning: for though a dead man be not a man, yet is his human blood shed there by violence; and to the corpse itself is violence, horror and injury offered' (Neale & Webb 1843: 133). The intentional violation of a corpse resulting in bloodshed necessitated reconsecration of the associated church and cemetery. It is thus here suggested that this reasoning may have extended to the recently buried dead, who were still fleshed. A decomposing body within a grave naturally effused bodily fluids into the surrounding earth during the putrefaction stage of decomposition, but since this was not the result of aggressive means, and so was not polluting in a manner which required reconsecration. In contrast, the deliberate disturbance of a buried decomposing corpse via intercutting during the creation of a grave could have been regarded as violence towards that deceased, intercut, person. Segmentation and fragmentation of a deceased individual was not regarded negatively during the medieval period, so long as the individual was being fragmented for reasons of respect and/or honour: 'But the case is otherwise if any one, having died a natural death, be, through respect of, and honour to his body, dismembered in the church or embowelled, that perhaps one part may be buried in one place, and another in another' (Neale & Webb 1843: 134). The intentional division or fragmentation of a decomposing body via intercutting was not being committed for the benefit, honour or respect of that buried individual. It could be surmised that graves containing still fleshed individuals were deliberately avoided by gravediggers, so as not to risk causing pollution to the cemetery and church. There is, indeed, archaeological evidence of this desire to prevent intercutting in many early and late medieval cemeteries (see Chapter 3 Section (3.3) & Chapter 7).

6.3: Practical Reasoning for Not Disturbing Corpses

(6.3.1) 'Bad Air' and Corrupt Bodies

The theological notion, discussed by Durandus, that a violated corpse's blood was polluting to consecrated ground relates to recently dead bodies, who have not yet been buried (See Section (6.1.2)). The phenomenon of *buried* bodies that were assaulted resulting in the emission of bodily fluids is not explicitly mentioned by Durandus as a form of contamination necessitating reconciliation. However, this is not definitive proof that a buried corpse could not be polluting in the same manner, or to the same degree, as an unburied corpse. The examples Durandus provided of situations constituting pollution were not exclusively the only methods by which reconsecration was required; he lists some of the means of pollution, but does not list all possible scenarios (Neale & Webb 1843: 130-6). In addition to the official doctrine, there is substantial evidence from a variety of sources that throughout the medieval period, decomposing bodies were conceived of as polluting and a source of contagion which was dangerous to the living, irrespective of the reconsecration issue.

From as early as the 6th century BC, philosophers and physicians, such as Hippocrates, advocated that decaying matter emitted 'bad air' which was harmful to the living (Rawcliffe 1999). In Jewish faith, as in many others, a deceased body was believed to be corrupt, and anyone who had physical contact with it had to ritually cleanse themselves, prior to subsequent contact with the living (Bynum 1995: 54-6). During the 4th century, Christian theologians and writers discussed the foulness of putrefying bodies and the 'bad air' which they emitted. Gregory of Nyssa, writing in what is now south-central Turkey between 335 and 394AD, expressed his horror at the thought of disturbing a putrefied corpse, for the insult to the deceased body as much as for the inevitable release of foul air (Bynum 1995: 84). Galen, a Greek philosopher and physician writing in the 2nd century AD Rome, links foul or unclean air to bodily humours, an idea which was appropriated and perpetuated by medieval physicians (Gilchrist 2012: 32; Rawcliffe 1999). Corrupted air was believed to exist naturally and moved from place to place, causing contagion to crops, livestock and people when it

was encountered (Rawcliffe 1999; Winslow & Duran-Reynals 1948: 748). Non-corrupt air could also become corrupted by various means, namely by contact with rotting material, including decaying human bodies. Spanish physician, Jacme d'Agremont, who in the 14th century wrote, in Lleida, north-east Spain, on the causes of plague in the 14th century, specifically lists unburied human bodies as causing contagion and illness (Winslow & Duran-Reynals 1948: 749 & 752).

The importance to Christians of burying the dead is exemplified by the addition in the 3rd century of the seventh Corporal Work of Mercy, to the six which were cited by Jesus, according to the Bible. This additional work of mercy was to bury the dead (Daniell 1999: 20; Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 19). Reverence for the dead and burial as a necessary mark of respect are some of the key components of the Book of Tobit, from which the seventh Work of Mercy was derived (Tobit 1: 16-17). The purpose of burying the dead was a combination of respect and duty, but it was also an act of necessity, to protect the living from the dangerous pollution emitted by decomposing flesh. Further indications of the potential corrupting nature of dead human flesh are found in Durandus, when he says of cemeteries, that they are occasionally called '*Poliantrum*, from *pollutrum antrum*, [polluted cave] on account of the carcasses of men therein buried' (Neale & Webb 1843: 102). He also speculates that they are called cemeteries after the word '*cimices*' literally meaning 'bugs/insects', but translated by Durandus as 'reptiles of intolerable odour' (Neale & Webb 1843: 102). The specific use of the term 'polluted' by Durandus is significant; a cemetery was inherently polluted due to the presence of the decaying corpses within the soil. A fleshed but decaying corpse was to spend this time of putrefaction in consecrated soil, which would contain the pollution within the earth, thereby preventing the corrupt air from escaping. The 14th-century writer Wenzel stated quite explicitly the pervading attitudes towards putrefying bodies and why burial of the dead was crucial: 'Nothing is more abhorrent than [a] corpse: it is not left in the house lest his family die; it is not thrown into the water lest it become polluted; it is not hung in the air lest it become tainted ... it is surrounded with earth so that its stench may not rise' (Horrox 1999: 93).

In 1299 Pope Boniface VIII issued the Papal Bull *Detestande feritatis*, which outlawed the practice of bodily division for the purpose of multiple burial (Horrox 1996: 101). Although this statute is frequently used by scholars as evidence of medieval theological uncertainty regarding bodily fragmentation, it may have been related more to the notion of corrupt air that would be discharged by the corpse during the fragmentation of the body, and of the riskiness involved in keeping a body unburied longer than was necessary. The bull decreed that 'in future bodies were to be buried immediately and intact … If this meant that the body could not be buried in the desired place, it could be exhumed and moved once it had returned to ashes, that is, decomposed naturally' (Horrox 1999: 101). Burying a body as soon as possible after death, and as intact as possible, ensured that exposure of the living to any potentially dangerous odours emitted by the deceased during putrefaction was kept at a minimal.

(6.3.2) The burial process

There are many aspects of medieval funeral and burial processes which reflect both liturgical requirements and the pragmatic necessities of burying the dead. By at least the 13th century, most people were buried the day after they died, after morning mass had been celebrated (Daniell 1999: Gilchrist & Sloane 2005; Horrox 1999: 101). Once a person had died, their body was washed and dressed for burial (Daniell 1999: 43; Wieck 1999: 437). According to contemporary medieval depictions of the dead (see Figs 6.1 & 6.2) and the lack of excavated finds within graves such as, for example, belt buckles, buttons or shoes, it appears that normally a person was buried naked, inside a simple shroud. This may have depended, however, on the status of an individual, as there is growing evidence for wealthier lay people having been buried clothed (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 23-24). However, medieval wall paintings and manuscript illuminations such as those found in Books of Hours generally depict people in varying forms of shrouds, whether they are shown being prepared for burial, buried, or rising from their graves at the time of the Resurrection (see Figs 6.1 & 6.2).
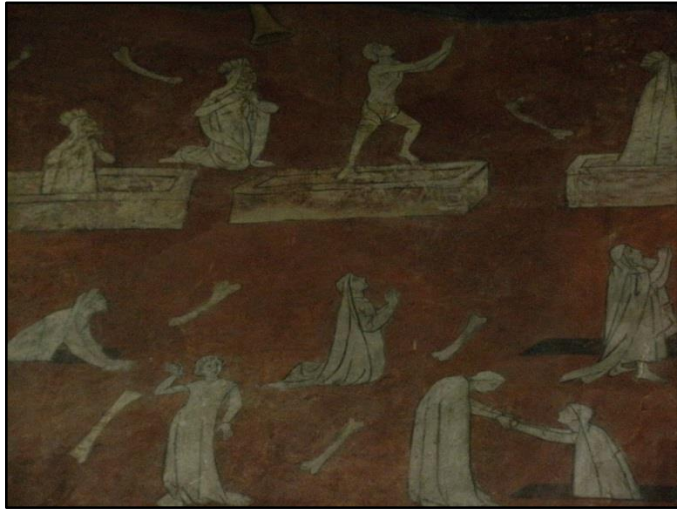
Figs 6.1 & 6.2: The Medieval funeral or Office of the Dead, from death to burial, from a late 15ᵗʰ-century French Book of Hours, (left) (from Gilchrist & Sloane 2005, cover plate); A portion of the heavily restored medieval Doom or Resurrection scene above the chancel at St Mary's church, Lutterworth, Leicester, depicting the dead rising from their graves naked and/or in shrouds (right) (Photograph author's own)

Once the body had been prepared, a vigil was held over the deceased until their funeral the following day. This 'wake' could take place either at home or in the church, depending on the status of the deceased. Throughout the wake, family, friends or, for the wealthy, a member of clergy, prayed for the soul of the deceased. On the day of the funeral, the body was transported to the church inside a coffin on a communal bier, where it was brought inside the church for the duration of the Requiem Mass (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 24: Horrox 1999: 101-3). While mass was being celebrated the grave was dug in the cemetery (Litten 1991: 150). Both Roberta Gilchrist and Barney Sloane (2005: 24), and Rosemary Horrox (1999: 104) assert that prior to the Requiem Mass, the priest marked the location of the grave which was to be dug, by sprinkling the ground with holy water and inscribing the sign of a cross into the earth. This implies that choosing the location of the burial plot was arbitrary and at the discretion of the presiding ecclesiast. It is perhaps more probable that the priest performing the funeral was merely fulfilling the necessary obsequies prior to the actual grave being excavated, which constituted blessing the ground in preparation for a grave being dug. The specific plot for burial had probably already

been selected by the gravedigger, in accordance with the deceased's wishes and the deceased's family's requests. According to recent investigations (see Chapter 2 Section (2.3) & Chapter 7) there is significant evidence that medieval graveyards were strictly managed by one or more gravediggers and/or sextants, and so it is highly improbable to assume that the specific position of individual graves were decided upon by the priest alone, mere minutes prior to burial. Graves were relatively shallow during the medieval period, normally between 0.5 and 1.0m deep (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 131; Horrox 1999: 104). This is substantiated by archaeological evidence but also by manuscript illuminations of gravediggers standing within graves (see Fig. 6.1). Once mass was over, the excavated grave was further blessed, and the body was lowered into the grave by the gravedigger/s (Litten 1991: 150). Soil was ritually scattered over the body by the mourners, after which the grave was completely infilled by the gravedigger (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 24; Litten 1991: 150-1).

The medieval funeral was conducted relatively quickly after the death of the individual. There are indications that swiftness of burial was important, to avoid the danger of contaminating air being released by the decaying body (See above Section (2.1)). According to Wenzel, bodies were buried swiftly following death, 'lest the people there should die of its stench' (Daniell 1999: 44). William Courtney, Archbishop of Canterbury, stated in his will that; 'My body which will be corrupted and decay I wish to have buried as quickly as possible' (Daniell 1999: 95). During the Black Death many European cities stipulated new regulations regarding the bodies of people who had died from the disease, namely that they ought to be buried in coffins to 'prevent the egress of corrupt air' (Horrox 1999: 104). The sooner a person was buried following their death, the less potential there was for corrupt emissions to escape from their decaying flesh.

Throughout the medieval period, graveyards were used for holding markets and fairs, despite numerous statutes declaring such trading to be blasphemous (Daniell 1999: 113; Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 44). Cemeteries also functioned as meeting places, locations for communal games and as places where disputes were settled (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 45). In addition, various ecclesiastic and lay buildings or dwellings

were constructed within their confines, such as happened at Exeter Cathedral prior to 1390, where 'the laity … fixed pales and posts in the graveyard and closed certain portions of it with the walls of their houses' (Daniell 1999: 113). Cemeteries were also used for liturgical communal purposes; miracle plays were held in cemeteries at particular times of the year, such as saints' feast days, and pulpits were constructed for the purpose of public speaking and outdoor sermons (Daniell 1999: 114-5). Wells, which may have had some devotional purpose, were frequently cited in the lay portion of cemeteries at many ecclesiastical complexes (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 43-4). It seems improbable that any of these activities would have taken place in a graveyard which was unmanaged and where decaying corpses were routinely displaced from their graves via the creation of new graves. Cemeteries were enclosed from the about the 10th century onwards and many had gates at their entrances (Daniell 1999: 110; Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 35; Hadley & Buckberry 2005: 130; Zadora-Rio 2003). Aside from the spiritual necessity of demarcating sanctified from unsanctified land for burial, protective boundaries, walls or ditches also prevented rooting animals or dogs from disinterring decomposing human remains (Daniell 1999: 110-1; Horrox 1999: 104). This indicates the desire to protect the corpse within the grave from violation and to prevent its unnecessary disturbance, but might also be understood on more practical terms as safe-guarding against corrupt air being released from buried corpses. The desire to prevent corrupt air from being released from the decaying body was an important consideration in relation to the burial process. The grave might be understood as a container, where the body underwent the dangerous but necessary process of decay within consecrated soil, which would physically and spiritually encase corrupt air emitted by the corpse and prevent it harming the living. From as early as the 12th century, it was believed that a decaying body produced toads, worms and insects from within the rotting cadaver, which subsequently devoured the body leaving only skeletal remains (Bynum 1995: 156 - 99). It is here suggested that this belief adds credence to the argument that a grave containing a still fleshed person would have been deliberately left undisturbed. This lack of disturbance was important in preventing these corrupt creatures being exposed to the surface of the earth where they could contaminate the living, but

equally it ensured that they could complete their crucial part in the decomposition of the deceased.

6.4: 'Superstitious' Reasoning for Not Disturbing Corpses

During the medieval period in England, there is significant evidence for the existence of a belief that cadavers retained elements of life (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 27-8; Gordon & Marshall 2000: 7; Foxhall Forbes 2013: 320). Fleshed bodies, whether within a grave or prior to burial, seem to have been perceived by laity and ecclesiastics alike as being 'alive' in some manner, until they became entirely skeletonised. The 14th-century writer Wenzel, intriguingly stated one of the reasons for why a corpse is buried: 'it is firmly trodden down so that it may not rise again but stay, earth in earth' (Horrox 1999: 93). Although it is not stated in explicit terms in religious documents or by theological writers, insinuations pertaining to these beliefs derive from a variety of alternative sources. These beliefs are, therefore, classed as 'superstitions' as there does not appear to have been doctrinal stipulation or decrees confirming or justifying them. These superstitions further substantiate the liturgical and practical reasons outlined above for why disturbing a fleshed corpse within a grave during the medieval period appears to have been taboo.

(6.4.1) Sentient corpses in medieval ghost stories

Medieval ghost stories tend to contain, if not centre, on a theme of repentance. These tales of hauntings have been interpreted as a method by which the Church could emphasise the importance of a 'good death' (*ars moriendi*) and the necessity of repenting and undertaking penance for sins committed during life, prior to death (Caciola 1996; Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 27; Joynes 2001: xii; Simpson 2003). The insinuation by scholars researching the stories has been that they were moralistic tales, much like fables; the actual story may not necessarily have happened, but by citing religious instruction within a colloquial setting, the message was made memorable and could be identified with by the lay population. While this is almost certainly true, these stories reflect additional beliefs regarding the recently dead, beyond what is purely moralistic or liturgically instructive.

In each of the stories discussed below, the motivation for the ghostly manifestation may be assigned to one of three central themes: penance; revenge; or possession. The reason for why and how the deceased individual in question had come to be a ghost is explained according to these terms. In the first scenario, the deceased died with unrepented sin, and returns from the dead in order to seek help from the living in atoning for that sin. Twelve short ghost stories were discovered in the early 1920s on blank pages of a 12th- or early 13th-century manuscript from Byland Abbey (North Yorkshire). These have been dated to c.1400 (James 1922). Nine of these tales concern ghosts who implore the living to have masses said for the repose of their souls, or to obtain absolution for them. In one, Number VII, 'Of a ghost which begged indulgence for its misdeeds', it is stated that the ghost 'begged that his master should be asked to show indulgence, so that by some sort of absolution he might obtain relief from his torment' (Haining 1979: 44). The second scenario is a less common theme than the other two, and typically features the deceased, who was wronged in some manner during their life, returning from the dead to seek out the person who sinned against them, in order to wreak their revenge. One of the Byland ghost stories, Number XI, 'Of a marvellous work of God who can call up things that do not exist', concerns the ghost of an unbaptized baby (Haining 1979: 46). The phantom baby appears to its father as part of a funeral cortege. The father, not recognising the baby, demands to know who it is, to which the ghost replies, admonishing him that he ought to know him as his deceased premature baby, and subsequently requests baptism and a name. Once the father grants this wish, the ghost transforms into a happy child. The third form of ghost story comprises tales of the recently dead being possessed by the/a devil, who animates the corpse causing it to do unspeakable and terrifying deeds. The body of the deceased may also rise from its grave to commit malevolent acts if the person had been evil during their lifetime. These ghosts are consistently the physical body of the dead individual as opposed to merely being an apparition of the deceased. Whereas in the other two scenarios the ghost, whether a tangible being or not, is put to rest via prayer and absolution of its sins, the ghosts comprising this category of haunting receive a different remedy than merely prayer to prevent them from rising from their graves. This difference in treatment is merited, because whereas other ghosts contact the living for the benefit of their soul,

or for the soul of the person they contact, these ghosts are those of evil people, or whose corpses have been possessed by an evil entity, and the 'normal' method to dispel the 'ghost' is insufficient. A series of ghost stories were chronicled between 1136 and 1198 by William of Newburgh (Joynes 2001: 134). All four of these tales comprise evil ghosts. Caciola and Simpson, amongst others, have termed these ghosts 'revenants,' from the French '*revenir*' meaning 'to return,' as it is the physical body of the deceased which leaves its grave and does not merely constitute a spectre or phantom (Caciola 1996; Foxhall Forbes 2013: 317; Joynes 2001; Simpson 2003; Thompson 2004: 50). Once a deceased body has been obtained or possessed by the devil, the corpse must be destroyed in order for the haunting to cease. This may be done either by digging up the corpse of the deceased and throwing it into water, by burning the body, or by beheading or dismembering it (Daniell 1999: 106; Joynes 2001: 135-42).

Two points of particular relevance to the present study are present in many ghost stories, and are central to those tales that comprise the third category, that featuring the evil revenant. The first is a reluctance by clergy to physically disturb the corpse of the supposed revenant, the second is the revenant as a source of pollution and death.

(i) **Disinclination to disturb bodies of revenants**

In 'The Buckinghamshire Ghost', a family is haunted by the revenant of the recently deceased father (Joynes 2001: 135-6). The townspeople want to exhume the body of the deceased man in order to burn the corpse and so cease the haunting. However, the presiding archdeacon proclaimed that this was 'indecent and improper to the last degree' and instead turned to the bishop of Lincoln for an alternative solution (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 199-201). He was sent a scroll of absolution for the deceased man's sins, which was to be placed on the breast of the corpse. Once this had been carried out, the haunting stopped (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 200). The bishop in this story is disinclined to perform or grant permission for the body of the deceased to be violated, advocating

instead the merits of prayer and absolution. In one of the Bynum Abbey ghost stories, a scroll of absolution was similarly placed on the breast of the corpse of a revenant, after which the haunting ceased (Haining 1979: 36-42). The natural abhorrence at the thought of exhuming a corpse only to violate it by dismemberment, burning or drowning is evident in a second story recorded by William of Newburgh. In 'The Ghost of Anant', two siblings agree to secretly exhume the corpse of the revenant in order to destroy it and prevent further mishaps and deaths occurring amongst the haunted villagers. The presiding priest's solution to the haunting was to hold a meeting with other religious men on a holy day, Palm Sunday, to discuss what action ought to be taken and to alleviate the worries of the town's people (Joynes 2001: 140-1). The two men planning to destroy the revenant act without the knowledge, permission or blessing of the clergy. In the two remaining Newburgh ghost tales, the offending corpse is exhumed and destroyed without mention of ecclesiastical opinion on the matter and without official sanction by the Church. In the 12th-century chronicle of Walter Map, a remarkably similar solution is advocated by the clergy in response to the behest of the knight William Laudun, who wishes to rid his town of a malicious and disease-spreading revenant (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 28). As in the other tales described above, the knight is advised by the presiding bishop to open the tomb of the deceased man or revenant and to sprinkle his body with holy water. When this proves unsuccessful in bringing about the cessation of the revenant's activities, the knight resorts to exhuming the corpse and decapitating it (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 28).

The revulsion expressed by the archdeacon and bishop in the Buckinghamshire ghost story, and that of the bishop to William Laudun's request, is in response to the sacrilegious nature of violating the body of a Christian man, revenant or not (see Section 7 (7.2.2)). It may additionally relate to the belief that violating a fleshed corpse within consecrated ground or within a church was tantamount to causing

pollution (see Sections (7.2.1) & (7.2.2)). Decaying flesh was a source of corrupt air, which would undoubtedly be released via the process of exhuming and burning or dismembering the body (see Section (7.3.1)). While placing the absolution parchment on the dead man's chest still constituted disturbance of the dead, it was non-invasive, and was committed out of respect for the dead man and in order to assist his soul. The clergy do not always advocate non-violent solutions to revenant hauntings; in one of the Byland Abbey stories, Number IV, 'About a ghost that put the eye out of a concubine', the presiding abbot orders that the offending corpse be exhumed, and both it and its coffin be thrown into the river (Haining 1979: 42-3).

(ii)   The revenant as a source of contagion & death

The second commonly occurring theme in relation to revenants is that they are polluting and cause deaths amongst the living. Even in tales involving encounters with ghosts who are not acting malevolently, live individuals who have contact with the ghosts are violently ill or occasionally die after their confrontation. In the second story of the Byland Abbey collection, the man who assists in laying the ghost to rest via intercessory prayers for its soul, 'on returning home was violently ill for several days' (Haining 1979: 42). The same fate befalls another man who witnessed a ghost and arranged for its sins to be absolved, in story Number VI; 'Thereafter the ghost was absolved and rested in peace. But the man was taken ill and languished for many days' (Haining 1979: 43). In the 12th-century chronicle of Walter Map, the revenant is described as 'calling out by name each of his neighbours. As soon as they are called they take ill, and within three days they die' (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 28). In three of the four tales recounted by William of Newburgh, deaths in the villages are specifically attributed to revenants. In 'The Berwick Ghost', the villagers are fearful that 'the air circulating around the town would become infected by the corpse and so lead to general sickness and death in the town' (Joynes 2001: 137). The same attribution of pestilence

to the revenant is evident in 'The Ghost of Anant'; 'by the circulation of air poisoned and infected by the corpse, the neighbourhood became filled with the sick and the dying who had inhaled the pestilence' (Joynes 2001: 140). The same theme is also apparent in European contemporary ghost stories, such as those described by Caesarius of Heisterbach, which date to the 13th century (Caciola 1996: 18). In one, a corpse is witnessed leaving its grave to wander about the town; subsequently, numerous of the neighbours of the witness die inexplicably. In a second story, two canons die after encountering a revenant (Caciola 1996: 18).

(6.4.2) Liturgical & superstitious beliefs combined

In each of the medieval ghost stories cited above, the 'ghost' is always perceived of as a fleshed individual, and never, as Nancy Caciola (1996) has pointed out, as a skeleton. Most of the hauntings involve a tangible entity, and in many cases the haunting is by the physical body of the deceased, having literally risen from its grave. These revenants reflect the medieval belief of decaying matter being a source of contagion or pollution, as the revenants are directly responsible for the deaths of many individuals. They also exemplify the belief that the fleshed dead were sentient, or that they could become reanimated (Binski 1996: 139). An integral part of the medieval funeral involved the deceased's body being watched overnight by members of their family, friends, or clergy (see Section (7.3.2)). In addition to the doctrinal reasons, there appear to have been non-liturgical motivations for guarding the unburied dead, as demonstrated in a mid-13th-century story recorded by a Dominican, Thomas of Cantimpré. A devout woman is praying in a church at night, where there is also the body of a recently deceased man, laid out for his funeral the following day (Caciola 1996: 11). The devil possesses the corpse and attempts to scare the woman, who hits the corpse with a cross, and knocks out the demon. The implication is that an unwatched body, even within the sanctified location of a church, may become a revenant. Liturgical treatments exacted on the deceased could prevent this from happening, or prevent a revenant from rising from their resting-place, but they were not fool proof. The month's mind mass was held one month after the death of an individual, ensuring prayers were said for the deceased's

soul but also in the belief or hope that if that person's soul had not yet passed on to Heaven, Hell or Purgatory, this would be the gentle push required to facilitate it in doing so (Burgess 2011: 103; Daniell 1999: 50, 61-2). This liturgical belief may equally be understood as a precaution by the living, to ensure that any souls or spirits lingering in the vicinity of the deceased would not cause harm to the living population, or be appropriated by the devil (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 27). Elaborate anniversary masses were said for the deceased a year after their death, for much the same reasons outlined for the celebration of the month's mind mass. Significantly, it is occasionally cited that during the medieval period, it was thought that a dead body took about a year to fully decompose (Burgess 2011: 104; Daniell 1999: Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 28). In addition to fulfilling the necessary liturgical requirements of prayers for the dead, the anniversary mass might also have publicly marked the end of the transitional stage of bodily decomposition of the deceased, signifying that the grave and the body within it no longer posed a threat to the living via bodily pollution or spiritual haunting.

(6.4.3) The consciousness of relics

The potential for a corpse to maintain sentience has been noted for the laity and ecclesiastics alike (see (6.4.2)). One of the most profound examples of the dead being regarded as 'alive' is in relation to the relics of saints. These physical remnants of saints' bodies were deemed to retain an element of life; they could perform post-mortem miracles, or express displeasure at being disturbed by unworthy people by causing their disturber to suffer inflictions of illness or injury. Relics also frequently displayed 'life' remaining incorrupt or undecayed, as noted at the time of their disinterment for elevation or translation. This has been discussed extensively in Chapter 2.

Relics serve to demonstrate that a 'live' deceased individual was not automatically inherently evil or only caused harm or damage to the living. Relics benefitted the living and were revered as proof of that person's holy status. Despite this, there was still a wary acknowledgement that relics were sentient and conscious of their treatment by the living, even years after their death. If the relics were not created or

the preserved corpse of the saint were not treated with respect and honour, as outlined by Durandus, then the perpetrator of the crime would be divinely punished (see Section (6.2.2) & Chapter 2).

(6.4.4) Imagery of sentient corpses, post-deposition

There are various examples of the depiction of 'live' buried corpses dating to the late medieval period. One of these, from a 15th-century German book of the Office of the Dead, shows a decaying man in a grave, being eaten by black worms (see Fig. 6.3). The deceased individual speaks words from the Book of Job, apparently to God himself, whose hand appears in the sky from a cloud, in a position denoting a blessing (Binski 1996: 137-8). A second illustration, in an early 15th-century French Office of the Dead, depicts a remarkably similar scene (see Fig. 2.14, Chapter 2). Here the deceased individual is also speaking to God, despite clearly being dead. God, pictured in the sky, responds, as if knowing the dead man can hear him. Binski interprets this image as the man at the point of death, as his soul – which was believed to be released via the mouth at the point of death – is pictured being fought over by a demon and St Michael. The corpse is, however, clearly emaciated and lies naked on cloth on a green surface representing the grass of a cemetery, surrounded by bones. It is here suggested that this image represents multiple stages of death and the burial process, from the moment of death and the release of the soul, to the burial of the deceased individual in the cemetery and the corpse's inevitable decay. A third image of a speaking corpse is in an illustration from the mid-15th-century English poem, *Disputacione betwyx the Body and Wormes* (see Fig. 6.4). In this poem, a deceased noble woman within her grave has a conversation with the worms that are devouring her flesh (Binski 1996: 144-5). Another illustration dating to c.1400 portrays prayer as a woman, who is feeding a corpse within its grave (See Fig. 6.5). This has been interpreted as being symbolic of the necessity of saying prayers for the souls of the dead in Purgatory (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 105). It might equally represent the literal sustenance or alleviation of suffering by sentient corpses, via the means of prayer. The deceased individual is shown in various stages of sentience, from reposing on its back in the burial position, with its face either covered by its shroud or exhibiting the pallor of death, to almost sitting upright as it leans forward to receive something in

a vessel held by the lady. The corpse's eyes are now open and its skin colour is the same as that of the lady feeding it.

Figs 6.3-6.5: Illustration of a sentient corpse in a 15th-century German Book of Hours (top left) (Morgan 1999: 121 Fig 49); Illustration of a sentient corpse from the 15th-century English poem *Disputacione betwyx the Body and Wormes,* (top right) (Binski 1996: 145); Illustration of 'Lady Prayer' feeding a live corpse, dating to c.1400 (bottom) (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 107, Fig. 68)

Perhaps the most well-known example of the dead talking, are the three corpses in the tale of The Three Living and the Three Dead. This is a French poem which dates to the 13th century (Horrox 1999: 93). In it, three aristocratic men who are hunting

encounter three dead and decaying men, who greet them with the words, 'what you are, we were, and what we are, you will be' (Horrox 1999: 93). The scene was frequently depicted in wall paintings in English churches but was also reproduced in manuscripts, such as the de Lisle Psalter. This psalter dates to the early 14th century and is possibly the earliest English representation of the tale (see Fig. 6.6) (Binski 1996: 37; Horrox 1999: 93).
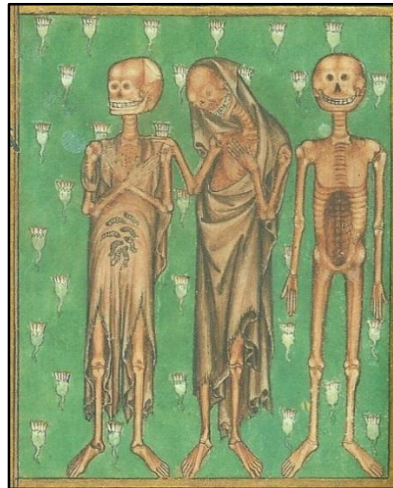
Fig. 6.6: The three sentient corpses from the medieval tale of the Three Living & the Three Dead, from the 14th-century de Lisle Psalter (from Horrox 1999: Plate 7)

(6.4.5) Imagery of sentient skeletons

None of the examples cited above of speaking corpses depict a general personification of the same decaying body each time. Instead the deceased can be either men or women, are shown in varying stages of putrefaction, and are visually distinct from each other. This is in contrast to when the live-dead are depicted as skeletal images, where they are consistently described or interpreted as a – or *the* – personification of death. It has been argued that purely skeletal imagery is less commonly depicted in the medieval period than fleshed or decaying corpses (Caciola 1996). Nancy Caciola (1996: 25) has pointed out that 'contrary to the widespread belief that the *danse macabre* and the three living/three dead motifs depict skeletons, in fact the medieval iconography only rarely involved bony figures.' This assertion is, however, not entirely true. There are numerous examples of skeletal imagery from medieval England, in churches, manuscripts, in stained glass and in

masonry. In addition to these examples, ossuaries and charnel collections, which comprised of disarticulated human bones may be understood as a form of skeletal iconography. Once thought to have been rare in medieval England, current research is demonstrating that ossuaries, in the form of charnel chapels, were a frequent component of medieval cemeteries (see Chapter 5). It has also previously been assumed that these ossuaries were neither accessible nor their contents visible, and they served merely as functional storage locations for charnel, providing no additional purpose (see Chapter 5). Contrary to this, evidence now indicates that they were intended to be visited by the public and were designed in such a way that the skeletal material located in the undercroft was highly visible to passers-by via strategically placed windows.

Below follow various examples of the depiction of sentient skeletons, derived from a variety of ecclesiastical sources and portrayed in multiple formats. These serve to illustrate that perceptions of corpses as sentient were frequently to be encountered throughout the medieval period, but were also consistently in liturgical settings.

(i) Paintings

Skeletal imagery is apparent in Doom (Resurrection) paintings, many of which show charnel and skeletons emerging from graves to be refleshed (see Figs 6.7 & 6.8). Additional examples of medieval art depicting skeletal material include crucifixion paintings (see Figs 6.9 & 6.10). These are paintings which depict the dying Jesus on the cross on the hill of Calvary or Golgotha. Calvary is the English word for the Latin 'calvaria' or skull, a derivative of 'place of the skull' which is how it is described in the Bible (Matthew 27:33 and Mark 15:22). This in turn is a derivation of 'Golgotha' or the Aramaic 'Gulgutha,' both of which translate as 'skull' (Merriam-Webster 2009). It was believed by Christians that Jesus was crucified on this hill, which was also the resting place of Adam, the first man (Bynum 1996: 191). In paintings such as these, skulls or skeletal material are frequently depicted at the foot of Jesus' cross.
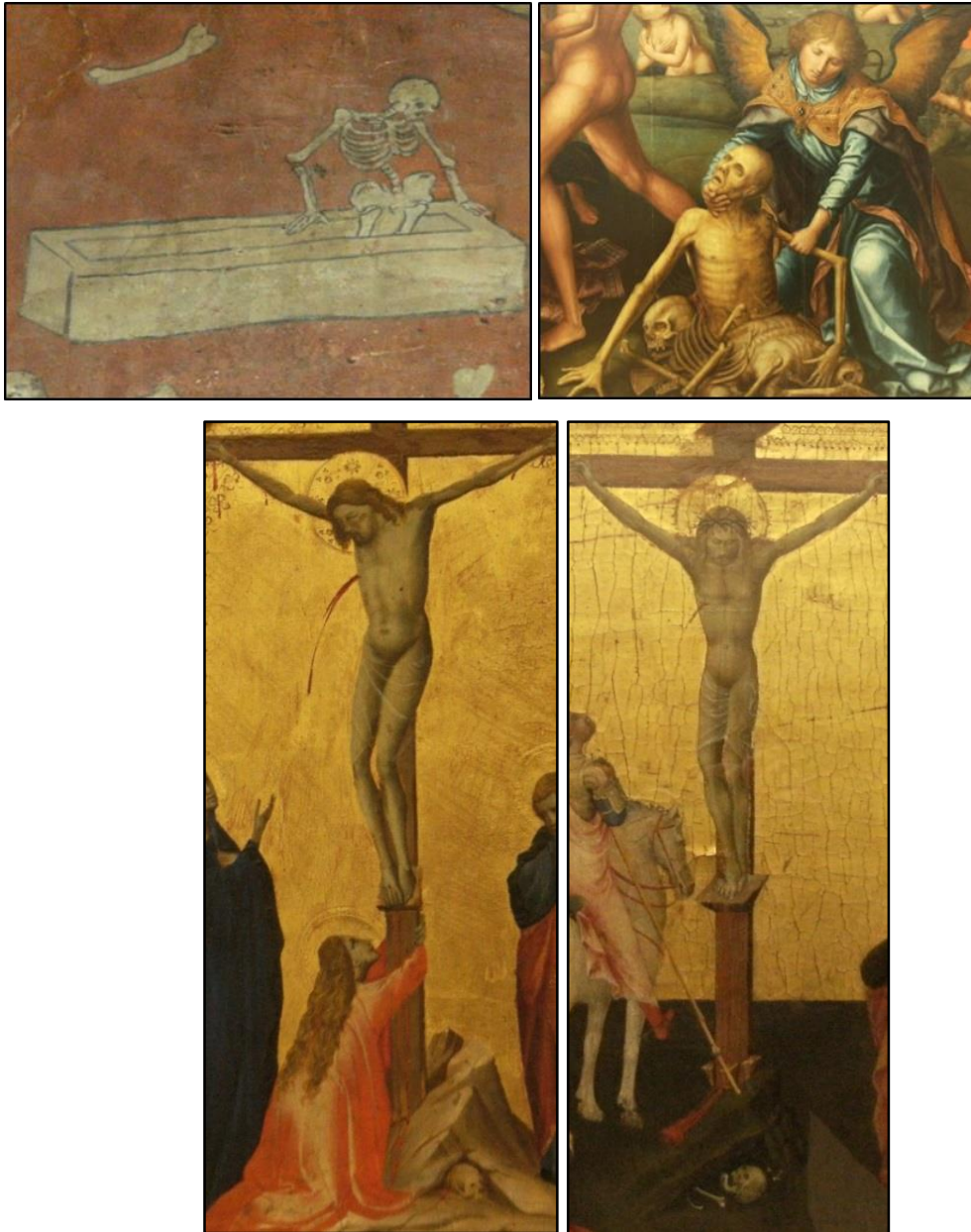
Figs 6.7-6.10: Detail from the restored Doom or Resurrection painting at Lutterworth St Mary's church, Leicester, of a skeleton emerging from its coffin (top left); detail from Bellegambe's 'Last Judgement,' depicting the reassemblage of the skeletal dead on the Day of Judgement, dating to the early 16th century, Douai, France (top right); Detail from the mid-14th-century triptych by Italian painter Gaddi showing a skull under the mound at the base of Jesus' cross (bottom left); Detail from the mid-15th-century triptych by Italian painter Paolo showing skeletal material at the foot of Jesus' cross (bottom right)

(ii) Wall paintings

Seven examples of graphic skeletal imagery, where a skeleton is the main theme of the image, have been identified by the author in English medieval churches. These depictions bear striking resemblances to each other. On the west wall by the tower in the church of All Saints, Salperton, (Gloucestershire), there is the painting of a skeleton, standing on a coffin. In its right hand there is an arrow or short spear, and its burial shroud is draped over its left arm. It appears to rest on a spade, and there is a pickaxe behind it (see Fig. 6.11) (http://www.britainexpress.com/counties/glouces/churches/Salperton/Salperton-1517-02032007.htm). At Ashby St Legers church, (Northamptonshire), there are two wall paintings of skeletons (see Fig. 6.12) (http://professor-moriarty.com/info/content/page/wall-paintings-ashby-st-ledgers). One depiction is located on the south side of the west wall, south of the tower, and shows a skeletal figure holding something indistinguishable in its left hand. Below the skeleton, are a spade, pickaxe, and a green wreath. The second skeleton is on the north side of the west wall, although no images could be located of the painting.

Figs 6.11 & 6.12: Wall painting of 'Death', on the west wall of All Saints church, Salperton (left); Wall painting of 'Death,' on the west wall of Ashby St Legers church (Northamptonshire) (right)

At Mary & All Saints church, Fotheringhay (Northamptonshire), there is a very faded and incomplete wall painting of a skeleton on the west wall (see Fig. 6.13) (http://pennhenry.yolasite.com). Only the head and shoulders of the skeleton survive. A skeleton is also depicted on the west wall of St. Issui's church, Partrishow (Powys South Wales) (see Fig. 6.14) (http://flickrhivemind.net/Tags/partrishow,wales/Interesting). It holds something in its left hand, although the image has worn away and it is indistinguishable. In its right hand is an hourglass, and a spade is resting on, or below, its left arm. All of these wall paintings are located on the west wall of the churches, and all depict the skeleton with the equipment of a gravedigger.
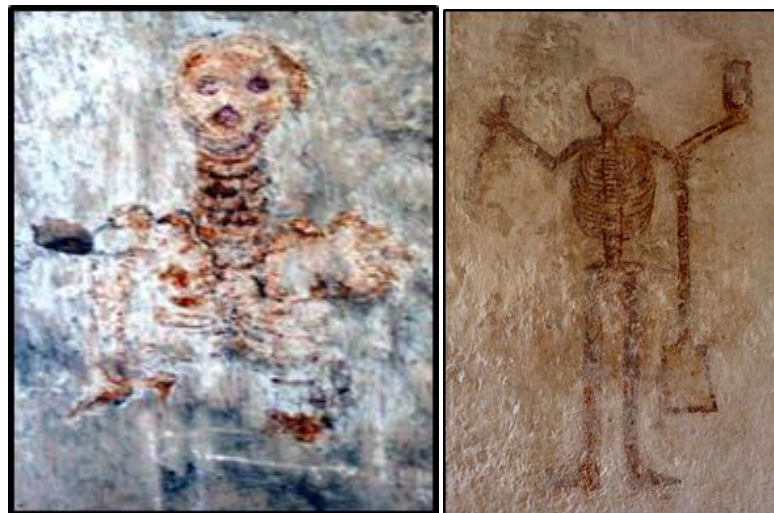
Figs 6.13 & 6.14: Wall painting of a skeleton or 'Death,' on the west wall of the church of Mary & All Saints, Fotheringhay (left); wall painting of 'Death,' on the west wall of St. Iussi's church (Wales) (right)

(iii) Stained glass

Skeletal imagery is also found in two examples of stained glass from English medieval churches. These images differ slightly from those of the wall paintings, but still represent some very similar themes. The large stained glass window of All Saints church, York, in the east wall of the church, depicts the mid-14th-century poem, The Prick of Conscious (Fig. 6.15) (Hadley 2001: Plate 20). The window was constructed in 1410 (http://allsaints-northstreet.org.uk/). One of the panels, number 14 in the centre of the top row of the stained glass, is of a skeletal figure,

commonly described as representing death. Just as in the wall painting at Salperton, the skeleton holds an arrow or spear in its left hand. Under the image are the words 'The fourtend day, al that lyves than Sal dighe, childe man and woman; For thai shalle with tham rys ogayn That byfor war dede, outher til ioy or payn,' ['on the fourteenth day all that lives shall die: child, man and woman] (http://allsaints-northstreet.org.uk/; Hadley 2001: Plate 20). The second example of a skeleton in stained glass is from Stanford on Avon church (Northamptonshire). The glass dates to c.1500, and was commissioned by the then vicar, Henry Williams (Morgan 1999: 122). One panel of the stained glass depicts a skeleton standing in a coffin, holding a bow and arrow, aiming at a representation of Williams (see Fig. 6.16). Williams stated that he wished this scene to be of 'my ymage kneling in ytt and the ymage of deth shotyng at me,' [my image kneeling in it and the image of death shooting at me] (Morgan 1999: 122).

Figs 6.15 & 6.16: Skeletal figure of 'Death,' All Saints church, York (left)

(Hadley 2001: Plate 20); Stained glass representation of 'Death,'

Stanford on Avon church, Northamptonshire (http://vidimus.org)

(iv) Manuscript illustrations

A representation of a skeleton, or Death, is shown in an illustration in the English poem by John Lydgate, 'Death's Warning to the World,' written between 1370 and 1449. The image is of a partially fleshed skeleton standing on grass, which holds a bell in its left hand and a spear in its right (see Fig. 6.17). It is surrounded by the words; 'Doth yow now, lo, here thys manace. Armour ys noon that may withstande hys wound' [Doth you

know, lo, hear this menace. Armour is none that may withstand his wound] (Morgan 1999: 121).

Fig. 6.17: Illustration of 'Death' from medieval poem 'Death's Warning to the World.' (Morgan 1999: 121, Fig. 49)

(v) Stone sculpture

No examples of purely skeletal sculpture could be identified by the author that dated to the medieval period in England, apart from a single example of an isolated piece of masonry from the Cistercian abbey site of St Mary Stratford (Barber *et al* 2004: 106). There is no provenancing information regarding this sculpture, but it appears to represent charnel in the window of an ossuary (see Fig. 6.18).
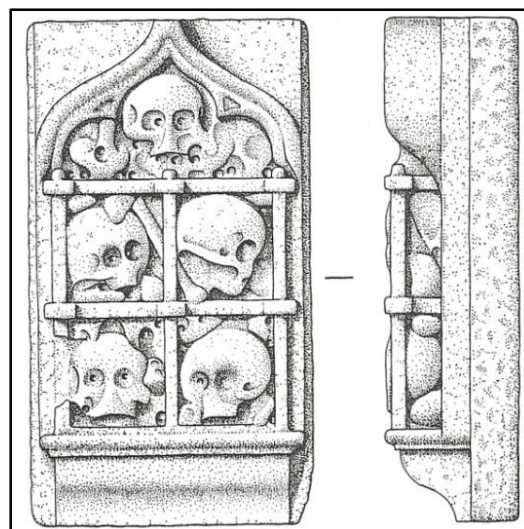
Fig. 6.18: Stone sculpture of possible ossuary/charnel chapel window, St Mary Stratford (Barber *et al.* 2004: 106, Fig. 75)

There are, however, numerous examples of stone sculptures in medieval churches in Brittany which depict skeletons of remarkably similar form and style as the skeletal imagery discussed above (see Figs 6.19 & 6.20). These French sculptures supposedly represent 'the Antou/Ankou', a little known legend which is believed to have once been common in medieval France, Ireland and Britain, although no documentary records of the story dating to the medieval period could be identified by the author (Gostling 1906; Hutchinson 1970; La Braz 1893). The legend goes that the last person to be buried in each village or town cemetery every year was transformed into the Ankou, a skeleton who carried a dart or spear and was a harbinger of death for the local population. The deceased person remained in this state until the following new year, when the obligation of becoming Ankou was passed onto that year's last buried corpse. In some versions of the story, it is the first person to be buried in the cemetery each year, who is resurrected as the Ankou at the end of that year. During the medieval period, there was a general belief that a body took about a year to decompose (see Section (6.4.2)). In this context, the appearance of Ankou as a skeleton may reflect or be related to this belief.

Figs 6.19 & 6.20: 'Ankou' on the 14th- to 16th-century church, L'église Notre-Dame de Bulat, France (left); 'Ankou' on themed 16th-century ossuary of L'église Notre-Dame et Saint-Tugen de Brasparts, France. The skeletal figure bears the inscription which translates as 'I kill you all' (right)

(6.4.6) Live bodies, dead bones

The manner in which sentient corpses and sentient skeletons are depicted differs. It is here suggested that this related to how each category was perceived during the medieval period. It appears that each fulfilled disparate ideological roles. Skeletal material was not believed to be 'alive' to any degree, such as fleshed corpses were. The 'complete' death of an individual was marked by the body's transformation to skeletal material, due to decomposition. When there is no flesh, the identity of the individual is gone and the bones of one person are indistinguishable from the bones of another. A skeleton has no discernible features by which it might be identified, but decaying corpses are still recognisable as individuals, however grotesque their appearance, as has been seen in the ghost stories discussed above (see Section (6.4.2)). This may also in part explain why comingling of skeletal material in charnels and ossuaries was justifiable, whereas the disturbance of a still fleshed body in the grave, was not (see Chapter 5 Section (5.5.3)). When a skeleton is portrayed as being alive, it is not that of an identifiable individual, but is a general figure, a personification of death.

6.5: Conclusion

Medieval perceptions of death and of the dead were clearly complex. Death was not perceived as an immediate single event marked by the end of life and the release of the soul, but instead life lingered on until skeletonisation of the corpse had been completed. The process of death was understood as a series of stages; the initial death of the individual, followed by their decomposition, and completed by their reduction to bones. Even then the transformation of a person from live to dead was not entirely complete, as at the time of the Resurrection, God would reform and reanimate the bodies of the dead, literally causing bodies and skeletons to leave their graves or ossuaries and become fully sentient once more. Each of these stages was significant, which is evident in their portrayal and discussion in medieval art, folklore and theological texts.

Post-mortem and, in particular, post-depositional treatment and disturbance of the dead was a frequent occurrence throughout the medieval period (see Chapters 2-5). This disturbance could be argued to represent a general medieval attitude towards the buried dead where corpses and skeletons were treated with indifference. It is thought that the crucial stage of death for medieval people was the point at which the person breathed their last and the soul left the body. Once the necessary pre- and peri-mortem liturgical observances were adhered to, then all subsequent *physical* treatments were of no real consequence. The archaeological evidence (see Chapters 3 & 4) of such physical behaviours might superficially be understood as callous acts, with little or no merit to the deceased individual, and were committed incidentally or not for the benefit of the deceased. These disturbances are thought to have been justifiable because bodily disturbance to the dead, and in particular skeletal remains, was liturgically inconsequential. Alternative sources of evidence for medieval attitudes towards the dead demonstrate intricate and fantastical notions regarding the dead, be they fleshed or skeletonised. These beliefs, when taken in consideration with the evidence from the archaeological record, illustrate that post-depositional disturbance was certainly not arbitrary, and was consistently liturgically,

practically or superstitiously motivated. The magnitude of engaging in or authorising post-depositional acts is exemplified in medieval ghost stories, which reveal the genuine emotional responses of everyday people and ecclesiastics alike to the dead. Artistic depictions of the dead are found in a variety of media; wall paintings, religious manuscripts, illustrations in poems, and in the form of ossuaries. Imagery of death was all pervasive in medieval life.

Due to the sentience of the dead, the post-depositional disturbances noted in Chapters 2-5 may be understood in a more sympathetic light than simply as apathetic acts. Judging by the three motivating factors for grave disturbance (liturgical, practical and superstitious) the evidence strongly dictates that no post-depositional disturbances would have been undertaken unless it was absolutely necessary. Crucially, the acts had to be sanctioned and executed for the right reasons, namely for the respect, honour or benefit to the deceased. Death was an inevitable and unavoidable transformation of the physical body, from fleshed to skeletonised, recognisable to indistinguishable, alive to semi-sentient. The perception of fleshed bodies and skeletal material differed, perhaps because once decomposition was completed, the body was deemed to have achieved a new, less sentient state. The physical identity of the individual was lost with the decay of their features, and once skeletonised, became part of a conglomerate of the dead.

CHAPTER 7: MEDIEVAL CEMETERY MANAGEMENT

7.1: Introduction

This chapter will highlight how frequently archaeological excavations reveal substantial evidence for cemetery management at a wide range of early and later medieval sites. The list of sites collated is not exhaustive, as to do so would require a study of all excavated medieval graveyard or church sites, which is beyond the scope of this thesis. The examples selected nonetheless permit insights from a cross-section of cemeteries, including those associated with parish churches, abbeys, friaries, hospitals, and priories, and they date from c.500 to the advent of the Reformation. The aim is not only to highlight the prevalence of cemetery management, but also to demonstrate that it was practiced throughout the entire medieval period. It is also intended to elucidate the implications of such management for our understanding of medieval attitudes towards post-depositional disturbance and care of the buried dead.

7.2: Medieval Cemetery Management

(7.2.1) Current perceptions

Graveyard management here refers to the means by which a cemetery was planned, ordered and maintained in relation to the layout, siting and preservation of graves. A decade ago Gilchrist and Sloane (2005: 47) acknowledged that 'there was without doubt a medieval system of cemetery management or perhaps a number of successive systems, employed at most major cemeteries ... Their precise operation is not documented'. Despite this assertion, since 2005 little research has been conducted specifically relating to defining and deciphering medieval cemetery management. Although cemetery planning is mentioned in individual excavation reports, no overarching study has been conducted on the manner in which medieval cemeteries were planned and developed, who was involved in such activity or whether, how and why it was regulated. Helen Geake is one of the few who has discussed these aspects, although her analysis was limited to the Middle Anglo-Saxon period (Geake 2003). When graveyard management is discussed, archaeologists have tended to focus on the identification of zones of burial for different members of lay and ecclesiastical society, or the variety of grave type and shape present in given sectors of the cemetery (Barber *et al*. 2004; Boddington 1996; Gilchrist & Sloane 2005).

Examples of post-depositional disturbance in medieval graveyards might be assumed to be evidence for a lack of cemetery management (Binski 1996: 55; Daniell 1999: 146-7). These have sustained a long-standing and general belief that medieval cemeteries were disorganised and that medieval people, whether lay or ecclesiastic, were therefore ambivalent about post-depositional disturbance of the dead and commemoration of the dead within the cemetery. In relation to early medieval cemeteries (that pre-date the 12th century), Donald Bullough (1983: 185) claimed that 'On the European mainland from c.500 the larger cemeteries were commonly laid out in more or less regular rows (hence "row-grave cemeteries"). This regularity seems largely absent from the major English cemeteries'. While this statement is

accurate in relation to the majority of early medieval English cemeteries, there is alternative evidence for the overall planning of such cemeteries, including burial rows in some cases, at numerous sites (see Section (7.2.2) 1)). In the 30 years since Bullough's observation, little research has been conducted to identify and interpret medieval cemetery organisation and management. Frequently, the significance of sites exhibiting clear and extensive cemetery management is often diminished by the excavators themselves. For example, Klemperer & Boothroyd (2004: 131) describe the intercutting of graves and disturbance of their contents within the church at Hulton Abbey (Staffordshire) as potentially reflecting 'an unceremonious approach to the earlier remains'. No significance is accorded the fact that throughout the church's 300-year history, most of the graves within the church were clearly sited with respect to each other or were systematically arranged in small rows (see Section (7.2.3) 2)). Where individuals' graves were intercut, the remains were reinterred in the fill of the new intercutting grave, implying that some degree of care and respect was accorded to the disturbed individuals. The assumed method by which the disturbed individuals were treated is also unsubstantiated; 'The fill [of grave (F318)] (313) contained … the disarticulated but largely complete remains of an adult male (sk 50034). This skeleton had been disinterred and thrown back within the fill of a later burial' (Klemperer & Boothroyd 2004: 38). The assumption is that in cases of post-depositional disturbance human remains were treated indifferently, even disrespectfully, by medieval people; indeed, the use of the term 'thrown' to describe the reinterment of skeletal remains is telling. Grainger, writing in 2011 on the successive generations of burials at the Cistercian Abbey of St Mary Graces, (London), describes in much detail the evidence for clearly defined grave rows and repeated attempts to avoid intercutting graves by gravediggers (see Section (7.2.2) 2) & (7.2.3)). Where post-depositional disturbance of this kind did occur, Grainger repeatedly describes how most graves only peripherally intruded into other graves, sometimes entirely avoiding disturbance of the graves' occupants (Grainger 2011: 33-43). Subsequent to this discussion, however, he states that 'graves were cut haphazardly wherever space was, or appeared to be available … in medieval churchyards multiple burial in the same place or cyclically across the churchyard was normal; burials frequently exhumed earlier ones, even of those buried within living

memory' (Grainger 2011: 102-3). It is strongly implied by Grainger that recent burials of decomposing bodies were routinely and callously displaced from their graves, with little or no concern or protest from the living who had buried them. This is despite there being very limited archaeologically excavated examples of bodies having been disturbed by intercutting while still in the process of decomposition (see Section (7.3.2) & Chapter 6).

The above-mentioned examples demonstrate how medieval cemeteries and medieval peoples' attitudes towards the buried dead are currently perceived and promoted; even if graveyards initially were carefully planned, it is believed that for the most part, long term management of cemeteries and the preservation of graves generally did not occur. This in turn is taken as evidence of callousness and indifference by medieval people towards the buried dead. Although it is not explicitly stated in all relevant texts, articles and reports, the insinuation is that cemetery planning was limited and grave disturbance was both inevitable and inconsequential in liturgical and pragmatic terms.

(7.2.2) Archaeological Evidence for Planned & Managed Cemeteries

Few medieval documentary sources could be identified relating to cemetery management, and consequently archaeological evidence from cemetery excavations will be relied upon as the main source of evidence for this chapter. Archaeological excavations reveal the end-stage of cemeteries, many of which, by the time of their cessation, had been used over many generations or centuries, resulting in graves that appear to have been haphazardly placed with little respect to others. Any regularity can be difficult to identify, 'by later rows being inserted into earlier rows; giving the appearance of a random placing of graves' (Daniell 1999: 147). Where dating evidence is sufficient to permit the division of sites into phases and periods, the development of cemeteries over time and the manner of this development is striking between sites. Below are examples of both early and late medieval cemeteries which strongly exhibit evidence of graveyard management, planning and organisation.

1) Early Medieval Cemeteries

The cemetery at Whithorn & St Ninian Priory (Galloway, Scotland) was established between c.500-c.730, which the excavators have termed Period 1 (Hill 1998: 67). The site is defined as a *monasterium*, a circular enclosed area within which were two regions; the outer zone comprising the monks' residential and industrial zones, and the inner precinct, containing the church, founder's tomb and a cemetery, centred around a shrine structure (see Fig. 7.1) (Hill 1998: 67). A total of 118 burials were dated to Period 1, all of which were 'laid out in regular lines and rows' (Hill 1998: 73). Despite most of the graves not exhibiting evidence for above ground markers, there appears to have been some method by which to remember where each grave was located, as over the whole period, the burial rows remained ordered, with little if any intercutting of graves or of the skeletons within (Hill 1998: 73). For Phases 1-3 of Period 1, the cemetery was bounded on its north side by a gully, along with which two rows of burials were aligned (Hill 1998: 87). During the earliest phases of Period 1, graves were dug in a curved line surrounding a focal point, interpreted as a shrine of some sort (Hill 1998: 90). By the end of Period 1, the shrine seems to have been moved further north, as a new line of burials was dug over its original location. During Period 2 (c.730-845) a children's graveyard was located to the east of the chapel (Hill 1998: 170). This area contained 14 burials which were 'densely packed, but were arranged in regular rows, and respected the enclosure wall to the west' (Hill 1998: 170).
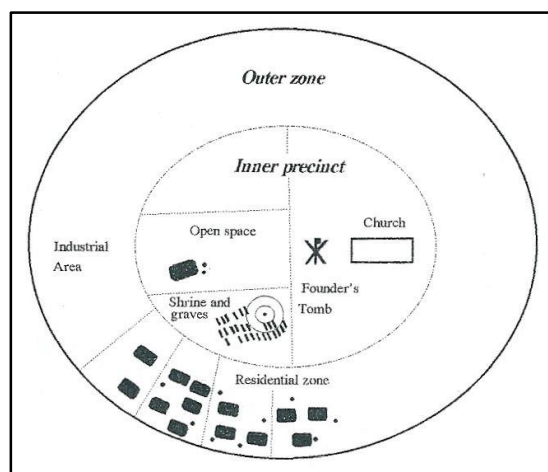

Fig. 7.1: Plan of the early medieval cemetery of Whithorn and St Ninian.

Note the three rows of graves centred on a shrine (Hill 1998: 67)

A total of 363 inhumations were excavated from the cemetery at Raunds Furnells (Northamptonshire) which was in use between the 10th and 11th centuries (Boddington 1996). It is believed that the full extent of the cemetery was excavated, as boundaries were identified on all four sides of the cemetery (Boddington 1996: 26, 49). The burials were arranged into 23 rows, although these were less well defined than burial rows dating to later medieval sites (see Fig. 7.2). The earliest rows were nearest to the church, with additional rows added mainly to the east but also to the north, south and west, in later phases (Boddington 1996: 54). The cemetery was divided into five zones of burial within which the 23 rows of graves were arranged. It appears that these zones were opened consecutively once each zone became filled with the burial rows (Boddington 1996: 53-5). Clusters of burials were also noted, particularly within the eastern part of the cemetery and at the southern limit of Zone 4 (Boddington 1996: 50). A stone cross and six stone coffins were found in different regions of the cemetery to these clusters. The cross and coffins were not in their original contexts and it is possible that were initially located within the regions of clusters of burials, originally serving as focal points for the burials prior to being relocated (Boddington 1996: 42-3). Many of the graves were intercut when later burials were added to earlier grave rows, although the skeletons within the cuts were not disturbed (Boddington 1996: 27-9). Three graves were interpreted as 'abandoned' (Boddington 1996: 28). By this it is meant that once it was discovered that earlier graves were being disturbed, the gravedigger ceased digging. One of these graves contained still articulated material (Boddington 1996: 28). At least 36 graves were marked at surface level by stone slabs and it is assumed that the others were also distinguished in some manner; 'Undoubtedly most or all graves were marked by at least a humble mound' (Boddington 1996: 45).
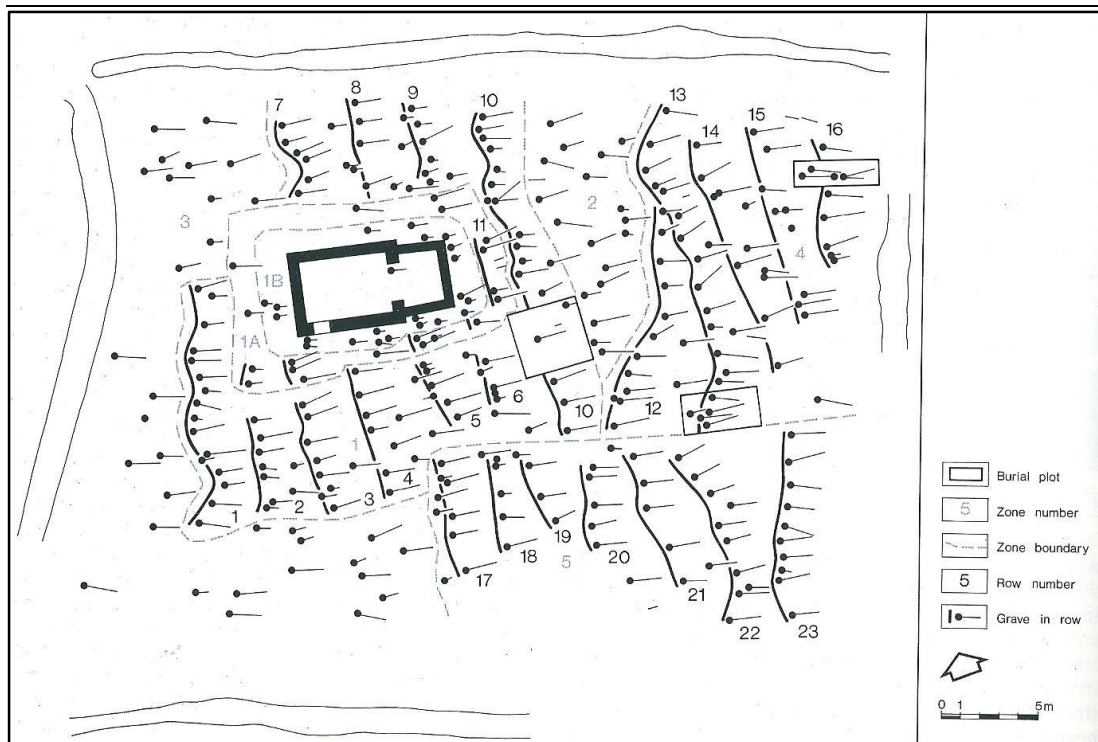
Fig. 7.2: Burial rows and zones at Raunds Furnells cemetery

(Boddington 1996: 54)

The early medieval cemetery at Addingham (West Yorkshire) was in use between the 8th and 10th centuries, according to radiocarbon dating evidence from four burials (Adams 1996: 151, 181). An estimated 80 individuals were excavated from a total of 55 graves. It is probable that the cemetery extended to the south-east, beyond the limits of excavation; 'the excavated part can represent no more than one-fifth of the total cemetery, and probably much less than that' (Adams 1996: 165, 185-6). The burials were aligned into four distinct rows, the earliest of which were to the east, with later rows added to the west (see Fig. 7.3) (Adams 1996: 183). Unlike later medieval grave rows, the rows were not delineated by leaving a gap or space between the rows. All individual graves and grave rows were spaced very close together, with some graves so narrow that the deceased individuals were buried on their sides (Adams 1996: 163, 165). Despite this extreme spatial closeness of burials, the level of intercutting across the whole site was minimal. The cemetery was bounded to the north-east by a ditch. The burial rows in this location of the cemetery were not as well defined as to the south and east and the burials were also more widely spaced than to the south-east. It is likely that there was a focal point for burial

to the east of the cemetery making burial in the south-east more desirable than to the north (Adams 1996: 182-3). A minimum of 27 graves contained secondary burials of articulated individuals or quantities of disarticulated material (Adams 1996: 166). Most of these graves were located in the eastern region of the cemetery and were most likely deliberately reopened to accommodate a new burial (Adams 1996: 183).
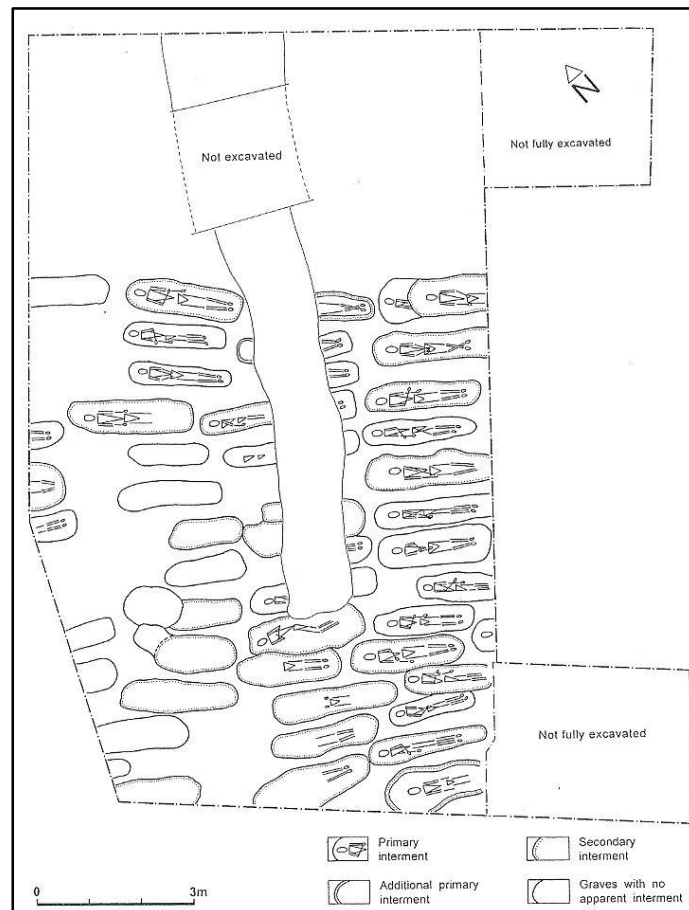
Fig. 7.3: The rows of graves at the early medieval cemetery of Addingham, (West Yorkshire) (Adams 1996: 162)

Twelve graves, tentatively dating to the early 11th century, were excavated from north of the tower of St Peter's Church, Holton-le-Clay (Lincolnshire) (Sills 1982). Although no distinct rows of burial were noted, 'Some care had been taken to ensure that they did not overlap to any great extent' (Sills 1989: 31). Four more graves were excavated north of the chancel, one of which had been re-opened to accommodate a second articulated burial. This secondary burial did not disturb the underlying earlier burial despite it lying only a few inches below (Sills 1982: 32).

A total of 105 graves were excavated at the north Walk cemetery, Barnstaple (Devon), all of which pre-dated the construction of the Norman castle, which was built over the majority of the burials (Miles 1986). Although none of the burials are described as being arranged into rows of any kind, some evidence of rows and general organisation is visible from the excavation plans (see Fig. 7.4). As at other early medieval cemeteries discussed above, the graves were closely spaced to each other, but effort was clearly made not to disturb earlier burials by later ones (Miles 1986: 62). These later burials are those which appear to cut through other burials on the plans.
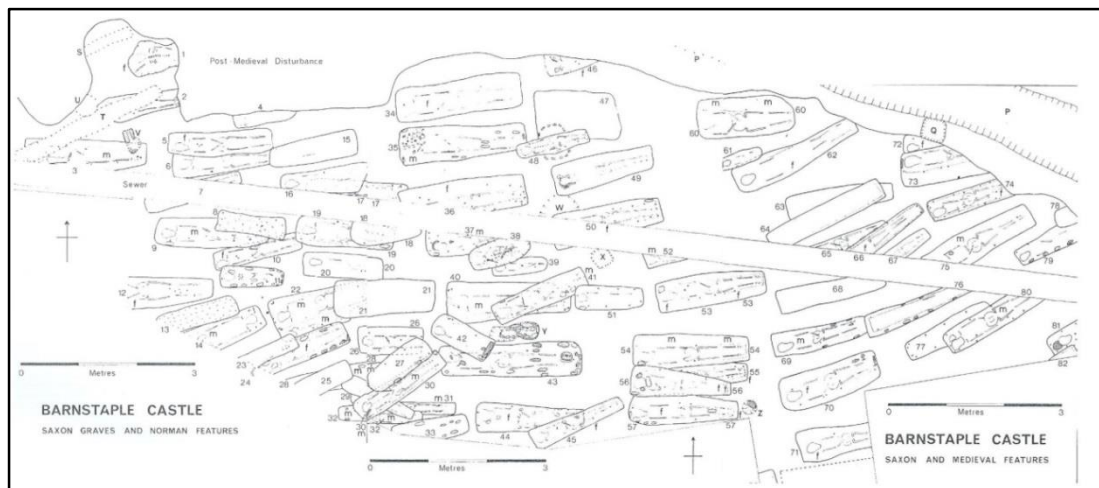
Fig. 7.4: Burials in the Anglo-Saxon cemetery at North Walk, Barnstaple.
Note how many of the graves appear to line up with each other. Those
burials that appear from this plan to have been inserted into earlier
graves, severely truncating them, were actually dug in the earth above
the earlier burials, causing little disturbance (Miles 1986: 64-5, 67)

In the cemetery at St Peter's church, Barton-upon-Humber (Lincolnshire), a large number of burials were arranged alongside the north, south and west of the Anglo-Saxon church (Rodwell & Atkins 2011: 169; Rodwell & Rodwell 1982: 299). During the initial excavations, 'Slight indications of graves forming rows can be seen, and some distinct clusters comprising two or three adults and several children' were noted (Rodwell & Rodwell 1982: 299). These burials date to Phase E c.950-1150, before the Norman reconstruction of the church (Rodwell & Atkins 2011: 169). These burials do not comprise distinct rows but are arranged in mostly straight strings of burials,

mainly to the north and south of the nave of the church. Two clear rows of graves are located in the north east corner of the cemetery which were positioned next to the boundary ditch (see Fig. 7.5).
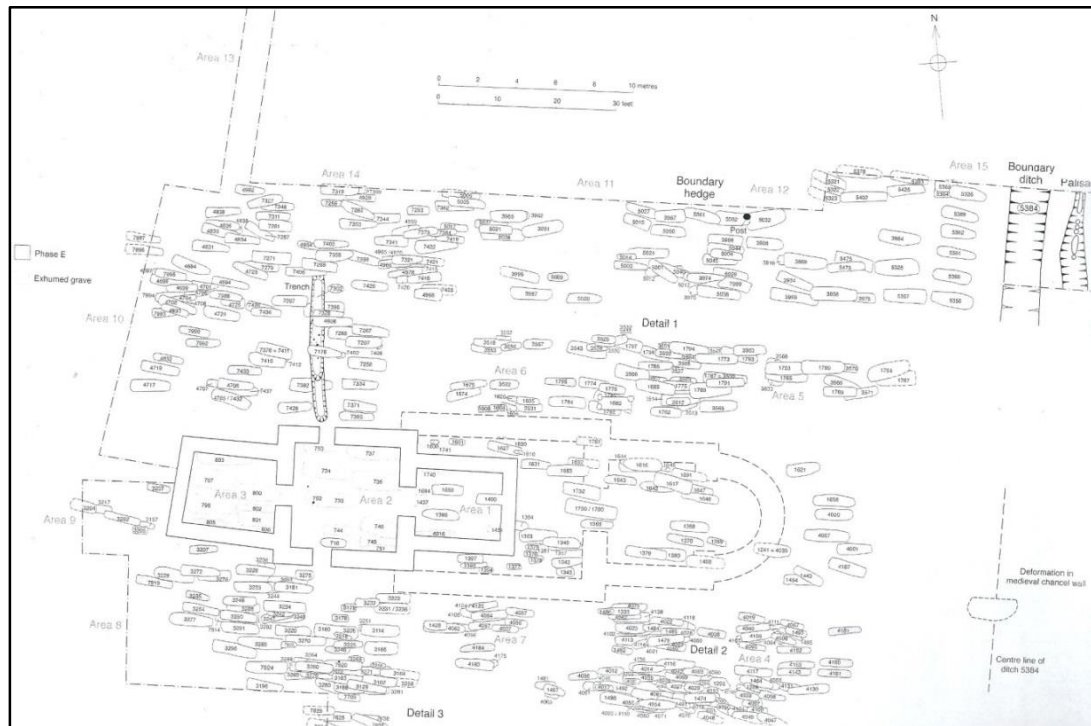
Fig. 7.5: Phase E c.950-1150 burials in the cemetery of St Peter's Church, Barton-upon-Humber. Note the distinct large evenly spaced graves to the north-east of the cemetery, and the east-west aligned rows to the north and south of the church (Rodwell & Atkins 2011).

2) Later medieval cemeteries

The late medieval cemetery of the priory of St Ninian (Galloway, Scotland), developed from the early medieval cemetery (see Section (7.2.3) 1)). By the early 1300s a substantial cemetery extended south of the cathedral. The burials appear to be aligned with the boundary wall of the cemetery to the south and are arranged in west-east lines with burials lined up head to feet, as opposed to north-south rows of burials where graves were dug side by side (see Fig. 7.6) (Hill 1998: 254-6). Some of the earliest burials were disturbed by later ones, 'others, with aberrant orientations, were perhaps squeezed into the gaps between extant rows of burials' implying some form of marker was employed to mark the locations of graves (Hill 1998: 256). The later

14th-century cemetery was also arranged into 'strings' of burials orientated along the boundary wall (Hill 1998: 257-8).
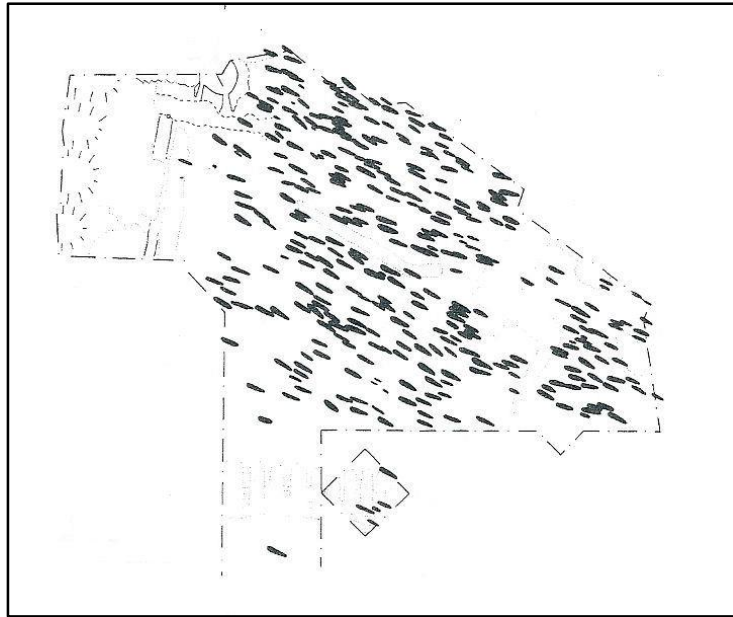
Fig. 7.6: The cemetery at Whithorn & St Ninian by the 14th century.

Note that the burial rows are aligned west-east, with burials arranged

head to feet as opposed to side by side (Hill 1998: 254)

Evidence of graveyard management in the form of rows or lines of burials was noted at the Cluniac priory and abbey of St Saviour, Bermondsey (Surrey) (Steele 2010). In the monastic cemetery, OA6, 'The first burials … were widely spaced in irregular north-south rows. Graves were dug across the full width of the land between the church (B3) and the chapel (B1)' (Steele 2010: 34). This order continued into the later period M5 (c.1150 – c.1220) when 50 individuals were buried in the cemetery. With the addition of graves, the distinction between rows became less apparent (see Fig. 7.7). By period M7 (c.1250 – c.1330) an additional 91 burials were interred within the cemetery OA6. These burials, plus the burials of the preceding period, extended eastward 'arranged in fairly haphazard north-south rows … it [burial] began in the western part north of the chapel and south of the priory church, and continued to develop eastwards through time, until burial ceased … after the mid-15th century' (see Figs 7.7-7.10) (Steele 2010: 71). A gap of 5.2m was left between the earlier M5 burials and the subsequent M7 burials which contained no graves and did not exhibit

evidence of buildings or constructions. During period M7 the cemetery was bounded by a wall running north-south (see Fig. 7.8). During period M8 (c. 1330 – c.1430), 21 burials were interred, east of those of the preceding M7 period (see Fig. 7.9). Of these, eleven were in north-south rows, each approximately 1m apart from the adjacent graves. The remaining ten graves were placed in a row against the cemetery wall. This row of graves was entirely exhumed during the period M9 (c. 1430-1538) (see below) (see Fig. 7.10).

Figs 7.7-7.10: Rows of burials in the later medieval monastic cemetery of St Saviour illustrating the eastward progression of rows of graves over time. The medieval phases M5 (top left Fig.7.7) and M7 (top right Fig. 7.8), M8 (bottom left Fig. 7.9) and M9 (bottom right Fig. 7.10). A row of burials dating to period M8, immediately adjacent to the cemetery wall, were exhumed during proceeding period M9 (Steele 2010: 40, 68, 80, 93)

The cemetery appears to have been in decline during Period M9, when few burials took place. This may explain why the graves comprising the row beside the boundary wall were exhumed, as the cemetery appears to have served a non-liturgical purpose;

rubbish pits were dug in the cemetery, the boundary wall was dismantled and its foundation stone robbed (Steele 2010: 95). The graves may have been disinterred by those wishing to protect and relocate the burials which would be disturbed by those dismantling the graveyard wall, or they may have been emptied in anticipation of the dismantling, to facilitate the removal of the foundation stones of the wall. The excavators speculated that 'It is possible that any conspicuous tomb monuments or markers, and more recent and visible burials, were moved, while older burials remained unseen and undisturbed' (Steele 2010: 95). Two pits c.8m west of the row of graves by the cemetery wall were tentatively interpreted as once having contained conspicuous burials and grave markers (Steele 2010: 95). However, these pits did not contain any displaced human bone, monuments or markers, and it is unknown where the exhumed graves' contents were redeposited.

Burial at the Cistercian abbey of St Mary Stratford, Langthorne (Essex), began c. 1135 in the north-east cemetery, OA3. At some point during this period, a path (R2) was constructed from the road external to the cemetery and the church, dividing the cemetery into two parts (OA3 and OA4) (see Fig. 7.11). A clear row of graves lined this path, with further shorter rows dug closer to the church building. During this period, a total of 91 graves were dug (Period 4 c.1135-1220) in the north-east section, and a total of 123 graves extended across the entire cemetery; 'there is no stratigraphic or dating evidence to indicate whether the rows spread across the cemetery to the east over time, or if burial began in several locations and then spread away from the church' (Barber *et al.* 2004: 26). Whether the graves were dug sporadically in various regions throughout the entire period, or were uniformly dug one after another in consecutively opened rows, an inclination towards maintaining order and regularity is still apparent, in that the graves were evenly spaced and were in line with each other. This regularity is also evident in the subsequent Period 5 (c.1220 – 1350) with fairly evenly spaced rows and little intercutting of the 430 graves assigned to this period (see Figs 7.12 & 7.13) (Barber *et al.* 2004: 45, 94). According to the excavators, these regular rows and gradual progression of burials eastwards are indicative of 'a systematic attempt … to bring order to the layout of the north-east cemetery' after

the initial slightly haphazard rows of burials in various regions of the cemetery (Barber *et al.* 2004: 47).
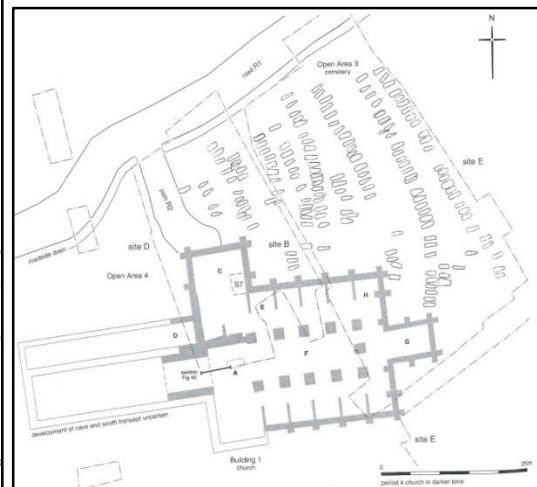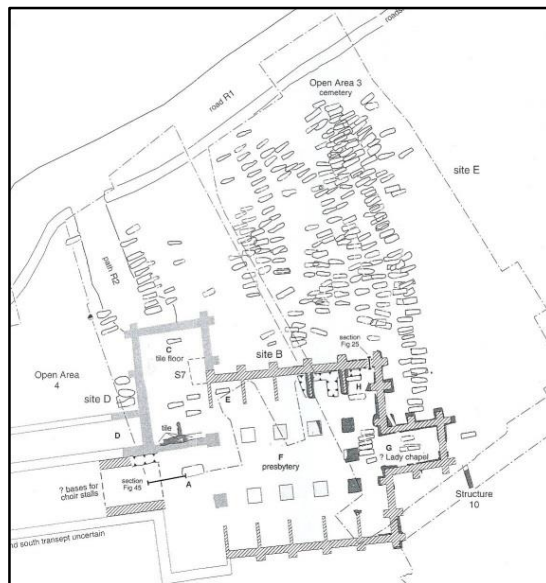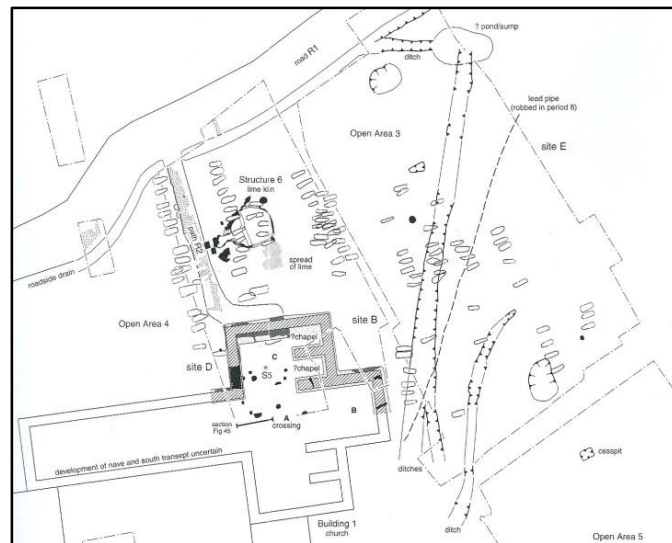
Figs 7.11-7.13: The rows of graves created during Period 4 (top, Fig. 7.11) and Period 5 earlier burials (bottom left, Fig. 7.12) and the later burials (bottom right, Fig. 7.13) at the Cistercian abbey of St Mary Stratford (Barber *et al.* 2004: 19, 35, 48)

Where intercutting did occur, 'it was more common for graves of an eastern row to cut a grave of a western row, rather than vice versa,' indicating expansion of the cemetery eastward and away from the church in an orderly fashion (Barber *et al.* 2004: 45). The only region of the excavated graveyard in which it was recorded that

intercutting disturbed the buried skeletons within the graves, and not just disturbed the grave cut itself, is in the north-east part of cemetery OA3 (see Fig. 7.14). 'One short row of five burials was cut into the dense cluster of burials' in an already compact region of graves, despite there being empty space in the remainder of the cemetery. It is speculated by the excavators that this region may have been a focal point or desired location for burial (Barber *et al.* 2004: 46). There may have been a timber cross erected in this vicinity during Period 5 or the ensuing Period 6 (c.1350 – 1538), erected in commemoration of an individual 'buried in period 5, with whose perceived holiness, status, or patronal status others wished to be associated' (Barber *et al.* 2004: 46). An early burial in this region of an adult male in a lead coffin may represent such a person. To the far west of the church, which was beyond the limits of the excavation, there was additional evidence for regularity in burials, where 'the graves appear to be laid out in rough rows, with limited intercutting of graves' (Barber *et al.* 2004: 30).
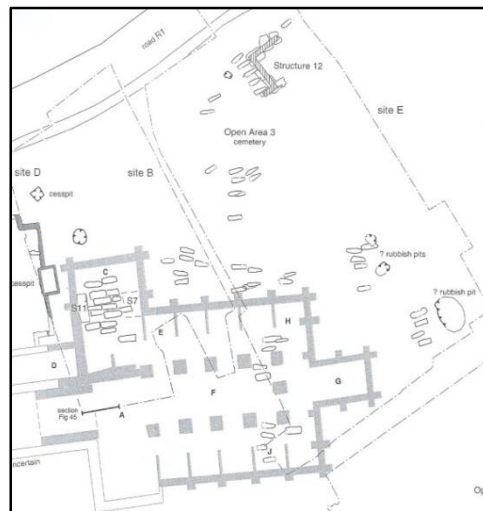
Fig. 7.14: The focus of burials in the north-east part of cemetery OA3, St Mary Stratford, during period 6 (c.1350 – 1538) in the vicinity of a lead coffin burial and a wooden structure (after Barber *et al.* 2004: 59)

A total of 67 graves were dug during Period 6 (c.1350 – 1538), a significantly smaller number than were dated to preceding periods (Barber *et al.* 2004: 94). Some of these graves constituted those burials in the north-east region of the cemetery, by the 'focal' point. The remaining 'consisted of small groups of graves unevenly distributed

among the pre-existing rows, either to infill gaps within or between rows, or because particular locations were desirable' (Barber *et al.* 2004: 63). In both of these potential circumstances for burial a conscious effort was clearly made to avoid the disturbance of the graves which were already present in these locations. The clearly laid out rows of graves, particularly those of Period 5, are not specifically or strictly orientated east-west, but conform to visible markers within the cemetery. Rows of graves line the path R2 that divided the cemetery into two halves, 'while those closer to the church reflect that structure's nearly true east-west alignment' (Barber *et al.* 2004: 96). The larger rows spreading eastward over Period 5 curve westward at their southern ends. According to the excavators this indicates that 'a grave digger would be influenced by the position of earlier burials where this was apparent, but was also inclined to take the alignment of the grave pit from the nearest boundary or liturgical structure' (Barber *et al.* 2004: 96). Those burials dating to Period 6 were inserted neatly between pre-existing graves of Periods 4 and 5.

Excavations at St Faith's Lane, Norwich (Norfolk), revealed evidence of a regulated cemetery of the 13th – 16th-century Franciscan friary (Soden 2010). In total, 136 burials were excavated, although it is likely that the cemetery extended westward and southwards beyond the excavation area (Soden 2010: 13-14). The burials were ordered in clear rows; 'Long continuous lines of burials were dug across the area, probably forming part of a wider burial pattern which extended beyond the excavation area to both west and south' (see Fig. 7.15) (Soden 2010: 14). Three phases of interment were identified although no specific dates could be provided for each phase. Fifty-seven graves were cut into the original soil and did not disturb any other contexts or graves. These graves comprise the first phase. The second phase is represented by 22 'secondary' interments that cut into other phase 1 graves and the third phase comprises nine graves that intercut phase 2 graves (Soden 2010: 14). This superimposition of graves may indeed represent three successive phases of burial within the same geographic region. This interpretation must be treated with caution, however, as it is entirely possible that graves of the same 'phase' intercut each other, and as the excavator points out 'virtually none produced any pottery or other dateable material which might have been of value in producing any relative seriation'

(Soden 2010: 14). Despite the superimposition of burials, the level of intercutting skeletons within intercut graves is low across the site: 'While there is evidence for intercutting graves, and for burials overlying one another, the cemetery layout appears generally orderly, and distinct north-to-south rows of graves can be identified. The skeletal material was relatively undisturbed … very complete in osteological terms' (Soden 2010: 23).
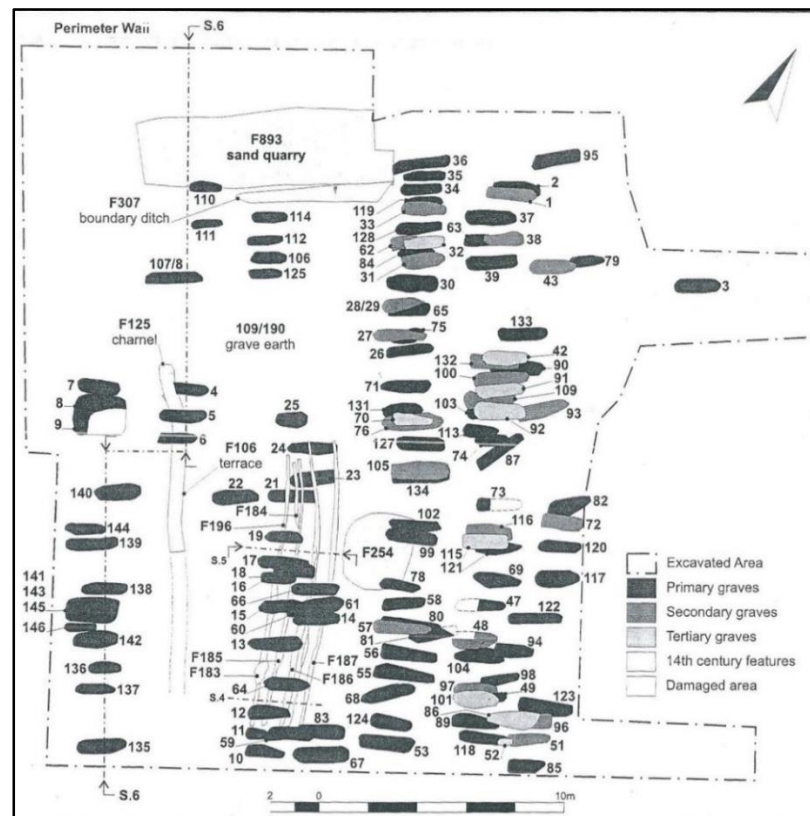
Fig. 7.15: Excavated portion of St Faith's cemetery, Norwich. Note the north-south rows of burials and potentially successive phases of burials (Soden 2010: 16)

Just as has been identified at St Faith's cemetery, Norwich, successive overlying phases or generations of burial were also excavated at the Priory of St Oswald, Gloucester (Heighway & Bryant 1999). Nine successive 'generations' were identified, of which four were dated to the medieval period. The excavators define a 'generation' as follows; 'a series of overlying skeletons, indicating a number of 'generations': a generation being the period of time taken to fill the space available before burying over it again … In addition generations have been assumed to be of uniform length, which may not be the case' (Heighway & Bryant 1999: 195). A total of 280 burials

were assigned to the period between c.1120 to c.1540, most of which had been intercut and the skeletons disturbed (Heighway & Bryant 1999: 229). Of these, 246 were from the Norman cemetery west and south of the church, which was not used from c.1230 onwards. Neither site plans nor descriptions of the burials provide details regarding the spatial arrangement of the graves. Nevertheless, there is some evidence of rows from the limited plans provided (see Figs 7.16 & 7.17).
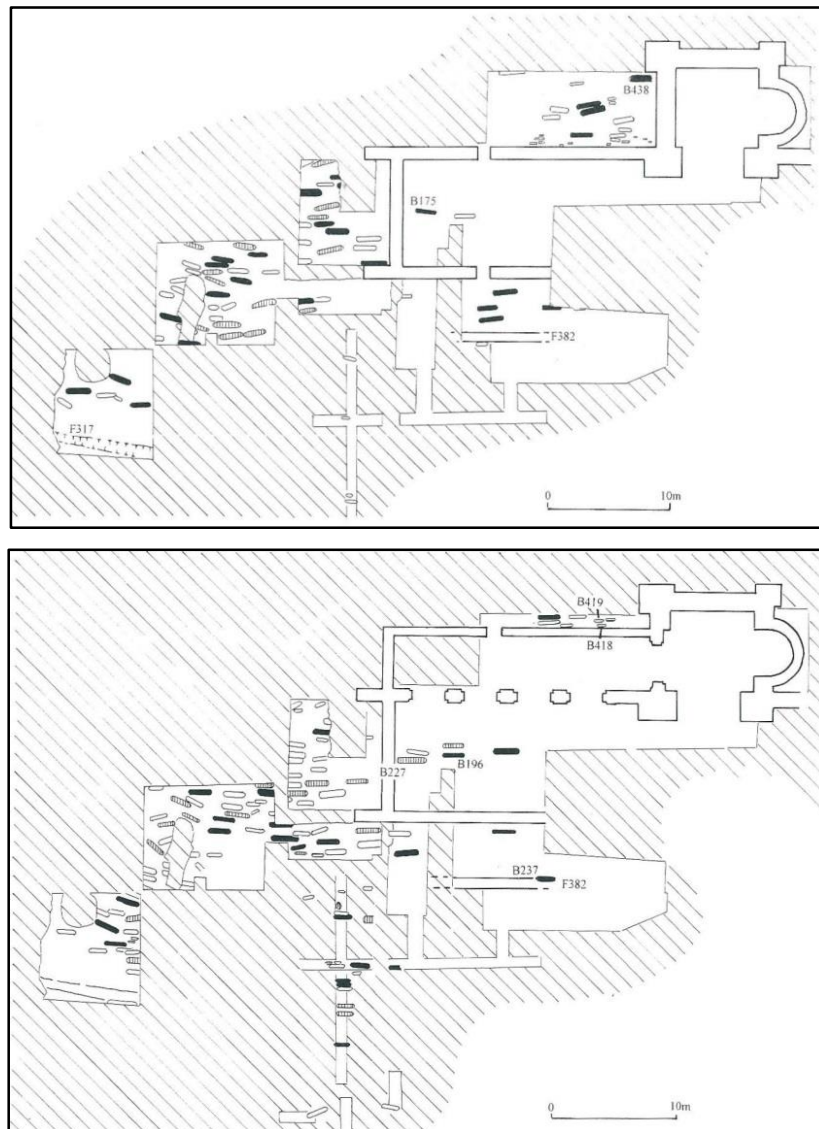
Figs 7.16 & 7.17: Medieval burials at the Priory of St. Oswald, Gloucester, generation F2 c. 1120 – c.1150 (top, Fig. 7.16) and generation G c.1150 – 1230 (bottom, Fig. 7.17). Note how most burials are evenly spaced and are in line with each other, despite the significant variation in the graves' orientation (Heighway & Bryant 1999: 198)

One of the most striking examples of graveyard management can be seen at the cemeteries of the Cistercian abbey of St Mary Graces, Smithfield (London). This is well known as a 'plague cemetery', where during epidemics of the Black Death, victims were interred in mass graves (Grainger 2011). Burial area OA2 overlay a region of the cemetery that had been used for mass burials of Black Death victims (see Fig. 7.18).

Fig. 7.18: The cemetery of St Mary Graces, Smithfield, by 1350. Note the clear layout of burials in north-south rows, indicating cemetery space was carefully planned and utilised with future interments in mind (Grainger 2011: 8)

The region was reopened for further burials in the second half of the 14th century but was closed by 1410 when this area along with other parts of the cemetery became a garden (Grainger 2011: 33). It is not known whether all the later burials were victims of the Black Death or not. 12 north-south rows of east-west aligned graves were excavated, comprising 221 individuals (Grainger 2011: 33). These rows of graves 'appeared initially to infill the gaps between the underlying graves of the Black Death cemetery and to follow the line of the mass burial trenches' (Grainger 2011: 33). Some of the graves in the rows cut into adjacent graves, although these incidents appear to have been accidental and without 'coherent pattern' (Grainger 2011: 33). The eastern cemetery, OA9, also comprised nine rows of graves, containing a total of 91 burials (Grainger 2011: 54). These burials date to c.1400 – 1539 and so it appears that this region was opened for burial after the closure of the OA2 cemetery (Grainger 2011: 54, 103). The same pattern noted in OA2 was evident in OA9: 'Graves in some rows cut ones in adjacent rows, but there was no coherent patterning to this intercutting. As with the western cemetery [OA2], this burial area appears to have evolved from a pattern of reasonably well-defined rows into a less orderly pattern' (Grainger 2011: 54). As with the intercut graves in OA2, it is not stated by the excavators whether the skeletons were disturbed or if the intercutting only affected the grave cut. Some of the burials in this region appear to have been aligned on a structure, most likely a cemetery cross or calvary. Structures such as this have been noted elsewhere (see Sections (7.2.2) 1) & (7.2.2)) and have been interpreted as focal points for burial, hence explaining the density of burial in their vicinity and the generally higher level of intercutting than in contemporary burials in other parts of the cemetery.

The cemeteries of the Church and Priory of St Andrew, Fishergate (York) also provide evidence of graveyard management and planned layout. The Period 4 (11th/12th century) cemetery is divided into sub categories, 4b – 4z and comprised a total of 131 burials (Stroud & Kemp 1993: 130 – 3, 159). In the first phase of the cemetery, 4b, 60 interments were made, most of which were arranged in rows around what has been interpreted as an early wooden church (Stroud & Kemp 1993: 131). Two of these rows comprising eleven burials were located east of the church and are interpreted as

burials of men killed 'as a result of a single violent act' but were given individual burial instead of burial in a mass grave (Stroud & Kemp 1993: 131). The next phase of burial was Period 4d and comprised 26 inhumations. In the intervening Period 4c the Period 4b burials were covered with a stone layer. Some of the Period 4d burials appear to have been inserted into the earlier rows of Period 4b, or were buried continuing the same alignment as the Period 4b rows below them, despite them no longer being visible due to the stone layer; some of [the 26 inhumations] 'were arranged in the rows established during the first phase of the cemetery' (Stroud & Kemp 1993: 133). Forty-five burials were assigned to period 4z, of which 26 were located in the south-western corner of the site. These burials were also roughly laid out in rows (see Fig. 19) (Stroud & Kemp 1993: 133).
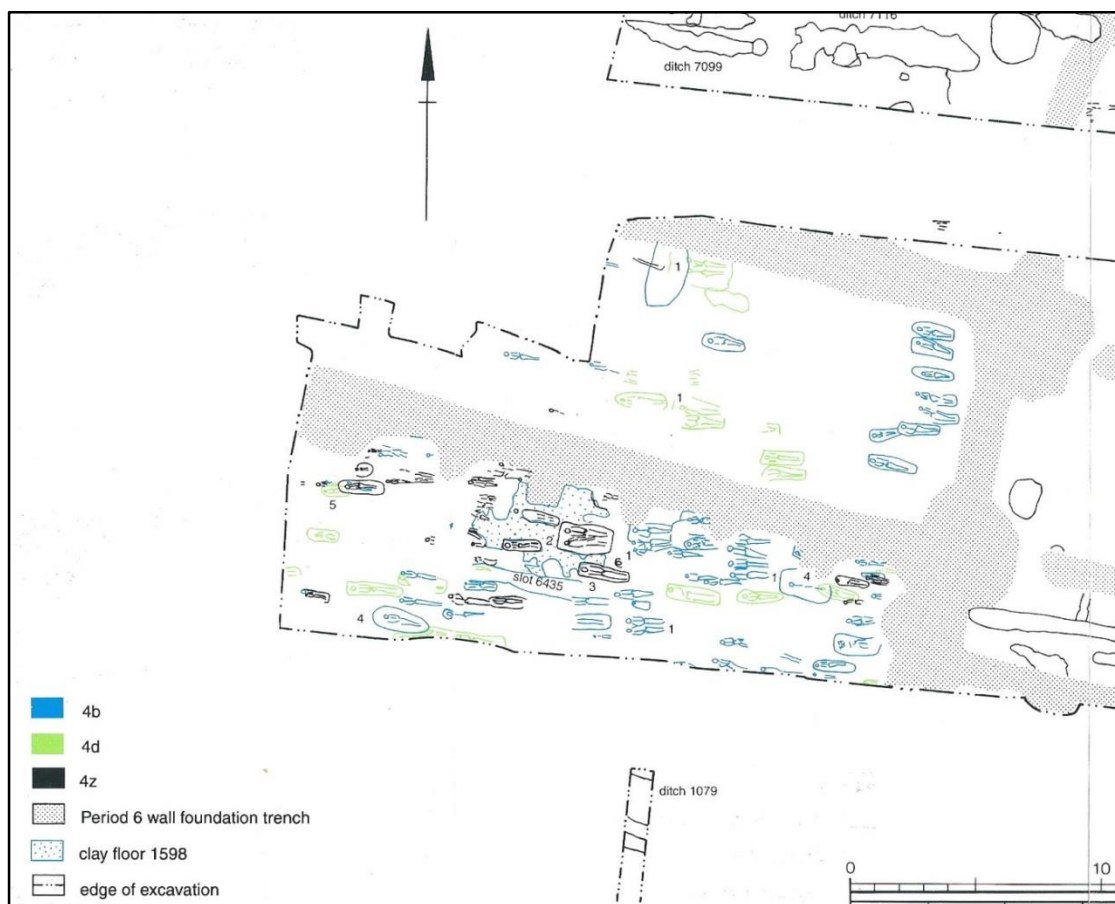
Fig. 7.19: Burials dating to Period 4 at the church and priory of St Andrew Fishergate (Stroud & Kemp 1993, Fig. 34)

The second cemetery at the site dates to Period 6a and 6b, (1195 – 1538) but no specific dates are provided for individual phases (Stroud & Kemp 1993: 134-5, 140-1). A total of 271 burials date to Period 6, 49 of which were located to the east of the newly built church, and were divided into two main groups (Stroud & Kemp 1993: 140, 159). The first group of 15 individuals were arranged into two 'systematically laid out' rows that were aligned with the east wall of the presbytery and did not intercut (see Fig. 7.20) (Stroud & Kemp 1993: 140). These have been interpreted as representing a possible monastic cemetery that extended beyond the limits of the excavation. The second group of 33 inhumations were to the north of the presbytery. These graves were also arranged into rows with little intercutting of adjacent graves, although these rows were less orderly and well defined than the Period 4 rows and those rows east of the presbytery (Stroud & Kemp 1993: 141). This pattern of well organised burial rows, their location east of the presbytery, with a less defined group of rows to the north has also been noted at the 12th-century Cistercian Bordesley Abbey (Worcestershire) (Stroud & Kemp 1993: 142).
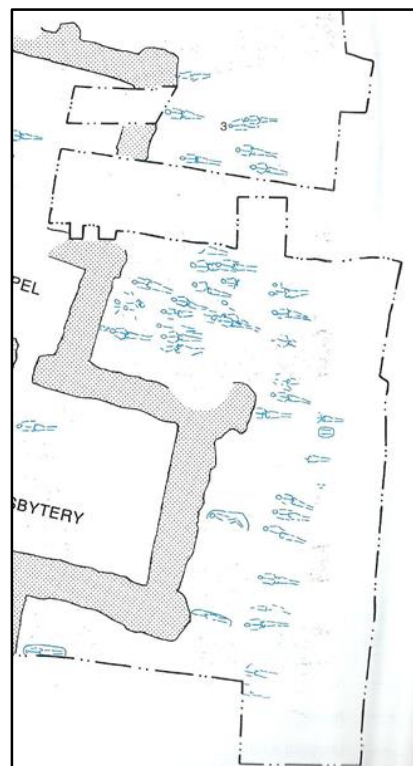
Fig. 7.20: Period 6 burial rows east and north of the church at the cemetery of the church and priory of St Andrew Fishergate (Stroud & Kemp 1993, Fig. 36)

The Augustinian Priory and Hospital of St Mary Spital (London), had three main phases of burial. The first coincided with the initial founding of the first church in 1197, the second with the 1235 foundation and rebuilding of the priory and hospital, and the third dating from at least c.1280 (Thomas *et al.* 1997). The earlier cemetery and burials of Period M2 (c.1195 – 1235) were located south of the then hospital church between an area defined by two ditches running north-south on the eastern and western sides (Thomas *et al.* 1997: 23). This area measured 13m east-west by 17m north-south and contained two rows of burials, located along the eastern and western edges of this defined area (see Fig. 7.21) (Thomas *et al.* 1997: 23). The eastern row comprised ten graves, one of which was empty from which the body most likely had been exhumed (Thomas *et al.* 1997: 23). The western row comprised four burials, although it is believed by the excavators to have extended further south, beyond the limit of the excavation (Thomas *et al.* 1997: 23). It is noted that 'There was no intercutting between the graves and they were evenly spaced,' apart from two intercutting graves in the western row, which is interpreted as representing the deliberate targeting of the grave for re-use (Thomas *et al.* 1997: 23). The space in between the two rows of graves was large, and according to the excavators was of sufficient size to accommodate up to six rows (Thomas *et al.* 1997: 24). The regular spacing between burials, lack of intercutting and limited number of burials is interpreted as evidence that the early hospital contemporary with the burials did not house many inmates, at least up until 1235 and the construction of the new priory and hospital (Thomas *et al.* 1997: 24).
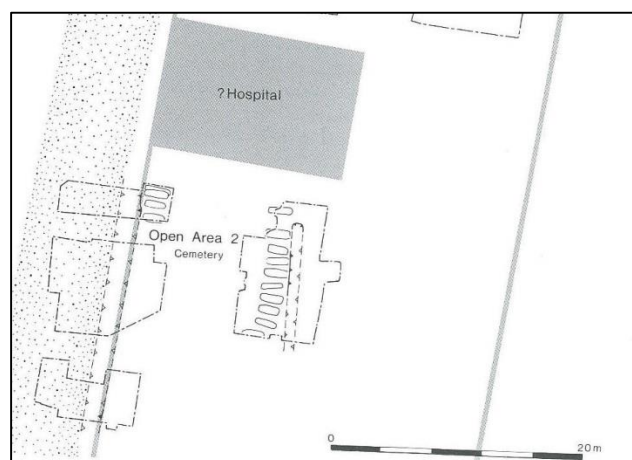
Fig. 7.21: Period M2 burials in cemetery OA2 at the priory and hospital

of St Mary Spital (Thomas *et al.* 1997: 22)

The second phase of burial occurred during Period M3 (1235 – 1280) in the new hospital cemetery, OA5, located west of the infirmary hall and chapel (see Fig. 7.22). It measured c.20m east-west and 27m north-south, although no evidence of 'formal, physical boundaries' was identified, except on the eastern side, which was bounded by the hall, Building 1 (Thomas *et al.* 1997: 37). The full extent of the burials was believed to have been excavated, however, as 'no further interments were found for a distance of 1.5m beyond the southernmost burial, or 2m beyond the westernmost, while the northern extremity was well established' (Thomas *et al.* 1997: 37). This cemetery was as well laid out and ordered as the earlier cemetery dating to Period M2. It consisted of nine rows of graves that were filled from north to south, the earliest of which was the easternmost row, and the latest to be filled was, the westernmost row (Thomas *et al.* 1997: 37). The earliest grave identified was located directly outside the infirmary hall doorway (Thomas *et al.* 1997: 117). The graves were not very evenly spaced, both in terms of the space between each grave in a single row, and in the amount of space left between each row, but the only evidence of intercutting was in the two easternmost rows. It is suggested by the excavators that these two rows were being filled infrequently and did not have above ground grave markers and so the precise location of each individual grave was not known, resulting in some intercutting (Thomas *et al.* 1997: 40). The remainder of the graves are not intercut, which according to the excavators is indicative of the position of the last burial being very apparent at the time that the next grave was being dug: 'The lack of any structural evidence for grave markers indicates that the grave locations were determined purely by the mound of earth that accompanied the backfilling, and probably remained visible for many years' (Thomas *et al.* 1997: 117). This is an important observation, as it in turn indicates either relatively swift successive burials, or that some additional means of recording the locations of each grave was utilised.
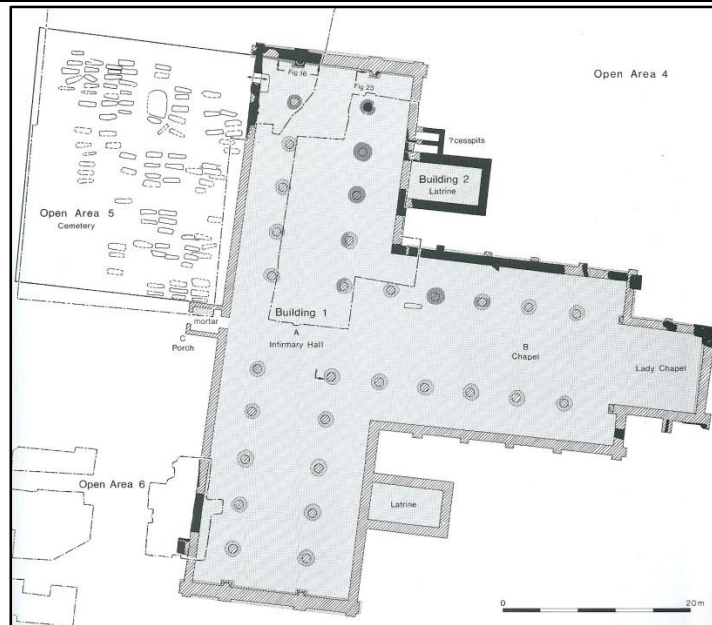
Fig. 7.22: Period M3 burials in OA5 at the priory and hospital of St Mary Spital (Thomas *et al.* 1997: 27)

The second infirmary was constructed during Period M4 (1280 – 1320) directly over a portion of the Period M3 cemetery, OA5, without the burials being disinterred (Thomas *et al.* 1997: 47-8). At least nine burials were cut by this construction. During this Period M4, burials continued in OA11, to the south-east of the hospital complex. This was a very large expansive area, estimated to have been c.4200 sq. m. from which over 10,000 skeletons have been excavated (see Figs 7.23-7.26) (Connell *et al.* 2012; Thomas *et al.* 1997: 116). The northern portion did not exhibit any intercutting with only a few discrete graves. This is in stark contrast to the southern and central portions, where density of burial was so intense, few graves cuts were identified (Thomas *et al.* 1997: 63). The plan of this cemetery, however, clearly exhibits defined neat north-south rows of burials in all areas of the cemetery and throughout all phases of its use. It is believed to have possibly begun as the cemetery for the ecclesiastical members of the hospital and priory, but accommodated lay members after burial ceased in OA5, in the late 13th century. A charnel chapel was constructed within the southern part of this cemetery between 1310 and 1325, and served as a strong focal point for burial, as is evident from the density of grave cuts surrounding it (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 41).
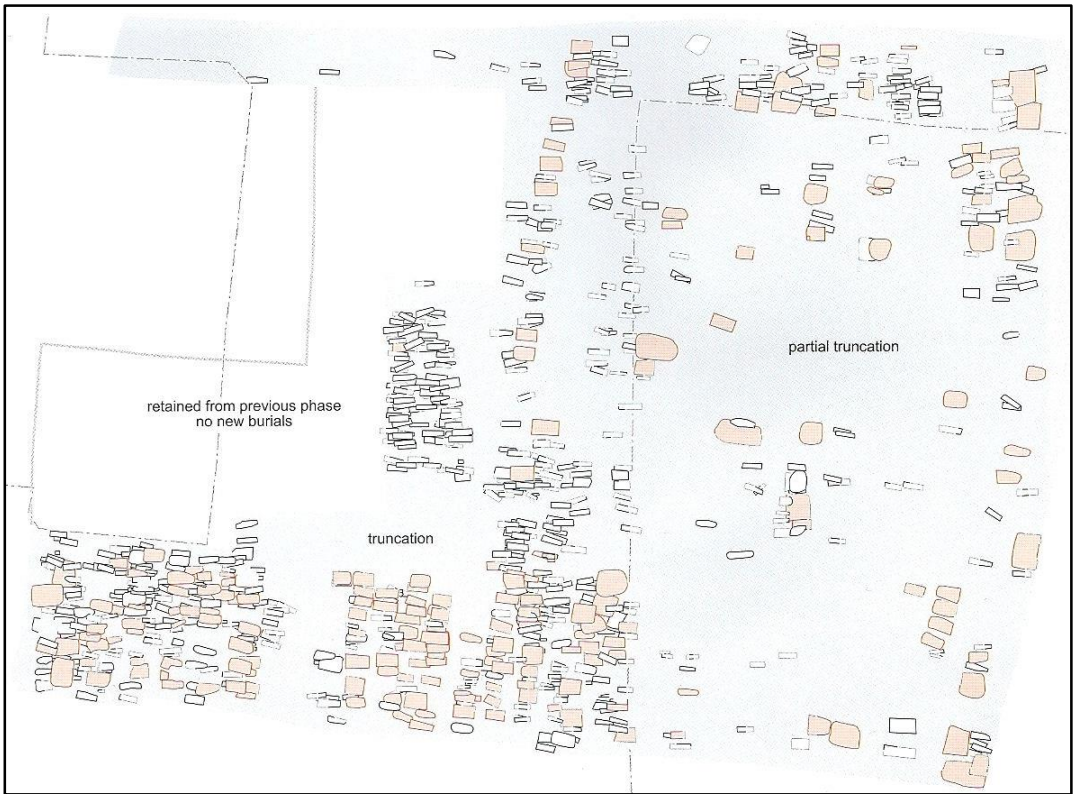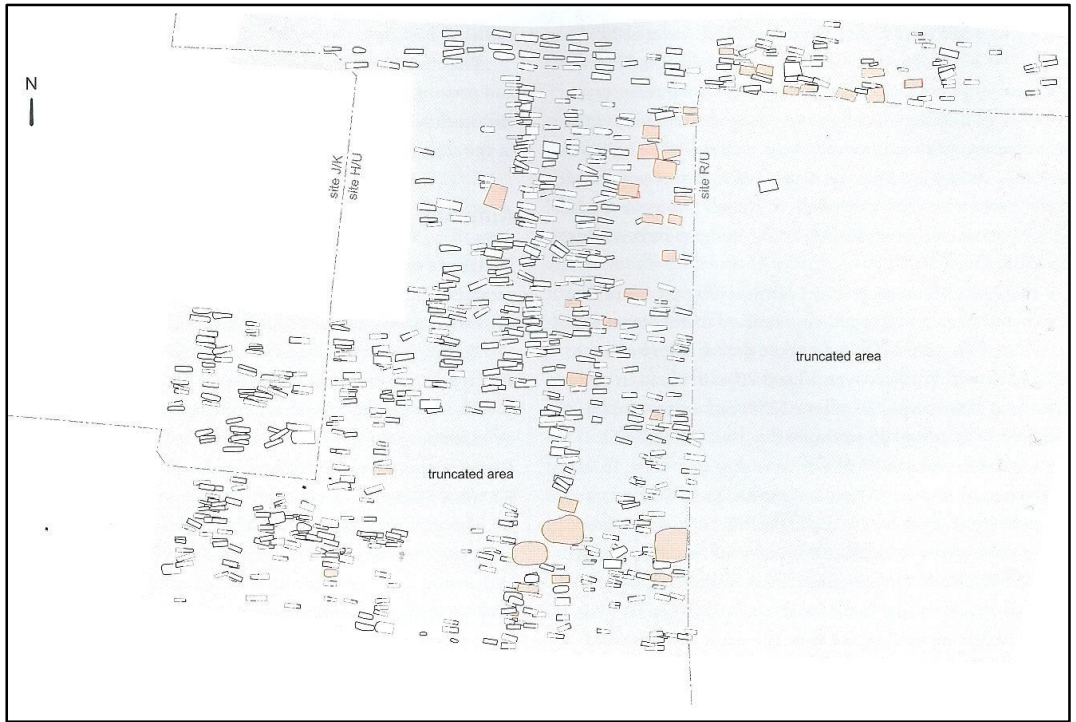
Figs 7.23 & 7.24: Different phases of burial in the southern cemetery at the Hospital of St Mary Spital. Despite the intercutting and superimposed grave cuts, clearly defined burial rows are visible throughout the cemetery. Phase a c.1120-1200 (top); Phase b c.1200-1250 (bottom).
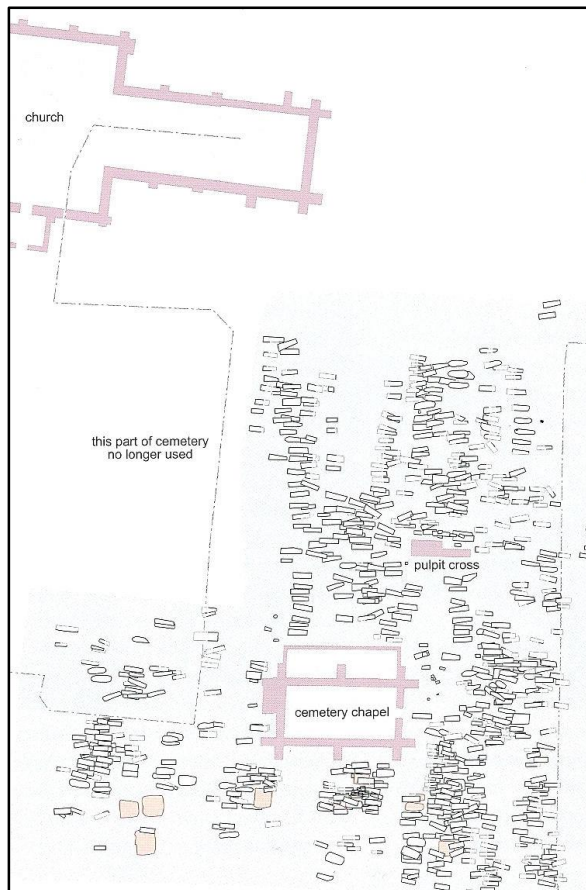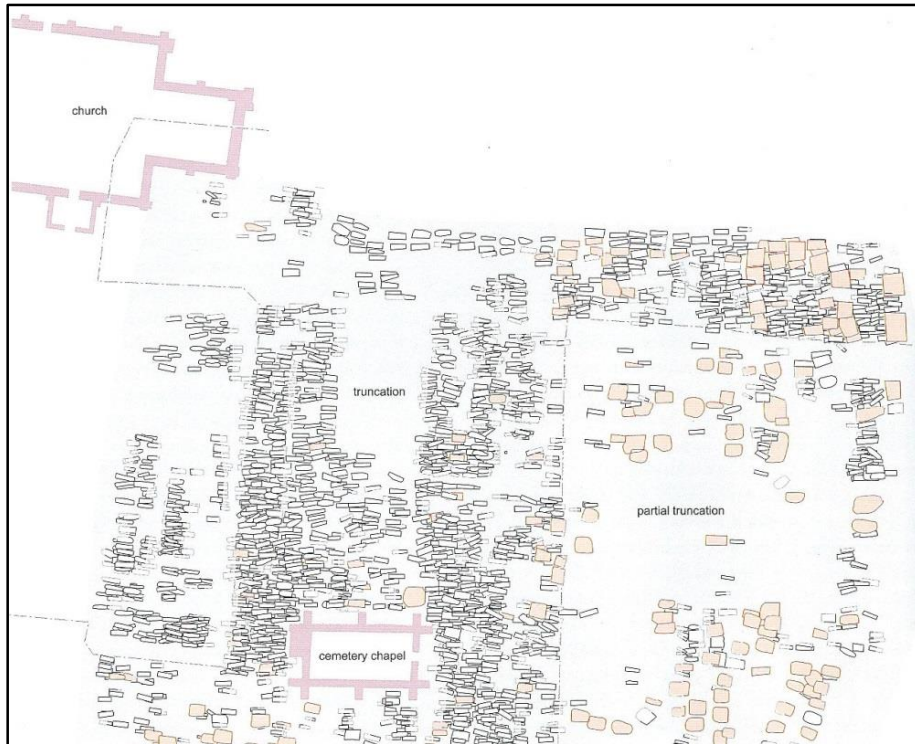
Figs 7.25 & 7.26: Different phases of burial in the southern cemetery at the Hospital of St Mary Spital, (continued). Phase c c.1250-1400 (top); Phase d c.1400-1539 (bottom) (Connell *et al.* 2012: 6-7).

At St Gregory's Priory, Canterbury (Kent), 1342 articulated skeletons in total were excavated, although information pertaining to the cemetery burials is limited to only 45 individuals (Hicks & Hicks 2001: 338). Little detail is provided regarding the layout of the lay cemetery, although burials were arranged in at least two rows to the west of the later priory church, dating to the 12th century (Hicks & Hicks 2001: 46).

The Hospital of St Mary Magdalen, Partney (Lincolnshire) was founded c.1115 and functioned as a hospital until c. 1318 when it became an administrative cell of Bardney Abbey and burial on the site ceased (Atkins & Popescu 2010: 204). The cemetery, which was located east of the hospital chapel, is believed to have been completely excavated and comprised a total of 43 graves (Atkins & Popescu 2010: 217). There were two regions of burial, those north of a pathway leading to the chapel and those south of the pathway (see Fig. 7.27) (Atkins & Popescu 2010: 216). The graves north of the path were shallower than those to the south and are interpreted by the excavators as burials of lay inmates of the hospital. The southern burials are interpreted as ecclesiastical burials, as they were deeper than the northern burials, nine were anthropomorphic shaped graves, and at least 20 graves had ledges around their edges (Atkins & Popescu 2010: 218-222). As none of the northern burials exhibited any of these characteristics, but were shallow and simple in comparison, it has been suggested by the excavators that the differences in the graves' style represents ecclesiastic versus lay burials. Both sets of burials were in clearly defined rows, aligned to the orientation of the chapel. The ecclesiastical burials comprised a total of 26 burials in four north-south rows. Some of the burials within these rows were very widely spaced particularly in the westernmost row of graves. The lay burials located to the north of the pathway comprised a total of 14 burials (Atkins & Popescu 2010: 222). These were arranged into two rows near to the chapel with the remainder running alongside the pathway. These burials were in smaller, shallower grave cuts than the southern burials but were also well spaced out with little intercutting.
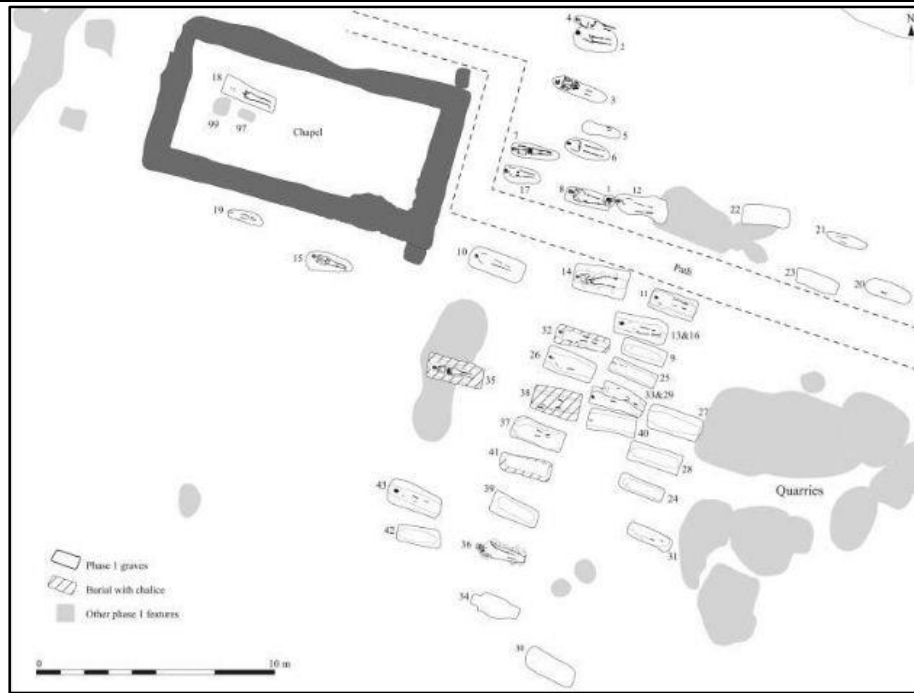
Fig. 7.27: The cemetery of the Hospital of St Mary Magdalen, depicting ecclesiastical burials in rows to the south of the pathway, and lay burials to the north (Atkins & Popescu 2010: 219)

A total of 351 individuals from 330 graves were excavated from the cemetery of Ss James and Mary Magdalene, Chichester (West Sussex). Only the south-east portion of the cemetery was excavated, the remainder lay beyond the extent of the excavation. The hospital was founded by at least 1118, and was in use until the end of the 17th century (Lee & Magilton 1989: 274). No more refined chronology is offered for the site although it is claimed that area 1 was the earliest region to be used, followed by areas 2 and 3 (Lee & Magilton 1989: 274-8). This determination is based on the fact that the eastern part of the cemetery contains male and female skeletons, whereas the other regions have mainly male burials, and the hospital only admitted female inmates after c.1540 (Lee & Magilton 1989: 278). This is slightly tenuous evidence, as previously it had been stated that 'sisters as well as brethren' were admitted after 1540, meaning *lay* women might easily have been inmates there prior to this point (Lee & Magilton 1989: 274). The cemetery was bounded to the east by a ditch which was extended at some point by a second ditch 5m further west (Lee & Magilton 1989: 275). The burials were aligned into very distinct north-south rows at the eastern end (area 3) (see Fig. 7.28). This was the latest portion of the cemetery to

be filled although no dates could be established for when this took place (Lee & Magilton 1989: 275). The centre region (area 2) did not exhibit evidence for systematic rows or planning, but towards the west end of the cemetery (area 1) rows were again evident. All of the graves were closely positioned with little space between graves. Little intercutting of grave cuts was noted in the eastern area 3, with most disturbance noted in areas 2 and 3 where graves were less well spaced out. It is not noted if the skeletons within these graves were disturbed or not. There was one example of a grave having been opened to accommodate a second burial, but no further details are provided (Lee & Magilton 1989: 276). It is suggested by the excavators that there may have been a chapel or focal point for burial to the west of the cemetery, although no evidence was found for where the hospital building or the chapel may have been located. Some graves of significance in area 1 may have served as a focal element; 'there was a cluster of burials in the vicinity of two-stone lined tombs and another possible concentration of graves 10m to the north-east' (Lee & Magilton 1989: 277).
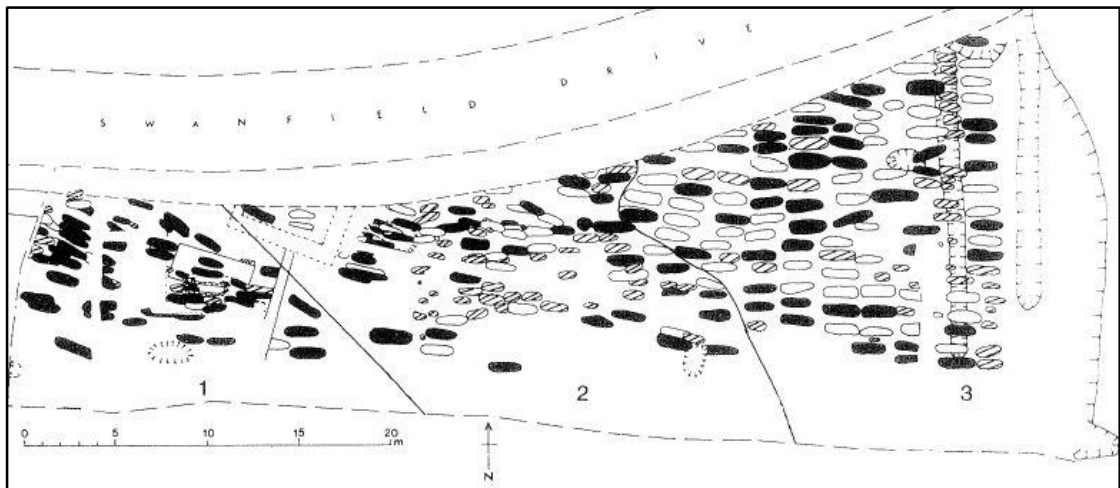
Fig. 7.28: Burials divided into rows at the Hospital of St James and St Mary Magdalene (Lee & Magilton 1989: 276)

Ninety-one burials were excavated from a portion of the later 12th- and 13th-century cemetery at Malmesbury Abbey (Wiltshire), to the south of the abbey building (Hart & Holbrook 2011: 166). All of these burials were aligned into five north-south rows (see Fig. 7.29). The majority of these graves were evenly spaced apart from two

distinct clusters of burials in row D. These are interpreted as family graves, with additional graves dug between earlier ones to accommodate them in that specific location. Despite the closeness of these burials only one of the skeletons was truncated by a second burial inserted directly over it at a later date. This indicates that graves were being dug 'with respect to, the earlier ones' and that 'for the remainder the stratigraphic sequence need not imply that the earlier graves had necessarily become invisible or uncared for with the passage of time' (Hart & Holbrook 2011: 175, 177). Rows A, B and D were the earliest of the rows, with row C being dug between B and D, possibly 'as a re-establishment of an earlier row given that it is evenly spaced between Rows A and D' (Hart & Holbrook 2011: 175).
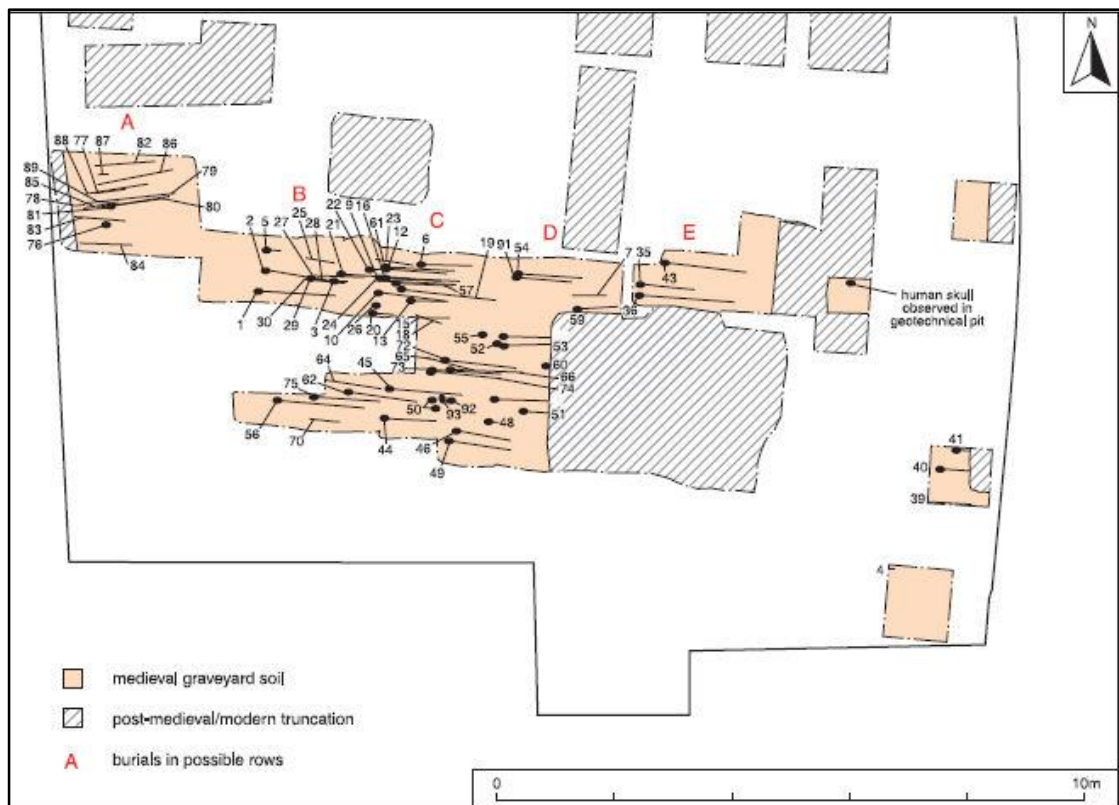
**Fig. 7.29: Burials in the cemetery of Malmesbury Abbey, arranged in
five burial rows (Hart & Holbrook 2011: 170)**

Gilchrist & Sloane (2005) have noted numerous additional sites where cemetery planning and management is evident. The remainder of the sites discussed in this section are those cited in their 2005 publication.

In a 1243 act relating to the cemeteries of Wells Cathedral (Somerset), it is explicitly stated that 'The laity were to be buried in the western cemetery, beginning at the elm trees … and extending eastwards' (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 47). The cloister garth for burial of ecclesiastics was directed to be filled 'probably from east to west, in rows that ran alternately southward and then northward again' (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 47).

Distinct neat rows of burials were excavated at St James Benedictine abbey (Northampton) over four phases of cemetery and monastic building development (see Fig. 7.30) (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 47). Five initial rows of graves extended northwards exhibiting very little intercutting. Additional burials were inserted into these rows between the pre-existing burials during phase two, with an unknown number of rows added to the east. Later burials of phase three to four were much smaller in number 'with only a small amount of evidence for formal row construction' (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 47).
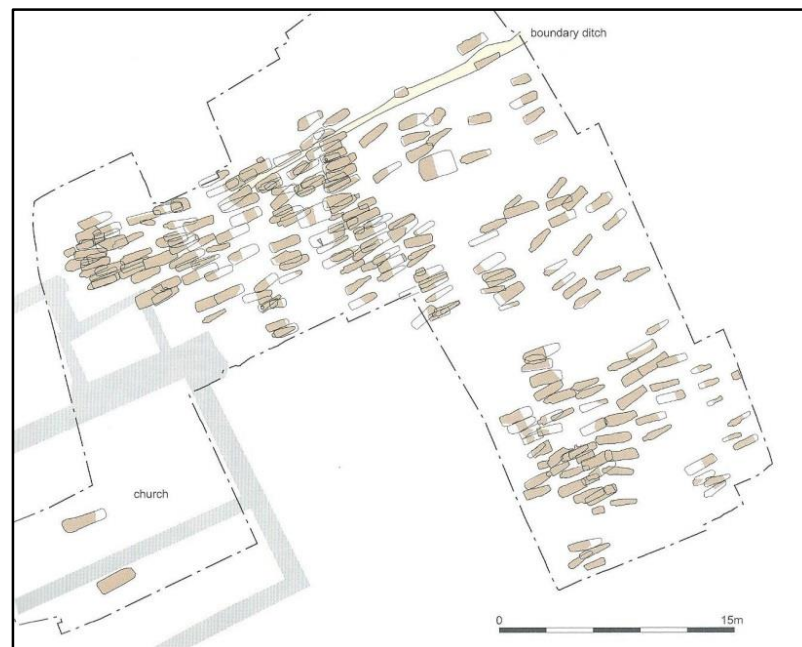
Fig. 7.30: Rows of burials in the cemetery of St James Benedictine abbey (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 51)

Evidence of definitive aspects of cemetery management has not been recorded at the 12th-century monastery and priory at Wenlock (Shropshire). There was evidence of

some graves in the cemetery intercutting each other, however, and radiocarbon dating combined with stratigraphic information, reveals that the burials were intercut and disturbed after decomposition, or after at least the putrefaction stage (Woods 1987: 60). Burials 53, 57, 58 and 59 were specifically positioned in relation to each other, and the 'careful placing' of the inhumations indicates a managed cemetery layout; 'Burial 53 lines up with 59, and 57 with 58' (Woods 1987: 48).

(7.2.3) Burials Within Churches

In addition to cemetery management there is also substantial evidence of some form of management and planning having been in place for burials located within churches. Burial within church was generally reserved for ecclesiastics, although according to Durandus, Bishop of Mende, a 13th-century canon and ecclesiastical writer, 'worthy Presbyters, and laymen of eminent sanctity' were also permitted burial within them (Neale & Webb 1843: 104). Intramural burial in churches does not appear to have been an established practice during the early medieval period, with it only being noted at later medieval sites, apart from translations and elevations (see Chapter 2 Section (2.3.2)). It was a possibility, however, but only for those who were sufficiently worthy (Foxhall-Forbes 2013: 269). As burial in churches was restricted to certain elite categories of individual, it might be expected to find graves distributed haphazardly with little if any evidence of burial management; a plan was not required as only limited numbers of burials would ever take place. Despite this assumption, there is significant evidence that church burials were managed just as efficiently as those in cemeteries, with the same identifiable management traits recognisable in both.

A total of 44 burials were located within the monastic church of the Cistercian abbey of St Mary Stratford, Langthorne (Essex) during the medieval period, although assigning them to specific phases was problematic (Barber *et al.* 2004: 42 & 58). Most of the burials are not in clearly defined rows, although some north-south rows were visible in the presbytery and eastern ambulatory (see Figs 7.11-7.13 and 7.31). The remainder of the burials are described as being in 'clusters' (Barber *et al.* 2004: 107).

Whether in rows or clusters, the majority of burials 'were well spaced, with a minimum of intercutting' (Barber *et al.* 2004: 61).
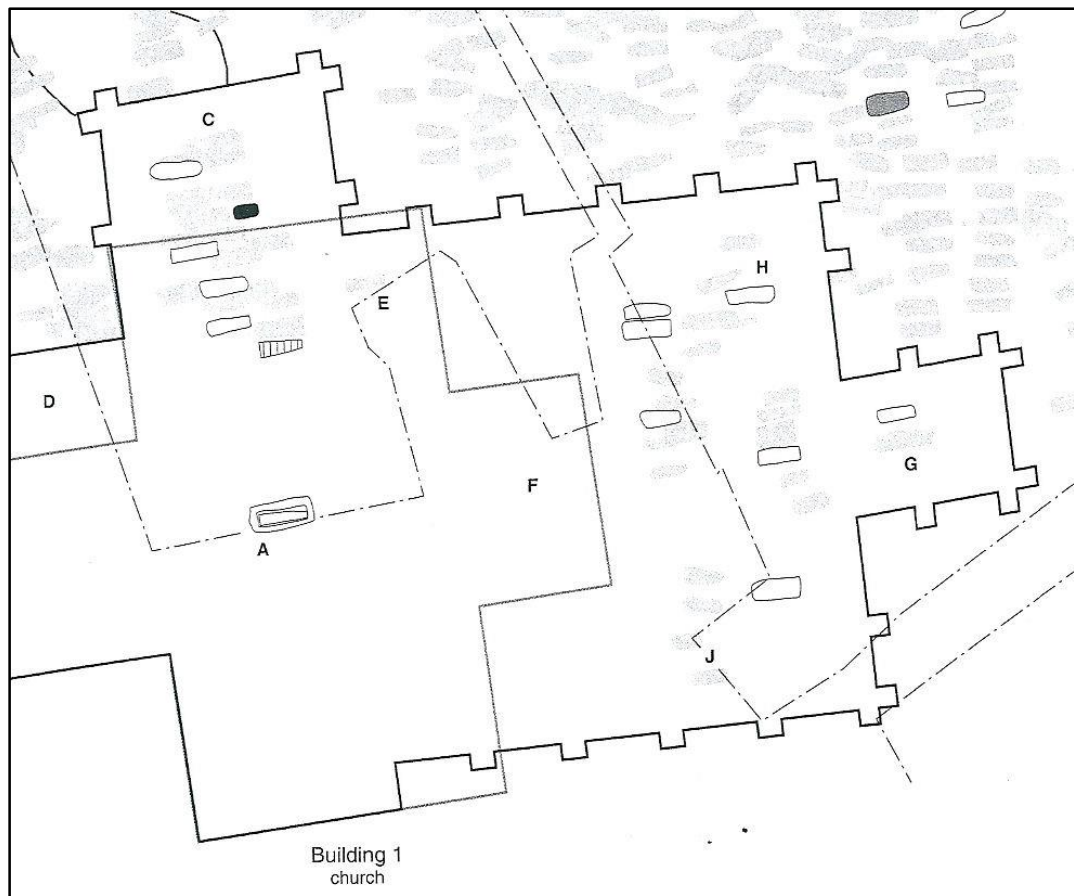
Fig. 7.31: Church burials from all periods at the Cistercian abbey of St Mary Stratford (Barber *et al.* 2004: 108)

Burials were only situated within the church at the priory of St Oswald (Gloucester) from the 13th, or possibly as late as the 14th century onwards and there appears to have been some restriction on where people could be buried. Burials were not haphazardly placed within the nave, but were excavated in two east-west orientated lines; 'burials were restricted to the centre-line of the nave with perhaps some interments in the north aisle' (see Fig. 7.32) (Heighway & Bryant 1999: 199).
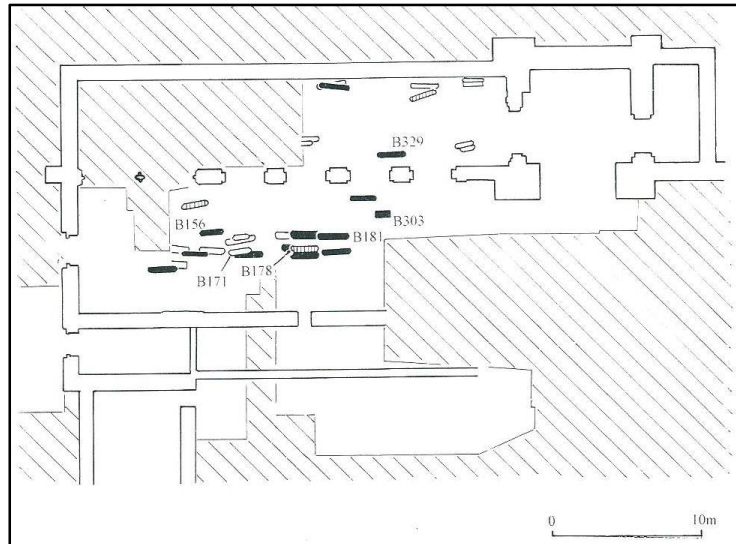
Fig. 7.32: Burials of generations H and I (c.1400-1540) in the centre of the nave of the Priory of St Oswald, Gloucester (Heighway & Bryant 1999: 199)

During Period B3 (c.1400 – 1539) burials took place within the church at the Cistercian abbey of St Mary Graces, Smithfield (London). Several rows of burials were located between the pilasters of the presbytery (Fig. 7.33) (Grainger 2011: 38-9). A row of four graves was located at the western end of the Chapel of St Anne (Room 6a). The excavators note that 'There was some peripheral intercutting between these graves but otherwise they appeared to respect each other carefully' (Grainger 2011: 39). A row of three burials was excavated to the north of a monument or tomb in room 6a, and a 'cluster' of burials was located in the nave, west of the rood screen (Grainger 2011: 42). These graves, like those near the Chapel, and others within the nave, were only 'peripherally intercutting' (Grainger 2011: 42-3). Further rows of burials were located in the nave and south aisle. Where these graves intercut each other, there was no disturbance to the skeletons within the graves; 'Each slightly cut a burial on the row to the west, but in no case were the skeletons disturbed' (Grainger 2011: 44).
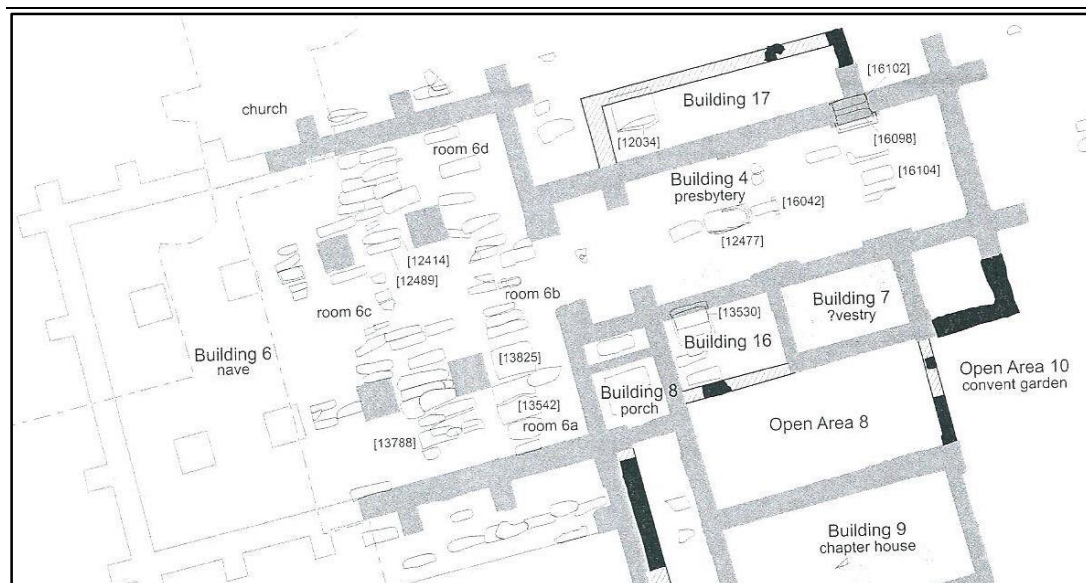
Fig. 7.33: Burials dating to period B3 (c.140 – 1539) located within the abbey church of St Mary Graces, Smithfield (Grainger 2011: 41)

Sixteen burials assigned to Period 4 (11th/12th century) were located within the early, timber church of St Andrew Fishergate, York (see Fig. 7.19). This church was demolished in the mid-14th century and replaced with the new priory church, within which a total of 135 burials were made, mostly dating to Period 6 (1195 – 1538) (see Figs 7.34-7.35) (Stroud & Kemp 1993: 135). Twenty-five inhumations dating to Period 6a were located in the crossing, in the eastern arm of the church. This group of burials 'was not as systematically arranged as in other [contemporary] areas' with some intercutting other graves (Stroud & Kemp 1993: 136). A further four graves were located in the presbytery, east of the crossing, which were described by the excavators as 'systematically arranged' in contrast to those from the crossing of the church (Stroud & Kemp 1993: 137). What form of arrangement this incorporated is not further defined nor is it evident in the plan. A total of 73 inhumations were located in the nave, 22 of which dating to Period 6a were aligned in rows (Stroud & Kemp 1993: 135, 137-8). In Period 6c, 23 burials were very well ordered into two distinct rows.

Figs 7.34 & 7.35: Burials within the Period 6 (1195 – 1538) church of St Andrew Fishergate. Burials within the crossing (top) and the nave (bottom) (Stroud & Kemp 1993: Figs 37 & 38)

In the period between c.1133 – 45, four graves were dug in the extended chancel of the church at St Gregory's Priory, Canterbury (Kent) (see Fig. 7.36) (Hicks & Hicks 2001: 17). Unusually, these graves were positioned, one in each corner of the chancel. A further 32 graves were excavated from within the nave, dating between the 13th and 16th centuries, although 'they were impossible to place within a precise chronological framework' (Hicks & Hicks 2001: 50). These graves did exhibit some slight intercutting, which the authors deduce was the result of the actions of 'Lazy gravediggers' as opposed to contempt or a lack of concern for the buried dead (Hicks

& Hicks 2001: 50). The majority of the burials are located in the centre of the nave and are arranged in east-west rows of east-west orientated burials, as has been noted at various other sites, including the Priory of St Oswald, and Hulton Abbey (see Section (7.2.4)).
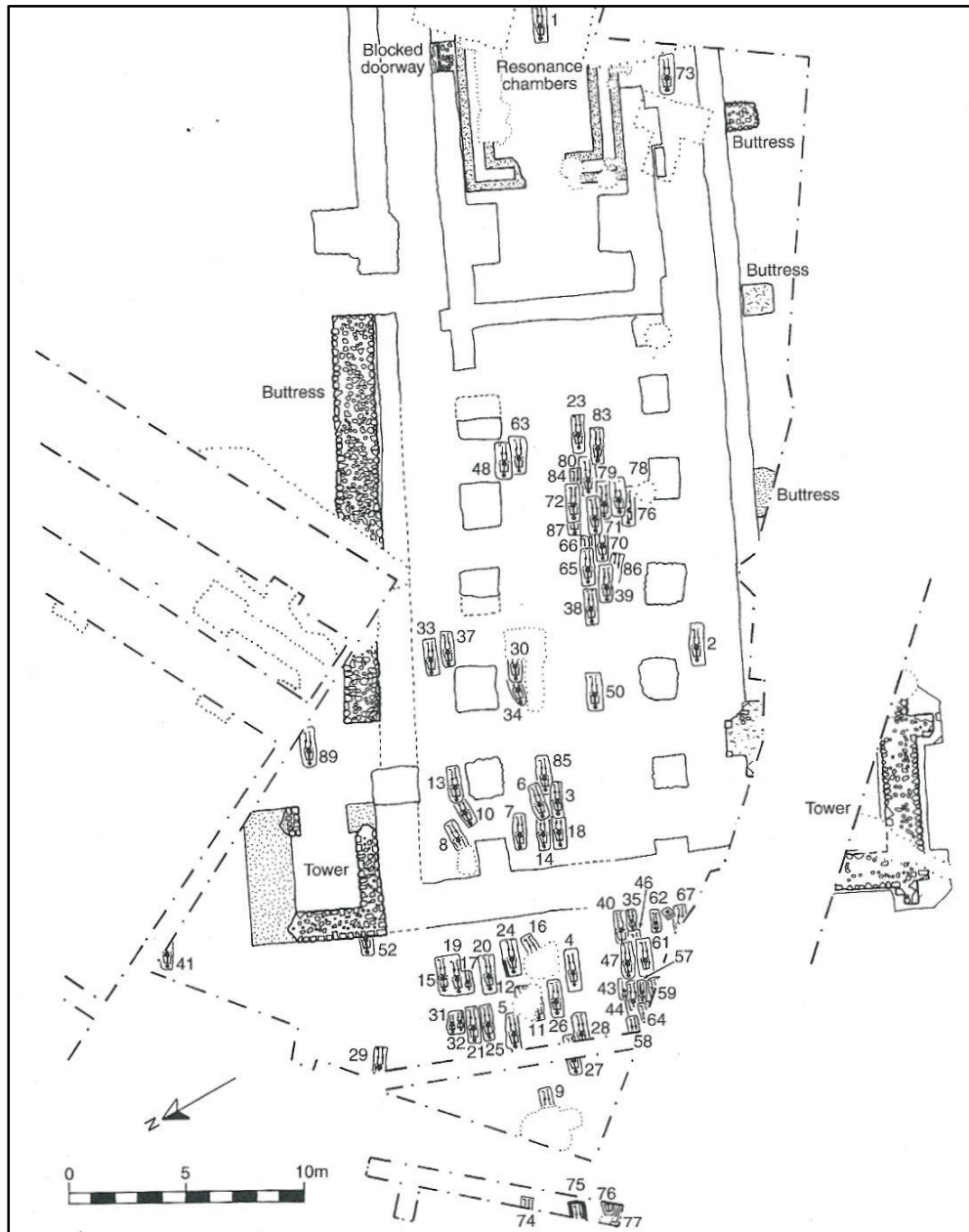
Fig. 7.36: Burials inside the church at St Gregory's Priory, Canterbury.

Note the east-west aligned rows of burial in the central nave (Hicks &

Hicks 2001: 44)

The abbey church, Hulton Abbey (Staffordshire), contained a total of 91 medieval burials, many of which were arranged in rows (see Fig. 7.37). Eight burials were

located within the south transept of the church. According to the excavators, 'The eight burials were arranged in a row' although the plan of the burials and transept shows only six grave cuts in line with each other. These six grave cuts appear to have originally been three graves, which were deliberately targeted for additional burials in the same location (Klemperer & Boothroyd 2004: 25-6). Four graves were excavated in the crossing of the church. The graves constituting this row are in line with one another and are evenly spaced, although there is slight curvature of the row. The north transept had been extensively disturbed by 19th-century construction, but four rows of graves were still clearly visible during the excavation. These rows were orientated north-south and both rows and the burials constituting the rows were fairly evenly spaced. Earlier graves had been intercut by later graves, but it appears that the spaces in between earlier graves were selected for burial which occasionally resulted in the earlier grave and skeleton being intercut longitudinally (Klemperer & Boothroyd 2004: 37-8). In the north aisle, within a group of seven burials was a row of three infant burials and one unexcavated grave (Klemperer & Boothroyd 2004: 47). The burials in the south aisle appear to have been arranged in east-west longitudinal rows instead of rows running north-south.
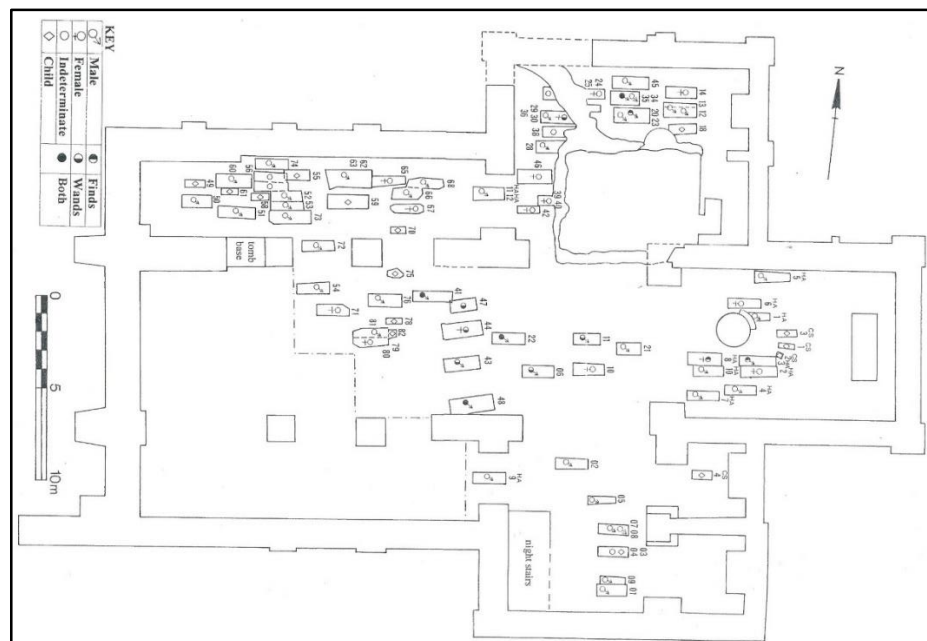
Fig. 7.37: Burials within the church at Hulton Abbey. Note the east-west orientated rows of burials in the north transept and aisle (Klemperer & Boothroyd 2004: 130)

Burials took place within the newly extended and reconstructed St Peter's church, Barton-upon-Humber (Lincolnshire) from at least 1200 onwards (Rodwell & Rodwell 1982: 301-2). Within the south porch 'The last four graves inserted here formed a neat row, filling the whole interior of the porch' (Rodwell & Rodwell 1982: 303).

Further examples of burial rows have been noted by Gilchrist & Sloane, such as within the presbytery of Carmarthen Franciscan Friary, Wales or in the nave of St Anne's Carthusian charterhouse, Coventry (see Figs 7.38 & 7.39) (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 57-59).
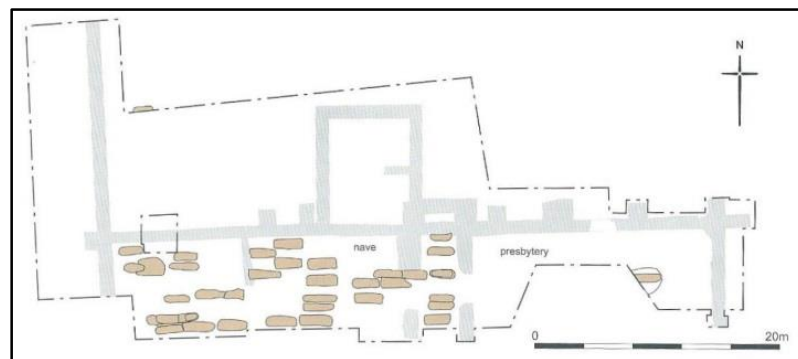
Figs 7.38 & 7.39: Rows of burials within the church at Carmarthen Franciscan Friary (left, Fig. 7.38) and St Anne's Carthusian charterhouse (right, Fig. 7.39) (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 58-9)

7.3: Interpreting the evidence

(7.3.1) The 'ideal' cemetery

From the evidence outlined in Section 7.2 it may be suggested that there was an ideal way to lay out and organise medieval cemeteries, even if it was not always strictly observed. This form of organisation is noted at a variety of site types, including parish churches, abbeys, priories, hospitals and cathedrals. The identification of the same method of management at multiple site types indicates that the manner of medieval cemetery management was standard, and not dependant on the size or status of a church or ecclesiastical complex. Graves were to be arranged in rows orientated in north-south lines, extending southwards as each burial was added. Grave cuts within these rows were aligned with each other at the west end of each grave, at the head. Where these burial rows were located to the east or west of the church, the earliest burial rows were situated closest to the church. Later rows were added either east or west of the first row, depending on which side of the church the cemetery was located and on available cemetery space for expansion of rows. When cemeteries became filled by these burial rows, graves were slotted into the spaces between the rows or between graves within the rows. This secondary stage of management may represent one of the successive stages of planning suggested by Gilchrist and Sloane (see Section (7.2.1)). Once a graveyard became full, extra earth could be added to the surface of the cemetery as was done at Whithorn and St Ninian, otherwise people were buried above earlier burials, only a few cm below the earth, as at St Faith's Lane and St Mary Graces. These actions may represent a third stage of management, where once the point has been reached where intercutting became inevitable, cemeteries were extended or new areas for burial were opened. Charnel chapels were constructed from the 1200s onwards to accommodate bones disinterred from cemeteries and may also represent this stage of graveyard management (see Chapter 5). The reasons for constructing charnel chapels or ossuaries, however, do not always relate simply to the quantity of bones being disinterred and overcrowding in cemeteries. No evidence has come to light that there was a medieval charnel chapel

in York, despite the density of burial in the cemeteries, such as St Helen-on-the-Walls and St Andrew Fishergate (Dawes & Magilton 1980; Stroud & Kemp 1992).

Within churches burial rows tend to be west-east in orientation, extending to the east or west with the addition of each burial. Burials in close proximity to the exterior church walls also tend to be arranged in west-east rows as opposed to north-south orientation. In contrast to the common assumption that burial to the south of churches was preferable during the medieval period, there does not appear to have been any restriction on the location of the cemetery relative to the associated church, with graveyards sited to the north, south, east or west of church buildings (Dawes & Magilton 1980: 10; Sills 1982: 35). Space was also consistently left between the burial rows sufficiently wide to allow a person to comfortably walk without stepping on adjacent graves. This has also been noted by Helen Foxhall-Forbes who also concludes that people did not wish to walk over graves out of respect for the dead (2013: 271-2). The graves themselves also exhibit some standardisation in relation to their depth. The majority of medieval graves, where it could be assessed or was recorded during excavation, were between 0.4m and 0.7m deep (Atkins & Popescu 2010; Barber *et al.* 2004; Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 131; Horrox 1999: 104; Klemperer & Boothroyd 2004; Miles 1986). In medieval imagery depicting open graves with the (presumed) gravedigger standing in them, their depth is roughly the height of the man's knee or thigh (see Figs 7.40-7.42). During the medieval period in England the average height of a man was c.1.71m/c.5' 7" thus his knee height would have equated to c.0.5m/1' 7" (Roberts & Cox 2003: 248). While these images may simply arbitrarily depict grave depth, gravediggers may have used their knee height as a simple but rough guide to grave depth. Variation in grave depth may equally be attributed to the surface level of the cemetery increasing or decreasing over time.
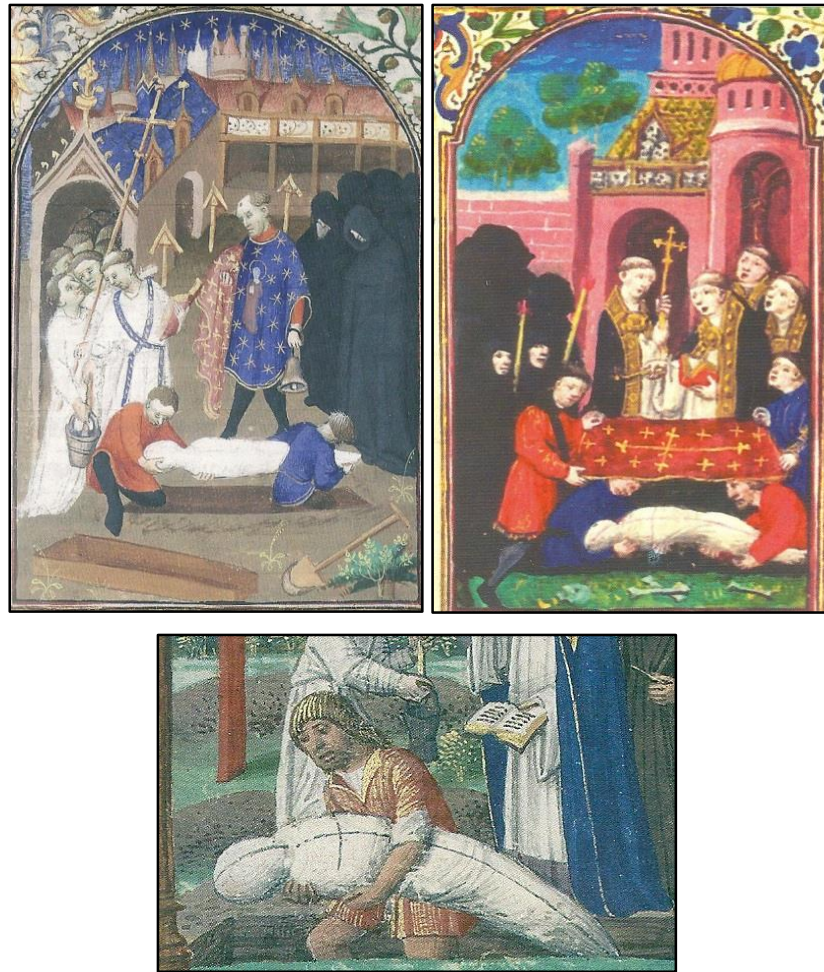
Figs 7.40-7.42: Medieval depictions of grave diggers from Books of Hours. Note the depth of the graves and that all gravediggers are secular males (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 25, 180, front cover)

The same characteristics of management were noted for burial within churches as within cemeteries. Burial rows are smaller and comprise fewer graves than those located in cemeteries, given the obvious restriction on available space, but are arranged in the same manner as external burials; graves are arranged in burial rows with the cuts aligned at the western end. Just as in the cemeteries, there is also strong evidence that where possible, grave intercutting was avoided.

One aspect of medieval cemetery management which does not appear to have been universally adhered to is the amount of land allocated for burial. Medieval cemeteries clearly differ greatly in extent and shape from one site to another (see Figs 7.1-7.31). One indication of how large medieval cemeteries were officially

intended to be is provided by Durandus. He states that 'a space of thirty feet round the church ought to be set apart' and designated as a cemetery (Neale & Webb 1843: 104-5). Interestingly, he follows this by stating that 'others say that the space enclosed by the circuit which the Bishop makes around the church must suffice for this' (Neale & Webb 1843: 105). Although it is not explicitly stated, Durandus may be referring to the circuit made by the bishop during the ceremony to consecrate a church. He describes this ceremony in great detail, part of which involves the bishop performing a circuit of the exterior of the church while blessing its external walls (Neale & Webb 1843: 115-6). It is probable that in many cases the size and extent of a cemetery was also dependant on other, practical terms, such as the revenue available to purchase land designated for burial. Geographic factors may also have determined a cemetery's size, as Durandus and Bede both imply that marshy or waterlogged land is not suitable for burial (Cosgrave & Mynors 1969; Neale & Webb 1843).

It has been suggested that cemetery organisation is more defined and therefore easier to identify at larger ecclesiastical complexes than in parish churches (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 47). It is noted that 'Monastic cemeteries were generally less heavily used than parish churchyards, and for a shorter time-span' meaning that organisation in the form of rows is more visible at such sites (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 47). This may also give the false impression that parish churchyards were not managed to the same extent as monastic establishments, if at all. Sites such as St Andrew Fishergate disprove this theory, as even prior to this parish church cemetery becoming a Gilbertine priory, it displayed evidence for the same type of management as is recorded at monastic sites (see Section (7.2.2) 2)). Larger ecclesiastical establishments may also have had more funds to allocate to cemetery management, to pay for one of more gravediggers to maintain the cemetery. Larger establishments also tended to have had more space to allocate for burial than a parish church might, meaning that space was less restrictive and did not have to be reused over successive generations. The cemetery at St Helen-on-the-Walls displayed elements of order but one of the few examples of medieval burial where consistent management was not always followed. Grave markers were identified during excavation, as were an

attempt at maintaining burial rows, but the overall impression of the layout of the burials was that they were disorganised, particularly compared to other contemporary sites (Daws & Magilton 1980: 16). It must be reiterated that the template of cemetery management as outlined here is an ideal method of maintenance and clearly was not strictly adhered to in every case, for various reasons. This is potential evidence for at an attempt to manage the disorganisation of the intensely densely filled cemetery by the allotment of a new tract of land as an extention of the cemetery. This is from an inscription by the Bishop of Dromore in 1424 referring to a plot of land allotted for the cemetery (Dawes & Magilton 1980: 17).

Wealthier and more prestigious ecclesiastical sites that attracted large numbers of pilgrims and had large congregations might have made an effort to maintain an orderly and neat cemetery, more so than small parish churches. The intention of keeping a cemetery in an orderly manner has been noted at the site of Whithorn and St Ninian, amongst others. The charnel chapel at Bury St Edmunds was also apparently constructed after the abbot had been walking in the lay cemetery and was upset by its seemingly unkempt state and evidence of intercutting graves (see Chapter 5) (Bloxam 1855).

(7.3.2) Further implications of medieval cemetery management

The identification of a significant quantity of cemetery sites exhibiting organisation has served to demonstrate the normality and prevalence of medieval cemetery management (see Section (7.2)). Aside from this important and previously unrecognised observation, there are additional implications pertaining to medieval cemetery management that may be derived from examining the archaeological evidence outlined thus far. The organisation and planning noted at the cemetery sites discussed above reveal insights relating to cemetery usage and post-depositional disturbance of the dead that are not generally accepted as having been commonplace. By assessing the manner in which cemeteries were utilised for burial over generations and centuries, a more complete and accurate picture of medieval

graveyard management and medieval care for the buried dead may be obtained than is currently accepted.

(i) **Retained knowledge of graves' location**

It is apparent that at all sites discussed so far, whoever was digging graves throughout successive years of cemetery usage, was at the very least aware of where burials had previously been dug. This is deduced from the secondary stage of cemetery management identified, when graves were added in between grave rows or graves within burial rows. For example, at Raunds Furnells cemetery, one fifth of all graves were cut by a later grave, but few of the skeletons themselves were disturbed (Boddington 1996: 32-3). Many of these intercutting graves had been inserted in the gaps between earlier burials in grave rows (Boddington 1996: 51). Only 36 out of the 363 graves excavated were marked at surface level by stone slabs, crosses, stones or posts, so there must have been some additional method by which specific locations of the graves were remembered (Boddington 1996: 47). At the Cistercian site of St Mary Stratford, very little evidence was identified for above-ground grave markers within the cemetery, apart from a potential cross and wooden structure signifying a high-status grave (see Section (7.2.2) 2)). The very low level of intercutting graves, however, indicates that either some form of marker was evident beyond the natural mounds of earth and grass over the filled grave; 'although most graves remained visible for a time as low grassed mounds, few were marked in any other way' (Barber *et al.* 2004: 105). It is feasible to suggest that management of the cemetery to avoid intercutting and to maintain regularity may have been monitored and recorded in other manners besides above-ground markers. The location of graves may have been recorded on a cemetery map or plan, which may have aided in the siting of graves (see (iv) below). Alternatively, people may have simply remembered graves' locations by memory, logic and experience (see Section (v) below). As has been demonstrated, the graves were dug in rough north-south rows from the

west to east of the cemetery, and so it must have been known that these areas contained burials, even if there was no visible indication of this. The deliberate and careful placing of graves in between pre-existing rows and in areas of intense burial at these and other sites further substantiate the theory that detailed recorded knowledge of each individual grave location was made, by some as yet unidentified means. Despite the high number of excavated graves at the cemetery of St Mary Spital all graves were evenly spaced with very little intercutting (Connell *et al.* 2012; Thomas *et al.* 1997). Many different phases and periods of burial were noted at the cemetery of St Andrew Fishergate. Despite some of the earlier rows belonging to Period 4b not remaining visible after being covered by layers of stone during Period 4c, later rows dating to Period 4d clearly followed the alignment of these earlier rows (Stroud & Kemp 1993: 133). Burials were inserted into gaps between the graves, with none of these newly inserted graves recorded as having intercut the earlier graves. This demonstrates that even in cases where graves were entirely obliterated from sight, their precise location was still remembered or marked in some way that has not been identified archaeologically. At St Mary Graces cemetery, no case was recorded where a later grave or row of graves cut into a Black Death burial below, despite graves being dug sometimes directly on top of a previous burial; 'In some cases a later grave or even a series of graves lay directly over a Black Death burial' (Grainger 2011: 33). There was a clear effort made by the grave digger/s not to disturb the underlying graves. Little information is provided by the excavators regarding the depth of either the initial burials of plague victims or of the depth of the later graves overlying them. It was believed that foul air emitted from rotting flesh, including that of humans, could cause death (see Chapter 6), and, as a result, the initial burials may have been dug relatively deeply, to contain the contaminated deadly air released by the corpses from harming more people. When an area for further burials was required, it must have been known that area OA2 could accommodate additional burials in the earth

overlaying the Black Death victims. The later graves were slotted into the spaces between the underlying burials (Grainger 2011: 33). This is evidence that each grave's specific position was known or recorded somehow, particularly as nowhere is it stated that any of the earlier graves were disturbed. In relation to the grave cuts, Grainger (2011: 103) states 'there was little if any evidence of standardisation … The deciding factor appears to have been the habits of the gravedigger'. Yet the careful siting of new graves in the narrow spaces above and between earlier burials in OA2 negate against this interpretation. It is also noted that when the burials within the church building intercut, the material disturbed was mainly the peripheral elements of the skeleton, or the skeleton was not disturbed at all (Grainger 2011: 39, 42, 44, 54). At the hospital site of Mary Magdalen, substantial gaps were noted between some graves forming a row in the area apparently designated for ecclesiastical burial (Atkins & Popescu 2010: 219). No empty or emptied grave cuts were identified during the excavation which may account for the open spaces, yet the four burials within this row are all in line with each other, indicating that the position of this row (and the other three) may have been marked above ground. According to the excavators 'The recovery of a possible stone burial marker (unstratified) suggests that at least some of the graves may have been marked' (Atkins & Popescu 2010: 218). At the cemetery of Whithorn and St Ninian, periodically, after the cemetery space had become filled (usually about 20-30 years) with neat rows of burials, the land was levelled and new burial rows were initiated (Daniell 1999: 147; Hill 1998). Daniell describes such activity as 'careful but ruthless', which implies that disturbance of the dead was callous. Yet the very fact that the cemetery was repeatedly levelled, combined with the excavation evidence that few graves disturbed those beneath them in the successive burial generations, actually implies a deliberate intention not to disturb the dead, which can hardly be regarded as ruthless. This kind of graveyard management also illustrates the large scale and long term planning of the cemetery, which would not have

been necessary if people were ambivalent regarding disturbance of their buried dead.

It is entirely possible that graves were permanently marked in some way that is not recognisable archaeologically. A single image from a medieval French Book of Hours depicts two men holding a decorated sheet of material over the body as it is being lowered into the grave (See Fig. 7.42) (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 180). This image may, however, be a representation of a disinterment and not an interment. Sheets of material and canopies were used to cover the graves of people who were being elevated and translated during the early medieval period, and also to adorn coffins as they were transported to church for burial (see Chapter 2 Section (2.2.4)) (Daniell 1999: 146; Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 25, 39). It is possible that some, perhaps wealthier or high-status people, paid for their graves to be marked by palls at the cemetery surface. The 1511 church wardens' accounts for St Margaret's church, Westminster, contain a reference to 'ii blak clothes wt white crosses to lie upon the graves' (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 25). Archaeological evidence for palls or sheets covering bodies have been found at St Peter's Church, Barton-upon-Humber, at the Benedictine Abbey at Dunfermline, Fife, and at Lichfield Cathedral (Staffordshire), but these were placed directly onto the buried individual or their coffin, and not on the grave surface itself (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 179-180).

(ii) Avoiding intercutting of fleshed burials

None of the sites discussed here exhibited any indication that burials were disturbed or intercut whilst the graves' occupants were still in a process of decomposition, although it must be noted that in the majority of cases it is not explicitly stated either way, nor are many images provided in site reports of disarticulated material or of intercut graves. It is, however, explicitly stated by the excavators of the early medieval cemetery at Addingham (West Yorkshire) in the case of all the disturbed

graves, that this seemingly intentional disturbance was only done 'At a stage after the disarticulation of the body' (Adams 1996: 184). A second early medieval cemetery, that of Raunds Furnells, also exhibits evidence that when graves were disturbed and it was found that the buried individual was not decomposed, the disturbance ceased; 'another was abandoned after dislocation of the left humerus of 5200 (G1011) (Boddington 1996: 28). Disturbed material and charnel pits were excavated across the cemetery of St Mary Graces (Grainger 2011: 102). It is insinuated that these are evidence of callous and indiscriminate disturbance of graves. Grainger (2011: 103) also states that 'in medieval churchyards multiple burial in the same place or cyclically across the churchyard was normal; burials frequently exhumed earlier ones, even of those buried within living memory'. This inclusion of this interpretation is odd, as there are no recorded instances at St Mary Graces where the disturbance of a still fleshed or recently buried person occurred. Grainger also does not provide examples of such disturbance, and the evidence from this particular site appears to suggest the opposite; that recent graves were deliberately avoided, and care was taken where feasible to avoid intercutting other graves, particularly in cemetery OA2. The limited description of the disturbed material provided by the excavators also does not imply that any material was articulated at the time of its disturbance. Between 1278 and 1290 at the hospital site of St Mary Spital, a new infirmary hall was built directly over a portion of the pre-existing cemetery, OA5 (Thomas *et al.* 1997: 117). It is implied that the burials in this cemetery would have still been in a state of decomposition; 'a nominal 7-19 years between inhumation and truncation: in any event, decomposition of the bodies would not have been in an advanced state' (Thomas *et al.* 1997: 117). The evidence of this determination is based on the excellent preservation of a coffin from the site. The authors further state that 'This suggests that the pragmatism with which medieval people disturbed "clean" skeletons also extended to the dismemberment of rotting corpses of the recently buried' (Thomas *et al.* 1997: 117-8). The

preservation conditions for wood and human flesh and bone are entirely different, however, and so the near complete survival of the coffin does not equate to the soft portions of human cadavers also surviving for long periods (Boddington *et al.* 1987; Rodriguez & Bass 1985). Seven to 19 years could certainly have been sufficient time for full decomposition of a cadaver to take place, meaning that at the time of their disturbance the burials may have been completely reduced to bone. Contrary to the assertion of Thomas *et al.*, the evidence strongly indicates that bodies in a state of decomposition and putrefaction were not routinely disinterred or disturbed (see Chapter 6). Only a few cases have been identified where burials were definitely in articulation at the time of their disturbance and were not the result of deliberate exhumation and reburial of a decomposing body. One of these cases was excavated at the early medieval cemetery site at Chimney, (Oxfordshire). The articulated torso of an infant was found within the fill of a grave of three other semi-articulated skeletons (Crawford 1989: 50). These skeletons appear to have been relocated from their original deposition context, but the juvenile torso may have been an accidental inclusion; it is plausible that an infant's body may have been accidently cut through by a grave digger without it being noticed due to its diminutive size. Further evidence that burials were not intended to be disturbed while fleshed derives from foundation charters of charnel chapels (see Chapter 5), where it is stated that only dry un-fleshed bones may be removed to the ossuary (Blomefield 1806; Goody and Poppi 1994; Saunders cited in Gilchrist and Sloane 2005: 42). Reasons pertaining to why fleshed burials ought not to be disturbed are discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

(iii) Targeting specific graves for additional burial/s

At Addingham, 27 graves were reopened in order to add either articulated burials or disarticulated material (Adams 1996: 166, 174). It is not known whether each of the graves were targeted specifically because of who was initially buried within that particular grave plot, or if the

graves were being reused due to a lack of cemetery space to create new graves, but either way it demonstrates that the location of each grave was recorded somehow. The hospital site of St Mary Magdalen, Partney, also exhibits evidence for the targeting of specific graves for additional burials. Burial 14 appears to have been reopened on successive occasions, as the grave contained four different fills (Atkins & Popescu 2010: 220). Burial 13 was dug directly above Burial 16 and Burials 33 and 29 almost overlay each other, suggesting the deliberate targeting of these burials for additional interments (Atkins & Popescu 2010: 218). This indicates that knowledge of these graves' locations was retained, even if physical markers were not utilised (see (i) above). Two graves located in the western row of Period M2 at the cemetery of St Mary Spital were interpreted as representing a single grave that was re-opened to accommodate a second burial (Thomas *et al.* 1997: 23). This re-use of a particular plot for an additional burial indicates not only knowledge of where the graves were located, but presumably also of who was within each grave. Multiple burials of this character are more common in the early medieval period than in the later, and have been discussed in detail by Stoodley (2002).

(iv) Pre-planned cemeteries

Only a single definitive example of a documented pre-planned medieval cemetery has been identified to date, that of the early medieval monastery of St Gall; 'The St Gall plan shows 14 burial plots to the south-east of the church … arranged around a churchyard cross' (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 47). At the cemetery of St Andrew Fishergate burials were added to grave rows of an earlier phase, despite the earlier graves not being visible due to a covering of a stone layer (see Section (7.2.2) 2)). The continuation in Period 4d of burial in the rows initiated in Period 4b implies that there may have been an original plan or planned layout of the cemetery, prior to any graves and rows actually being created. The idea of pre-planning a cemetery and specific siting of burial rows may also

be suggested for St Faith's Lane cemetery (Soden 2010). Most of the rows of graves excavated at this graveyard are described as being very closely laid out with little space between individual rows and graves (Soden 2010: 55). Close proximity of the graves and rows may be evidence of a desire to fit potentially large numbers of burials into a limited space. This implies that the layout of the overall cemetery may have been planned prior to the creation of any graves or rows, to prevent or limit the level of future intercutting graves and to fit as many graves as possible into the limited space. The depth of the graves across the site varied considerably (up to 2.3m) and is in contrast to the orderly layout of the majority of the burials. Some individuals were buried 'only a few centimetres below the [original medieval] ground surface' (Soden 2010: 55). The depth is not recorded for each grave but it might be suggested that some of the shallower graves were those dug above pre-existing graves in later generations, with the deliberate intention of not disturbing whoever was buried previously, and deeper, in that location. This in turn implies that it was known exactly where each grave was located in each phase. It may additionally imply that the shallow graves may have been dug sufficiently shallow so as not to disturb any still decomposing remains in deeper graves. If so, then this may be considered as evidence of knowledge for how long each individual had been buried, in addition to recording their specific location. One burial, number 87, was recorded as having been at a depth of 4.15m (Soden 2010: 55). No further detail is provided by the excavators as to how or why this particular grave was so deep, particularly in comparison to the others in the cemetery. This was also one of the earliest phase 1 burials in the cemetery, and may originally have been dug so deep to prevent its later disturbance by overlying graves, which even in this initial phase of burial, was known or expected to occur.

(v) Gravediggers

If graveyard management as outlined in Section (7.3.1) was intended to be universally applied to all cemeteries, it might be expected that one or more people would be made responsible for cemetery maintenance and grave digging, for this to be achieved. It has not been absolutely determined if an official grave digger was employed at all medieval cemeteries, if it was regarded as an ecclesiastical or lay role, or if it depended on who was available at the time of each burial. It also remains unknown as to whether there were any specific conditions pertaining to being made a grave digger, such as a blessing or ceremony. Little documentary evidence exists that might elucidate these issues, besides pictorial representations in Books of Hours, Offices of the Dead and the occasional wall painting (see Figs 7.40-7.46). It has been noted that in these images, the people depicted engaged in grave digging are dressed in lay clothing, not ecclesiastical habits, and they are always male (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 24, 131). However, conflicting accounts from wills and descriptions and chronicle accounts of high-status burials indicate that on certain occasions grave digging was carried out by ecclesiastics. At the funeral of Abbot Thomas de Henley at Winchester in 1344 it was church servants who dug his grave, and the 1368 will of Rector John Watford of Mayfield church (Kent), states a sum of 20d was to be paid to the sacristan for digging the rector's grave (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 131). In both these cases the deceased was a member of clergy. For the early medieval translations of saints the most reverent ecclesiastic was selected for interacting with the corpse and grave of the saint to be elevated (see Chapter 2). It might, therefore, have been deemed more appropriate for an ecclesiastic to dig an ecclesiastic's grave than a lay person.

Figs 7.43-7.46: Medieval images of lay, male grave diggers (Gilchrist &
Sloane 2005: 39, 132, 25, 181). Note how the buried dead in Fig. 7.44
have nimbuses, indicating they are being disinterred by the
gravediggers, not buried, as people were only made saints after death

The medieval term 'fosser' refers to a ditch digger, but may also have
been used in reference to grave diggers. By 1305 Norwich cemetery had
its own 'fosser' who was paid an annual fee, although what his role
involved precisely is unknown (Lepine & Orme 2003: 21). Throughout all
phases of the cemetery at St Ninian, the graveyard was maintained
'scrupulously clean' and it is suggested by the excavators that a small
building within the inner precinct 'housed a *fossor* with specific
responsibility for the adjacent graveyard' although neither a definition of
'fossor' nor justification for the interpretation of the building are
provided (Hill 1998: 89). There are indications from the archaeological
and documentary evidence of cemetery management that grave diggers
were consistently employed in the majority of medieval cemeteries. For
the majority of cases discussed here, it appears that the most recent

person to die was placed in the next available space in the current row being used in cemeteries, unless a specific location for burial had been requested by that person or their family. In wills, often a specific church or cemetery is requested for burial, but a precise location within them, is not (Bell 1997; Furnivall 1882; Orme 2007). Even when people requested burial at a focal point, such as a cemetery cross or a charnel chapel, the specific location in relation to that focal point is not habitually mentioned. This indicates that there was a limit to the control individuals had over the siting of their grave, with perhaps ultimate control the gravedigger's responsibility. The examples discussed in Section (7.3.2) (i) and (ii) above strongly indicate that the act of grave-digging was the responsibility of a single person or a limited number of people working to a plan that directed them where to site graves. The clear knowledge of where to position later graves in relation to earlier ones further indicates that grave digging was a profession; the precise location of an unmarked grave may easily be recognised by someone with experience of grave digging, even years after the interment took place (Stuart Prior, pers. comm. 2012). Stuart Prior was a grave digger for many years, digging graves by hand rather than with machinery (pers. comm. 2012). His experiences and insights assist in understanding how medieval grave diggers were able to avoid intercutting and disturbing still decomposing bodies, and how the specific location of graves that are no longer visible above ground may still be identified. For an experienced gravedigger, this is relatively simple, whereas it would be difficult if not impossible for a novice with no grave digging experience (Stuart Prior, pers. comm. 2012). Freshly dug graves may be readily identified by the mound of earth and grass covering the burial, but the slumping of this soil over time will correspond to the state of decomposition within the grave, as well as the natural settling of the soil; as the process of putrefaction and decomposition of the body progresses the overlying earth will slump downwards into the newly created space (Boddington 1987: 4; Daniell 1999: 119; Stuart Prior, pers. comm. 2012). Changes in soil colour may be

used as an indicator of bodily decay, as when a body is still in the early stages of putrefaction, the earth immediately above and around the body is tinged a greenish-blue and is visually apparent to the trained eye (Stuart Prior, pers. comm. 2012). Graves which may no longer be distinguishable on the cemetery surface may also readily be identified by testing the earth's compactness; recently disturbed soil will be easier to dig through than soil that has not been dug previously. The soil will also fall away from the edges of a grave cut once excavation has commenced, in a manner that earth that has not been disturbed will not. This means that identifying the exact location, shape and extent of a grave cut is possible, in order to avoid intercutting and disturbing graves (Stuart Prior, pers. comm. 2012).

It is now apparent that for most if not all early and later medieval cemeteries, the prevention of grave disturbance was not only desirable but essential. Given the substantial quantity of cemeteries that exhibit explicit evidence for control, organisation and management of burials, the probability of there having been at least one individual at each cemetery who was capable of identifying graves' locations, and had the knowledge and experience necessary in order to maintain the cemetery without disturbing still decomposing bodies.

The decay rate of dead bodies must have been known to some extent by experienced gravediggers, when, for example, graves were reopened for exhumation and relocation. It has been stated on occasion by scholars that medieval people believed that it took a year for a human body to decompose (Daniell 1999; Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 28; Horrox 1999: 101). The source of this belief is, however, difficult to identify and the statements are not referenced by the authors. Decomposition depends on numerous factors which medieval people would not have been aware of, although certain decomposition factors combined with the general manner in which medieval bodies were buried, may explain why it might

have been thought that decomposition was complete after a year had passed. The length of time required for any body to be reduced to bones is dependent on the level of moisture in the soil, the type of soil and its PH levels, temperature of the soil and environment, depth of burial and oxygen present at that depth, presence or absence of bacteria and fungus in the soil, and whether a person was buried in a coffin, amongst other factors (Boddington 1986: 44-9; Rodriguez & Bass 1985). Tentatively, a medieval burial, where the deceased was buried half a meter in depth, naked, wrapped in a shroud, un-coffined and buried the morning after death, might indeed take about a year for the putrefaction stage of decomposition at least to be completed (see Section (7.3.2) Chapter 6). The first anniversary of the funeral of an individual was also highly commemorated during the later medieval period, sometimes with a more elaborate ceremony that the original funeral (Burgess 1987: 847; Daniell 1999: 61-3). One point of this ceremony may have been to recognise officially that the deceased had transformed from one stage of death to another, that is from fleshed to skeletonised (see Chapter 6 Section (6.5)).

(vi) Cemetery management before and after the 11th century

There is a clear difference between the layout and arrangement of cemeteries before the Church reforms of the 10th to 12th centuries and afterwards (see Section (7.2)) (Zadora-Rio 2003). Cemetery organisation, planning and layout were more structured during the later medieval period than during the early medieval and Anglo-Saxon periods. Although only a few early medieval sites exhibited definitive evidence for the planned burial rows identified at later medieval sites, organisation is still evident, albeit in a slightly different form and one less visually distinct (see Section (7.2.2) 1). It is apparent that early medieval cemeteries were regulated to some degree and that methods of remembering and marking specific locations of graves were employed. The overall aim of graveyard maintenance and planning both before and after the Church

reforms seems clear – to prevent disturbance of graves where possible. The points made in (7.3.2) (i) – (v) are relevant to both the early and later medieval periods. It must also be noted that the most specific and definitive evidence for cemetery planning comes from the early 9th-century plan of St Gall (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 47). Daniell argues that care of the buried dead and avoidance of intercutting graves only existed prior to the 12th century, although he does not elaborate to any great length on this theory (Daniell 1999: 146). He links this apparent change in attitude towards the buried dead to the advent of Purgatory, which was officially accepted into Christian doctrine despite it not being mentioned in the Bible. This occurred in 1254 at the Council of Lyon by authority of Pope Innocent IV (Daniell 1999: 11, 146). With the belief that the soul of the deceased now resided in Heaven, Hell or Purgatory, it might be argued that care and protection of the physical buried body did not matter, it no longer serving any purpose. This is a large assumption, which presupposes that the living were unaffected by the concept of grave disturbance, even by the intercutting of still-decomposing burials. The fact that the evidence for this being very rare except in cases of deliberate exhumations, combined with the large amount of information regarding medieval peoples' attitudes towards the dead, negates Daniell's assertion (see Section (7.3.2) (ii) & Chapter 6).

7.4: Conclusion

Some significant conclusions may be drawn from the evidence outlined above for medieval cemetery management. These directly relate to the concept of post-depositional disturbance of the dead as discussed elsewhere in this thesis. However, the focus here has been on the clear intention *not* to physically disturb the buried dead. This evidence thus exemplifies the magnitude and importance of cases of *deliberate* post-depositional disturbance, as identified and discussed elsewhere in this thesis (see Chapters 3 & 4). Five main points are outlined below that summarise why medieval cemetery management was structured as it was and what the implications of enforcing that management reveals in relation to issues concerning post-depositional disturbance of the dead:

1) There was some method in place for remembering where individual graves were located, whether this was via above ground markers, cemetery plans, retained knowledge by the gravedigger/s, or a combination of all three.

2) There was a clear intention not to disturb graves and their contents, unless it was entirely unavoidable.

3) Graves were only disturbed after the main putrefaction stage of decomposition was completed. This signifies that not only was the location of individual graves recorded, but the length of time the person had been buried was also noted by some means.

4) It is highly likely that one or more people were employed as a cemetery's grave digger. These people appear to have been specialised in their role to be able to identify grave location and prevent unnecessary disturbance of the dead.

5) Efforts were made to formalise graveyard management at the time of the 10th- to 12th-century Church reforms. An 'ideal' method was developed that combined elements of management that were initiated and practiced throughout the early medieval period.

The notion that medieval graveyards were essentially unmanaged now appears erroneous. Admittedly, it is occasionally near impossible to decipher stratigraphy during archaeological excavations of cemeteries, or parts of cemeteries, resulting in the impression that graveyards were devoid of management and order (Kjølbye-Biddle 1975; Zadora-Rio 2003). Many medieval graveyards were in constant use for hundreds of years and incorporated thousands of burials (see Section (7.2.2)). Initial observations made during excavations at such sites convey the impression of messy, unkempt and haphazardly filled graveyards, without planning or management. As these sites also tend to exhibit large numbers of burials and high levels of intercutting, it has been deduced that there was a callous indifference towards the buried dead by the living. These have led to unfounded assumptions, such as that held by Grainger, that bodies still in early stages of putrefaction and decomposition were routinely displaced from their graves, despite there being little actual evidence for these occurrences (see Section (7.3.2) (ii)). These unverified assumptions have equally been upheld by recourse to certain pieces of arguably misinterpreted snippets of written evidence, for example that it was the remit of the presiding priest during the funeral ceremony to dictate where exactly the deceased individual was to be buried within the graveyard (see Chapter 6) (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 24; Horrox 1999: 104; Litten 1991: 50). This implies a totally arbitrary method of siting graves, in turn insinuating there was little planning involved. When such unsubstantiated concepts are not questioned the myth that medieval cemeteries were unmanaged and that medieval people were unconcerned with protection of the dead, are perpetuated.

As some graveyards became full there is no doubt that earlier burials were intercut and disturbed by later ones, sometimes extensively. Yet this is not evidence of either a lack of respect or of a lack of *desire* to manage that particular graveyard. Some sites

335

became intensely desirable for burial, resulting in high levels of disturbance, while cemeteries that accommodated large numbers of burials from surrounding parishes may not have been wealthy enough to engage in tertiary stages of management, as defined in Section (7.2.1) (Connell *et al.* 2012; Forrest 2010; Kjølbye-Biddle 1975; Thomas *et al.* 1997). The level of management employed at each cemetery may have been more the result and consequence of wealth, status and politics than actually reflecting a lack of intention to provide care for and protect the dead.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS

8.1: What Did Physical Disturbance of the Buried Dead Signify to Medieval People?

From the earliest centuries of Christianity in England (c.500), the living have been interacting physically with their buried dead. Primary relics, portions of the corporal body of a deceased saint or saintly individual, were crucial in the establishment of churches, and are referred to frequently in sources such as the writings of Bede, and in accounts of the lives of early medieval saints (Cosgrave & Mynors 1967; Farmer 2004; Neale & Webb 1843: 236-7; Rollason 1985). These relics did not necessarily derive from England, however, having been brought into the country from abroad, and so the first documented example of structured and controlled post-depositional disturbance in England is in the form of translations and elevations (see Chapter 2). This form of deliberate physical engagement with the dead was restricted to a certain category of society, that of ecclesiastics. Disturbance of lay individuals did occur concurrently, although not for the same reasons. Instances of post-burial movement and repeated disturbance of graves have been recorded at numerous early medieval cemetery sites (see Chapter 3). As with the cases of translations, traces of these disturbances have been excavated in multiple locations throughout England. These post-burial disturbances range from the reopening of a grave to insert another articulated or disarticulated individual, to the reburial of disarticulated skeletons in bags (see Chapter 3). The initiation of Church reform in the 9th century coincided with the cessation of certain types of disturbance, such as the repeated use of single graves for successive burials (see Chapters 3 & 4). The reforms also introduced stricter measures for particular post-burial treatments, such as redefining who could be classified as a saint and hence attributed a formal translation ceremony. This introduction of more controlled or ordered means of engaging in post-depositional disturbance highlights two critical points; 1) that any post-burial engagement with the dead was not undertaken lightly 2) that an emphasis was being placed on limiting

the amount of disturbance where possible. These two points succinctly illustrate that previous assumptions presuming that medieval disturbance of the buried dead was neither regulated nor regarded with indifference are erroneous (see Chapter 1 & Sections (8.2-4) below).

Perhaps the most profound regulatory measure implemented as part of the Church reforms of the 9th to 10th centuries, was with regards cemetery management (see Chapter 7). Although early medieval cemeteries were clearly managed to some degree so as to avoid unnecessary, unplanned or accidental disturbance of the dead, later medieval graveyards display intensely ordered layout of burials in rows, with new or empty swathes of cemetery space opened successively as and when required (see Chapter 7). Additional funerary practices centring on skeletal remains were initiated in the centuries that followed Church reforms, such as the creation of charnel chapels and ossuaries and the proliferation of skeletal imagery in churches, manuscripts and masonry (see Chapters 5 & 6). This seemingly contradictory emphasis on avoiding or preventing unintentional disturbance while simultaneously deliberately disinterring defleshed skeletal material for their continued use for liturgical purposes as relics, charnel collections, translations and elevations, reflects the prevailing attitudes towards the buried dead throughout this later medieval period. The motivations for, and justifications of, grave disturbance, as well as the circumstances by which a disinterment was authorised and implemented differed. It has been ascertained in this thesis that specific conditions pertaining to each form of post-burial engagement had to be met both prior to permission being granted and during the disinterment process itself. These conditions were devised according to what purpose those remains were intended to serve once disinterred (see Chapters 3-6). These standards limited and regulated physical engagement by the living with decomposing and skeletal human remains alike. Critically, they demonstrate that such behaviour was neither haphazardly engaged in nor was physical disturbance of the dead regarded with indifference or callousness by either lay or ecclesiastical society but rather they illustrate profound respect and consideration for the dead.

8.2: Evaluating Current Archaeological Perceptions of Medieval Post-Depositional Disturbance

(8.2.1) Obstacles in interpretation

The general assumptions, as described in the Introductory Chapter (see Section (8.1)), that post-depositional disturbance was neither liturgically prohibited nor regulated have been demonstrated to be erroneous. The wealth of information concerning these various issues and the volume of evidence pertaining to each category of post-depositional disturbance is considerable (see Chapters 2-7). Despite this, previous research and investigation into medieval burial and funerary archaeology has been largely dismissive of instances of burial disturbances. The osteological limitations in assessing sex, age, and of identifying particular pathological conditions when analysing disarticulated, disinterred, commingled skeletal material discussed in Chapter 1 Section (1.2.1) are mostly valid. Yet the manner by which articulated skeletons came to be in a state of disarticulation and the contemporary perceptions of both the manner and the motivation inherent in the disturbances have received little, if any, attention. Medieval interaction with buried physical remains has been deemed insignificant, explicable on pragmatic terms, or irrelevant to medieval funerary studies (see Chapter 1 Section (1.1)).

(i)   **Lack of coherent study**

Occasionally, individual examples of post-depositional disturbance from medieval cemetery sites have received intense scrutiny. These occurrences, however, have been examined in isolation, as opposed to as a homogenous group, which has prevented understanding of post-depositional disturbance of human remains as a widespread phenomenon. Medieval charnel chapels have been discussed by various archaeologists and historians from at least the 18th century, but little comparative research has been undertaken (see Chapter 5) (Gilchrist 2005; Gnanaratnam 2005; 2006; Harding 1992; Henderson & Bidwell

1982; Orme 1991). The same may be said for the analysis of translations and elevations (see Chapter 2). Individual examples of notable translations, such as those of Cuthbert or Wilfrid have been repeatedly studied and discussed extensively (Battiscombe 1959; Bonner *et al.* 1995; Cox 2002; Crook 1990; 1992; Waters 1980). These cases have been analysed mainly from an historical or an art historical perspective, with the focus predominantly on either the commemorative fabric of the memorial or the accounts of the life of the translated individual in question. Neither of these types of analysis incorporate multi-disciplinary approaches to any notable extent; research into translations generally glosses over the physical act of disinterment and redeposition, while ossuary and charnel chapel studies have neglected to investigate the buildings that house ossuaries and how they were used.

The specific manner by which people came to be disinterred and redeposited are crucial to our deciphering the role of post-depositional practices, as are contemporary understandings of such behaviour and the role that curation of the dead played in these activities. By ignoring the specific processes of disinterment and redeposition, any regulations or restrictions inherent in each type of post-burial disturbance are not likely to be recognised. This gives the impression that practices involving the once buried dead were engaged in haphazardly or that such disturbances were not regulated. Once the instances of post-depositional disturbance are examined as a group then additional information about these practices becomes apparent. It further illustrates that each separate activity had its own set of liturgical and practical guidelines, ensuring that these activities were correctly carried out and the disinterred people were suitably commemorated.

(ii) Lack of affinity with post-depositional disturbance

A lack of 'connection' between today's attitudes towards cemetery use, inhumation and post-depositional disturbance and those of medieval

societies', may explain why medieval disturbances of the buried dead are commonly misunderstood as being either disrespectful or non-liturgical. Lack of inherent understanding and inaccurate perceptions of medieval religion by modern day archaeologists and historians could in part explain why certain medieval practices remain under-researched or are considered negatively. The very idea of burial and decomposition within a grave, let alone the concept of disturbing a burial, whether decomposed or otherwise, is alien and subsequently repugnant to a significant proportion of the English population (Parker Pearson 1999: 40-4, 183-194).

The idea of interacting with the dead, whether fleshed or skeletal, is generally regarded with abhorrence by most people, even some archaeologists. There are laws relating to the sale of human skeletal remains, ownership of the deceased, organ donation, retention of human material, which are all designed to protect the human body from desecration or disrespectful treatment post-mortem (Mays 2005; copies of legislation available online at https://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/burials-and-coroners/exhuming-human-remains-faq.pdf; http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/30/contents). Throughout the entire medieval period in England burial in consecrated ground was the only acceptable method of disposal of the body of a Christian, as cremation was considered inappropriate according to contemporary Christian theology (Daniell 1999: 106). Officially introduced as a legal method of disposal of the dead in 1885, cremation as a form of funerary rite has since become the preferred method of disposal in England (http://www.cremation.org.uk Progress of Cremation in the United Kingdom 1885-2013). According to a survey conducted in 2007 by the Commission for Architecture & the Built Environment, cremation is the dominant funerary rite in England, accounting for 72% of all disposals, one of the highest rates worldwide (Worpole 2007). A survey conducted

in 2006 by the Ministry of Justice determined that there were 9747 burial grounds in England and Wales, with 80% of this land already occupied by graves (Ministry of Justice 2007 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment _data/file/217908/burial_grounds_web_whole_plus_bookmarks.pdf).

In May 2014, the reuse of graves for additional burial was discussed in British parliament as a potentially viable option where land designated for burial was limited. The results concluded that, as in 2004 and 2012, reuse of graves and the disturbance of inhumations may only be undertaken in certain cases and under strict guidelines and controlled circumstances (Fairbairn 2014; http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN0 4060#fullreport). This is unlike funerary customs and observances in many European Catholic countries where reuse of graves and creation of ossuaries and charnelling of human skeletal material is commonly practiced (Koudounaris 2011; 2013). Disturbance of the buried dead may thus be said to be a relatively uncommon occurrence in modern day England, but one which is regarded with extreme negativity. Therefore, when an archaeological instance of such behaviour is encountered, the immediate 'natural' response is to regard it as a negative act. This extends to unusual cases of burial as well as post-depositional activity. For example, it is frequently assumed that a prone burial in a medieval Christian cemetery is evidence of a deliberate disrespectful treatment of that individual (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 153-4; Murphy 2008; Reynolds 2009). However, certain devout individuals appear to have requested burial in the prone position, as this was regarded as an extension of kneeling or genuflecting, and was intended to be understood as a sign of humility and to demonstrate piousness, even in death (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 154). Throughout this thesis it has been emphasised that archaeologists have failed to acknowledge post-depositional disturbance of burials, still less have they adequately explained the reasons for it. Why this may be the case has not, however, yet been addressed. It is arguable

that the explanation may lie in contemporary attitudes to the dead, where perceptions of how the dead ought to be, and are expected to be, treated are projected onto medieval disturbances of the dead.

Attitudes towards the dead have been discussed extensively in Chapter 6. These insights reveal that medieval perceptions of corpses and disturbance of the buried dead were not overtly different from the modern attitudes discussed above. The crucial point, which is not recognised by many researchers, is that medieval forms of disturbance were liturgically justified, motivated, regulated and controlled just as they are today. Due to the religious changes brought about by the English Reformation these same justifications were no longer acceptable by the end of the medieval period.

(iii) The impact of the Reformation

As outlined in Section (8.3.1) (i) above, current perceptions of medieval post-depositional disturbance seem to be derived from post-medieval and early modern attitudes to treatment of the buried dead. Post-medieval interaction with the dead is entirely different from that of the medieval period (see Section (8.4) below). The English Reformation substantially changed religious doctrine, which subsequently meant that certain aspects of medieval religion were designated illegal and no longer practiced. These ideological and doctrinal changes necessitated physical alterations to Church fabric and trappings and also drastically altered the entire structure of religious Christian practice in England (Tarlow 2003; Phillips 1973; Spraggon 2003; Whiting 2010). It is here suggested that in some manners, the magnitude of these changes are still in effect today, reflected in some, albeit marginal, perceptions of pre-Reformation period funerary practices (see Sections (8.3.1) (i) & (ii) above).

Detailed discussion of the Reformation period of England is beyond the scope of this thesis. There are certain aspects of this time period,

however, that are particularly pertinent to the current discussion. As a result, three doctrinal concepts that had been essential to medieval Christian religious practice were drastically modified between c.1530 – 1600; 1) Purgatory was no longer acknowledged as a real place; 2) prayer could no longer directly affect the fate of an individual's soul, after death; 3) images, icons, and church fabric idolising saints were deemed blasphemous and were therefore designated illegal (Cummings 2002; Dimmick *et al.* 2002; Phillips 1973: 47-61). These three concepts were enforced with varying degrees of vigour, mainly depending on the prevailing monarch and their religious persuasion throughout this period. Eventually, the rigorous implementation of these liturgical laws made England a Protestant nation by the end of the reign of Elizabeth I in 1603 and the succession of James I to the crown (Phillips 1973). Today, according to 2011 census statistics, 33.2 million people equivalent to 59% of Britain and Northern Irelands' population classified their religious persuasion as Christian (http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census/detailed-characteristics-for-local-authorities-in-england-and-wales/sty-religion.html). Although the particular denominations of Christianity were not recorded, according to the Catholic Church in England and Wales, only 8% of the population of Britain, excluding Northern Ireland and Scotland identify as being Catholic (http://www.catholic-ew.org.uk/Home/News/2012/2011-Census). As medieval religion was essentially Catholicism, a basic knowledge of Catholic doctrine is surely essential in accurately interpreting medieval funerary behaviour, including incidences of post-depositional disturbance. While medievalists undoubtedly have this detailed knowledge, it may be argued that others who interpret post-depositional occurrences do not to the same detailed expertise, hence certain incidences may be misinterpreted. Care must be taken in such assumptions, however, as modern Catholic interpretations of, and attitudes towards, medieval Catholic practices may hinder our understanding of medieval disturbance of the dead; modern Catholic or

Protestant explanations of current post-depositional activities may be projected onto medieval post-depositional activities, masking any original meaning. Attempted interpretations of medieval disturbances may be inherently biased, if predicated on liturgical context derived from after the Reformation.

8.3: A Comparative Analysis of Medieval & Post-Medieval Disturbance

There are profound differences between medieval and post-medieval post-depositional disturbances of the dead. The changes brought about by the Reformation in England appear to have brought about significant changes in funerary practice that are detectable in the archaeological and historical record. Certain practices and treatments of the buried dead effectively ceased in England entirely, while others continued but in a significantly modified manner. The reasons for these changes relate directly to the Reformation and the doctrinal modifications initiated throughout the period. As outlined in Section (8.2.1) (iii), three main medieval liturgical concepts were significantly modified or eradicated, in addition to many other amendments introduced under Henry VIII and Elizabeth I during the 16th century. All medieval funerary practices and concepts related to these three changes. The role that they played in commemoration of the dead and their overall purpose were no longer deemed acceptable according to the new religion, Protestantism. Consequently, these practices and all spiritual and physical manifestations of them ceased. No specific references to charnelling or of the disturbance of human skeletal material or its use could be identified in post-medieval legislation by the author. Yet a general change in attitude towards human skeletal remains during this fraught time period may be surmised from analysis of the doctrinal legislation initiated and implemented both during and after the English Reformation.

(8.3.1) Charnelling

Medieval charnel chapels and charnelling were discussed extensively in Chapter 5. Ossuaries were demonstrated to be intrinsic to medieval liturgical and doctrinal values, understanding of Purgatory and the power of prayer concerning the fate of the soul of the deceased. No specific Reformation legislation regarding charnelling or charnel chapels can be identified. However, the differing treatment of human skeletal material before and after the English Reformation, indicates that their symbolism and role changed significantly with the advent of the new official religion, Protestantism. As charnelling and the curation of human bones in ossuaries no longer

served the liturgical purpose they did during the medieval period, their subsequent treatment in the 16th and 17th centuries was justified (see Chapter 5). The destruction of the buildings that housed the charnel and the treatment of the charnel itself has been documented, and noted to have occurred at the time of the Dissolution of the Monasteries Act, 1536 – 41. This Act authorised the physical destruction of ecclesiastical buildings such as friaries and monasteries (Phillips 1973). Their destruction did not concern a need for building material but, amongst other motivations, symbolised an end to the medieval Catholic religion as the dominant religion of England. The medieval methods and practice of charnelling engaged the living with the dead in Purgatory via their physical remains, and were a means by which the medieval Church encouraged the living to remember and pray for the dead. As the existence of Purgatory was denied by Protestant reformers, any activity that encouraged or promoted prayers for the dead could not be continued.

Charnelling did not cease entirely in England in the years after the Reformation, but the motivations behind the handling of human remains changed completely. While spiritual ideals underpinned the practice in the earlier periods, practical reasons were most prevalent later. The need to clear certain portions of cemetery space to allow further burials to take place, so often assumed incorrectly to have been the main purpose of medieval ossuary creation, became the primary incentive of post-medieval charnelling. Post-Reformation ossuaries were not intended to be visible or accessible. The 'interactive' element of charnel practice – the living being able, if not expected, to visit the charnel chapels and pray for the dead amongst their physical remains – is absent in post-medieval ossuaries. Instead, those examples that have been excavated exhibit a distinct lack of accessibility. In some, the bones were placed, or arranged in patterns, inside brick vaults which were subsequently sealed (Haslam 2014; Milne 1997; Teague *et al.* 2013). In others, the bones were inserted into the vaults via small holes or 'bone-chutes', not sufficiently large to allow human access to the interior. These vaults also do not have windows and in some cases the charnel was covered with a layer of earth, meaning even if access was possible, the bones themselves would not be visible (Haslam 2014; Litten 1991: 219; Milne 1997: 14, 44-5, 107). These two key points, lack of access and visibility, were clearly

important if not crucial to post-Reformation treatment of charnel. Significantly, it appears that the visibility and accessibility of medieval ossuaries were specifically targeted at the time of their destruction, through their clearance and sealing.

(8.3.2) Skeletal imagery before & after the Reformation

As discussed in Section (8.3.1), physical interaction with the dead via their bones ended in England with the Reformation. Imagery of the dead was also transformed at this time. It is here suggested that two significant alterations were made to how people remembered the dead and perceived their own mortality: 1) physical remnants, actual skeletal material, were replaced by *symbols* of skeletal remains, such as the skull and crossbones image; 2) such remembrance changed from public commemoration to private contemplation and became portable, as *memento mori*. It is perhaps significant to note that the emergence of *memento mori* began in countries which had undergone a Protestant Reformation (Ariès 1971; 1981).

Depictions of the human skeleton in medieval imagery were discussed in Chapter 6. These were identified in church wall paintings, in manuscripts, in stained glass, and as external stone sculptures on ossuaries in Brittany (see Chapter 6). Where dating evidence could be obtained, the majority of these examples were from the late 15th to mid-16th centuries, making them a rather late medieval phenomenon. One interpretation for their introduction and depiction may relate to a developing belief in northern France, Ireland, and England. Collections of bones began to symbolise a personification of death, the 'Ankou', to late medieval people (see Chapter 6 Section (6.4)). Changes in the use of imagery of the dead appear to suggest that societal attitudes towards charnel may already have been changing prior to the advent of the Reformation and the Dissolution of the Monasteries (1536), with specific symbols of death and commemoration emerging in place of actual skeletal material from the late 15th century.

The practice of charnelling and visiting charnel chapels continues today in European and South American Catholic countries in much the same manner as it appears to have done in medieval England (Ariès 1981; Crangle 2009; Goody & Poppi 1994;

Koudounaris 2011). The presentation of the charnel is, however, more elaborate than that of English charnel chapels, in the majority of cases. Instead of merely being stacked against the walls of the charnel room, the charnel is arranged into patterns or incorporates various Catholic symbols of crosses, or anachronisms such as INRI, a Latin acronym meaning 'Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews'. The use of bones as decorative material and their arrangement into icons of Catholicism occurs predominantly from the 16th century onwards, in tandem with the emergence of *memento mori* (Ariès 1981; Crangle 2009; Koudounaris 2011). Use of skeletal material to form crosses within a grave has been noted at four English medieval sites: Whithorn Priory, Scotland: St Mary Spital, London: St James Priory, Bristol: and St Anne's Charterhouse, London (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005; Hill 1997; Jackson 2006; Soden 1995). At all four sites, burials of individuals were excavated that had two disarticulated long bones from a secondary disturbed burial, arranged into rudimentary crosses over their chest. At Whithorn, a perinatal juvenile was placed on the thoracic region of an adult female skeleton, whose humeri were arranged into a cross on top of the juvenile (Hill 1997: 551). Two ulnae were formed into a cross over the body of an unsexed adult at St Mary Spital (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005: 181). At St James Priory there may be an example of a skeleton having being disturbed at a later date, sometime after decomposition, as the excavation report describes that two femurs were arranged in a cross over the skeleton's pelvic region, but do not specify if they derived from the skeleton in question, or elsewhere; 'Both femurs placed across pelvis in a cross. Hands across pelvis' (Jackson 2006: 84). At St Anne's Charterhouse, according to the excavator a juvenile was buried in the nave with two unidentified long bones and a skull that had, together, been placed in a skull and crossbones arrangement over the body (Soden 1995: 78). Unfortunately, no images were provided for any of these occurrences. The burials at Whithorn and St Mary Spital could only be dated to between the 13th and 16th centuries, that of St James Priory to between the 14th and 15th century, while the burial at St Anne's dated to the late 15th to early 16th century. It is here suggested that these examples of crosses within the grave, are precursors to the use of the skull and crossbones symbol in post-medieval funerary iconography.

8.4: Re-Assessment of the Evidence; Future Analytical Methodology

The deliberate negative portrayal and denunciation of medieval Catholicism by Protestant reformers in England has had adverse influence on current perceptions and interpretations of certain medieval post-depositional practices (Dimmick *et al.* 2002; Marshall 2004; Parish & Naphy 2002; Parish 2005; Phillips 1973; Spraggon 2003; Whiting 2010). The range of issues highlighted above have conspired to create a situation where the post-deposition treatment of human remains in the medieval period has neither been adequately acknowledged nor afforded sufficient attention. This is in spite of the considerable volume of archaeological evidence and historical documentation attesting to the physical manipulation of the dead. Inherent and inherited biases, such as medieval disturbance of the buried dead being thought indicative of negative, disrespectful or callous treatment, derive from the time of the Reformation, and have been perpetuated – intentionally or otherwise – ever since. No meaningful attempt has been made to isolate particular assumptions, to define their origins or to test their validity. Conversely, assumptions about particular aspects of medieval post-depositional behaviour are repeatedly stated as fact, for example, that medieval people frequently disturbed fleshed burials, or that charnel houses mainly contained crania and femurs, as this is what medieval people believed was required for them to enter Heaven (see Chapter 5). Moreover, the over-riding impression gained whilst researching the source material for the purposes of this thesis, has been that according to medieval archaeologists, there is no requirement or necessity to investigate incidences of medieval post-burial disturbance further.

The manner in which acts of disturbance have been recorded in archaeological reports has contributed greatly to the problem of assessing and investigating post-depositional medieval practices. In the vast majority of cases discussed throughout this thesis, examples of evidence of disturbance was abundant, yet was poorly detailed by those reporting it, with pertaining information consistently and remarkably scarce. Where post-burial behaviour at a particular site was recorded in excavation reports, it was invariably brief, with little if any description provided, and

rarely was accompanied by a photographic record. This tendency reflects the dismissive attitudes that prevail in archaeological and historical disciplines towards the phenomenon of medieval post-depositional disturbance, as highlighted in the introductory chapter. Due to this dearth of detail, it has not consistently been possible to confirm absolutely the significance of each and every individual category of post-depositional disturbance to medieval people and culture, or to offer a precise explanation as to the reasons for contemporary engagement in such activities. Instead, it has been possible to identify various fallacies concerning medieval interaction with the buried dead and to demonstrate the inaccuracies in interpretations offered to date. The preconditions leading to the initiation and cessation of certain practices have also been identified, which in turn has allowed for the personal and emotive nature of disturbing the buried dead to be highlighted. This has been achieved by focussing on the physical act of burial, disinterment and disturbance, and the deliberate prevention of grave disturbance (see Chapters 3-4 & 6-7). Furthermore, certain concepts that have previously not been acknowledged to have been practiced, such as graveyard management, have now been proven to have been in place and controlled from the early medieval period onwards (see Chapter 7).

The limited methodological analysis of disarticulated skeletal material has been discussed in Chapter 1. It is here suggested that an alternative method of analysis of disarticulated material ought to be developed and utilised, instead of or in addition to the traditional procedure that is applied to articulated skeletons. As opposed to focussing solely on osteological analysis, it is proposed that a more funerary emphasis would be advantageous. Where feasible, the specific location of the disarticulated remains within the cemetery in question should be noted, to see if there are particular regions that display more concentrations of disturbed material than others. By comparing the levels of disarticulated material in these areas with the level of articulation of the burials in the same areas, it could be seen if disarticulated material had been deliberately moved from one location to another within the cemetery. As has been illustrated in Chapter 5, significant quantities of charnel were occasionally, if not frequently, translated from one cemetery to

another, to be housed within charnel houses. Aside from detailing an aspect of medieval cemetery management, this has important implications for medieval demographic studies; the buried individuals within cemeteries are assumed to represent the once living population of the associated village, town or ecclesiastical community, yet this study of medieval charnel chapels and their use and purpose, proves otherwise. It has been discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, that there were a significant number of cemetery sites where disarticulated crania were inserted into graves of articulated individuals. It was also noted that some sites exhibited little intercutting of buried skeletons, yet contained quantities of disarticulated material (see Chapters 3 and 4). By comparing or 'matching' the disarticulated material to the articulated burials that are missing portions of their skeletons via post-depositional disturbance, it would be revealed whether or not charnel has been removed, or added, to the site in question.

It has been demonstrated that charnel chapels were a significant funerary feature of medieval churches and ecclesiastical complexes (see Chapter 5). The 'rediscovery' and analysis of charnel chapels as a forgotten aspect of medieval mortuary and church archaeology requires further research. The list of charnel chapels identified in Chapter 5 potentially represents only a proportion of the original number of structures that once existed. It is probable that additional charnel chapel sites may be identified that were not discovered by the author due to time constraints. Further detailed analysis of these sites, in the manner that has been achieved for that of Holy Trinity Church, Rothwell (see Chapter 5), was beyond the scope of this thesis and necessitates completion. The initial preliminary research conducted in this thesis has highlighted the previously unrecognised role that charnel fulfilled in medieval religion. It is expected that continued research into these structures, both architecturally in relation to church archaeology, and ideologically in a funerary capacity will further elucidate their precise and complex purpose.

The study of the disturbed buried dead of the medieval period can positively contribute to the combined disciplines of funerary, church, and osteoarchaeology. The perceptions that medieval people held regarding their buried dead and how their

disturbances ought to be carried out, indicates that post-depositional interaction with the deceased was regulated and controlled. It also demonstrates that physical curation of the dead was equally as important as liturgical and funerary considerations. Commemoration of the dead extended beyond prayers with charnel deliberately being relocated from the cemetery to beneath churches. This previously unrecognised role that churches held with regard the dead is a fascinating and valuable aspect of medieval ecclesiastical studies.

A substantial quantity of the interpretative information provided throughout this thesis has been gleaned from a wide variety of source material, deriving from multiple disciplines. The conclusions drawn and interpretations offered were potentially open to countless other researchers. Yet due to various inherited biases and assumptions, these insights have simply either not been noticed or dismissed as irrelevant and non-representative of later medieval funerary culture. It is expected that future research conducted by archaeologists, historians, osteoarchaeologists and medievalists via the same manner proffered by the author, will contribute further to elucidating this now demonstrably under-researched area of medieval funerary studies.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adams, K.A., 1990. The Monastery and Village at Crayke, North Yorkshire. *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, Vol. 62, 29-50

Adams, M., 1996. Excavation of a Pre-Conquest Cemetery at Addingham, West Yorkshire. *Medieval Archaeology,* Vol. 40, 151-191.

Anonymous, 1971. *The Holy Bible: Containing the Old and new Testaments.* London: Collins.

Ariès, P., 1976. *Western Attitudes Toward Death: from the Middle Ages to the Present.* London: Marion Boyars.

Ariès, P., 1981. *The Hour of Our Death.* Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Ariès, P., 1985. *Images of Man and Death.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Aspöck, E., 2011. Past 'Disturbances' of Graves as a Source: Taphonomy and Interpretation of Reopened Early Medieval Inhumation Graves at Brunn Am Gebirge (Austria) and Winnall II (England). *Oxford Journal of Archaeology,* Vol.30, 299-324.

Atkins, R. and Popescu, E., 2010. Excavations at the Hospital of St Mary Magdalen, Partney, Lincolnshire, 2003. *Medieval Archaeology*, Vol. 54, 204-270.

Aufderheide, A. and Rodríguez-Martin, C., 2011. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Human Paleopathology.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Barber, B., Chew, S., Dyson, T. and White, B., 2004. *The Cistercian Abbey of St Mary Stratford Langthorne, Essex: Archaeological Excavations for the London Underground Limited Jubilee Line Extension Project.* London: Museum of London Archaeology Service.

Barker, J.F., 1998. *The Parish of Hythe. St. Leonard's Church, A Historical and Architectural Guide.* England: Chaucer Technology School Press.

Battiscombe, C.F., 1959. *The Relics of Saint Cuthbert*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bell, P., ed., 1997. *Bedfordshire wills, 1484-1533. The Publications of the Bedfordshire Historical Record Society Vol. 76.* Bedford: Bedfordshire Historical Record Society.

Binski, P., 1996. *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Bishop, M.W., 1983. Burials from the Cemetery of the Hospital of St. Leonard, Newark, Nottinghamshire. *Transactions of the Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire,* Vol. LXXXVII, 23 – 35.

Blair, J., 2004. Wells: Roman Mausoleum, or Just Anglo-Saxon Minster? *Church Archaeology,* Vols. 5-6, 134-137.

Blomefield, F., 1806. *An Essay Towards A Topographical History of the County of Norfolk: Volume 4: the History of the City and County of Norwich, Part II.* London: W. Bulmer and Co.

Bloxam, M.H., 1855. *On the Charnel Vault at Rothwell Northamptonshire and on Other Charnel Vaults Elsewhere.* Northampton: Dicey.

Boddington, A., 1996. *Raunds Furnells. The Anglo-Saxon Church and Churchyard. Raunds Area Project.* London: English Heritage.

Boddington, A., Garland, A.N. and Janaway, R.C., eds., 1987. *Death, Decay and Reconstruction. Approaches to Archaeology and Forensic Science.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Bonner, G., Rollason, D. and Stancliffe, C., eds., 1995. *St. Cuthbert, His Cult and Community to A.D. 1200.* Woodbridge: The Boydell Press.

Brickley, M. and McKinley, J., eds., 2004. *Guidelines to the Standards for Recording Human Remains. IFA Paper No. 7.* BABAO & the Institute for Field Archaeologists: Department of Archaeology, University of Southampton & University of Reading, Whiteknights.
http://www.babao.org.uk/HumanremainsFINAL.pdf

Brown, F. & Howard-Davis, C., 2008. *Norton Priory: Monastery to Museum: Excavations 1970-87.* Lancaster: Oxford Archaeology North.

Buckberry, J., 2007. On Sacred Ground: Social Identity and Churchyard Burial in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire, c.700-1100AD. In Semple, S. and Williams, H., eds., *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History 14,* 117-129.

Buckberry, J., 2010. Cemetery Diversity in the Mid to Late Anglo-Saxon Period in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. In Buckberry, J. and Cherryson, A., eds., *Burial in Later Anglo-Saxon England c.650-1100AD,* 1-25.

Bull, F.E., 1911-1912. Rothwell Church, *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries,* 24, 225 – 229.

Burgess, C., 1987. By Quick and by Dead': Wills and Pious Provision in Late Medieval Bristol, *The English Historical Review*, 102 (405), 837-58.

Burgess, C., 1987. By quick and by dead': Wills and Pious Provision in Late Medieval Bristol. *English Historical Review*, 102(405), 837-858.

Burgess, C., 2011. Chantries in the parish, or `through the looking-glass. *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 164, 100-129.

Busk, G., 1872. Remarks on a collection of skulls from Rothwell in Northamptonshire, *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland,* 1, xci – xcii.

Butler, L., 1988. The Cistercian Abbey of St Mary Rushen: Excavations 1978-79. *Journal of the British Archaeological Association,* Vol. CXLI, 60-104.

Bynum, C.W., 1996. *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200 – 1336.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Caciola, N., 1996. Wraiths, Revenants and Ritual in Medieval Culture. *Past & Present,* Vol. 152, 3-45.

Cherryson, A., 2005. *In the Shadow of the Church: Burial Practices in the Wessex Heartlands c.600-1100AD.* University of Sheffield Unpublished PhD Thesis.

Cherryson, A., 2007. Disturbing the Dead: Urbanisation, the Church and the Post-Burial Treatment of Human Remains in Early Medieval Wessex, c.600-1100AD. In Semple, S. and Williams, H., eds., *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History 14,* 130-142.

Cherryson, A., 2010. 'Such a Resting-Place as is Necessary for us in God's Sight and Fitting in the Eyes of the World': Saxon Southampton and the Development of Churchyard Burial. In Buckberry, J. and Cherryson, A., eds., *Burial in Later Anglo-Saxon England c.650-1100AD,* 54-71.

Clarke, E., 1903. *The Chronicle of Jocelin of Brakelond: A Picture of Monastic Life in the Days of Abbot Samson.* London: De La More Press.

Clive-Rouse, E.C., 1952-1953. Rothwell Church, *Archaeological Journal,* 201, 109 – 110.

Colgrave, B. and Mynors, R.A.B., eds., 1969. *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Connell, B., Gray Jones, A., Redfern, R. and Walker, D., 2012. *A Bioarchaeological Study of Medieval Burials on the Site of St Mary Spital: Excavations at Spitalfields Market, London E1, 1991-2007. Museum of London Archaeology Monograph 60.* London: MOLAS.

Cooper, J., and Elrington, C.R., eds., 1996. *A History of the County of Essex, Vol. 9. The Borough of Colchester.* Essex: Constable.

Cox, D., 2002. St. Oswald of Worcester at Evesham Abbey: Cult and Concealment. *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History,* Vol. 53 (2), 269-285.

Cox, J., 2011. *St. Anne's Chapel, Paternoster Row, Barnstaple, Devon. A Conservation Management Plan for Barnstaple Town Council.* Exeter: Keystone Historic Building Consultants.

Craig, E.F., 2009. *Burial Practices in Northern England c. A.D. 650-850: A Bio-Cultural Approach.* Unpublished University of Sheffield PhD Thesis.

Craig-Atkins, E. In press. Seeking 'Norman Burials', evidence for continuity and change in funerary practice following the Norman Conquest. In Dyer, C. and Hadley, D. M. *The Norman Conquest: transformations and continuities*. Society for Medieval Archaeology Monograph Series.

Cramp, R., 1969. Excavations at the Saxon Monastic Sites of Wearmouth and Jarrow, Co. Durham: An Interim Report. *Medieval Archaeology,* Vol. 13, 21-59.

Crangle, J., 2009. *Ossuaries and the Curation of the Dead in Medieval England and Europe; Saving of Space or Saving the Soul?* Unpublished Masters Dissertation, Bournemouth University.

Crangle, J., 2013. The Rothwell Charnel Chapel and Ossuary Project. http://www.pasthorizonspr.com/index.php/archives/08/2013

Crawford, S., 1989. The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Chimney, Oxfordshire. *Oxoniensia,* Vol. LIV, 46-56.

Crook, J., 1990. The Typology of Early Medieval Shrines – A Previously Misidentified 'Tomb-Shrine' Pane from Winchester Cathedral. *Antiquaries Journal,* Vol. 70, 49-64.

Crook, J., 1992. King Edgar's Reliquary of St. Swithun. *Anglo-Saxon England,* Vol. 21, 177-202.

Crook, J., ed., 1993. *Winchester Cathedral: Nine Hundred Years 1093 – 1993.* Great Britain: Phillimore & Co. Ltd.

Crook, J., 1999. The 'Rufus tomb' in Winchester Cathedral. *Antiquity,* Vol. 79, 188-212.

Crook, J., 2011. *English Medieval Shrines*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press.

Cummings, B., 2002. Iconoclasm and Bibliophobia in the English Reformations, 1521 – 1558. In Dimmick, J., Simpson, J. & Zeeman, N., eds., 2002. *Images, Idolatry, and Iconoclasm in Late Medieval England: Textuality and the Visual Image.* 185-206. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cypher, P., 1865. *History of Rothwell, in the County of Northampton, with an Account of the Bone Caverns.* Northampton: Taylor & Son.

Daniell, C., 1999. *Death and Burial in Medieval England, 1066-1550.* London: Routledge.

Daniell, C. and Thompson, V., 1999. Pagans and Christians: 400-1150. In Jupp, P.C. and Gittings, C., eds., *Death in England. An Illustrated History,* 65-89. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Davis, R.H.C., 1990. *King Stephen 1135 – 1154.* London: Longman.

Dawes, J.D., and Magilton, J.R., 1980. *The Cemetery of St Helen-on-the-Walls, Aldwark. The Archaeology of York, Vol. 12: The Medieval Cemeteries.* London: Council for British Archaeology for the York Archaeological Trust.

Dimmick, J., Simpson, J. & Zeeman, N., eds., 2002. *Images, Idolatry, and Iconoclasm in Late Medieval England: Textuality and the Visual Image.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dimmick, J., Simpson, J. & Zeeman, N., 2002. Introduction. In Dimmick, J., Simpson, J. & Zeeman, N., eds., 2002. *Images, Idolatry, and Iconoclasm in Late Medieval England: Textuality and the Visual Image.* 1-3. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dixon, K., 2000. *St. Mary's, Saffron Walden. A History and Guide.* Saffron Walden: privately printed.

Dodwell, B., 1996. The monastic community. In Atherton, I., Fernie, E., Harper-Bill, C., and Hassell Smith, A., eds., *Norwich Cathedral: Church, City and Diocese, 1096-1996,* 231-54. London: Hambledon.

Doughty, B., 1977. *The Rothwell Crania.* Unpublished paper.

DuBruck, E.E. and Gusick, B.I., eds., 1999. *Death and Dying in the Middle Ages.* New York: Peter Lang.

Dyson, T., Samuel, M., Steele, A. and Wright, S.M., 2011. *The Cluniac Priory and Abbey of St Saviour, Bermondsey, Surrey. Excavations 1984 – 95.* London: Museum of London Archaeology.

Fairbairn 2014. *Reuse of Graves*. House of Commons Library: London. http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN0 4060#fullreport

Farmer, D.H., ed., 2004. *The Age of Bede.* London: The Penguin Group.

Fisher, A. H., 1898. *The Cathedral Church of Hereford: A Description of its Fabric and a Brief History of the Episcopal See.* London: G. Bell.

Forrest, I., 2010. The Politics of Burial in Late Medieval Hereford. *English Historical Review,* Vol. CXXV (516), 1110-38.

Foxhall Forbes, H., 2013. *Heaven and Earth in Anglo-Saxon England: Theology and Society in an Age of Faith.* Farnham: Ashgate.

Franklin, W., 2013. *Rothwell with Orton – A History of a Midland Market Town.* Staploe Historical Publishing; Rothwell.

Furnivall, F.J., 1882. *The Fifty Earliest English Wills in the Court of Probate, London, A.D. 1387-1439; with a Priest's of 1454.* London: N. Trübner for the Early English Text Society.

Gaimster, D.R.M. and Gilchrist, R., 2003. *The Archaeology of Reformation, 1480 – 1580.* Leeds: Maney Publishing.

Garland, A.N., Janaway, R.C. and Roberts, C.A., 1988. A study of the decay processes of human skeletal remains from the parish church of the Holy Trinity, Rothwell, Northamptonshire, *Oxford Journal of Archaeology,* Vol. 7 (2), 235-252.

Geake, H., 2002. Persistent Problems in the Study of Conversion-Period Burials in England. In Lucy, S. & Reynolds, A., eds., *Burial in Early Medieval England and Wales,* 144-155. Leeds: Maney Publishing.

Geary, P., 1978. *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages.* Princeton: Guildford.

Geary, P., 1994. *Living with the dead in the Middle Ages.* London: Cornell University Press.

Gilchrist, R., 2005. *Norwich Cathedral Close. The Evolution of the English Cathedral Landscape.* Woodbridge: The Boydell Press.

Gilchrist, R., 2012. *Medieval Life. Archaeology and the Life Course.* Woodbridge: The Boydell Press.

Gilchrist, R. and Sloane, B., 2005. *Requiem. The Medieval Monastic Cemetery in Britain.* London: Museum of London Archaeology Services.

Gilmour, B.J.J., and Stocker, D.A., 1986. *St. Mark's church and Cemetery. The Archaeology of Lincoln.* London: council for British Archaeology for the Trust of Lincoln Archaeology.

Gittos, H., 2002. Creating the Sacred: Anglo-Saxon Rites or Consecrating Cemeteries. In Lucy, S. and Reynolds, A., eds., *Burial in Early Medieval England and Wales,* 195-208. Leeds: Maney Publishing.

Gnanaratnam, T., 2005. Leicester, Shires West. *Leicester Archaeological and Historical Society,* Autumn 2005 (72), 7.

Gnanaratnam, T., 2006. An Urban Medieval Population from St. Peter's, Leicester. *The Archaeologist,* Summer 2006 (60), 26-7.

Godfrey, G. 1928. Church of St Anne, Lewes: an anchorite's cell and other discoveries. *Sussex Archaeological Society,* Vol. 69, 159-169.

Gonissen, J., 2013. *New tools in anthropology: an evaluation of low-cost digital imagery methods in 3D photogrammetry and Reflectance Transformation Imaging applied to fragile osteological material with limited accessibility: the case of Rothwell ossuary.* Unpublished Masters Dissertation.

Goody, J. and Poppi, C., 1994. Approaches to the Dead in Anglo-American and Italian Cemeteries. *Comparative Studies in Society and History,* Vol. 36 (1), 146-175.

Gostling, F.M., 1906. L'Ankou. *The Celtic Review,* Vol. 2 (7), 272-282.

Grainger, 2011. *The Cistercian Abbey of St Mary Graces, East Smithfield, London.* London: Museum of London Archaeology.

Green, V., 1796. *The History and Antiquities of the City and Suburbs of Worcester, Vol. 1.* London: W. Bulmer and Co., Worcester: Smart, Tymbs, Holl, Andrews and Gamidge.

Groves, S.E., 2007. The Bowl Hole Burial Ground: A Late Anglian Cemetery in Northumberland. In Semple, S. and Williams, H., eds., *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History 14,* 116-127.

Hadley, D.M., 2000a. Burial Practices in the Northern Danelaw, c. 650 – 1100. *Northern History,* Vol. XXXVI (2), 199-216.

Hadley, D.M., 2000b. *The Northern Danelaw: Its Social Structure, c. 800 – 1100.* Leicester: Leicester University Press.

Hadley, D., 2000c: Equality, humility and non-materialism. *Archaeological Review from Cambridge,* Vol. 17(2), 149-178.

Hadley, D.M., 2001. *Death in Medieval England: An Archaeology.* Stroud: Tempus.

Hadley, D., 2002. Burial Practices in Northern England in the Later Anglo-Saxon Period. In Lucy, S. and Reynolds, A., eds., *Burial in Early Medieval England and Wales,* 209-228. Leeds: Maney Publishing.

Hadley, D., 2007. The Garden Gives up its Secrets: The Developing Relationship Between Rural Settlements and Cemeteries, c.750-1100. In Semple, S. and Williams, H., eds., *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History 14,*194-203.

Hadley, D.M. and Buckberry, J., 2005. Caring for the Dead in Late Anglo-Saxon England. In Tinti, F., ed., *Pastoral Care in Late Anglo-Saxon England, Anglo-Saxon Studies, 6,*121-147.

Hadley, D.M. and Richards, J.D., eds., 2000. *Cultures in Contact: Scandinavian Settlement in England in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries. Studies in the Early Middle Ages.* Vol. 2. Belgium: Brepols Publishers.

Haining, P., 1979. *Book of the Supernatural,* Berkshire: Foulsham & Ltd.

Hall, R.A. and Whyman, M., 1996. Settlement and Monasticism at Ripon, North Yorkshire, from the 7th to 11th Centuries A.D. *Medieval Archaeology,* Vol. 40, 62-150.

Hamilton Thompson, A., 1911. *The Historical Growth of the English Parish Church.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Harding, V., 1992. Burial choice and burial location in later medieval London. In Bassett, S., ed., *Death in Towns. Urban Responses to the Dying and the Dead, 100-1600,* 119-35. Leicester: Leicester University Press.

Hart, J., and Holbrook, N., 2011. A Medieval Monastic Cemetery Within the Precinct of Malmesbury Abbey: Excavations at the Old Cinema Site, Market Cross, *Wiltshire Archaeological & Natural History Magazine,* Vol. 104, 166-92.

Haslam, A., 2014. *PCA Report No. R11773. An Archaeological Excavation on Land at the Elephant and Castle Leisure Centre, London Borough of Southwark, SE11 4TW.* Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited: London.

Heighway, C. and Bryant, R., 1999. *The Golden Minster. The Anglo-Saxon Minster and Later Medieval Priory of St Oswald at Gloucester. CBS Research Report 117.* York: Council for British Archaeology.

Henderson, C.G. and Bidwell, P.T., 1982. The Saxon Minster at Exeter. In Pearce, S.M., ed., *The Early Church in Western Britain and Ireland: Studies Presented to C.A. Ralegh Radford Arising from a Conference Organised in his Honour by the Devon Archaeological Society and Exeter City Museum,* 145-75. British Archaeological Research Report 102. Oxford: BAR.

Heslop, D.H., 1995. Excavations Within the Church at the Augustinian Priory of Gisborough, Cleveland. *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal,* Vol.67, 51-126.

Hicks, M. and Hicks, A., 2001. *St. Gregory's Priory, Northgate, Canterbury: Excavations 1988-1991 Archaeology of Canterbury New Series Volume 11.* Canterbury: Canterbury Archaeological Trust.

Hill, P., 1998. *Whithorn and St Ninian: The Excavation of a Monastic Town, 1984-91*. Stroud: Alan Sutton.

Hillen, H.J., 1907. *History of the Borough of King's Lynn, Vol. 2.* Norwich: East of England Newspaper Co.

Hoggett, R., 2007. Charting Conversion: Burial as a Barometer of Belief? In Semple, S. and Williams, H., eds., *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History 14,* 28-37.

Horrox, R., 1999. Purgatory, Prayer and Plague: 1150-1380, In Jupp, P.C. and Gittings, C., eds., *Death in England: An Illustrated History,* 90-118. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Houlbrooke, R., 1998. *Death, Religion, and the Family in England, 1480-1750.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Hutchinson, P., 1970. Ómós d'Fhile Briotáineach. *Comhar*, Vol. 29 (5), 10.

Irvine, S.E., 1990. Bones of Contention: The Context of Ælfric's Homily on St. Vincent. *Anglo-Saxon England,* Vol. 19, 117-132.

Jackson, R., 2006. *Excavations at St James' Priory, Bristol.* Oxford: Oxbow.

James, M.R., 1922. Twelve Medieval Ghost Stories. *The English Historical Review,* 37 (147), 413-422.

Johnson, J., 2013. *Assessing Ancestry in the Crania of the Rothwell Charnel House Using Morphometrics.* Unpublished Masters Dissertation, University of Sheffield.

Joynes, S., 2001. *Medieval Ghost Stories. An Anthology of Miracles, Marvels and Prodigies.* Woodbridge: Boydell Press.

Jupp, P. and Gittings, C., eds., 1999. *Death in England: An Illustrated History.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Keynes, S., 2007. An Abbot, an Archbishop, and the Viking Raids of 1006-7 and 1009-12. *Anglo-Saxon England,* Vol. 36, 151-220.

Kirby, D.P., 1995. The Genesis of a Cult: Cuthbert of Farne and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Late seventh and Early Eighth Centuries. *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History,* Vol. 46 (3), 383-397.

Kjølbye-Biddle, B., 1975. A Cathedral Cemetery: Problems in Excavation an Interpretation. *World Archaeology,* Vol. 7 (1), 87-108.

Klemperer, W.D., and Boothroyd, N., 2004. *Excavations at Hulton Abbey, Staffordshire 1987-1994. Society for Medieval Archaeology Monograph.* London: Society for Medieval Archaeology.

Klevnäs, A.M., 2010. *Whodunit? Grave-Robbery in Early Medieval Northern and Western Europe.* Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge.

Knüsel, C.J., 2014. Crouching in Fear: terms of Engagement for Funerary Remains. *Journal of Social Archaeology,* Vol. 14 (1), 28-51.

Koudounaris, P., 2011. *The Empire of Death: A Cultural History of Ossuaries and Charnel Houses.* London: Thames & Hudson.

Krogman, W.M. and Isçan, M., 1986. *The Human Skeleton in Forensic Medicine, 2nd Edition,* Springfield: Charles C. Thomas.

La Braz, A., 1893. *La Légende de la Mort Chez les Bretons Armorcains.* Paris: Picard.

Lambrick, G., and Woods, H., 1976. Excavations on the second Site of the Dominican Priory, Oxford. *Oxoniensia,* Vols. 41-3, 168-231.

Lapidge, M., Blair, J., Keynes, S. and Scragg, D., eds., 2000. *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England.* Maldon: Blackwell.

Lee, F., and Magilton, J., 1989. The Cemetery of the Hospital of St James and St Mary Magdalene, Chichester – A Case Study. *World Archaeology,* Vol. 21 (2), 273-82.

Leland, J., 1964. *The Itinerary of John Leland in or about the years 1535-1543, Vol. 3. Edited by Lucy Toulmin Smith.* London: Centaur Press.

Leland, J., 1964. *The Itinerary of John Leland in or about the years 1535-1543, Vol. 4. Edited by Lucy Toulmin Smith.* London: Centaur Press.

Lepine, D. and Orme, N., eds., 2003. *Death and Memory in Medieval Exeter.* Exeter: Devon and Cornwall Record Society.

Litten, J., 1991. *The English Way of Death: The Common Funeral Since 1450.* London: Hale.

Lloyd, T., Orbach, J. and Scourfield, R., 2004. *Pembrokeshire: The Buildings of Wales.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Loveluck, C. and Atkinson, D., 2007. *The Early Medieval Settlement Remains from Flixborough, Lincolnshire: The Occupation Sequence, c.AD 600-1000.* Oxford: Oxbow.

McClain, A., 2011a. Local Churches and the Conquest of the North: Elite Patronage and Identity in Saxo-Norman Northumbria. In Petts, D. & Turner, S., eds., *Early Medieval Northumbria: Kingdoms & Communities 450-1100. Studies in the Early Medieval Ages, SEM 24,* 151-78. Brepols: Turnhout.

McClain, A.N., 2011b. The Archaeology of Parish Churches in Late Medieval England'. In Carver, M. & Klapste, J., eds., *The Archaeology of Medieval Europe: Twelfth to Sixteenth Centuries, Vol. 2, Acta Jutlandica, Humanities Series,* 468-78. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press.

McClain, A.N., 2014. Churchyard Archaeology. In Smith, C., ed., *Encyclopedia of Global Archaeology.* Springer Science Business Media, New York.

MacKenzie, E., 1827. *Historical Account of Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Including the Borough of Gateshead.* Newcastle Upon Tyne: MacKenzie and Dent.

MacLean, M., 2013. *The Presence of Animal & Human Bones in Rothwell Ossuary.* Unpublished Masters Dissertation.

Magilton, J.R., Lee, F., and Boylston, A., 2008. *"Lepers outside the gate": excavations at the cemetery of the Hospital of St James and St Mary Magdalene, Chichester, 1986-87 and 1993.* York: Council for British Archaeology.

Marshall, P., 2004. *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mays, S., 2005. *Guidance for Best Practice for Treatment of Human Remains Excavated from Christian Burial Grounds in England.* English Heritage & the Church of England: Swindon.
https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/human-remains-excavated-from-christian-burial-grounds-in-england/16602humanremains1.pdf

Mays, S., Brickley, M. and Dodwell, N., 2004. *Centre for Archaeology Guidelines. Human Bones from Archaeological Sites. Guidelines for Producing Assessment Documents and Analytical Reports.* English Heritage & British Association for Biological Anthropology & Osteoarchaeology: London.

Mayvaert, P., 1979. Bede and the Church Paintings at Wearmouth-Jarrow. *Anglo-Saxon England,* Vol. 8, 63-77.

McGinn, J., 2015. Title TBC. Unpublished Masters Dissertation, University of Sheffield.

McNeill, T.E. 2006. *Faith, Pride & Works: Medieval Church Building.* Stroud: Tempus Publishing.

Miles, T.J., 1986. The Excavation of a Saxon Cemetery and Part of the Norman Castle at North Walk, Barnstaple. *Devon Archaeological Society Proceedings.* Vol. 44, 59-69.

Miller, P., and Saxby, D., 2007. *The Augustinian Priory of St Mary Merton, Surrey: Excavations 1976-90.* London: Museum of London Archaeology.

Milne, G., 1997. *St. Bride's Church London. Archaeological Research 1952-60 and 1992-5.* London: English Heritage.

Merriam-Webster, 2009. *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary.* Available from: http://mw1.meriam-webster.com/dictionary

Morgan, P., 1999. Of Worms and War: 1380 – 1558, In Jupp, P.C. and Gittings, C., eds., *Death in England: An Illustrated History,* 119-146. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Morton, J., 1710. *The Natural History of Northampton-shire; With Some Account of the Antiquities.* London: Knaplock & Wilkin.

Murphy, E.M., 2008. *Deviant Burial in the Archaeological Record. Studies in Funerary Archaeology, 2.* Oxford: Oxbow.

Neale, J.M. and Webb, B., eds., 1843. *The Symbolism of Churches and Church Ornaments: A Translation of the First Book of the Rationale Dibinorum Officiorum Written by William Durandus, Sometime Bishop of Mende.* Leeds: T.W. Green.

Nilson, B., 1998. *Cathedral Shrines of Medieval England.* Woodbridge: Boydell Press.

O'Brien O'Keefe, K., 1998. Body and Law in Late Anglo-Saxon England. *Anglo-Saxon England,* Vol. 27, 209-232.

Orme, N., 1989. *Education and Society in Medieval and Renaissance England.* London: Hambledon.

Orme, N., 1991. The Charnel Chapel of Exeter Cathedral. In Kelly, F., ed., *Medieval Art and Architecture at Exeter Cathedral,* 162-71. Exeter: British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions.

Orme, N., 1996. Church and Chapel in Medieval England. *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society,* Sixth Series, 75-102.

Orme, N., 2007. *Cornish Wills 1342 – 1540. Devon and Cornwall Record Society New Series, Vol. 50.* Exeter: Devon & Cornwall Record Society.

Orme, N. and Cannon, J., 2010. *Westbury-on-Trym: Monastery, Minster and College.* Bristol: Bristol Records Society.

Ortner, D., 2003. *Identification of Pathological Conditions in Human Skeletal Remains.* San Diego: Academic Press.

O'Sullivan, D., 2013. *In the Company of the Preachers: The Archaeology of Medieval Friaries in England and Wales*. Leicester: Leicester Archaeology Monographs.

Page, W., ed., 1906. *The Victoria History of the County of Norfolk, Vol. 2.* London: Constable.

Page, W., ed., 1907. *A history of the County of Suffolk, Vol. 2.* London: Constable.

Page, W., 1912. *The Victoria History of the County of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, Vol.5.* London: Constable.

Page, W., 1923. *The Victoria History of the County of York, North Riding, Vol. 2.* London: St. Catherine's Press.

Parish, H.L., 2005. *Monks, Miracles and Magic: Reformation Representations of the Medieval Church.* London: Routledge.

Parish, H. and Naphy, W.G., 2002. *Religion and Superstition in Reformation England.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Parsons, F.G., 1908. Report on the Hythe crania, *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland,* 38, 419 – 450

Parsons, F.G., 1910. Report on the Rothwell crania, *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland,* 40, 483 – 504

Percival, S., 1915. *The Bones of Rothwell, their Date and Origin.* Kettering: Spencer Percival.

Phillips, J., 1973. *The Reformation of Images: Destruction of Art in England, 1535-1660.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Phillips, D. & Heywood, B., 1995. *Excavations at York Minster Volume I. From Roman Fortress to Norman Cathedral. Part 1 The Site.* London: Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England.

Plumtree, J., 2012. Stories of the Death of Kings: Retelling the Demise and Burial of William I, William II and Henry I. *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies,* Vol. 21, 1-30.

Proctor, L., 2013. *Are There Two Separate Populations Represented in the Rothwell Bone Crypt? An Investigation Using Cranial Measurements & Non-Metric Traits.* Unpublished Masters Dissertation, University of Sheffield.

Pugh, R.B., ed., 1953. *The Victoria History of the County of Cambridge and the Isle of Ely, Vol. 4.* London: Oxford University Press.

Pugh, R.B. and Crittall, E., eds., 1956. *A History of the County of Wiltshire, Vol. 3.* Oxford: Oxford University Press for the Institute of Historical Research.

Preest, D., 2002. *The Deeds of the Bishops of England (Gesta Pontificum Anglorum).* Woodbridge: Boydell Press.

Rahtz, P., and Watts, L., 1998. Kirkdale Anglo-Saxon Minster. *Current Archaeology,* Vol. 155, 419-422.

Rawcliffe, C., 1999. *Medicine & Society in Later Medieval Europe.* London: Sandpiper Books.

Reynolds, A., 2009. *Anglo-Saxon Deviant Burial Customs.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ridyard, S.J., 1988. *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England. A Study of West Saxon and East Anglian Cults.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Roberts, C.A., 1982. Analysis of Some Human Femora from a Medieval Charnel House at Rothwell Parish Church, Northamptonshire, England, *OSSA: The International Journal for Skeletal Remains,* Vols. 9-11, 119-134

Roberts, C. and Cox, M., 2003. *Health & Disease in Britain. From Prehistory to the Present Day.* Stroud: Sutton Publishing Ltd.

Roberts, M. and Manchester, K., 2005. *The Archaeology of Disease. Third Edition.* Cornell University Press: New York.

Robertson-MacKay, R., 1957. Recent Excavations at the Cluniac Priory of St Mary, Thetford, Norfolk. Medieval Archaeology, Vol. 1, 96-103.

Rodriguez, W.C. and Bass, W.M., 1985. Decomposition of Buried Bodies and Methods that May Aid in their Location. *Journal of Forensic Sciences,* Vol. 30 (3), 836-52.

Rodwell, W., 2001. *Wells Cathedral. Excavations and Structural Studies, 1978-93.* English Heritage Archaeological Report, 21. London: English Heritage.

Rodwell, W. and Atkins, C., 2011. *St Peter's Barton-upon-Humber Lincolnshire. A Parish Church & Its Community. Vol. 1 History, Archaeology & Architecture part 1.* Oxbow: Oxford.

Rodwell, W. and Rodwell, K., 1982. St. Peter's Church, Barton-Upon-Humber: Excavation and Structured Study 1978-1981. *Antiquaries Journal,* Vol. 62(2), 283-315.

Rollason, D., 1978. Lists of Saints' Resting-Places in Anglo-Saxon England. *Anglo-Saxon England,* Vol. 7, 61-93.

Rollason, D., 1982. The Cults of Murdered Royal Saints in Anglo-Saxon England. *Anglo-Saxon England,* Vol. 11, 1-22.

Rollason, D., 1986. Relic-Cults as an Instrument of Royal Policy c. 900 – c. 1050. *Anglo-Saxon England,* Vol. 15, 91-103.

Rollason, D., 1989. *Saints and Relics in Anglo-Saxon England.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd.

Rousseau, M.-H., 2001. *Saving the Souls of Medieval London: Perpetual Chantries at St. Paul's Cathedral, c.1200-1548.* London: Ashgate.

Rugg, J., 1999. From Reason to Regulation: 1760-1850. In Jupp, P.C. and Gittings, C., eds., *Death in England. An Illustrated History*, 202-229. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Serjeantson, R.M., Ryland, W. and Adkins, D., 1906. *The Victoria History of the County of Northampton, Vol. 2.* London: Constable.

Schmidt, R.A. and Voss, B.L., 2000. *Archaeologies of Sexuality*. London: Routledge.

Schwartz, J.H., 2007. *Skeleton Keys: An Introduction to Human Skeletal Morphology, Development, and Analysis.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sills, J., 1982. St Peter's Church, Holton-le-Clay, Lincolnshire. *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology,* Vol. 17, 29-39.

Simpson, J., 2003. Repentant soul or walking corpse? Debatable apparitions in Medieval England, *Folklore,* Vol. 144 (3), 389-402.

Soden, I., 1995. *Excavations at St. Anne's Charterhouse, Coventry, 1968-87.* Coventry: Coventry City Council.

Soden, I., 2010. *Life and Death on a Norwich Backstreet, AD 900 – 1600: Excavations in St Faith's Lane. East Anglian Archaeology Report No. 133.* Northampton: Northamptonshire Archaeology.

Sloane, B., 2004. *Excavations at the priory of the Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, Clerkenwell, London.* London: Museum of London Archaeological Service.

Spraggon, J., 2003. *Puritan Iconoclasm During the English Civil Wars.* Woodbridge: Boydell Press.

Spurrell, M., 2000. The promotion and demotion of whole relics. *Antiquaries Journal,* Vols. 80-81, 66-84.

Stafford, P., 1981. The Laws of Cnut and the History of Anglo-Saxon Royal Promises. *Anglo-Saxon England,* Vol. 10, 173-190.

Steele, A., 2010. *The Cluniac Priory and Abbey of St Saviour, Bermondsey, Surrey Excavations 1984-95.* London: Museum of London Archaeology.

Stoessiger, B.N. and Morant, G.M., 1932. A Study of the Crania in the Vaulted Ambulatory of Saint Leonard's Church, Hythe. *Biometrika* 24 (1/2), 135-202.

Stone, R. and Appleton-Fox, N., 1996. *A View from Hereford's Past: A Report on the Archaeological Excavation in Hereford Cathedral Close in 1993.* England: Logaston Press.

Stoodley, N., 2002. Multiple Burials, Multiple Meanings? Interpreting the Early Anglo-Saxon Multiple Interments. In Lucy, S. and Reynolds, A., eds., *Burial in Early Medieval England and Wales* 103-121. Leeds: Maney Publishing.

Stow, J., 1971. *A Survey of London, Vol. 1.* Oxford: Clarendon Press

Stroud, G. and Kemp, R.L., 1993. *Cemeteries of St Andrew, Fishergate. The Archaeology of York, the medieval cemeteries, 12/2.* York: Council for British Archaeology.

Syer, G.V., 2005. *A Guide to the Church of Saint Candida and Holy Cross Whitchurch Canonicorum, Dorset.* Creeds the Printers: Bridport.

Tarlow, S., 2003. Reformation and Transformation: What Happened to Catholic Things in a Protestant World? In Gaimster, D.R.M. & Gilchrist, R., eds., *The Archaeology of Reformation, 1480 – 1580,* 128-121. Leeds: Maney Publishing.

Teague, S., Loe, L. and Taylor, J., 2013. *Thameslink Archaeological Assessment 7: Land to the Rear of the Hop Exchange & Park Street London Borough of Southwark. Post-Excavation Assessment.* Oxford Archaeology 7 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited: London.

Thacker, A., 1985. Kings, Saints and Monasteries in Pre-Viking Mercia. *Midland History,* Vol. 10, 1-25.

Theilmann, J.M., 1990. Political Canonization and Political Symbolism in Medieval England. *Journal of British Studies,* Vol. 29 (3), (December), 241-266.

Thomas, C., Sloane, B. and Phillpotts, C., 1997. *Excavations at the Priory and Hospital of St Mary Spital, London.* London: Museum of London Archaeological Service.

Thompson, V., 2002. Constructing Salvation: A Homiletic and Penitential Context for Late Anglo-Saxon Burial Practice. In Lucy, S. and Reynolds, A., eds., *Burial in Early Medieval England and Wales,* 229-240. Leeds: Maney Publishing.

Thompson, V., 2004. *Dying and Death in Later Anglo-Saxon England.* Anglo Saxon Studies, Woodbridge: Boydell Press.

Thompson, V., 2004. *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 164, 100-29.

Toynbee, M.R., 1929. *S. Louis of Toulouse and the Process of Canonisation in the Fourteenth Century.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Trevor, J.C., 1967. *Rothwell Parish Church, Northamptonshire: The Bone Crypt. Unpublished paper.*

Wallis, R.B., 1888. Rothwell Bones. *Olla Podrida,* February 1888 (15), Vol. II, 33-7.

Waters, C., 1980. *Who Was St. Wite? The Saint of Whitchurch Canonicorum.* Creeds: Bridport.

Ward, A., and Anderson, T., 1990. Excavations at Rochester Cathedral. *Archaeologia Cantania,* Vol. CVIII, 91 – 131.

Watson, T., 2007. Creating the Cult of a Saint: Communication Strategies in 10th century England. *Public Relations Review,* Vol. 34, 19-24.

Watts, L., Rahtz, P., Okasha, E., Bradley, S.A.J., and Higgott, J., 1997. Kirkdale – the Inscriptions. *Medieval Archaeology,* Vol. XLI, 51-99.

Webb, E.A., 1921/1908. *A History of the Smithfield Gate: of the Parish of St. Bartholomew the Great. The records of St. Bartholomew's Priory [and] St. Bartholomew the Great, West Smithfield: Volume 2.* London: W. H. and L. Collingridge.

Western, G., 2005. *A Field Guide to the Excavation of Human Remains. Guide 14.* British Archaeological Jobs & Resources & OssaFreelance: England. http://www.bajr.org/BAJRGuides/14.%20Field%20Guide%20to%20the%20Excavation%20of%20Human%20Inhumated%20Remains/FieldGuidetotheExcavationofHumanInhumatedRemains.pdf

Western, G., 2007. *A Basic Overview for the Recovery of Human Remains from Sites Under Development.* British Archaeological Jobs Resource & OssaFreelance: England. http://www.bajr.org/Documents/HumanRemainsGuide.pdf

White, T. and Folkens, P., 2005. *The Human Bone Manual.* Elsevier Academic Press: London.

Whitelock, D., 1961. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Revised Translation.* London: Eyre & Spottiswoode.

Whiting, R., 2010. *The Reformation of the English Parish Church.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wieck, R.S., 1999. The Death Desired: Books of Hours and the Medieval Funeral. In DuBruck, E.E. and Gusick, B.I. eds., 1999. *Death and Dying in the Middle Ages.* New York: Peter Lang.

Willis-Bund, J.W. and Page, W., eds., 1906. *The Victoria History of the County of Worcester, Vol. 2.* London: James Street.

Winslow, C.-E.A, and Duran-Reynals, M.L., 1948. Jacme d'Agramont and the first of the plague tractates, *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, Vol. 1(22), 747-765.

Woods, H., 1987. Excavations at Wenlock Priory 1981-6, *Journal of the British Archaeological Association,* Vol. 140 (1), 36-75.

Worpole, K., 2007. *Briefing: Cemeteries, Churchyards and Burial Grounds.* Commission for Architecture & the Built Environment. http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110118095356/http:/www.cabe.org.uk/files/cemeteries-churchyards-and-burial-grounds.pdf

Zadora-Rio, E., 2003. The Making of Churchyards and Parish Territories in the Early Medieval Landscape of France and England in the 7th-12th Centuries: A Reconsideration. M*edieval Archaeology,* Vol. 47(1), 1-19.