

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

“In search of the spear people: spearheads in context in Iron
Age eastern Yorkshire and beyond.”

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Abstract

Spearheads have long been an understudied class of object for the Iron Age, and for the British Iron Age in particular. No satisfactory typology has yet been published and this thesis addresses that lacuna through the creation of a new typology of spearheads for Iron Age Britain. The typology is a significant step-forward in the study of Iron Age weaponry, and forms a useful tool which facilitates not only the study of martial practices but also contextual studies of this important class of object. The typology has been designed with the end-user in mind and offers guidelines for practical application. The data collection conducted for this thesis forms the largest dataset of Iron Age spearheads for Britain which has been conducted to date. This data is made freely available as an online resource to facilitate future research. To this end, the typology has been designed as an open system which can accommodate the addition of new types, should they come to be identified.

Spearheads did not exist in a cultural vacuum and this work applies the typology in a number of contextual analyses. The Arras Culture of Iron Age East Yorkshire featured an unparalleled burial rite involving spears, known as the ‘speared corpse’ ritual. This practice serves as an entre-point for an examination of Iron Age spearheads in Britain, placing them in their broader martial, social and cosmological contexts. The contextual analyses explore the archaeological contexts from which spearheads have been recovered, examining the types of spear selected for inclusion in structured deposition and martial burials inter-regionally and through time. Consideration is given to the decision-making processes underlying the inclusion of spearheads in votive deposits as well as the specific placement of martial objects in Iron Age burials. The thesis also examines the role which spearheads and other martial objects played in the construction of martial identities in the British Iron Age. The research undertaken represents the most detailed study of Iron Age spearheads conducted for Britain to date, and demonstrates the importance of the spear within the cultures and cosmologies of the Iron Age peoples of Britain.

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Contents

1	Introduction.....	1
1.1	Background	1
1.2	Aims	2
1.3	Objectives	2
1.4	Structure	3
2	Typology Literature Review	5
2.1	Introduction	5
2.1.1	History of typological theory	5
2.2	An appropriate approach for the formation of spearhead typologies	11
2.3	Critical evaluation of existing spearhead typologies.....	12
2.3.1	Swanton: Anglo-Saxon spearhead typology	12
2.3.2	Manning: Romano-British spearhead typologies.....	16
2.3.3	Ian Stead: Iron Age Yorkshire spearhead typology	22
2.3.4	Brunaux and Rapin: Gournay-sur-Aronde spearhead typology.....	24
2.3.5	Anderson: Northern Britain Iron Age spearhead typology	31
2.3.6	Schatte: European bone and antler points typology	34
2.4	Conclusions	37
3	Methodology.....	38
3.1	Introduction	38
3.2	Recommendations for ‘best practice’ in spearhead typology design	38
3.2.1	Preliminary questions.....	38
3.2.2	Purpose and rationale for the development of a new typology	38
3.2.3	What kind of typology will be created?	42
3.3	Sample size.....	42
3.4	Data collection.....	43
3.4.1	Variables	43
3.4.2	Measurements	44
3.4.3	Identification of animal bone	45
3.4.4	Data collection procedure	46
3.4.5	Photography	46
3.4.6	Prioritisation of data.....	47
3.5	Terminology: the language of spears, or what’s in a name?	47

3.6	Data storage and accessibility	49
4	Typology.....	51
4.1	Introduction	51
4.2	A new typology of British Iron Age spearheads	51
4.2.1	Throwing spearhead forms – Type Group 1	56
4.2.2	Thrusting/slashing spearhead forms – Type Group 2	91
4.2.3	Versatile spearhead forms – Type Group 3.....	114
4.3	Discussion	131
4.3.1	Geographic distribution.....	131
4.3.2	Chronology.....	132
4.4	Guidelines for practical Application	133
5	Depositional Practices.....	135
5.1	Introduction	135
5.2	Objects in space: identification of structured deposits	135
5.2.1	Wetland deposition practices in Britain	140
5.2.2	Dry-land deposition practices in Britain	155
5.3	Discussion: structured deposits – hoarding, ritual, or rubbish?	173
5.3.1	Public and private ritual	175
5.4	Significance of place: liminality and objects of power and memory	179
5.5	Accident or design: survival in the archaeological record	185
5.6	Conclusions: depositional practices in Iron Age Britain.....	187
6	Mortuary and Funerary Practices in the British Iron Age	191
6.1	Introduction: rituals and the dead	191
6.2	Variation in mortuary practice.....	192
6.2.1	Pit burials	193
6.2.2	Ditch and rampart burials.....	194
6.2.3	Excarnation and structured deposition of fragmentary remains	203
6.2.4	Bog bodies: overkill and sacrifice.....	208
6.2.5	Inhumation burials	209
6.2.6	Barrow burials: death and burial in Iron Age East Yorkshire.....	209
6.2.7	Cremation burials	215
6.2.8	Cave deposits	217
6.3	Otherworldly goods	218

6.3.1	Pottery	219
6.3.2	Offerings of food.....	222
6.3.3	Textiles.....	225
6.3.4	Metalwork and items of personal adornment.....	226
6.3.5	Two-wheeled vehicles and horse equipment	228
6.4	Conclusions: being dead in Iron Age Britain	231
7	Burials of Martial Character	234
7.1	Introduction	234
7.2	Historiography and current state of research on martial burials in Britain	234
7.3	‘Warrior’ burials with the full panoply of shield, sword and spear	238
7.4	Spears and ‘speared corpse’ burials	250
7.5	Swords, ‘sword burials’ and daggers.....	266
7.6	Arrowheads and sling-shot in burials.....	275
7.7	Shields	277
7.8	Armour and helmets	282
7.9	Ritual destruction and inverted placement of martial objects	283
7.9.1	Ritual destruction	283
7.9.2	Alternative placement of martial objects: rites of reversal	284
7.10	Conclusions	289
8	Warfare and Violence in the British Iron Age.....	291
8.1	Introduction	291
8.2	A history of war and archaeology	291
8.3	Cultures of violence.....	294
8.3.1	Violence and warfare as cross-cultural phenomena.....	294
8.3.2	Fear and loathing in the Iron Age	296
8.3.3	War and social organisation	297
8.4	The rattling of spears: weapons, warriors and identity	299
8.4.1	Boys to men: socialisation for violent action.....	299
8.4.2	War as ‘men’s business’	300
8.4.3	Boars of men: hunting, game and identity	302
8.4.4	To bear arms: weapons, status and identity	303
8.4.5	A meeting of champions: duels and ritualized fighting	306
8.4.6	Tools of a bloody trade	307

8.5	Theatres of war	312
8.5.1	War as bodily performance	312
8.5.2	Contested ground and bloody fields.....	316
8.5.3	Taken by surprise: raiding, ambushade and massacres.....	320
8.6	A bloody business: evidence of physical trauma	321
8.6.1	Kinds of physical trauma associated with weapons and warfare.....	322
8.6.2	Blunt-force trauma	323
8.6.3	Sharp-force trauma.....	324
8.6.4	An unnumbered host	328
8.7	Conclusions	329
9	Conclusions.....	331
9.1	The typology.....	331
9.2	Ritual deposition.....	335
9.3	Mortuary and burial practices.....	336
9.4	Martial burials	337
9.5	Martial burial versus structured/ritual deposition.....	338
9.6	Warfare	340
9.7	Future directions for research.....	342
10	Appendices	343
10.1	Appendix: Comparative table of spearhead typologies.....	343
10.2	Appendix: Data collection proforma	344
10.3	Appendix: Database	345
10.4	Appendix: Burials of Martial Character	346
11	Bibliography.....	353

List of Figures

Figure 2.1: Swanton's typology of Anglo-Saxon Spearheads (Swanton, 1974).	15
Figure 2.2: Manning's 1976 typology (Manning, 1976: figs. 1, 8 and 16).	17
Figure 2.3: Stead's 1991 typology (Stead, 1991a: fig.57).	23
Figure 2.4: Brunaux and Rapin's 1988 typology (Brunaux & Rapin, 1988: fig.66).	29
Figure 2.5: Anderson's 2012 typology (Anderson, 2012: fig.41).	33
Figure 2.6: Schatte's typology of bone and antler points (Schatte, 2013).	35
Figure 4.1: Overall spearhead length to blade length including linear regression lines (complete examples only).	53
Figure 4.2: Distribution of functional groupings of spearheads.	55
Figure 4.3: Extant blade lengths of throwing spearhead forms (where data was available).	56
Figure 4.4: Overall length of throwing spearhead forms.	57
Figure 4.5: Type 1.1 diamond-bladed spearheads.	60
Figure 4.6: Distribution of Type 1.1 diamond-bladed spearhead forms.	61
Figure 4.7: Type 1.2 small leaf-bladed spearheads.	63
Figure 4.8: Distribution of Type 1.2 small leaf-bladed spearheads.	64
Figure 4.9: Type 1.3 small triangle-bladed spearheads.	67
Figure 4.10: Distribution of Type 1.3 small, triangular-bladed spearheads.	68
Figure 4.11: Type 1.4 narrow-necked spearheads.	70
Figure 4.12: Distribution of Type 1.4 narrow-necked spearheads.	71
Figure 4.13: Type 1.5 triangle-bladed spearheads.	73
Figure 4.14: Distribution of Type 1.5 triangle-bladed spearheads.	74
Figure 4.15: Type 1.6 'Celtic <i>pila</i> '.	76
Figure 4.16: Distribution of Type 1.6 'Celtic <i>pila</i> '.	77
Figure 4.17: Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid (Inv. 1940/27/VL/862) from Necrópolis de Valdenovillos, Alcolea de las Peñas(Sierra de Guadalajara (comarca), Guadalajara (third-second century BC) © MAN.	78
Figure 4.18: Type 1.7 hybrid of diamond and 'Celtic <i>pilum</i> '.	80
Figure 4.19: Distribution of Type 1.7 hybrid diamond/ <i>pilum</i> spearheads.	81
Figure 4.20: Type 1.8 bone points in accordance with Schatte's (2013) typology.	84
Figure 4.21: Distribution of bone points recorded in Britain, based on data from Olsen (2003) and data collection conducted for the thesis, (map: T. Sparrow).	85
Figure 4.22: Distribution of Type 1.8 bone points recorded in the database.	86
Figure 4.23: Type 1.8 (Schatte Type IV) bone spearhead (ID 393) recovered from the Thames (BM 1861,0304.3).	87
Figure 4.24: Type 1.8 bone points in the database as allocated to Schatte's typology of bone points.	88
Figure 4.25: Miscellaneous throwing spearhead forms.	89
Figure 4.26: Overall length of spearheads with a thrusting or slashing function.	92
Figure 4.27: Type 2.1.a long, angular spearheads with prominent shoulders.	94
Figure 4.28: Type 2.1.b long, angular spearheads with smooth shoulders.	95
Figure 4.29: Distribution of Type 2.1 long, angular spearheads.	96

Figure 4.30: Type 2.2 spearheads, a form possibly related to long, angular (Type 2.1) or bayonet (Type 2.3).	98
Figure 4.31: Distribution of Type 2.2 spearheads, a form possibly related to long, angular (Type 2.1) or bayonet (Type 2.3).	99
Figure 4.32: Type 2.3 bayonet spearhead from SCWC (Database ID 3) Beverley Treasure House 2005/99/26 RF70. Length: 478mm, width: 49mm.	101
Figure 4.33: Distribution of Type 2.3 bayonet spearhead form.	102
Figure 4.34: Type 2.4 spike-pointed spearheads.....	104
Figure 4.35: Distribution of Type 2.4 spike-pointed spearheads.	105
Figure 4.36: Examples of Type 2.5 narrow-bladed spearheads.	107
Figure 4.37: Further examples of Type 2.5 narrow-bladed spearheads.	108
Figure 4.38: Distribution of Type 2.5 narrow-bladed spearheads.	109
Figure 4.39: Type 2.6 broad convex spearhead from the Thames (BM 1857,0706.1), Database ID 263.....	111
Figure 4.40: Distribution of Type 2.6 broad convex spearheads in Britain.	112
Figure 4.41: Miscellaneous thrusting spearhead Llyn Cerrig Bach (NMW 46.320/2), Database ID 141.....	113
Figure 4.42: Overall length of versatile spearheads.....	114
Figure 4.43: Type 3.1 convex spearhead form.....	116
Figure 4.44: Distribution of Type 3.1 convex spearheads in Britain.	117
Figure 4.45: Type 3.2 broad-based leaf-shaped spearheads.	119
Figure 4.46: Continental comparanda for Type 3.2 Broad-based leaf-shaped spearheads.	119
Figure 4.47: Distribution of Type 3.2 broad-based leaf-shaped spearheads.....	120
Figure 4.48: Type 3.3 tapered spearheads.....	122
Figure 4.49: Distribution of Type 3.3 tapered spearheads.	123
Figure 4.50: Type 3.4 classic spearheads.....	125
Figure 4.51: Distribution of Type 3.4 classic spearheads.	126
Figure 4.52: Type 3.5 curved-bladed spearheads.....	128
Figure 4.53: Distribution of Type 3.5 curved-bladed spearheads.....	129
Figure 4.54: Miscellaneous versatile spearhead forms.	130
Figure 5.1: Contexts in which spearheads included in the database were found.	136
Figure 5.2: Breakdown of spearheads by functional grouping and deposition context for spearheads in the database.	136
Figure 5.3: Wetland and dry-land deposition sites discussed in this chapter.....	137
Figure 5.4: Fiskerton bone point No.445 (ID 241).	143
Figure 5.5: Fiskerton bone point 153, tip (ID 236).	143
Figure 5.6: Fiskerton spearheads 154 and 268 (IDs 257 and 252).	146
Figure 5.7: Fiskerton spearhead and shaft under excavation in 2001 (photograph: Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd).	146
Figure 5.8: Llyn Cerrig Bach Type 2.1 spearheads. IDs 134 (L) and 122 (R), (NMW 44.32/16 and NMW 44.32/14).	150
Figure 5.9: Llyn Cerrig Bach Type 2.1 spearhead showing signs of apparent deliberate destruction (ID 133, NMW 44.32/16).....	151

Figure 5.10: Llyn Cerrig Bach non-functional spearhead (ID 141 NMW 46.320/2).	152
Figure 5.11: The South Cave Weapons Cache under excavation in 2002.	157
Figure 5.12: The bundle of South Cave Weapons Cache spearheads during block excavation in 2003 at York Archaeological Trust conservation laboratory.	157
Figure 5.13: Left - Roman <i>pilum</i> from Hod Hill (BM 1892,0901.1111). Right – Spear ID 4 from the SCWC.	159
Figure 5.14: Spearheads from Four Crosses, Powys (NMW 86.79H/2 and 86.79H/1).	162
Figure 5.15: Museo Arqueológico Nacional (Inv. 1940/27/VL/862)'Celtic <i>pilum</i> ' from Necrópolis de Valdenovillos, Alcolea de las Peñas, Guadalajara, Spain ©MAN.	163
Figure 5.16: Currency bar four from Madmarston, (Fowler, 1960).	169
Figure 5.17: Madmarston spearhead (ID 113), (Fowler, 1960).	169
Figure 5.18: Bredon Hill spearhead (ID93), (Hencken, 1939: fig.7, scale 2:3).	178
Figure 6.1: Cadbury Castle, spearhead associated with human remains in context group III, south-western gateway (Barrett <i>et al.</i> , 2000: fig.58).	199
Figure 7.1: Raw number of martial burials recorded by region.	237
Figure 7.2: Number of Iron Age burials of martial character by funerary rite.	237
Figure 7.3: Raw number of objects by associated funerary rite (burials confidently dated to the Iron Age).	238
Figure 7.4: Map showing the sites of Iron Age martial burials which included a shield, sword and at least one spearhead.	242
Figure 7.5: Iron Age burials featuring sword, shield and spear. 1) Rudston R154 (location of spearheads highlighte by arrow); 2) Rudston R174; 3) Garton Station GS10; 4) Wetwang Cart Burial 1; 5) Grimthorpe; 6) Brisley Farm Burial 19; 7) Brisley Farm Burial 20; 8) Owslebury. Images: (Stead, 1991a, Dent, 1985, Stead <i>et al.</i> , 1968, Johnson, 2002, Collis, 1973), not all to scale.	243
Figure 7.6: The grave goods from the Owslebury Warrior burial (Collis, 1973).	247
Figure 7.7: Burial assemblage from the Grimthorpe Warrior burial (Mortimer, 1905).	248
Figure 7.8: Associations between martial objects in Iron Age burials in Britain, confident Iron Age burials.	249
Figure 7.9: Pocklington burial 16030, which included five spearheads, an iron ferrule and an iron sword (location of spearheads indicated with red arrows).	252
Figure 7.10: Allocation of spearheads recorded in the database by functional grouping for Arras Culture and non-Arras Culture burials.	253
Figure 7.11: Layout of 'speared corpse' burials (Stead, 1991a), not to scale.	258
Figure 7.12: Detail of Garton Station burial 4, spearhead 5 highlighted red. Spearheads 3 and 4 were found in the fill, tips pointed downwards after(Stead, 1991a).	259
Figure 7.13: Detail of Garton Station burial 7, spearheads highlighted red after(Stead, 1991a). Numbers 5, 7 and 9 were found in the grave fill, tips pointed downward.	259
Figure 7.14: Detail of Garton Station burial 10, spearheads highlighted red.	260
Figure 7.15: Detail of Rudston burial 174, spearheads highlighted red.	260
Figure 7.16: Plan of Rudston burial R144, not to scale (Stead, 1991a: fig.111), and Type 1.1.a.1 diamond-bladed spearhead with short socket (ID 81).	261

Figure 7.17: A recently excavated Arras Culture martial burial (15741) at Pocklington, East Yorkshire and the Type 2.5 narrow-bladed spearhead (ID 115).....	262
Figure 7.18: Plan of burial R50 (Stead, 1991a) and the Type 1.5.a triangle-bladed spearhead (ID 85) included in the burial, position highlighted with a red arrow.	263
Figure 7.19: Martial objects associated with swords and daggers in Iron Age burials in Britain.....	268
Figure 7.20: Sword length (mm) in accordance with Stead (2006) sword Groups B-G. Groups B-D are southern forms, and Groups E-F are northern forms. Group G is distributed north and south of the River Humber. * indicates incomplete sword. NB – The sword from Pocklington is excluded as it was not possible to obtain metric data on this sword in time for inclusion in this thesis.....	270
Figure 7.21: The Kirkburn Sword, from burial K3, © British Museum.....	273
Figure 7.22: Breakdown of martial objects found in association with shields (confident Iron Age only).....	277
Figure 7.23: Iron Age insular shield forms	280
Figure 7.24: Shield construction, exploded view, Brunaux and Rapin (1988: fig.1) ...	281
Figure 7.25: Detail of the decoration on the Battersea (left) and Witham (right) shields, © British Museum.....	282
Figure 8.1: Depiction of a boar on the Witham Shield (© British Museum, accession No. 1872,1213.1).	303
Figure 8.2: Detail of the Roman 'ballista bolt' lodged in the thoracic vertebra (© Dorset County Museums).....	319
Figure 8.3: Type 1.3 spearheads from Garton (left, ID 61) and Uley (right, ID 387)...	319
Figure 8.4: Type 1.3 spearheads from Hod Hill (left, ID 359) and Dragonby (right, ID 153).....	319
Figure 8.5: Type 1.1 diamond-bladed iron spearhead lodged in human pelvis. From Rudston burial R140. British Museum accession number: 1976,0504.3.....	327

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

This thesis was inspired by the writer's introduction to the Arras Culture of East Yorkshire by Dr Peter Halkon. The writer has a background of examining the Iron Age weapons assemblages of the Oscan-speaking peoples of South Italy and was wholly unfamiliar with the Iron Age societies of Britain. During an experimental archaeology conference held in Blera, Italy in 2011, the writer witnessed a presentation by Dr Halkon about ironworking in East Yorkshire during the British Iron Age. As part of his presentation Dr Halkon described the so-called 'speared corpse' ritual of the Arras Culture, a seemingly inexplicable burial rite, which involved the throwing of spears into the open grave. This extraordinary rite involving this particular class of weapon captured the writer's imagination and set her on a course of inquiry which has resulted in the production of this thesis.

The Arras Culture is named for the type-site of Arras on the Yorkshire Wolds, where a cemetery consisting of square barrows which were bounded by enclosure ditches was excavated in the nineteenth century. The cemeteries recorded in the region are some of the largest Iron Age cemeteries in Britain, and represent one of the few Iron Age cultures for whom burial was a majority funerary rite. Most of the funerary rites for the British Iron Age are archaeologically invisible.

The location of the Arras Culture burials, primarily on the Yorkshire Wolds, places them within the geographic territory associated by Ptolemy with a tribal group known the Parisi. The name is possibly derived from the term *par*, meaning spear in Welsh – close to the Celtic language spoken in the region during the Iron Age (Halkon, 2013). The apparent correlation between this nomenclature and the practice represented in the 'speared corpse' burials indicates that the local peoples, perhaps over an extended period of time, were identified as a 'spear' people, and that aspects of individual and collective identity were connected to this class of martial object.

The spear is an often-neglected and poorly understood artefact class in archaeology and history. Much research into martial practices emphasizes the role of the sword and places significant focus on helmets and other body armour. Certainly, these martial objects were important and offer a wealth of information about martial practices and identities. Yet, within the British Iron Age setting, armour seems to have rarely been

worn, and finds of swords are numerically overshadowed by the spear. When Caesar (*De Bello Gallico*, IV.26-35) encountered violent resistance during his British campaign in the first century BC, the action he describes is centred on use of the spear, indicating that the throwing of spears was a core component of indigenous warfare.

An examination of the Arras Culture, and the spears found within Parisi territory, offered an opportunity to produce an in-depth exploration of the role of the spear, and to place them within the broader context of Iron Age Britain.

1.2 Aims

The aims of this thesis are as follows:

- To examine the various functions of spearheads in Iron Age Britain.
- To assess the utility of existing spearhead typologies as tools facilitating the study of the use and function of Iron Age spearheads.
- To create a database of Iron Age spearheads, which could facilitate the construction of a new typology.
- To construct a new typology of spearheads for Iron Age Britain.

The spear is a class of martial object frequently found in contexts associated with the British Iron Age, yet they remain poorly understood. This is largely due to the lack of a satisfactory typology for the period, which has had serious implications for our understanding of the chronology, form, function and distribution of Iron Age spearheads. The thesis addresses this lacuna through the creation of a new typology. Although typological studies are largely out of favour, they remain a necessary tool for the observation of patterns in chronological and geographic distribution. The creation of this new typology will also facilitate a contextual analysis, exploring the martial, social and ritual functions of this class of object.

The thesis seeks to undertake such a contextual analysis, placing the spearheads of Iron Age Britain into the social, cultural, ritual and cosmological spheres they once inhabited.

1.3 Objectives

- To gain access to, and collect data on, the largest possible number of Iron Age spearheads held in museum collections.

- To use these data in the construction of a new typology of Iron Age spearheads for Britain that can serve as a ‘user-friendly’ tool to facilitate research and to understand their function, chronology and geographic distribution.
- To examine the deposition of spearheads in burial contexts to assess the martial character of Iron Age society and the use of these objects in identity construction.
- To examine the deposition of spearheads in non-burial contexts to reach a better understanding of Iron Age ritual activity.
- To examine the efficacy of spearheads as weapons and explore their use in warfare and the construction of martial identities in Iron Age Britain.

1.4 Structure

The thesis begins with a comprehensive discussion of typological theory: Chapter 2, analyses the various approaches that have been taken to the construction of spearhead typologies in the past, informing the methodology, which is outlined in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 presents a new typology of spearheads for the British Iron Age, based on the largest sample of British spearheads of Iron Age date ever undertaken. The dataset forms a new resource, which will be made publically available through the University of Hull’s Hydra system. This typology forms an important tool for the contextual exploration undertaken in the rest of the thesis. Comparative analysis highlights the chronological and contextual distribution of the different spearhead forms.

Following the introduction of the spearhead typology, the thesis moves to examine the contexts in which they are found. Spearheads in the archaeological record are rarely casual losses, but rather objects which have been deliberately selected for inclusion in structured deposits and burials. These are contexts rich with meaning and the thesis aims to explore the nature of these deposits and the underlying decision-making processes, which may have led to the inclusion of spearheads and other martial objects. Chapter 5 explores the role and importance of structured deposition in the British Iron Age, with particular reference to deposits which included spearheads and other martial objects.

One of the most important contexts in which martial objects have been found is in Iron Age burials. Mortuary practices in Britain remain poorly understood and Chapter 6 provides a synthesis of the current state of research. Mortuary practices were complex,

and not all were of a funerary nature. The variety of practices display nuanced expressions of social status, identity and cosmological understanding. A major issue in the study of Iron Age Britain is the lack of burials and accompanying grave goods over large areas. The decision to include martial objects in burials was an extraordinary one and represents one of the most complex sub-sets of funerary practice for the British Iron Age. The multifaceted associations of martial objects in burials are considered in detail in Chapter 7. This chapter assesses a greater number of martial burials than has been published to date, and considers the placement of martial objects in grave assemblages and explores performative aspects, such as the ‘speared corpse’ rite of the Arras Culture of Iron Age East Yorkshire. The typological assessment of spearheads and analysis of their associations with other martial objects from burial and votive contexts allows for the identification of possible cultural contacts, between regions, and with the near Continent.

Chapter 8 moves from these contextual analyses to examine other evidence for warfare and interpersonal violence in the Iron Age period in Britain. This assessment employs the typology as a tool for comparing the relationship between weapon forms, indications for physical trauma and fighting style. Beyond these practicalities, the typology also facilitates an exploration of the use of spears in the construction of martial identities. The method of analysis also facilitates an exploration of diachronic and geographic change or differences in martial practices.

The concluding Chapter 9, reviews the key findings of the research conducted in this thesis and offers possible directions for future research.

2 Typology Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter demonstrates the need for a new spearhead typology for the British Iron Age. The main issues surrounding the creation of a typology of spearheads for the period are considered. Firstly, the chapter outlines the general history of typological theory since the mid-twentieth century, before discussing appropriate theoretical approaches for the creation of spearhead typologies generally. The theoretical discussion is accompanied by a detailed critique of several existing spearhead typologies for Britain and the near Continent, and discusses their applicability to the British Iron Age. This review forms the basis for the formulation of the methodology outlined in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 presents a new typology of spearheads for the British Iron Age, accompanied by guidelines for practical application.

2.1.1 History of typological theory

The development of typological studies has had a long trajectory in archaeological theory. Since Thomsen first divided material into classifications of stone, bronze and iron in the nineteenth century, the need for, and importance of, typology and classification have been broadly accepted (Hayden, 1984). However, comparatively little study has focussed on the underlying theories used in typology. In the early 1950s Albert Spaulding (1953) published a landmark article in *American Antiquity*, which called for the application of statistical techniques for the development of ‘objective’ artefact typologies. The article triggered a long running debate throughout the 1960s and 1970s, particularly among the exponents of New Archaeology, concerning the role of statistics within archaeology, ranging from semantics to algorithmic principles and design. The application of statistical models met their desires to see archaeology evolve and mature as a scientific discipline (Ammerman, 1992).

At the time of Spaulding’s writing there was a clear need to critically assess the processes by which typologies were created. Typologies, particularly of ceramic and lithic assemblages, were developed through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and were regularly employed to establish the dating of archaeological contexts, such as the use of La Tène brooch forms to date Iron Age burials in East Yorkshire (Stead, 1991a: 179-184, Jay *et al.*, 2012: 62). However, with the advent of radiocarbon dating (by Willard F Libby in 1949) archaeologists began to look to

typological assessments in order to answer a broader range of questions about the material itself, moving beyond chronological considerations (Hayden, 1984: 141). Radiocarbon dating demonstrated some limitations of typological seriations – highlighting the fact that the chronologies developed were often ‘compressed’ and failed to offer accurate temporal ranges for the development of artefact styles and forms, although their sequences of development were often correct (Adams & Adams, 1991).

Type concepts began to be explored and archaeologists became interested in the distinction between so-called emic (native) and etic (observer) typologies (Hayden, 1984). Is it possible, through the development of a typology, to discover the function and meaning of an artefact as it was understood by those who made and used it? This is a question that continues to be explored in typological studies and is one without a firm answer. This was indeed the original impetus for Spaulding’s (1953: 305) call for statistical analysis in typological studies, when he observed that “classification into types is a process of discovery of combinations of attributes favored by the makers of the artifacts, not an arbitrary procedure of the classifier”.

The desire to grasp emic types has been a recurrent theme in the literature, although no universal position on whether this is possible has been reached. Like Spaulding, Hodson attempted to identify “natural” groupings of objects through the use of cluster analysis, claiming that types should provide a sense of “internal cohesion and external isolation” (Hodson, 1982: 23). Read also felt that the application of morphological taxonomic assessment would reveal “some underlying natural grouping” that would capture some sense of “cultural saliency” (Read, 1989: 164, 167). In contrast, Shanks and Hodder (1995: 9-11) have explored the possibility that capturing any real cultural understanding through artefact classification is impossible. Similarly, Binford (1983: 98-100) has challenged the capacity for the static data of the archaeological record to speak to us about the dynamics of past lives. Hayden (1984) has argued that the quest for emic types and cultural meaning was not always appropriate. Using a case study of ground stone axes from the New Guinea Highlands, Hayden illustrates a mismatch between emic identification by ethnography and the etic question of geographic distribution posed by archaeologists. Clear differences in morphology and construction material of the stone axes were without meaning for the Highland tribes, showing that these variables did not exhibit Read’s ‘cultural saliency’. However, these differences were extremely important for answering the etic purpose of mapping the geographic

distribution of stone axes. This raises the issue of underlying purposes in type formation, as explored by Cowgill (1982) and Brown (1982), and taken up as a core issue by Adams and Adams (1991).

In the wake of Spaulding's statistical call to arms, there followed decades of rigorous, and sometimes heated, debate about which statistical methods should be employed for the production of the most useful and revealing artefact typologies. The arguments focused on three issues: first, whether it was better to look for statistical object clusters or to focus on non-random associations between variables (Cowgill, 1982); second, which variables should be considered for type determination; and, third, whether the choice of variables should be subjected to hierarchical selection as Whallon (1972) and Read (1996) have argued in relation to ceramic and lithic typologies respectively.

In 1982, the state of typological debate was framed in Whallon and Brown's (1982) influential edited volume: *Essays on Archaeological Classification*, with contributors exploring at length the statistical and semantic nuances of the discipline. What was obvious in this collection of essays was the diverse and often contradictory nature of the arguments in North America, which seemed to have little impact on theoretical debate in Britain and Europe. Brown's own contribution to the volume finishes on a melancholy note, highlighting the lack of agreement and uncertainty that permeated the discipline: "Despite attempts to advance our theoretical understanding, an adequate theory of material culture has not arisen" (Brown, 1982: 187). He captured the zeitgeist: by the early 1980s attitudes towards typological studies were beginning to undergo something of a reversal away from raw statistical analysis. Foreshadowed in the 1970s by comments such as those made by Miller *et al.* (1972: 140), who stated that it was "tempting, but invalid, to equate quantification with objectivity." Since Spaulding first raised the hope of finding a hard, statistical solution to the typological problem, theorists had sought an algorithmic 'magic bullet' that would reveal a 'correct' approach to typological analysis.

The reaction against this unrealised expectation was explored by Binford and Sabloff (1982), who argued that archaeological theory was moving from an empiricist to a relativist position. Their stance partially explains why the typological debate had always been much fiercer in North America, as they saw Old World archaeology as a more evolutionary and experiential discipline, with few pretensions of objectivity. By the end

of the 1980s, the contention that statistical typologies provided nothing more than illusions of objectivity was becoming firmly entrenched (Read, 1989). Ammerman (1992), in his review of the field, neatly summarises the evolution of the debate and underscores the fact that a chasm had opened up between typological theorists and field archaeologists, who often lacked the high-level statistical training that was being employed in the typological debate. Further, he argued that largely inappropriate statistical techniques were being applied by typological theorists, who principally explored theoretical rather than practical models, their work succeeding mostly in muddying the waters instead of providing clarity. Typological theory had become a navel-gazing exercise, practiced by a select clique of archaeological theorists, chiefly ignored by field archaeologists (Adams & Adams, 1991).

The lack of practical applicability attendant in many artefact typologies being developed during the 1970s and 1980s led to the publication of Adams and Adams's (1991) notable *Archaeological Typology and Practical Reality: A Dialectical Approach to Artifact Classification and Sorting*. Published by two brothers, one a field archaeologist, the other a philosopher, the book was intended as an exploratory work that would aid the field archaeologist in not only grasping the core issues in the typological debate, but also in forming their own typologies. The publication received mostly favourable reviews, and made accessible to field archaeologists a theoretical domain that had become disconnected from practice (Wylie, 1992, Dunnell, 1993, Fotiadis, 1993). Adams and Adams (1991) placed an emphasis on the practicalities of using a typology in the field, and the challenges associated with assigning individual objects to artefact types. Much of their work underscores the need for a sound assessment of the purpose, or purposes, a typology would be intended to serve, and to design a typology with its end-purpose held firmly in mind. Adams and Adams (1991: 57-68) also highlighted the pitfalls of creating inappropriate typologies, unfit for purpose, as well as the risks associated with employing an existing typology to answer questions it had not been designed to answer. They focused on Medieval Nubian ceramics as a case study, and suggested that (while not the only valid process) a hierarchical, taxonomic approach to the material was the most practical and 'useful' method for classifying ceramics.

Taxonomic classification of ceramics and lithic projectile points was not new. The argument harked back to comments made by Ford (1961) who had called for the development of simple typologies employing a taxonomic approach. Whallon (1972:

15) had supported the application of a “tree-type” classification system for Owasco ceramics that was essentially taxonomic, while Read (1989) also endorsed a taxonomic approach for the classification of lithic projectile points. The application of morphological taxonomic typologies to material such as projectile points has been seen by Adams and Adams (1991: 203) and Read (1996) as something of a ‘best practice’ approach. Read (1996) went on to demonstrate that morphological taxonomies had the potential to close the gap between ‘objective’ and ‘intuitive’ type creation, again using lithic projectile points as a case study.

Another area of practical application considered in the 1990s was the role of replicability and consistency in assigning objects to artefact types. Adams and Adams (1991) explored the ideas of type formation and the underlying mental templates that are at play. In the construction of a typology, the typologist forms a mental template or ‘gestalt’ of each artefact type. The gestalt is a purely mental concept and does not exist as a physical object. When assigning individual artefacts to types, each artefact is measured against the gestalt held in the mind of the typologist, and the individual artefact is then assigned to the type whose gestalt it best approximates. Whittaker, *et al.* (1998) saw the question of consistency as critical, lamenting the lack of attention given to this aspect of typological theory. They explored how the exercise of assigning individual artefacts to type may evolve and shift from one archaeologist to another, and even for an individual archaeologist over time. This was done through a ceramic sorting experiment using a group of practicing archaeologists with varying degrees of familiarity with a typology of Sinagua ceramics. The results of the experiment were revealing. There was a general level of agreement between most of the sorters, a normative assignation of artefacts to the typology, with outliers who mostly comprised of those least familiar with the material. Information provided by the participants revealed that they did not learn the application of the typology from the literature, but rather, it was taught to them practically. Adams and Adams (1991: 197-198) also recognise this learned component to the practical application of typology, which they term “gestalt acquisition.”

The experiment also revealed that there was a generational component to the way archaeologists assigned artefacts to types. Whittaker’s *et al.* (1998) sample included an archaeologist who had learned the case study typology directly from the archaeologist who designed it. He was the only member of the sample who had learned the typology

from the “source”. The sample did, however, include a number of his students and, in turn, a number of their students. Whittaker *et al.* (1998) thus identified the sample as comprising three separate generations of typologist, based on their distance from the ‘source’. The first generation typologist sorted material slightly differently than did his students. However, this first generation typologist’s students, as members of a second generation, demonstrated a collective norm in how *they* assigned material to types. Their students, the third generation, assigned material slightly differently from their teachers, and differently from the first generation typologist, although with a clear ‘norm’ for *their* collective assignation. There was thus a clear progression away from the type concepts held by the archaeologist who created the typology for each generation of learned application.

The findings of Whittaker’s *et al.* (1998) experiment are illuminating and highlight that, regardless of how a typology is constructed, its application becomes removed from its creator’s conception, taking on a life of its own. Read (1989) recognised the problem of replicability, explaining that this was one of the main attractions for many theorists to algorithmic, automatic classification as a means of removing bias and human error. Certainly this was a recurrent thread throughout the literature of the 1970s, yet no practical solution has emerged. Consensus on the matter is that type definitions should be simple, tight and as explicitly stated as possible as a means of minimising bias (Whallon, 1972, Binford & Sabloff, 1982, Brown, 1982, Read, 1989, Adams & Adams, 1991, Read, 1996, Whittaker *et al.*, 1998).

Following the disillusionment of the 1990s, little has been written on typological theory in the twenty-first century. Attention has shifted to other theoretical realms and what scant attention has been paid to typology has swung back towards quantitative analyses with an emphasis on three-dimensional computer modelling of artefacts. This is often with a view to reconstructing and preserving them, such as Karasik and Smilansky’s (2008) 3D scanning approach to pottery analysis. The forum for debate has also changed, with articles published less often in sources like *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* and *American Antiquity*; rather, they have appeared in more computer-oriented publications like *Pattern Recognition Letters* (Kampel & Sablatnig, 2007), where they are less likely to be read by the practicing archaeologist.

2.2 An appropriate approach for the formation of spearhead typologies

As a class of object, spearheads have repeatedly been subjected to typological classification, with varying degrees of success. Typologies based on rigidly metric criteria have been unsuccessful in revealing aspects like function and chronological evolution (for example, W. H. Manning's 1985 typology, which will be discussed, below). However, metric analysis of spearheads has demonstrated clusters of certain spearhead lengths at individual sites, although the data become subject to stringing when applied to multiple sites (Ruby, 1995: 98-100 and figs.2.76 & 2.77). Hodson (1982: 24) has cogently argued against the employment of rigidly metric and arbitrary distinctions in type creation, stating that these create unnatural "dissections" in the data, which are not archaeologically useful, and which invariably fail to reveal the sense of "internal cohesion and external isolation" that should emerge from an appropriate typological analysis (Hodson, 1982: 23, quoting: Cormack, 1971: 329). Read has repeatedly argued that any algorithmically-based typology must retain an intuitive sense if it is to prove useful in practice, rather than theory, and that for the study of projectile weapons, a morphological approach is the best way to achieve this end (Read, 1989, 1996).

Morphological taxonomic typologies have been repeatedly demonstrated as effective in revealing function as well as geographic and chronological distribution (Brown, 1982, Brunaux & Rapin, 1988, Inall, 2009). Adams and Adams (1991: 167) have argued that morphological taxonomy is a kind of typology that lends itself to multiple purposes. In particular, lithic projectile points are a class of object that has frequently been subjected to typological analysis, and morphological taxonomy is generally considered the most useful typological approach to the material (Cowgill, 1982, Read, 1989, 1996). Like spearheads, lithic projectile points are weapons whose form is tightly linked to their function. Attempts to move away from morphological taxonomic assessment of projectile points have yielded inadequate results and met with serious criticism (Cahen & Van Noten, 1971, Miller *et al.*, 1972).

2.3 Critical evaluation of existing spearhead typologies

No typology of spearheads has been published for the British Iron Age. However, a recent PhD thesis accepted by the University of Edinburgh does include a typology of spearheads, which merits discussion in this chapter (Anderson, 2012). There are some peripheral spearhead typologies available, which also warrant consideration. Several typologies have been constructed for Romano-British and Anglo Saxon spearheads in Britain. Marchant (1991: 264-279) provides a critical overview of several such typologies in his doctoral thesis. The typologies he examined were all rigidly metric in their construction and drew unnatural distinctions between a number of functionally indistinct spearheads with leaf-shaped blades. Marchant was right to conclude that, due to their ubiquity across many cultures in a range of time periods, these typologies are unhelpful for any attempt to understand warfare or to construct a chronological or cultural narrative.

Attempts have been made to assign spearheads from Iron Age Britain to both Manning's (1976, 1985) Romano-British, and Swanton's (1974) Anglo-Saxon typologies. Therefore, it is appropriate to examine these particular typologies in close detail. Stead (1991a) constructed a limited typology to facilitate publication of the spearheads recovered during his excavation of Arras Culture burials at Burton Fleming, Rudston, Garton Station and Kirkburn. A typology of Iron Age Continental spearheads will also be evaluated in this section as it provides a comparative approach to similar material, some of which has direct correlation with the British finds assessed in this study (Brunaux & Rapin, 1988). A final typology, which must also be examined in this chapter, is Schatte's (2013) recently published typology of bone and antler points, incorporating material from the Continental European Long Iron Age as well as the British Iron Age. Appendix 10.1 offers a comparative table highlighting correlations between the typology created for the current study and the various spearhead typologies, examined in this chapter.

2.3.1 Swanton: Anglo-Saxon spearhead typology

The publication of Swanton's (1974) typology of Anglo-Saxon spearheads represented the assessment of several thousand spearheads. Swanton (1974: 2) describes his approach as follows: "[t]he major criteria are those of profile and proportion, together with some consideration of cross-section and overall length, and less apparent features such as bulk and weight". Secondary criteria included the treatment of the socket;

whether and how it was welded, and whether it was adorned with bindings etc. Ultimately, Swanton (1974: 3) aimed to present “...an elastic sequence of series and groups which might acknowledge more sophisticated formal interrelationships”, recognising that overlaps and outliers would exist.

The result is a morphological taxonomic typology identifying 12 spearhead types, labelled A to L, all but two groups (J and L) including between two and four sub-types (Swanton, 1974: 5-24). Swanton’s (1974) typology is extensively illustrated in his figures 1-8 (reproduced in Figure 2.1). Swanton’s types are loosely aggregated into five groups as follows:

- Group A, a collection of barbed spearheads, interpreted by Swanton as having evolved out of Roman spearhead forms;
- Group B, with pronounced midribs, thought to have evolved from Germanic and ultimately La Tène spearheads;
- Groups C and D, thought to be insular forms, exhibiting a range of leaf-shaped blades and lenticular blade sections;
- Groups E to H, all exhibiting angular shoulders for which Swanton finds little Continental comparison; and,
- Groups I to L, which display corrugated blade sections, a development thought by Swanton (1974: 20) to be an adaptation of a “well-known Celtic Dark Age type”.

Swanton’s typology is clearly an intuitive creation based on close familiarity with an impressive corpus of material, covering an extended period of time, and very broad in its geographic scope. Each of Swanton’s loose aggregate groups exhibits a sense of ‘internal cohesion and external isolation’ and within these aggregates; the individual types exhibit strong common traits, particularly their blade profiles. Unfortunately, Swanton does not provide a coherent methodology for his typology, referring the reader to his unpublished doctoral thesis on the subject (Swanton, 1973). Within each type there is considerable length variation between sub-types, and Swanton makes it clear that he places much greater emphasis on the profile of the blade and the proportions of the blade compared to the socket and shank, than in rigid measurements (Swanton, 1974: 3).

Through the application of his typology, Swanton (1974: 5-24) attempts to track the chronological and cultural evolution of Anglo-Saxon spearhead forms. Whether the cultural and ethnic origins Swanton proposes are supportable is unclear, and he is rarely forthcoming with specific examples for direct comparison. Swanton provides a number of general supporting statements for the chronological evolution of his typology, again, frequently without reference to specific examples.

Ultimately, Swanton's (1974) type definitions are prescriptive and his type ideals are quite clearly laid out. The flexibility he gives his typology allows for the recognition of new types not previously encountered, and the sheer size of his sample has allowed Swanton (1974) to demonstrate that his typology has a certain utility for those wishing to study the function of Anglo-Saxon spearheads, and their geographic distribution. It is this sense of utility that seems to have led to Swanton's (1974) typology being referred to when dealing with spearheads from outside the Anglo-Saxon cultural and chronological spheres (Manning, 1976, Marchant, 1991).

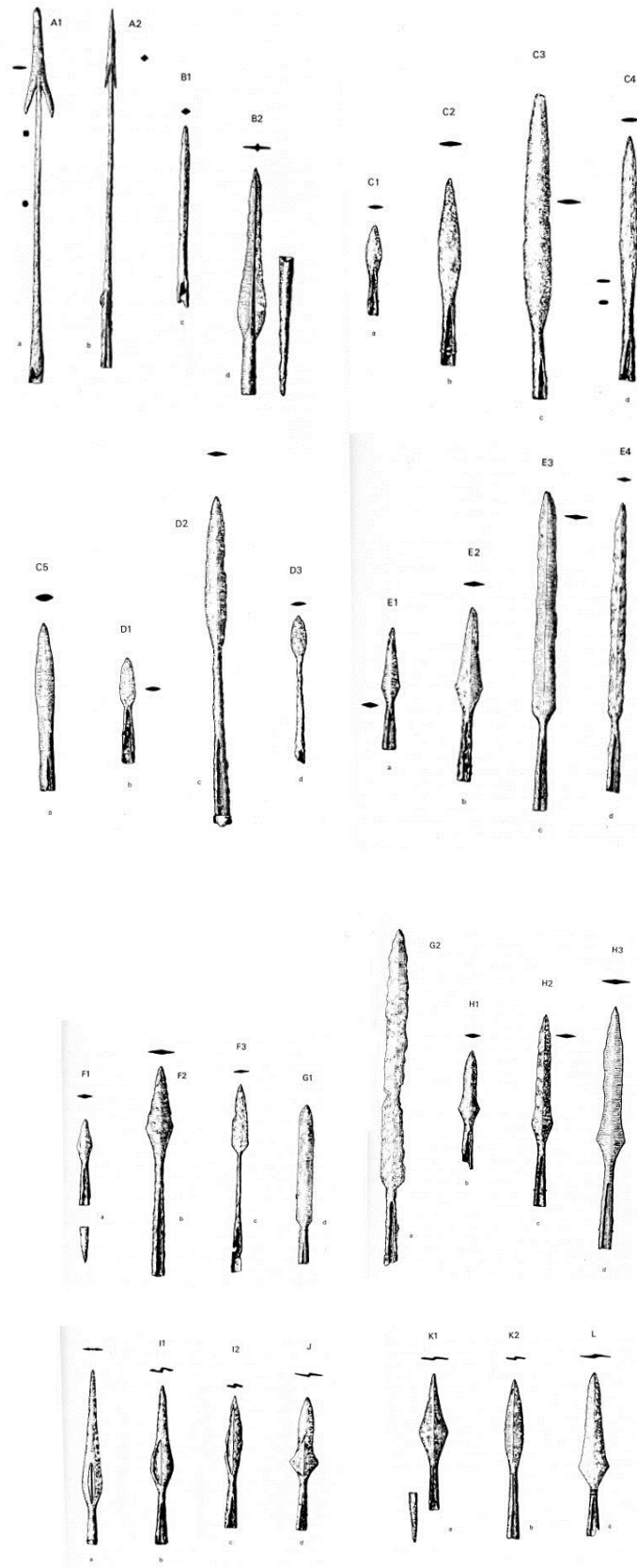


Figure 2.1: Swanton's typology of Anglo-Saxon Spearheads (Swanton, 1974).
 Top row: A1 to C4, second row: C5 to E4, third row: F1-H3, bottom row : I1 to L.

2.3.2 *Manning: Romano-British spearhead typologies*

Manning constructed two typologies of Romano-British spearheads. Firstly, in 1976 he published a typology of Romano-British spearheads from the Museum of Antiquities, Newcastle Upon Tyne (Manning, 1976). Manning's (1976) typology is particularly relevant for the Iron Age spearheads from East Yorkshire, as some attempts have been made, by Stead and others, to assign Yorkshire examples to Manning's spearhead types (Stead, 1991a, Evans, 2003). The typology was based on an assessment of 23 Romano-British iron spearheads held in the Newcastle museum collection, which Manning (1976: 18) professes is an insufficient sample for the creation of a typology. The spearheads are divided into three groups (Figure 2.2):

1. *Those with narrow, leaf-shaped blades.*
2. *Those with wider and generally shorter blades than Group 1.*
3. *Small spearheads, with a narrow blade which expands into an oval or diamond at its base; a form sufficiently well-defined to be treated as a separate group* (Manning, 1976: 18).

In addition to these three groups, which account for 18 of the spearheads, are four 'barbed' spearheads. Another miscellaneous spearhead, distinguished by a concave blade profile, is grouped together with the barbed spearheads under the title "Other Types" (Manning, 1976: 20). As with his later 1985 typology (discussed below), Manning attempts to reconcile his types with Brailsford's (1962) typology of spearheads from Hod Hill, but finds only limited correlation. The underlying rationale for the type definitions is not discussed in detail by Manning (1976: 18), and he comments that there is a degree of difficulty allocating spearheads to particular types. The principal distinction appears to be on the basis of blade profile, as indicated by the type descriptions. The length of the spearheads appears to be a secondary consideration as there is noticeable overlap in the length of the spearheads between type groups. Manning (1976: *ibid.*) is careful to avoid the use of the terms 'lance' and 'javelin' in acknowledgement of the particular functional connotations these terms carry. Manning does, however, offer some suggestions regarding the function of each of his spearhead types. Type 1 spearheads Manning (1976: *ibid.*) sees as something of an all-purpose weapon, suited to being thrown, used in hand-to-hand combat, or from horseback as a cavalry weapon. Type 2 spearheads he sees as almost exclusively for throwing,

although some, he suggests, may have been used as artillery bolts. Type 3 spearheads, which Manning likens to Swanton's Type B2 (Manning, 1976: 19, Swanton, 1974: 6-7), are perceived as having a mostly decorative function, believed to have a point too flimsy to be practical in its most extreme examples.

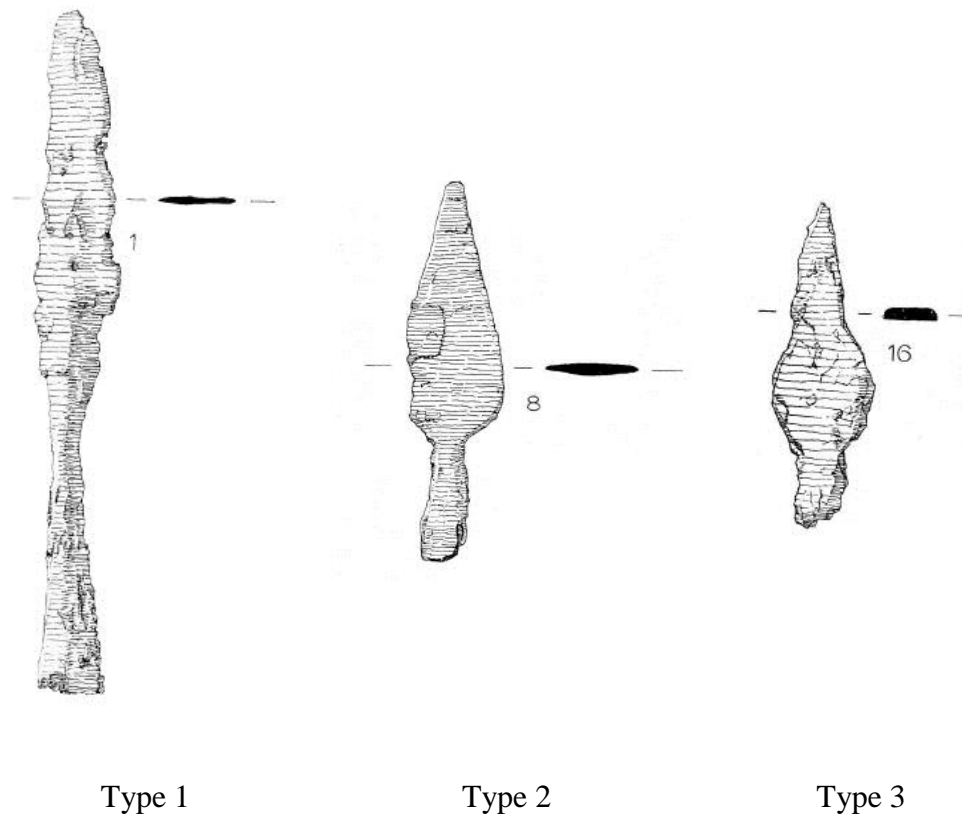


Figure 2.2: Manning's 1976 typology (Manning, 1976: figs. 1, 8 and 16).

In 1985 Manning went on to produce a catalogue of Romano-British iron artefacts held in the British Museum's collection (Manning, 1985). The work surveyed a broad range of tools and weapons, including 103 iron spearheads, which formed only a small part of the overall work. The material Manning (1985) published was drawn largely from excavations at Hod Hill, an Iron Age hillfort and later a Romano-British fort of Claudian date, in Dorset. The spearheads are accordingly dated to the mid-first century AD. Most of the artefacts had at one time graced the collection of Henry Durden, a local nineteenth century collector of antiquities. After Durden's death the collection was sold to the British Museum by his son. A small number of spearheads which had come from other sites were also included in the publication, with limited commentary. Due to the publication's remit to showcase specifically the Romano-British material in the British Museum's collection, Manning (1985) made a conscious decision to exclude any

material for which he could not support a Roman origin. There is no discussion of what material was excluded, or how the determination of 'Roman' origin was made. Further, there is no comparative discussion of those excluded examples, which might be of local origin.

In the development of this typology, Manning (1985) drew upon two previous typologies of Romano-British spearheads; the work of J. W. Brailsford (1962) and I. R. Scott (1980), both of whom had previously assessed the Hod Hill material. Brailsford (1962: 5-6) had divided the spearheads into categories A, B and C. Class A were 'large' spearheads divided into subcategories: i) broad-bladed, ii) narrow-bladed and iii) 'local manufacture', which Manning (1985: 161) recounts as meaning "relatively crudely made from sheet-metal, which is folded over to form a split socket." Brailsford's Category B is simply described as 'slender' with no subcategories. His Category C spearheads are described as 'small' and divided into i) well-made and ii) local manufacture. The determination of spearheads as being of 'local manufacture' was based entirely on whether the socket weld was closed or open. Manning (1985: 162) observed that these previous typologies distinguished between spearheads with flanged sockets, interpreted as having been "made on campaign", and those with closed sockets, their perceived higher production standards interpreted as reflective of a more stable smithing environment. Manning, (1985: *ibid.*) however, noted that the dimensions of the open-socketed forms fall within the range of each of his groups, and he identifies them as serving the same function as their better-made brethren.

Scott produced a type system, thought by Manning to be similar to Brailsford's typology, which also divided the spearheads into three categories, described by Manning (1985: 161) as follows:

- 1- *Lanceheads, with round points and straight tapering blades (the 'Hod Hill' type) or plain leaf-shaped blades.*
- 2- *Small spearheads used for javelins or lances, which were divided into two groups:*
 - a- *with broad flat blades, flat on one face, and often with a pronounced midrib on the other.*
 - b- *with slimmer and better-made blades, usually with drawn out points.*

- 3- *Crudely made weapons which range in size from over 20 cm down to very small points less than 4 cm long which can only be arrowheads.*

Both Brailsford (1962) and Scott (1980) constructed their type systems with a focus on the overall length of the spearheads. By contrast, Manning (1985) focused specifically on the dimensions of the blade in the construction of his typology, excluding the socket dimensions entirely. Manning (1985: 161-162) saw the socket purely as a means of fixing the spear blade to the shaft and, consequently, an irrelevant variable for the purposes of type determination.

In the construction of his typology, Manning (1985: 161) described the blade forms as simple, yet “responsive both to function and fashion.” He observed a relationship between blade length and width, dividing the spearheads into four groups (I-IV) based on a simple cluster analysis of the comparative length and width of the spear blades. Manning’s (1985: Plates 76-81) typology is illustrated in the form of a comprehensive catalogue, rather than offering any explicit type ideals and thus is not reproduced here. The object clusters for Manning’s Group III and Group IV are reasonably clear. However, the clusters comprising Group I and Group II are far less distinct, the point of division seemingly arbitrary. There is less than 5mm difference between the maximum blade length of Group I examples and the minimum blade length for members of Group II. Furthermore, there is complete overlap in the blade widths for members of Group I and Group II. This is an apparent example of an unnatural dissection of the data-set as outlined by Hodson (1982: 24). Indeed, Manning’s description of the distinction between the two groups fails to clarify matters, stating that members of Group II “are larger versions of the slender examples of Group I” (Manning, 1985: 165). The accompanying illustrations of Group I and Group II members depict objects which are not at all dissimilar.

In distinct contrast to his 1976 typology, blade profile was not considered a meaningful variable for type determination in Manning’s (1985) typology. Consequently, within each of Manning’s groups there is a diversity of blade forms, with examples ranging from leaf-shaped to triangular and diamond blade profiles allocated to the same group and sub-group, variations he describes as having “no functional significance” (Manning, 1985: 163).

Despite his firm decision to exclude the socket from consideration as a type determinate variable in the creation of his type groups, Manning (1985) does use the socket in his identification of sub-groups. Group I is divided into Group I A and Group I B, and Group II into II A and II B on the basis of whether the socket is completely welded (or very nearly so), or whether it presents an open, flanged socket. This appears to be a continuation of the belief, outlined explicitly by Brailsford (1962) and Scott (1980), that the degree of success with which the socket weld had been closed was directly related to the talent of, and/or the resources available to, the smith at the time of manufacture. No cogent argument is presented as to why this should be so. Nor is there any discussion about why this should be of greater importance than blade profile. This is particularly relevant given Manning's (1985: 161-162) position that the blade was of prime importance and that the socket served no meaningful function.

Two blade characteristics, which were noted with some frequency by Manning for members of both his Group I and Group II, were tendencies for the blade shoulders to be asymmetrical and for the blade section to be triangular, presenting a flat blade on one face with a midrib on the other. Manning (1985: 163) comments that the frequency of these two characteristics was of "sufficient frequency to suggest they were intentional", yet he chose not to draw any typological distinction (either primary or secondary) based on the exhibition or exclusion of either trait. There is no exploration of whether these two traits are interrelated, or mutually exclusive. While Manning attempts to relate his type groups back to Brailsford's type system, there is no clear correlation, rendering the comparison of little value.

With regard to spear function, Manning (1985) sees his Group I and Group II examples as possibly functioning as throwing spears, javelins or cavalry lances, although he argues that the spearheads provide insufficient evidence to allow any certain conclusions about their specific function. Manning (1985: 163) observes, that with the absence of stirrups, cavalry lances could not have been used in the same way as their Medieval counterparts. Certainly, without stirrups such usage would have been unlikely, although the necessity of stirrups to conduct complex manoeuvres is often overstated in modern scholarship (Anglim *et al.*, 2002). The type descriptions given for Group I and II thus raise more questions than they answer.

Manning's (1985: 166) Group III is described as a "small but strikingly uniform group of spears with relatively long, narrow blades" which he interprets as lanceheads. Again, he divides the material into Group III A and III B on the basis of whether the socket is open, a condition which constituted a single example.

Group IV forms a clear cluster, separate from members of the other three groups, presenting a clear sense of "external isolation" (Hodson, 1982). Manning (1985: 167) interprets these longer, broader-bladed weapons as designed for "hand-to-hand fighting", possibly related to later cavalry lances, as seen on the German frontier. Group IV is divided into three sub-groups and is the only group which is subdivided (partially) on the basis of blade form (Manning, 1985: 167). Members of Group IV A are described as "Narrow leaf-shaped blades with gently curving shoulders and a midrib of varying prominence". Members of IV B have narrow, tapered to triangular blade forms with angular shoulders. Manning sees these examples as being of an inferior standard of workmanship to members of Group IV A, although better made than members of his Group IV C, which are differentiated from IV B on the basis of having flanged, rather than closed, sockets. This inconsistency of sub-group determination is unhelpful and simply creates another form of unnatural dissection in the dataset, evidenced by the fact that Manning (1985: 167-168) assigns six spearheads to Group IV B, four to Group IV C and has a further six examples which he could not differentiate with sufficient confidence to allow assignation to one group or another.

Manning's (1985: 168-170) assessment of the spearheads includes a sample of nine spearheads which were outliers on his cluster analysis, and which he could not assign to any of his four Groups. These examples tended to be outliers on the basis of their blade width, rather than their length. A number of them also featured quite prominent midribs, which Manning felt was significant as such midribs rarely appear among Roman spearheads, and are reminiscent of La Tène spearhead forms. Two examples also featured very narrow necks between the socket and blade, which Manning (1985: 170) saw as a structural weakness that may have been intentional, with the aim that the spearhead should bend at this point upon impact.

On the basis of the flawed and inconsistent nature of Manning's (1985) type definitions, his typology is of little assistance for the study of Romano-British or Iron Age spearheads in Britain. This is unfortunate as the prominence and authority of a British

Museum publication lends the typology credence, and compels individuals to try and assign new finds to this muddled type system, which is poorly designed for the accommodation of new material. This is a clear example of a typology failing as a tool to answer questions it was not designed to answer, as Adams and Adams (1991) cautioned.

There is no clear evolution from Manning's 1976 typology to his 1985 typology. The underlying methodologies are distinct; the former based on morphological blade profile, the latter a strict cluster analysis of blade length and width. Consequently, there is no easy reconciliation of the two typologies. Nor does Manning attempt to integrate the Museum of Antiquities, Newcastle material into the new typology developed in 1985, which was certainly outside the remit of the latter publication.

2.3.3 Ian Stead: Iron Age Yorkshire spearhead typology

Ian Stead produced an English Heritage Archaeological Report in 1991, which presented an overview of Iron Age cemetery sites in East Yorkshire, excavated between 1961 and 1987 (Stead, 1991a). The excavations yielded over 50 iron spearheads and six bone points. Stead (1991a) developed a basic morphological taxonomy purely for the communicative purposes of publishing the iron spearheads. They are divided into two main Groups; A and B (Figure 2.3). Group A consists of spearheads with their maximum blade width at the base of the blade, while members of Group B have their maximum blade width "higher" up the blade (Stead, 1991a: 75). For each group Stead identifies three sub-groups, essentially small, medium and large examples determined on the basis of their comparative blade and socket lengths. Group A1 consists of examples with "blades considerably longer than the sockets;" A2 "blades only slightly longer than their sockets;" and, A3 "blades shorter than the sockets." Group B is similarly divided into: B1 "blades longer than sockets;" B2 "blades slightly longer than sockets;" and, B3 "blades shorter than sockets" (Stead, 1991a: , 75-78). No definitions are provided for subjective terms like "considerably longer" and "slightly longer" in reference to blade length, which is problematic for anyone attempting to make use of Stead's (1991a: 76-77) typology. Particularly for Group B, the distinction between B1 and B2 is utterly inadequate for the facilitation of future artefact assignments.

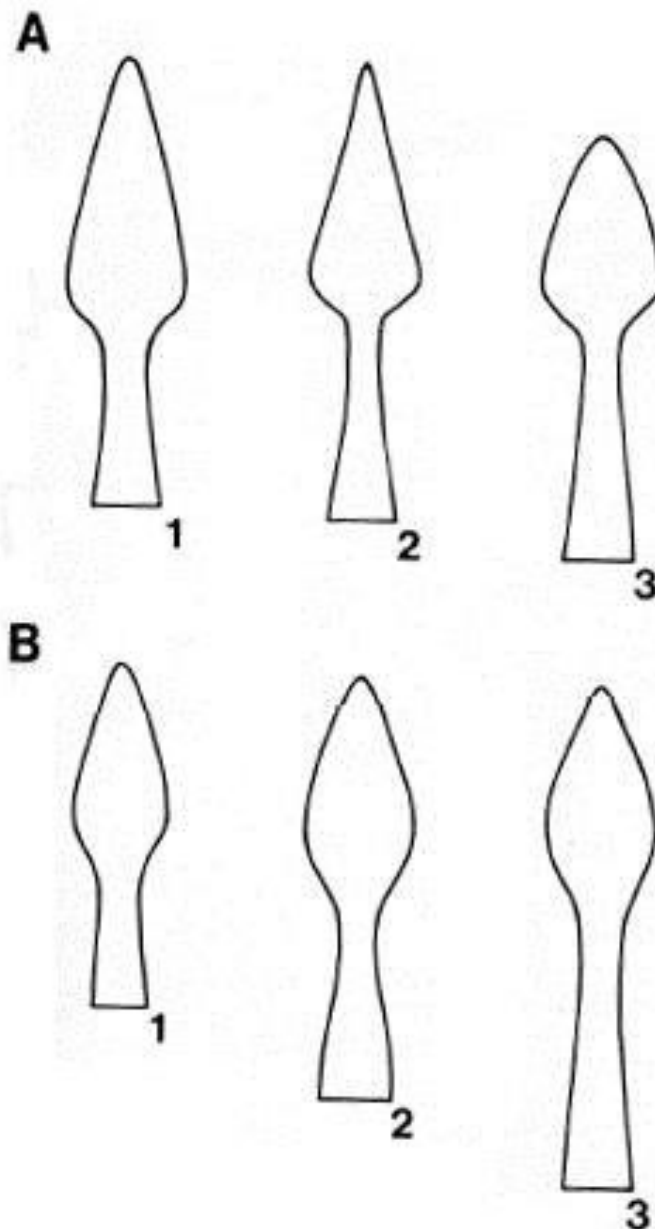


Figure 2.3: Stead's 1991 typology (Stead, 1991a: fig.57).

The groups which Stead (1991a) identified appeared to have geographic associations. He allocated 21 spearheads to his Group A, 86 percent of which had been found at Rudston or Burton Fleming (essentially a single site at the interface between two modern parishes). Stead assigned 30 spearheads to his Group B, 97 percent of which had been recovered from the excavations at Garton Station and nearby Kirkburn.

A small number of spearheads did not fit within the basic taxonomy Stead constructed, consisting of four spearheads, two with “sharply carinated” blades, one with an “exceptionally wide blade”, and an example with no identifiable blade that he thought may perhaps be a ferrule (Stead, 1991a: 78). While these examples are clearly outliers

amongst the sample Stead had to deal with, the assessment of material from other sites may prove informative. Unfortunately, it was beyond the scope of Stead's publication to compare the spearheads to material from other sites, and Stead (1991a: 74) comments directly on the dearth of spearhead finds in Britain and the lack of any intensive study of this class of object. The issue is complicated, in his opinion, by a tendency for chance finds of spearheads to be identified as Anglo-Saxon when they may, in fact, be of Iron Age date (Stead, 1991a: 75). He hints that his work is not intended as the definitive say on the matter, and that a revision of the material is overdue. The only work in which he found any meaningful assessment of spearhead types (but which produced no obvious comparisons with his sample) was Brunaux and Rapin's (1988) work on the material from the sanctuary site at Gournay-sur-Aronde in Picardy, Northern France, to which we shall now turn.

2.3.4 Brunaux and Rapin: Gournay-sur-Aronde spearhead typology

In 1988 Brunaux and Rapin published a detailed study of shield bosses and fittings, spearheads and ferrules from the Iron Age sanctuary site at Gournay-sur-Aronde in Picardy, Northern France (Brunaux & Rapin, 1988). Their work included the most in-depth study of French Iron Age spearheads to date, and the authors' approach considered the material in a highly nuanced manner. Brunaux and Rapin (1988) sought to understand the martial function of the shields and spearheads recovered from the Gournay-sur-Aronde sanctuary site, where literally thousands of items had been ritually deposited in ditches between the fourth and first centuries BC. Much of the material had been subjected to ritual destruction prior to deposition and required painstaking restoration work prior to formal analysis (Brunaux & Rapin, 1988). Like Marchant (1991), Brunaux and Rapin (1988: 84) comment on the tendency for spearheads to resist typological classification, in particular, they allude to the perils awaiting any scholar attempting to construct a chronological seriation on morphological bases.

In their approach to the spearheads, Brunaux and Rapin (1988) conducted a thorough exploration of ancient literary and iconographic sources in addition to examining the artefacts themselves. They drew upon a broad range of contemporary and earlier Classical sources, and discussed what is known of contemporary, better documented, Mediterranean warfare. Their work includes a number of misconceptions about the deployment of spears in complex overhead manoeuvres in Greek hoplite warfare, which were current in the literature of the time, and which have persisted until recent years

(Cartledge, 1977, Hanson, 1993, for a redress of these misconceptions see: van Wees, 2004, Matthew, 2009a). Detailed descriptions of the equipment and tactics of Gallic tribes are rare, and Brunaux and Rapin (1988) focus closely on the comments of Diodorus Siculus (*Bibliotheca Historica*: Book V.30) whose description of spearheads the size of swords might outwardly seem an exaggeration, but which conforms surprisingly well with some of the material recovered from the Gournay-sur-Aronde sanctuary. Likewise, there is little iconographic evidence to assist the authors in their attempts to reconstruct the spears. Depictions of Gallic warriors are rare, but not unknown. However, they tend to be highly stylised and, consequently, provide poor testament of the physical reality they represent. Images of Gallic warriors appear to show spears of differing shaft length, employed in a range of techniques, over-arm, underarm, on foot, and on horseback. Ultimately, Brunaux and Rapin (1988: 92) found the iconographic sources frustratingly disappointing, compelling them to rely predominantly on the archaeology.

Turning to the archaeological evidence, Brunaux and Rapin broke the spearhead down into its component parts (socket, point and blade) and considered for each a range of “*constantes*” and “*variables*” (Brunaux & Rapin, 1988: 97-103). For example, every spearhead in their assemblage was fixed to its shaft with a socket. There were no tanged spearheads recorded from Gournay-sur-Aronde. For the sockets, Brunaux and Rapin (1988: 97) observed that 60 percent of the spearheads had a socket diameter between 20mm and 22mm and, that total variation in socket diameter was between 15mm and 25mm. These they saw as the mechanical limits beyond which the shaft would become either too flimsy or too unwieldy to function efficiently (Brunaux & Rapin, 1988: *ibid.*). Likewise, many of the sockets retained observable traces of rivets, which had been used to fix the socket to the spear shaft, and they assert that, in instances where rivets or rivet holes could not be seen, their absence should not be assumed, as they may simply have become obscured by corrosion product. These traits Brunaux and Rapin (1988: *ibid.*) saw as “*constantes*”. “*Variables*” were the length, section and any ornamentation that the socket might exhibit. Strictly speaking, from a type construction perspective, all of these criteria are variables. What Brunaux and Rapin (1988) term ‘constants’ are in fact variables whose attributes (e.g. socket diameter) tend to cluster tightly, with few outliers. What Brunaux and Rapin (1988) label as ‘variables’ (e.g. blade profile) are

simply variables which display more striking morphological diversity, and which they thought would prove useful in the construction of a morphological taxonomy.

The greatest morphological diversity was observed in the blade profiles (Brunaux & Rapin, 1988: fig.49). Indeed, the only ‘constant’ observed for the blades was the thinness of the metal. Secondary to the blade profile was the prominence of the midrib, separated into high, medium and low examples (*haute, moyenne, basse*). On these bases, the spearheads from Gournay-sur-Aronde were initially divided into six groups as follows:

A. Convex forms:

1. With short socket
2. With long socket

B. Classic forms:

1. With long socket
2. With medium socket
3. With short socket
4. Indented (*échancrées*)

C. Wide forms:

1. With rectilinear/straight point (*rectilignes*)
2. With elongated point

D. Bayonet forms:

1. With long socket
2. With short socket

E. Biconvex forms

F. Javelins

For each of these groups, Brunaux and Rapin (1988: 119-131) present a list of comparable material from other Iron Age sites throughout Europe. In each instance, there is an attempt to associate each spearhead group with the Gournay-sur-Aronde typology of shield-bosses. The authors are confident that their shield typology has revealed a chronological seriation which can, via stratigraphic association, also be applied to the spearhead typology (Brunaux & Rapin, 1988: 115-118). This chronological assessment is enhanced through the study of comparative spearhead finds, many of which come from funerary contexts, that have been dated by other means

(frequently based on contextual associations with various La Tène fibula forms), also facilitating an exploration of geographic distribution. Through these examples, Brunaux and Rapin (1988) attempt to reconstruct a morphological evolution for each spearhead group and sub-group, which they interpret as chronological seriation.

In the final presentation of their formal typology (Figure 2.4), Brunaux and Rapin (1988) acknowledge that their typology is likely to be subject to later revision but feel a meaningful contribution can be made to the typological debate. The order of their previously identified spearhead groups is altered slightly, an apparent reflection of Brunaux and Rapin's (1988: 133-134 and fig.166) observed chronological seriation, and can be summarised as follows:

- Type I: Classic forms (*formes classiques*)
 - I a – 20-30cm long incorporating javelins and scalloped or indented (*échancrés*) forms.
 - I b – very large examples, frequently longer than 40cm, with proportionately short sockets.
 - I c – examples with long sockets.
- Type II: Convex forms (*formes convexes*)
 - II a – with a short socket and rather broad blades, appearing in the early levels of the Gournay-sur-Aronde sanctuary deposits (third century BC).
 - II b – socketed with a wide blade, later than II a, but still dated within the third century BC.
 - II c – with a long socket and a willow-leaf-shaped blade and with a similar distribution to Type I c. Dated to the second century BC.
- Type III: Wide forms (*formes larges*)
 - III a – with a long socket, the blade approximately 7cm to 8cm wide, the socket of roughly equivalent length.
 - III b – with a short socket, approximately 4cm to 5cm long with a less pronounced midrib than Type III a.
 - III c – wide, with a sharp point, thought to have evolved from Type III b, appearing during the transition from the third to second centuries BC.
- Type IV: Bayonet Lances (*lances baïonnettes*)
 - IV a – an ancient form with a long point, which can exceed 75cm, dated to the first quarter of the second century BC.

IV b – a standard form with a point proportionately longer than the wings of the blade, associated with tanged ferrules and Type VI shield bosses, dated to the mid-second century BC.

- Type V: Biconvex Blades (*fers biconvexes*)

V a – featuring an expanded blade base, the blades averaging around 20cm in length but with some examples up to 40cm long.

V b – thought to have evolved from Type V a, with a lower midrib and less accentuated point.

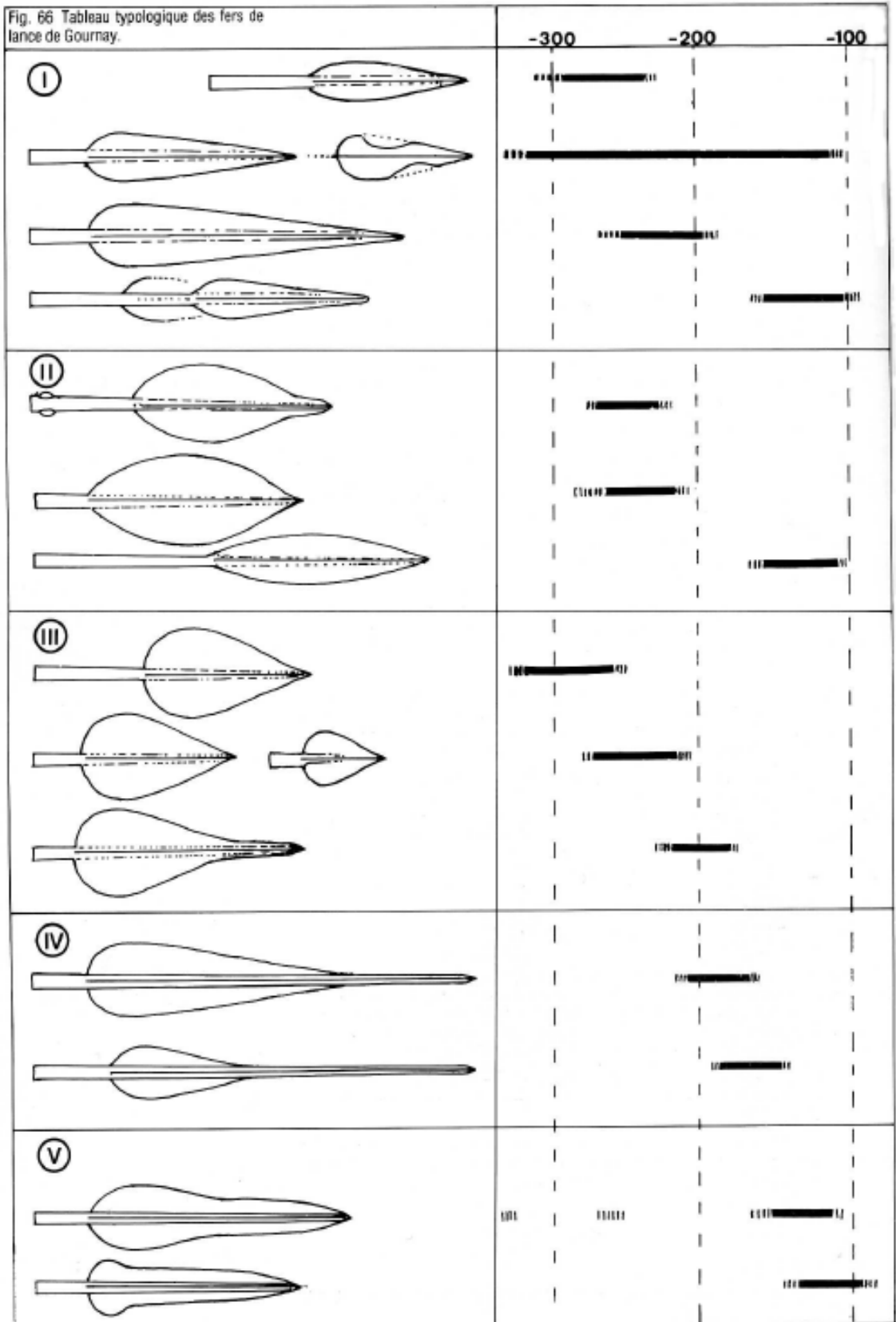


Figure 2.4: Brunaux and Rapin's 1988 typology (Brunaux & Rapin, 1988: fig.66).

Javelins, which form approximately 7 percent of the Gournay-sur-Aronde spearheads, were incorporated into Brunaux and Rapin's (1988) Type I, as members of sub-type I a. Each type group has a clear sense of 'internal cohesion and external isolation', with their descriptive type-group names and clear accompanying illustrations. Less obvious are the internal divisions between sub-types. Each type is sub-divided on the basis of different characteristics, along the lines of Read's (1989: 173-176, 1996: 669-670) hierarchical taxonomic approach, and in accordance with the shifts in type-defining criteria observed by Whallon (1972: 15) for the methodology underlying the construction of the Owasco ceramic typology. The defining criteria for the construction of sub-types are generally variations to the length of the spearhead blade or socket. Approximate definitions are given, in some instances, for subjective terms like "*douille longue*," so that the reader will understand that a length of 7-8cm is intended, for example (Brunaux & Rapin, 1988: 134). However, for some sub-types these subjective terms are as ill-defined as Stead's (1991a: 76-77) "considerably longer" and "slightly longer" (Brunaux & Rapin, 1988: 133-134). There is no discussion of outliers or miscellanea that did not fit within the typology, which is unhelpful and disappointing.

While much is made of the relationship between form and function in Brunaux and Rapin's (1988) study of a spearhead's component parts, there is no discussion regarding the martial function of the formal spearhead types presented in their final typology. In particular, the integration of 'javelins', a label with connotations of throwing actions, into Type I is not easily reconciled with the way 'classic' spearhead forms are readily differentiated from 'javelins' in the preliminary assessment. Their silence on this front is also disappointing and raises the question of whether the typology which they have created is successful in revealing martial function. While their preliminary discussions clearly focus on function, the final typology seems much more concerned with chronological seriation, and functional interpretations seem to have fallen away. Ultimately, one is left with the sense that the authors did not feel confident of any functional conclusions they may have drawn. The sense of cohesion within each type sub-group suggests that they likely served similar martial functions to their peers, although what these functions might have been is left for the reader to disentangle from the preliminary discussions.

Brunaux and Rapin's (1988: 93) study of the spearheads from Gournay-sur-Aronde also includes an uncommon attempt to reconstruct, and assess the function of, the spear shaft. Instances of preserved spear shafts are relatively rare and, consequently, estimations of shaft length are generally based upon the relative positions of spearheads and ferrules within individual graves. In many instances it is presumed that the shaft was broken before the spear was interred, and that the total length of the spear was greater than the length of the grave. On the basis of funerary examples, Brunaux and Rapin (1988: *ibid.*) estimate that the length of the spears from Gournay-sur-Aronde averaged around 2.5m in length. Through a comparative study of the diameters of the spearhead sockets and the sockets of the ferrules, Brunaux and Rapin (1988: 128-129) attempt to reconstruct three distinct shaft forms: conical, cylindrical and fusiform. While the authors present an interesting argument, and are to be commended for underscoring the importance of the spear shaft in considering the weapon's function, their conclusions are not entirely convincing and seem simplistic and naïve compared with their nuanced discussion of spearhead forms.

2.3.5 Anderson: Northern Britain Iron Age spearhead typology

A doctoral thesis was recently accepted (in January 2012) by the University of Edinburgh, produced by Dr Kate Anderson, entitled *The Weapons, Warriors and Warfare of Northern Britain, c.1250 BC – 850 AD*. As part of her assessment, Anderson (2012) constructed a typology based on a sample of 120 iron spearheads of northern British provenance, including material from East Yorkshire. Anderson (2012) is clear that she wishes her typology to function as a tool for the geographic and chronological study of Iron Age spearheads in northern Britain. As an initial phase of investigation Anderson (2012: 127-130) conducted a visual sort of her sample, grouping the spearheads on morphological bases, allowing for the construction of five groups and a series of miscellanea. However, Anderson (2012: 58 and 135) was unsatisfied with the morphological typology she created, stating: "the groups themselves do not evidence reliable chronological, regional or contextual patterning" and explicitly argues against morphological typologies as a useful tool for determining spearhead function. Anderson (2012: 133) also felt that the groupings were too subjective and voiced concerns that the quite distinct spearhead forms evident in the South Cave Weapons Cache, from East Yorkshire were biasing her results.

In order to produce a more ‘objective’ typology, Anderson (2012) conducted a two-step cluster analysis, arguing that recent developments in statistical software have been able to overcome the difficulties associated with algorithmic typologies in the past. Using SPSS software, Anderson (2012: 141) analysed the following intrinsic data:

1. Blade length
2. Socket length
3. Total length
4. Blade width at the widest point x blade length
5. Distance from the junction to the widest point x blade length
6. Distance from the widest point to the tip
7. Diameter of socket
8. Junction width

The cluster analysis resulted in the construction of four groups of spearheads (Figure 2.5), incorporating outliers with indicators about their degree of departure from the clustered objects. The groups created by cluster analysis do not correspond entirely with the groups determined through purely visual analysis and there is no easy reconciliation of the differences between the visually identified and statistically created type systems. The elimination of outliers is also problematic, given the small sample size, likely obscuring types which may emerge in an expanded sample of data. For example, this process renders invisible a representative of one of Brunaux and Rapin’s (1988) Type IV *lances baïonnettes*, which has important implications for our understanding of continental connections (discussed in Chapters 4, 7 and 8).

Anderson’s (2012) typology lacks the intuitive sense, which Read (1989, 1996) has cogently argued must be preserved in the generation of algorithmic typologies. Thus, while her methodology is clear and the purposes her typology is designed to serve are explicitly stated, one cannot see the typology functioning practically.

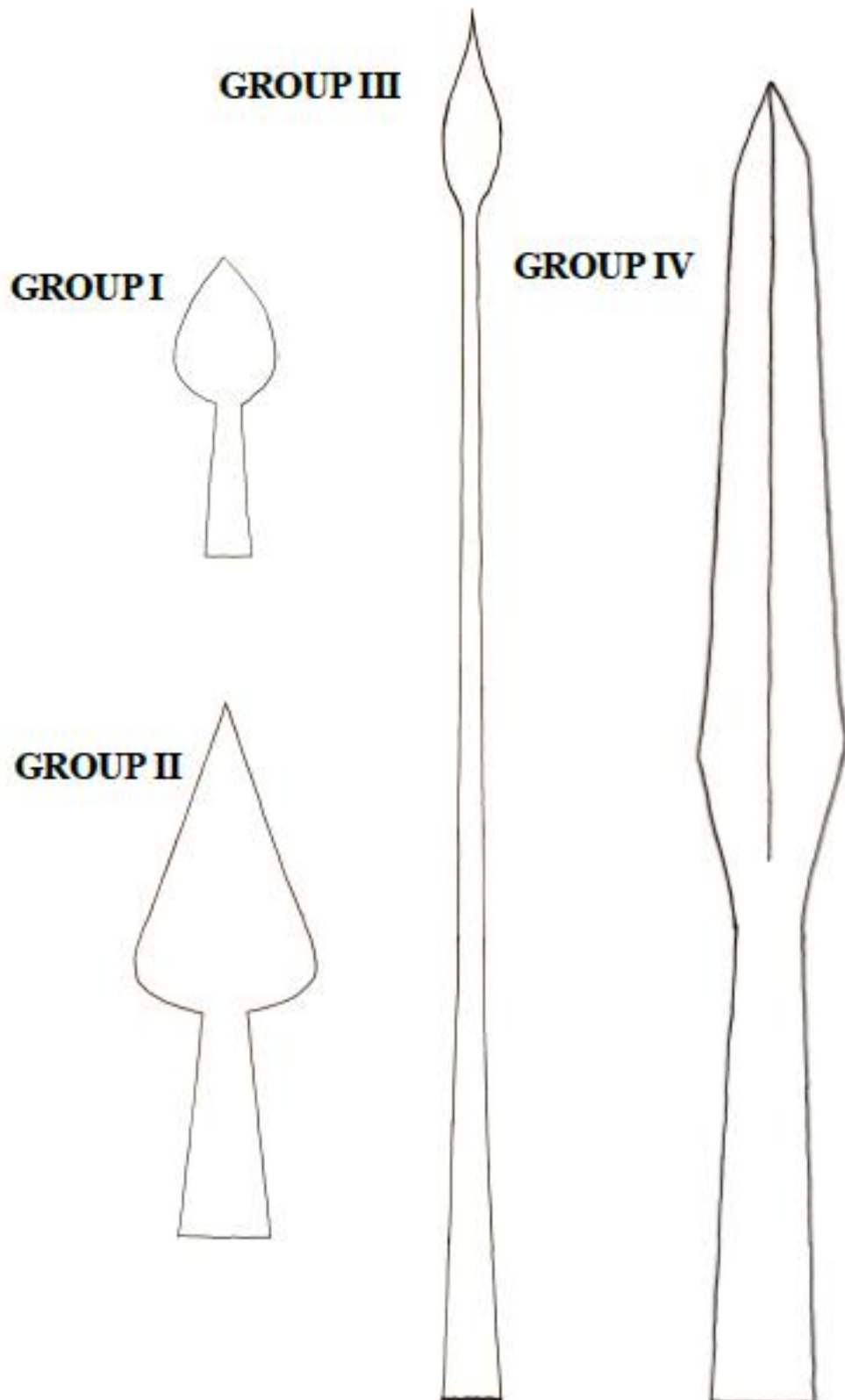


Figure 2.5: Anderson's 2012 typology (Anderson, 2012: fig.41).

2.3.6 *Schatte: European bone and antler points typology*

Torben Schatte (2013) published a typology of bone and antler points, most of which he felt had functioned as spearheads (Figure 2.6). Schatte (2013: 91) included a review of the research into this class of material within Continental literature, mostly from the German academic tradition, where bone and antler points had been observed from prehistoric archaeological contexts for more than 120 years. Bone and antler points can be defined as artefacts shaped from bone or antler (most frequently animal bone), in which the form has been manipulated to produce a sharp, oblique point and a hollow socket. Schatte (2013) observes that the function of bone points has been variously interpreted as spearheads, awls, weaving shuttles (or other weaving tools), and that there has been little agreement on the assignation of each of these functions within the literature. One factor contributing to these difficulties, in Schatte's (2013: 92) opinion, is the lack of a clearly demarcated typology. Mullins (2007: 38) also observed that bone points have been ascribed an array of functional interpretations, and that previous attempts at typological analysis have proved largely fruitless. To progress the debate, and with the hope of providing some clarity, Schatte (2013) developed a new typology of bone and antler points drawn from a sample of over 900 points, based on his own data collection and supplemented with material from the literature. The result, shown in Figure 2.6, was a morphological taxonomy with four principal types, Types I-IV, Type IV consisting of miscellanea. Each type is divided into subtypes based on the form of the socket cross-section, and some subtypes are further divided based on whether they featured rivet holes. The principal type determining criterion applied by Schatte (2013) is the general morphology of the points, which is heavily influenced by the materials from which each point has been constructed. Schatte's (2013: 99) formal typology is outlined in Chapter 4 in Section 4.2.1.






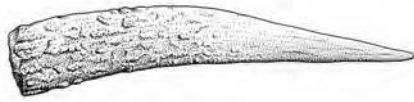
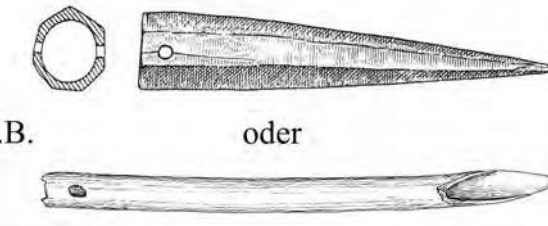
Typ I	
Typ II.1	
Typ II.2	
Typ II.3	
Typ III.1	 <p style="text-align: center;">oder</p>
Typ III.2	
Typ IV	 <p style="text-align: center;">oder</p>

Figure 2.6: Schatte's typology of bone and antler points (Schatte, 2013).

Schatte's (2013) typology has a clear sense of 'internal cohesion and external isolation' in accordance with Hodson's (1982) ideal, and his Type IV serves as a catch-all category for new points which cannot be assigned to the three principal type groups. The type system is well thought out and draws on a very large sample in its formation. The publication of the typology, includes clear, tight type descriptions in accordance with the best practice outlined in the typological literature (Whallon, 1972, Binford & Sabloff, 1982, Brown, 1982, Read, 1989, 1996, Adams & Adams, 1991, Whittaker *et al.*, 1998). The type descriptions are accompanied by photographs of type ideals, shown from multiple angles, replicated here in Figure 2.6. Although the typology has only recently been published, it seems to have genuine utility, and is the typology which will be applied to the bone points assessed in this thesis, discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

Schatte (2013) went on to employ his typology in the construction of a geographical distribution map for the types he observed in his sample. The results of the geographic analysis were illuminating, and of particular relevance for the current study. Type II bone points were heavily represented in the British material, followed by members of Type I points, with a very small number of antler points and miscellanea filling out the sample (Schatte, 2013: Abb.11). The British material included in Schatte's research was drawn from All Cannings Cross, Wiltshire; Glastonbury, Somerset; Gussage All Saints and Maiden Castle, Dorset; and, Grimthorpe, East Yorkshire (Schatte, *pers.comm.*). There were 42 British bone points in his sample, forming just one small sub-set of his overall data (Schatte, 2013: Abb.14-15). It is clear from Olsen's (2003) review of the bone points from Fiskerton, Lincolnshire, that Schatte's sample is limited, and that the geographic distribution of bone and antler points in Britain was much broader (discussed in Chapter 4).

While Schatte (2013) was able to construct clear geographic distribution maps for his type members, he was unable to establish any real chronological seriation. The severe limitations of poorly dated finds and primary materials, which did not change radically over the course of European prehistory, meant that it was not possible to identify any meaningful correlation between date and morphology. For those points which could be dated, the period in which they were most frequently produced appears to have been the pre-Roman Iron Age, although examples date from the Neolithic uninterrupted through

into the Migration Period (Schatte, 2013: 94-95). Schatte (2013: 96) concluded that the use of bone points as spearheads peaked in the pre-Roman and Early Roman Iron Age in Northern Europe, with numerous examples datable to this period retaining spear shafts, thereby confirming their martial function.

2.4 Conclusions

This chapter has examined the theoretical underpinnings of typology formation, and outlined the key debates on the subject within archaeology, principally focussed on whether intuitive or statistical typologies have greatest utility. As Adams and Adams (1991) brought to broad attention, utility is relative and heavily dependent on the intended function a typology is expected to fulfil. The examination of different approaches to archaeological typologies has indicated that morphological taxonomic typologies have the greatest utility for the study of projectile weaponry, such as spearheads. It is clear that Read's concept of internal cohesion and external isolation provides a good test of whether types form natural groupings and that unnatural dissections of datasets, as Hodson (1982) cautions, are to be avoided. This chapter has considered a number of existing spearhead typologies for the British and European Iron Age, critically examining them and testing them against these principles. It was found that, while each spearhead typology was designed to be a useful tool for the classification of spearhead forms, facilitating geographic, chronological and martial studies, each – with the exception of Schatte's typology of bone points – falls short of its intended goal. Thus, there remains a need to create a spearhead typology for Iron Age Britain, which develops a new standard of 'best practice' for type creation and which can function as a useful tool for the classification and study of this class of object. These principles will inform the methodology for typology construction, which is outlined in the next chapter.

3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 explored the theoretical debate around typology construction, and provided a critical examination of a number of existing spearhead typologies. Based on these analyses it is apparent that none of the available type systems account for the observed variations in the form of Iron Age British spearheads, and most shed little light on their function. Consequently, there is a clear need for the construction of a new typology, which forms a core part of the research undertaken in this thesis. This chapter offers a new approach to type construction, taking into account the shortcomings of current offerings. To achieve these ends, the current chapter explores the purposes which should underscore the development of a new typology of Iron Age spearheads for Britain. With these purposes held firmly in mind, a methodology has been formulated to facilitate typology construction.

3.2 Recommendations for 'best practice' in spearhead typology design

3.2.1 Preliminary questions

There are a number of questions which must be taken into consideration before commencing the construction of a new typology, for example:

- What kind of typology should be created?
- How best to collect data?
- What data are needed in order to ensure that sufficient information is collated?
- How should data be prioritised?
- What terminology should be used?

Each of these questions warrants investigation and will be explored here. The rationale and methodology applied in this thesis is outlined below.

3.2.2 Purpose and rationale for the development of a new typology

Each of the core questions outlined above requires a consideration of *purpose*. Adams and Adams (1991: 157-168) highlight the crucial need to understand the purpose for which a typology is being created, and the need to keep this in mind throughout the process of type formation. With regard to Iron Age spearheads there are several key areas that need to be understood. Firstly, there is a need to understand the martial function of the spearheads as weapons. Indeed, each of the typologies described in

Chapter 2 has sought to explain martial function. Such typologies are commonly described as ‘functional’ typologies (Brown, 1982: 18) and classified by Adams and Adams (1991: 160-161) as serving intrinsic, analytical purposes. Identifying the *function* of spearheads should therefore be considered as the *primary purpose* of a spearhead typology. It is anticipated that spearheads can be organised into the following functional categories:

- Throwing spearheads.
- Spearheads designed for the delivery of thrusting and/or slashing blows.
- Versatile spearhead forms suited to use in either a throwing or thrusting capacity.

A fourth, non-martial function may also be suggested. That is, spearheads created to impress as parade or ceremonial/ritual weapons or objects, rather than serving any overt martial function. Such weapons may conform to any of the three preceding functional forms, but may also exhibit distinctive traits such as unusual size, the application of decorative elements, or standards of manufacture indicating that they were not expected to be subjected to strenuous use. Objects constructed to serve these kinds of analogous functions may be categorised typologically as members of one or another functional group, although it is possible that they will appear as outliers within their assigned spearhead type. The primary purpose of the typology will thus be to identify groupings which reflect one of the three core functional interpretations, with individual type members thought to represent non-functional analogues listed among the miscellanea.

Beyond this list of potentially identifiable functions, any other purposes which the typology might be called upon to serve should be recognised as *secondary*. Among these secondary purposes, chronology remains a dominant consideration, and, again, each of the typologies discussed in Chapter 2 has attempted to answer questions about this. In particular, Brunaux and Rapin (1988: 132-134) attempted to develop a seriation for each of their type groups. While an interest in the evolution of forms is understandable, attempts to use typologies as dating tools must be met with caution. The advent of radiocarbon dating revealed the tendency for typological seriations to compress chronology and, in some cases, to be completely erroneous (Jay *et al.*, 2012). Certainly, in the writer’s own previous experience of examining South Italian Iron Age spearheads, some forms were seen to continue in production/circulation at a number of

sites for a long period, in some cases across the span of four centuries, with little observable change (Inall, 2009: 62). Dating should, wherever possible, be based on firmer grounds, with typology mainly allowing for the observation of chronological patterns through contextual associations, rather than serving as ‘type fossils’ as they may have done in the past. This problem has been explored in relation to the newly revised radiocarbon dates for Wetwang, East Yorkshire, which is of particular relevance for the current study, as Chariot burial 1 contained seven spearheads (Dent, 1985, Jay *et al.*, 2012). Thus, the results of this typological research may allow for the exploration of some chronological questions, but seriation is not a prioritised function which the typology should serve.

Swanton (1974), Brunaux and Rapin (1988), Anderson (2012), and Schatte (2013), along with Stead (1991a), to a lesser extent, have all sought to gain an understanding of geographic distribution and cultural influences through their typologies. Swanton (1974) sees the Anglo-Saxon spearheads as having evolved from a range of cultural influences including Roman, Germanic and British native peoples, making attempts to explain the impact of these influences through his typology. Brunaux and Rapin (1988) seek to place the material from Gournay-sur-Aronde, Picardy into a broader context through an exploration of comparative material from contemporary sites throughout Europe. This material is used to aid in the construction of their seriation (Brunaux & Rapin, 1988: 119-130). Stead’s (1991a: 75) assessment of geographic distribution is limited to East Yorkshire and the comparative distribution of his spearhead Types A and B within that region. Due to difficulties with the chronology of his material, Stead (1991a: *ibid.*) was unable to determine whether the differing geographic distribution was indicative of chronological or cultural differences. Anderson’s (2012) study is limited to Britain north of the Humber, and seeks to understand aspects of continuity and change from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age. Anderson (2012: 68-71) sees little relationship between the forms of British spearheads and their contemporary Continental counterparts. Schatte (2013) also seeks to identify geographical distributions for his observed types, suggesting that the distribution may reflect cultural preferences.

Each of these analyses highlights the close association between the secondary purposes of chronology, geographic distribution and cultural influence. It is difficult to

disentangle these *comparative* purposes, although Adams and Adams (1991: 159-160) suggest that morphological typologies are, again, generally employed in their exploration. The utility of morphological taxonomies to facilitate the consideration of questions beyond their primary purpose has been highly influential in the decision to construct this kind of typology here, rather than a more limiting, rigid metric type system.

Most of the spearhead typologies discussed in Chapter 2 also serve ‘descriptive’ or ‘communicative’ purposes. That is, they provide a convenient short-hand for communicating large quantities of data in a straightforward manner through their designations. Descriptive typologies allow objects considered of like form to be summarised in a single illustration depicting a ‘type ideal’ (Adams & Adams, 1991: 50-62). In subsequent research for example, describing a spearhead in a report as being like Swanton Type D1 or Schatte Type III, allows for any object fitting that particular type description to be readily visualised by the reader through consulting Swanton’s (1974) or Schatte’s (2013) original publication and type ideals. One need not even include an illustration of the spearhead in such subsequent publications. Descriptive typologies also tend to be designed on morphological bases, allowing for ready visual assignation of objects to specific types (Adams & Adams, 1991: 159).

As an end-user product, descriptive typologies allow any individual archaeologist to compare their finds against the illustrated type ideals and designate them as new members of the type. It is acknowledged that the assignment of objects to types tends to shift over time, through individual variations in the process of ‘gestalt acquisition’, which Adams and Adams (1991) describe. The experiment conducted by Whittaker *et al.* (1998), (discussed in Chapter 2) revealed that there is also a generational component to type assignation. This resulted in slight, observable shifts in the way typologists allocated artefacts to type. While there was consistency within each cohort of typologists, their assignations differed progressively, the further removed they were from the typology’s creator (Whittaker *et al.*, 1998). However, descriptive typologies are easily accessible and one need not undergo any formal training to make basic use of them. For the field archaeologist, for whom spearhead finds are exceptional rather than routine, such easy-to-use typologies are desirable.

3.2.3 *What kind of typology will be created?*

To allow the exploration of the multiple purposes a spearhead typology is required to serve, as outlined above (e.g., functional, comparative and communicative/descriptive), a morphological taxonomy is considered to be a best-fit approach (Read, 1989, Adams & Adams, 1991). This kind of typology can reveal functional aspects – the *primary purpose* – while also facilitating the exploration of the comparative and communicative *secondary purposes* like branches of the same tree. Further, given Ruby's (1995: 98-101 and figs. 102.176 and 102.177) findings that metric data on spearheads from multiple sites tends to string, resulting in muddy data, it was decided that the construction of a purely statistical typology was unjustified.

A morphological taxonomic approach can be constructed using a stepwise process, after Adams and Adams (1991). The stepwise process is essentially a 'lumping' and 'splitting' exercise, whereby spearheads, which exhibit similar morphological features, are grouped together. This grouping forms the highest level of the taxonomic system. Within each of these first-step groups individual members are then 'split' into sub-groups based on smaller morphological differences. For example, a number of spearheads may exhibit similar leaf-shaped blade profiles. On this basis, they may be grouped together, as all members share a common trait. Within this grouping, some members may, for example, have very long sockets, while the sockets of others may be short. This large group of 'spearheads with leaf-shaped blade profiles' can thus be divided, in a second step, into those with 'long sockets', and those 'short sockets'. Such a process can be repeated, grouping and sub-grouping individual members of the sample, for as many steps as are required to construct a meaningful taxonomy of forms.

3.3 *Sample size*

While it may be desirable to collect information about every Iron Age spearhead known for Britain, this was not possible due to constraints of time, funding and accessibility. Thus, a decision was taken to collect data on as many Iron Age spearheads as possible, while recognising that the total population size is unknown. Estimating the total number of extant Iron Age spearheads in Britain is a difficult task, as numerous examples are held in obscure collections, cursorily recorded in Heritage and Environment Register (HER) databases that have not been formally published, or are mentioned only in passing in antiquarian publications. It was estimated at the outset of data collection – based on a literature survey of Iron Age sites known to have yielded spearheads – that

the total number of recorded Iron Age spearheads for Britain was perhaps no more than 300.

In an attempt to collect a substantial sample size a decision was taken to examine larger collections in more prominent and accessible museums. Consequently, the sampling method is non-random, and can be described as a judgement sample. It is recognised that spearheads which are not held in larger museum collections, or which have not been published, would be excluded from the sample. Spearheads which were part of large, accessible collections had a higher probability of being included in the sample compared to lesser-known examples. The sample frame of accessible material from larger collections or well-published material facilitated an economically viable data collection, and ultimately resulted in a sample size which is larger than any previous study, and exceeds the number of Iron Age spearheads thought likely to have made up the recorded population. The number of spearheads which it was possible to access during data collection underscores that the number of spearheads known for the Iron Age rivals the number of swords recorded for the period. Further, the recognition that it was not possible to access all spearheads identified as of Iron Age date indicates that the likely number of spearheads in circulation during the period was significantly greater than the number of swords and that spears must have formed a major component in Iron Age warfare.

3.4 Data collection

For the construction of a morphological taxonomy, consideration needs to be given to what data should be collected, how best to collect the data and how it should be prioritised and analysed. To assess what data needs to be collected, and what methodology should be employed, we must begin with an exploration of variables. As Brunaux and Rapin (1988: 87-89) rightly acknowledge, a spearhead is formed from a number of components, each of which may vary in numerous ways. The form of each of these components impacts, to a greater or lesser degree, upon the weapon's function (Inall, 2009: 10-12).

3.4.1 Variables

Variables to be considered include:

- Material of manufacture, which impacts on the possible forms that can be produced. This is particularly relevant for bone spearheads.

- Length, including overall length, and the length of the blade as well as the socket or tang length. The length may impact on function and weight.
- Blade profile, which may impact on function and aerodynamics.
- Blade width, which again has the potential to impact on function, aerodynamics and weight.
- Blade section, particularly the presence or absence of a strengthening midrib, which would not only impact on durability and functional efficacy, but is a variable which has also been considered subject to external (e.g. Continental) cultural influences.
- Socket diameter, both external and internal, indicating the approximate diameter of the associated shaft.
- Weight, again potentially impacting on function, aerodynamics and durability.

3.4.2 *Measurements*

To record data on as many of these variables as possible the following measurements were taken for each of the spearheads in the sample:

- Overall length
- Blade length
- Socket/tang length
- Blade thickness at surviving blade edge
- Maximum blade width
- Distance from point of maximum blade width
- Socket/shank minimum width/diameter
- Distance from base of socket of minimum socket width
- External socket diameter/tang dimensions
- Internal socket diameter

Physical dimensions of the spearheads were recorded using an electronic set of metric graphite calipers, taking measurements accurate to 1mm, as the level of corrosion product adherent to many spearheads rendered measurements finer than 1mm unachievable. Note was also taken for each spearhead, recording blade section, overall blade profile, and whether or not a midrib was present. Where positive identification of a midrib was noted, further detail was recorded as to whether the midrib was observable on only one or both sides of the blade and whether it was prominent or shallow.

Observations were also made about the socket, particularly whether there were rivet holes observable, noting any rivets preserved in the socket, and, whether the weld seam could be identified. During the later stages of data collection a decision was taken to measure the diameter of observed rivet holes. However, this measurement was not collected for the full dataset. This decision was taken as there was noticeable variation in the diameter of rivet holes.

Mass measurements were taken using a metric scale, rounded to the nearest gram. Whilst current mass measurements are indicative of original mass, it should be noted that the original mass of many individual spearheads would have been greater, as iron loses mass as it oxidises. The amount of material lost through oxidation would have been affected by both the burial environment (soil acidity, aerobic or anaerobic conditions etc.) and subsequent conservation efforts and storage conditions. Due to the inherent variability in the former and, often, a lack of information regarding the latter, it is not possible to accurately calculate the amount of mass any individual spearhead may have lost. While mass information may prove informative, resolving the complex problems attendant in these data lie beyond the scope of this thesis.

3.4.3 Identification of animal bone

At the outset of data collection, there was an expectation that all of the spearheads encountered would be constructed of iron. However, once the preliminary research and data collection got underway, it became evident that some spearheads produced in Iron Age Britain had been constructed of bone. Indeed, bone spearheads came to form a significant portion of the sample (15 percent). The large number of examples indicates that bone spearheads were an important class of spearhead during the Iron Age. While there has been significant research conducted regarding Continental bone spearheads (Schatte, 2013), British examples datable to the Iron Age have not been subjected to any robust analysis. This sub-class of material presented an opportunity to meaningfully enhance our understanding of Iron Age weaponry, and depositional practices in Britain.

The identification of a substantial number of bone spearheads in the sample raises the prospect that metal spearheads were not necessary for the construction of spears. Fire-hardened sticks may also have been employed as spears. References to the deployment of wooden or bone-tipped spears are likely preserved in *The Táin* (Kinsella, 1970: 122-

124, 148). Thus the decision to construct spearheads from metal may exhibit a greater degree of cultural saliency than has previously been considered or recognised.

For the examination of bone spearheads the writer consulted with Miss Naomi Sewpaul, an independent Archaeozoologist. Along with the writer, Miss Sewpaul attended The Collection, Lincoln, where the bone spearheads from Fiskerton, Lincolnshire are held, and which form the largest group of bone spearheads in the dataset. Miss Sewpaul provided first hand analysis of these important bone spearheads, and, in addition, offered some useful insights into the identification of bone species. Beyond her assistance with the material from Fiskerton, she also reviewed scale photographs of bone spearheads from other sites, offering advice on species and bone elements.

3.4.4 Data collection procedure

During the process of data collection, information was recorded on hand-written data-sheets (included as Appendix 10.2, at the end of this thesis), which included space for basic observations. Photographs were recorded numerically for each data-collection session, and image file-names include information which allows ready identification of the object.

All objects which were physically assessed and recorded by the writer are noted as such in the database. The analysis was focussed on sites from which multiple Iron Age spearheads had been recorded, and where the archaeological context had also been recorded. However, spearheads with less secure contexts were not excluded from the sample due to the small number of British Iron Age spearheads thought to be in existence, and the desire to cast a wide net in the initial phases of data collection. These data are supplemented with well-published spearheads, where illustrations or photographs and measurements had been included. These methods facilitated the collection of information about more than 440 Iron Age spearheads, a significantly greater number than thought possible, and by far the largest dataset of Iron Age spearheads collected for Britain to date.

3.4.5 Photography

Each spearhead was photographed using a digital camera at high resolution. Photographic scales of either 50mm or 100mm were placed within the photo frame facilitating scale images. Several of the longer spearheads were scaled by the inclusion of a tape measure in addition to the 100mm scale. A scaled photograph of the overall

profile of each object was taken. Additional detail photographs were taken of the socket, blade edges and any unusual or noteworthy features. All photographs taken were recorded on the data collection sheet.

3.4.6 Prioritisation of data

Accepting that the typology would be a morphological taxonomy, it was necessary to consider which attributes should be prioritised as type-determinate, and which should be considered secondary. Within the taxonomy, priority is given to the overall profile of the spearheads, as this is one of the most readily identifiable attributes, and likely to be reflective of the emic martial function. Blade profile is given highest priority, followed by the raw dimensions of overall length, blade length and width. Blade section, which may impact on the durability and efficacy of the spearhead, but which is less impactful on basic intended function, is not considered a type-determinate variable. As discussed, above, the formation of the typology is primarily a visual process, in which spearheads are grouped together on the basis of how ‘like’ they are, compared to their fellows. The use of this process aims to overcome the difficulties attendant in purely metric typologies, as observed by Marchant (1991) and Brunaux and Rapin (1988), and demonstrated in Anderson’s (2012) and Manning’s (1976, 1985) typologies.

3.5 Terminology: the language of spears, or what’s in a name?

The importance of the language used in the creation of a typology cannot be overstated. As Dunnell (1986: 152) observed, classifications, and typologies by implication, “allow us to model reality in particular ways.” With regard to spearheads there is a need to be especially careful in the use of words with quite specific functional connotations. The term ‘javelin’ in particular has been problematic due to its specific connotations of a weapon designed to be thrown (OED, 2015), likewise the term ‘lance’ infers cavalry action (*ibid.*). Manning (1976: 18) argued against the use of the terms ‘javelin’ and ‘lance’ when there was inadequate knowledge about function. Yet, in some of his type descriptions of spearheads from Hod Hill, he did use the term ‘lance’, while continuing to acknowledge that objects so-labelled could equally be labelled ‘spears’ or ‘javelins’ (Manning, 1985). He offered only cursory discussion about how these weapons may have functioned when deployed from horseback, and admitted it was uncertain whether one should infer such a role from his usage of the term (Manning, 1985: 163).

Iron Age spearhead typologies developed for France and Italy feature similar semantic biases. In the construction of a typology based on material from Gournay-sur-Aronde, Picardy, Brunaux and Rapin (1988: 124-125) term their Type IV spearhead '*formes baïonnettes*.' While they do not explicitly argue that this spearhead form was used in a manner similar to the modern bayonet, the connotation is unavoidable. The problem is even more pronounced when examining South Italian material, where a number of typologies have been constructed. In that region archaeologists have drawn clear functional distinctions between javelins (designed to be thrown) and spears (designed for the delivery of thrusting blows). However, the basis upon which such distinctions have been drawn vary markedly, with some archaeologists, such as Ruby (1995) and d'Agostino and Gastaldi (1988), drawing divisions based on overall length, whilst Bottini *et al.* (1988) and Russo Tagliente and Berlingò (1992) grounded their differentiations on morphological bases. Even though these archaeologists were working on sites in closely linked geographic areas, and which were broadly contemporary, there appears to have been little theoretical or methodological debate on the issue (Inall, 2009: 7-8).

It is clear from reading Early Irish epic poetry such as *The Táin*, that in the past there were many different words for spears in the Celtic languages spoken on the Continent and in parts of Britain. Mallory (1993: 12) has identified 23 different words to describe spears in the Ulster Tales, including: *gáe*, *sleg*, and *cruísech*. Certainly, many of these terms would have had particular connotations for the audience, some with functional inferences. We cannot hope to recover this level of nuance and, as Hayden (1984: 83-86) has argued, the pursuit of such emic categories often provides no clear answers for archaeologists posing questions about function. The imposition of modern functional terminology thus introduces potential bias into our interpretations (Dunnell, 1986: 177-178). In contemporary English there are five relevant functional terms: spear; javelin; dart; lance; and, pike, (the term halberd is excluded, as a distinct, though closely related form of weapon) (Horn, 2013). Each has a different meaning, but the term 'spear' has the broadest range of interpretations and can act as an umbrella under which the other terms fit neatly. Thus, throughout this thesis the terms 'spear' and 'spearhead' are used without the implication of any particular martial function. Discussion of the specific function, or possible functions, of individual spearhead types is incorporated within the typological discussion in Chapter 4 and in the contextual discussions in Chapters 5, 6, 7

and 8. The use of this generic terminology aims to remove preconceptions about function.

Another issue which warrants consideration is that of type-labelling. In the formation of a new typology, how should individual types be identified? As there are currently a number of peripheral typologies – e.g.: Manning’s (1976, 1985) Romano-British typologies, Swanton’s (1974) Anglo Saxon typology, and Stead’s (1991a) preliminary type grouping for East Yorkshire etc. – it is important that the current typology should be readily distinguishable from them. Swanton (1974) and Stead (1991a) used letters to label their type groupings, while Manning (1985) used a combination of letters and Roman numerals. Anderson (2012) and Schatte (2013) both used Roman numerals to enumerate their type groups. Thus, to avoid any confusion between these typologies and the typology presented in Chapter 4, types will be numbered with Arabic numerals, with sub-types identified alphanumerically. Types will be divided into functional groupings, which will form the first numeric assignation. Within each functional grouping, types will be designated a second level numeral, for example Type 1.1, further sub-type groupings will be allocated Type 1.1.a, Type 1.1.b, etc.

Each type is accompanied by a brief descriptor (e.g.: small, leaf-bladed) which is intended to serve as an aide memoire for the reader/user. Where new types correlate with pre-existing, well-known Continental types (e.g.: ‘Celtic *pilum*’), the common-usage type name is given as the accompanying descriptor. No specific functional inference should be taken from the usage of these terms.

3.6 *Data storage and accessibility*

All data has been recorded in a relational Microsoft Access database, which was purpose-built. Each object is recorded as an individual record with a unique ID, including a description of the object and, where relevant, information about its publication. All references to specific objects are identified using this unique ID throughout the text of this thesis. The provenance and current location (if known) are recorded, along with Museum accession numbers, to facilitate easy identification of objects. Profile photographs or line drawings of each object are linked to the record.

A copy of the complete database is included as a DVD Appendix (10.3) at the end of this thesis. A copy is also available on the University of Hull’s Hydra System: <https://hydra.hull.ac.uk/resources/hull:11352>. However, some of the information in the

database (e.g. photographs and some specific GIS information) is subject to museum copyright, or other restrictions, which preclude their publication in an open forum. In these instances, links to the museums or institutions which can supply this information will be provided.

4 Typology

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 has outlined a methodology for typology construction, exploring the purposes which should underscore typology development, and summarising the methods of data collection used. On the basis of this methodology, a new typology is presented in this chapter. The typology has been constructed based on the largest sample of Iron Age spearheads from Britain that has been assessed to date. The artefact types are presented, accompanied by photographs or illustrations of type-ideals, and with a discussion of some of the general patterns observed in their find contexts. Although the majority of images include scales, the dimensions of those without scales are recorded in the database. The typology outlined in this chapter will be shown to have utility, and makes a substantial contribution to our understanding of the diversity of spearhead forms in circulation during the British Iron Age.

4.2 A new typology of British Iron Age spearheads

Data was recorded from 446 spearheads, which had been recovered from 49 sites across Britain. Contexts included finds from burials, structured deposits, river deposits, sanctuary, and settlement sites. Using the stepwise methodology outlined in Chapter 3, a number of morphological spearhead types were observable in the dataset. Three hundred and ninety-five spearheads could be allocated to a type or identified as a miscellaneous form. These spearheads can be divided into the three functional groupings of throwing spears, spears designed for the delivery of thrusting or slashing blows, and versatile spearheads suited both to being thrown and the delivery of thrusting blows. The remaining 51 spearheads were poorly preserved and could not be allocated to any type group with confidence. The types are outlined in the three functional groupings as follows:

1. *Throwing spears*

1.1 Diamond-bladed

1.2 Small leaf-bladed

1.3 Small triangle-bladed

1.4 Narrow-necked

1.5 Triangle-bladed

1.6 Celtic *pila*

1.7 Hybrid of diamond and *pilum* forms

- 1.8 Bone points
2. *Thrusting or Slashing forms*
 - 2.1 Long Angular
 - 2.2 A form possibly related to Long Angular or Bayonet
 - 2.3 Bayonet
 - 2.4 Spike-pointed
 - 2.5 Narrow-bladed
 - 2.6 Broad convex
3. *Versatile forms*
 - 3.1 Convex
 - 3.2 Broad-based leaf-shaped
 - 3.3 Tapered
 - 3.4 Classic
 - 3.5 Curved-bladed

In addition a miscellaneous group was observed, which primarily conformed to the functional groupings of throwing or versatile forms. Two tanged examples from Hunsbury Camp, which were identified in the British Museum database as spearheads, are unusual and may in fact have been misidentified. It is quite probable that these were daggers.

As can be seen from the list of observable types, there was a considerable variety of forms within each of the functional groupings. However, within each group there were morphological consistencies (discussed below), which indicate that they had been designed to perform similar martial functions. A simple linear regression analysis of the functional groupings reveals that there is a strong linear correlation between overall length and blade length for the versatile and thrusting spearhead groupings at R^2 0.94 and R^2 0.90 respectively (Figure 4.1). However, the correlation between overall length and blade length is weak for throwing spearhead forms at just R^2 0.05. This is caused by the very long Type 1.6 'Celtic *pila*', which skew the data significantly. If the *pila* are excluded from the dataset, the linear correlation between overall length and blade length for throwing spearhead forms becomes moderate, increasing to R^2 0.67.

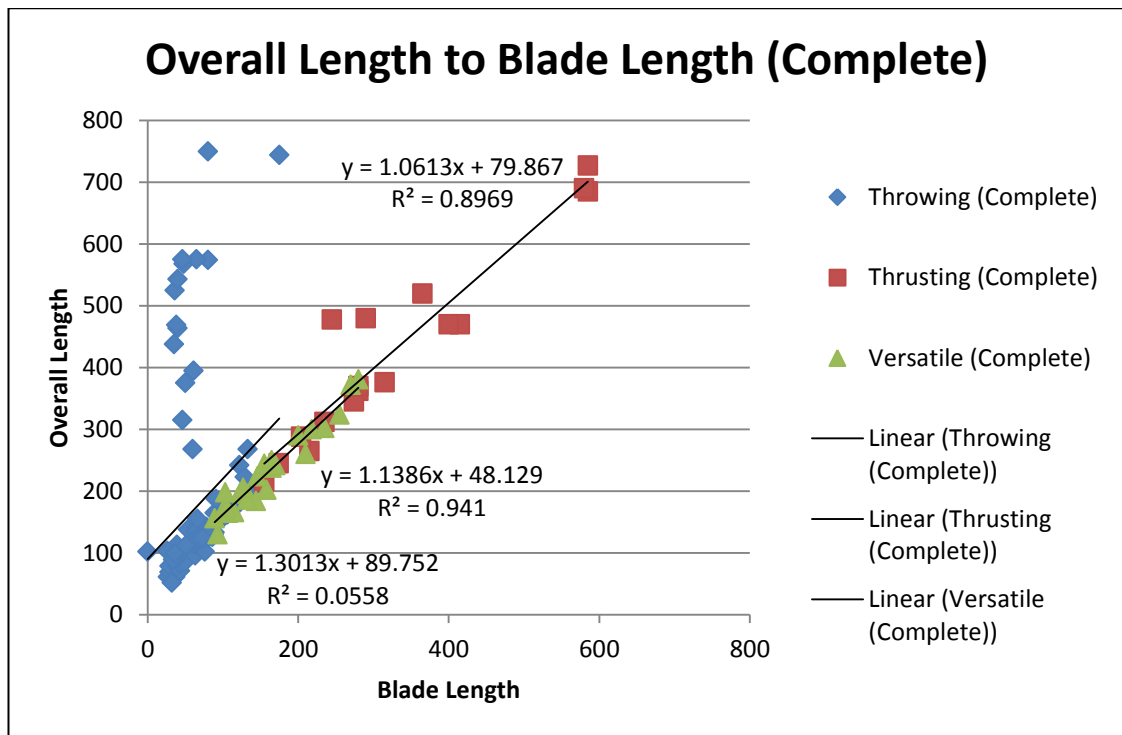


Figure 4.1: Overall spearhead length to blade length including linear regression lines (complete examples only).

During data collection and type formation a noticeable overlap in length and blade length was observed between the three functional groupings. However, the division between throwing and thrusting forms was very clear (Figure 4.1). The majority of throwing spearheads (Function Group 1) feature small blades, less than 100mm in length. Similarly, members of Function Group 2 (thrusting forms) present blades in excess of 300mm length, rendering thrusting spearhead forms the most readily identifiable functional grouping

As can be seen in Figure 4.1 Versatile Group 3 spearheads range in blade length from c.90mm to 280mm, making them more difficult to discern from Groups 1 and 2 on purely metric grounds. However, the overall length of versatile spearheads is generally longer than throwing forms (with the exception of Type 1.6 ‘Celtic *pila*’ and 1.7 hybrid forms). The distinction between thrusting and versatile forms is drawn on morphological bases.

It is clear from the distribution of spearheads by functional group (Figure 4.2) that throwing spearhead forms were the most numerous and widely distributed class of spearheads during the British Iron Age. Of the 395 spearheads which could be allocated

to a functional group, 304 can be identified as throwing spearhead forms, 28 spearheads can be assigned a thrusting or slashing function. Sixty-three spearheads were identifiable as being of versatile designs, which could readily be used to inflict thrusting blows or be deployed as throwing spears. There are limitations to the data due to the selective nature of data collection, which necessarily concentrated on museum collections that featured larger numbers of finds from key sites. However, the results of this study show that there was a widespread preference for throwing spears during the Iron Age in Britain. Throwing spearheads dominate the assemblage at most Middle and Late Iron Age sites examined in this thesis.

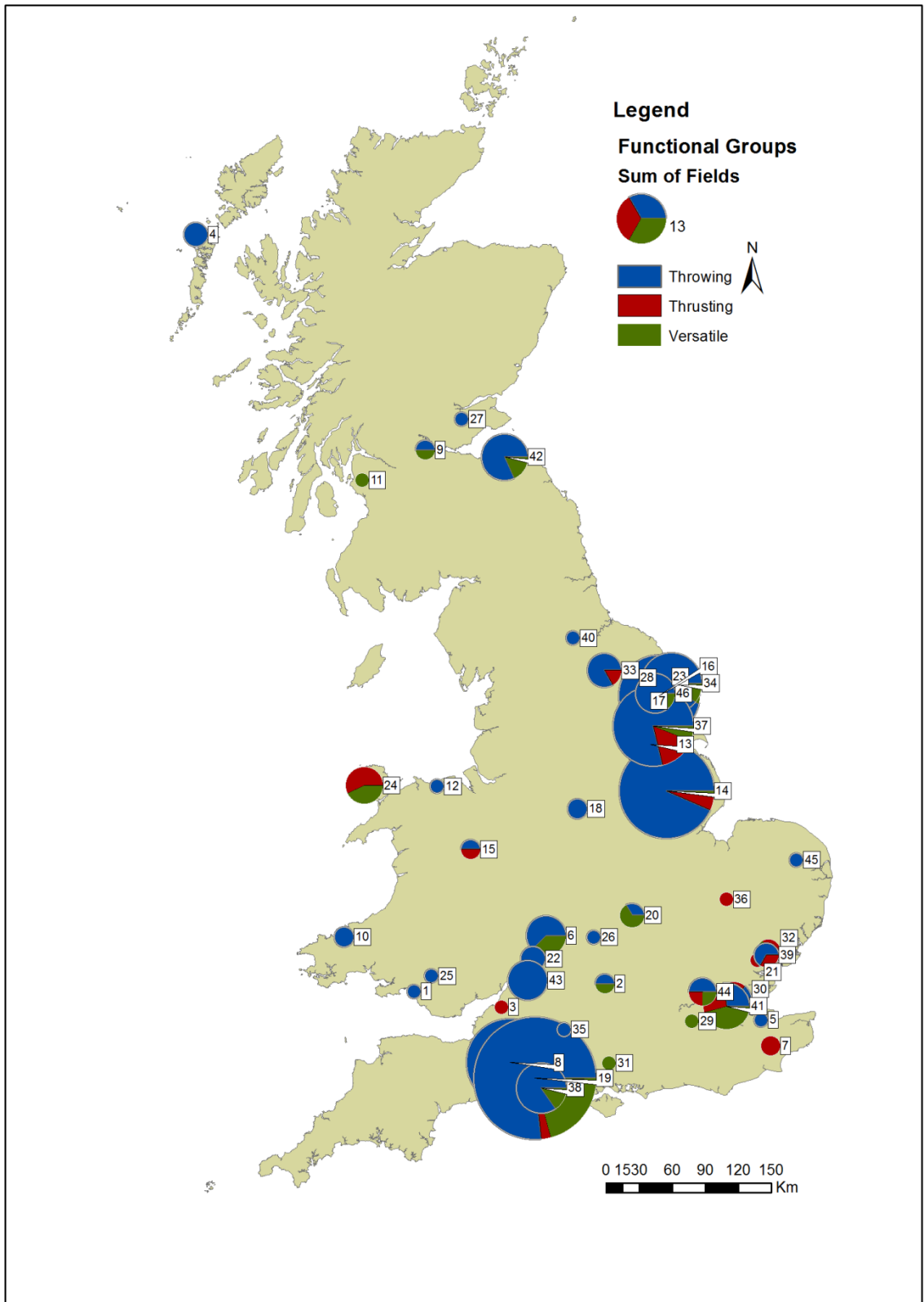


Figure 4.2: Distribution of functional groupings of spearheads.

Table 4.1: Site key for Figure 4.2.

1	Aberavon	11	Castlehill at Dalry	21	Kelvedon	31	Owslebury	41	Thames
2	Abingdon	12	Dinorben	22	Kingsholm	32	Playgolf	42	Traprain Law
3	Avon	13	Dragonby	23	Kirkburn	33	Pocklington	43	Uley
4	Bac Mhic Connain	14	Fiskerton	24	Llyn Cerrig Bach	34	Rudston	44	Walthamstow
5	Bayford	15	Four Crosses	25	Llyn Fawr	35	Rushall Down	45	Wensum River
6	Bredon Hill	16	Garton	26	Madmarston Camp	36	Soham Lode	46	Wetwang
7	Brisley Farm	17	Grimthorpe	27	Merlsford	37	South Cave		
8	Cadbury Castle	18	Harborough Cave	28	Nafferton	38	Spettisbury		
9	Camelon	19	Hod Hill	29	Orchard Hill	39	Stanway		
10	Castell Henllys	20	Hunsbury Camp	30	Orsett 'Cock'	40	Stanwick		

4.2.1 Throwing spearhead forms – Type Group 1

By far the largest functional type group can be identified as those forms designed to be thrown. The common trait which can be observed in all spear types allocated to this group is short blades. The majority of examples have blades between 50mm and 100mm long (Figure 4.3). However, the overall length of the spearheads is much more varied, with overall lengths for complete examples ranging from 37mm to 750mm (Figure 4.4).

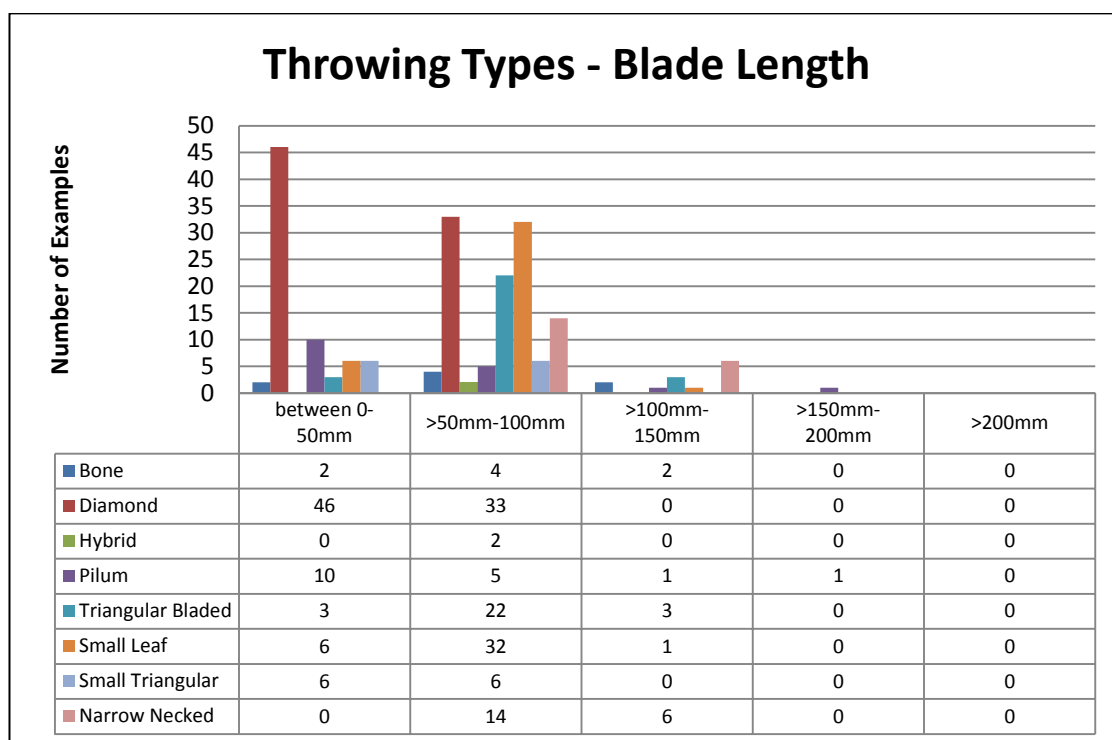


Figure 4.3: Extant blade lengths of throwing spearhead forms (where data was available).

The extreme variation in overall length is the result of the inclusion of Type 1.6, termed by Brunaux and Rapin (1988: 88 and note 126), as a ‘Celtic *pilum*’ following the precedent set by Kruta (1978). This Continental form, described in detail below, features a socket with a very long shank between the socket and blade, which tends to skew the length data for this functional group as a whole. In reality, the majority of spearheads in this functional group are shorter than 200mm in total length and the number of examples exceeding this length drops markedly. The ‘Celtic *pila*’ are the only throwing spearheads in the group to exceed 300mm in total length.

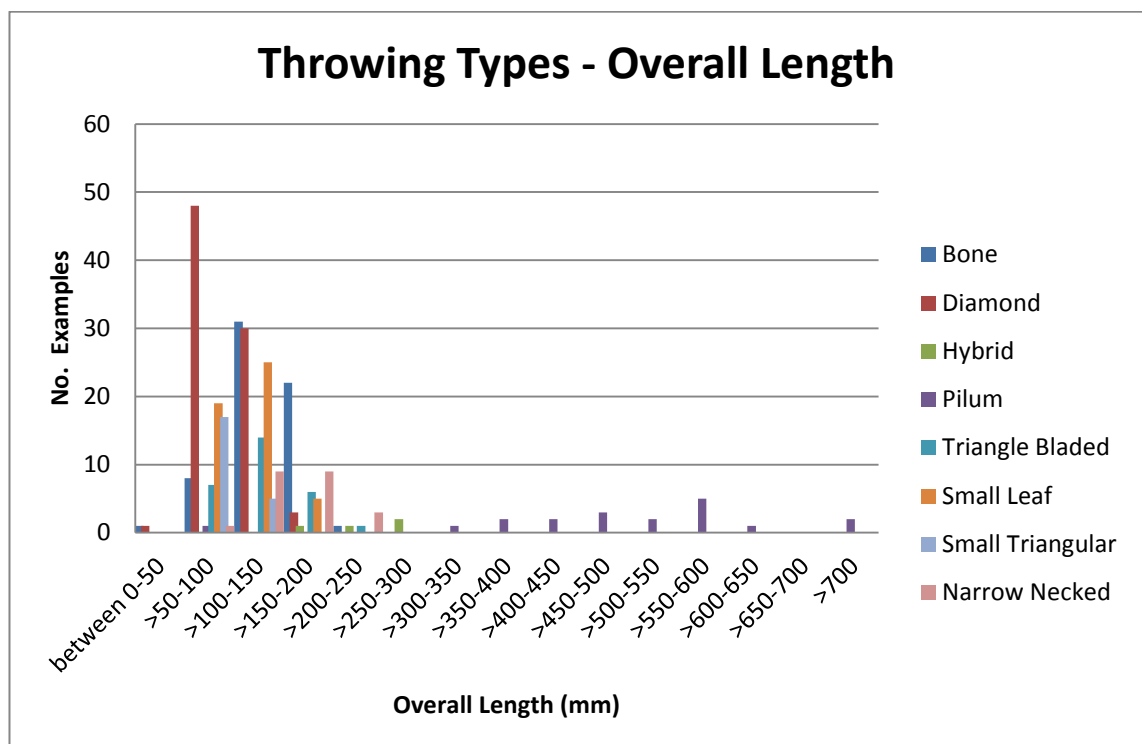


Figure 4.4: Overall length of throwing spearhead forms.

The distribution of the functional groups, laid out in Figure 4.2 (above) indicates that throwing spear forms were the most widely distributed class of spearheads. Such data supports the description of fighting against British warriors offered by Caesar (*De Bello Gallico*, IV.26-35), which indicates that the throwing of spears was a significant feature of indigenous combat. While Caesar’s account, which is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 8, relates to a single encounter in a limited geographic area, the data demonstrates that the throwing of spears was a core martial practice for warriors of the British Iron Age. That light, small-bladed spearheads are designed to be thrown in battle is supported by ethnographic parallels from the Loikop of Kenya (Larick, 1986). The

Loikop are recorded as having changed their preference from large, heavy spears, which they used to deliver thrusting blows, to light, small-bladed spears which were designed to be thrown over distance with accuracy, a change in fighting style prompted when hostile neighbours gained access to modern firearms (Larick, 1986: 279).

Eight spearhead types are identifiable as designed to be deployed as throwing spears. Each of the types is laid out below, with type descriptions, accompanied by photographs of type ideals, and notes regarding their geographic and chronological distribution, including some remarks on their find contexts.

Type 1.1 Diamond-bladed

Type definition: small, socketed iron spearheads featuring a small blade, widest around the mid-blade, giving the form a distinctive diamond-shaped profile (Figure 4.5). Within the type there is some diversity of socket length and blade form resulting in several sub-types:

- Type 1.1.a.1 – Small-bladed with a short socket. In these examples the blade is approximately as wide as it is long, and the length of the socket is generally close to the length of the blade.
- Type 1.1.a.2 – Small-bladed with a medium socket. Examples have the same small blade and diamond profile as 1.1.a.1, with a socket approximately twice the length of the blade.
- Type 1.1.a.3 – Small-bladed with a long socket. These spearheads have the same small blade profile observed in 1.1.a.1 and 2, although with a socket more than twice the length of the blade.
- Type 1.1.b.1 – Elongated-blade with short socket. These spearheads maintain a similar diamond-shaped blade profile to Type 1.1.a, however the blade is elongated to approximately twice the width of the blade. The socket of these spearheads is approximate to the length of the blade.
- Type 1.1.b.2 – Elongated-blade with long socket. With a similar elongated blade profile to type 1.1.b.1 and a socket which is noticeably longer than the blade.

This group of spearheads forms one of the most common types in the dataset. Eighty-eight spearheads in the database can be allocated to this type group. Examples appear at 19 sites from which data was collected (Figure 4.6). Spearheads of this type have been

recovered from a range of contexts including settlements, sanctuaries, burials, and both dry-land and wet deposits which could all be interpreted as votive.

Very few members of this spearhead type have any kind of midrib. Positive identification of a midrib was made for seven out of the 88 spearheads allocated to this type. Six examples (Object IDs, 97, 98 and 100 from Bredon Hill, Gloucestershire 340 and 365 from Hod Hill, Dorset and 271 from the Thames) had midribs on both sides of the blade. One spearhead (object ID 358 from Hod Hill) had a midrib which could only be observed on one side of the blade. A further four spearheads (IDs 296, 360 and 364 all from Hod Hill, and 147 from Dragonby, Lincolnshire) displayed a thickening of the blade section which suggested a potential midrib, although it was not possible to identify one with certainty. All examples for which positive identification of a midrib was made come from southern sites, with the possible example from Dragonby the only northern site.



Type. 1.1.a.1 Short-bladed, short socketed
Garton Station BM 1985,0305.45
Database ID 47



Type 1.1.a.2 Short-bladed medium socketed
Hod Hill BM 1892,0901.1082
Database ID 353



Type 1.1.a.3 Short-bladed long socketed, Garton Station BM 1985,0305.50
Database ID 52



Type 1.1.b.1 Elongated blade, short socketed
Hod Hill BM 1892,0901.1055
ID 321



Type 1.1.b.2 Elongated blade, long socketed
Garton Station, BM 1985.0305.36
ID 39

Figure 4.5: Type 1.1 diamond-bladed spearheads.

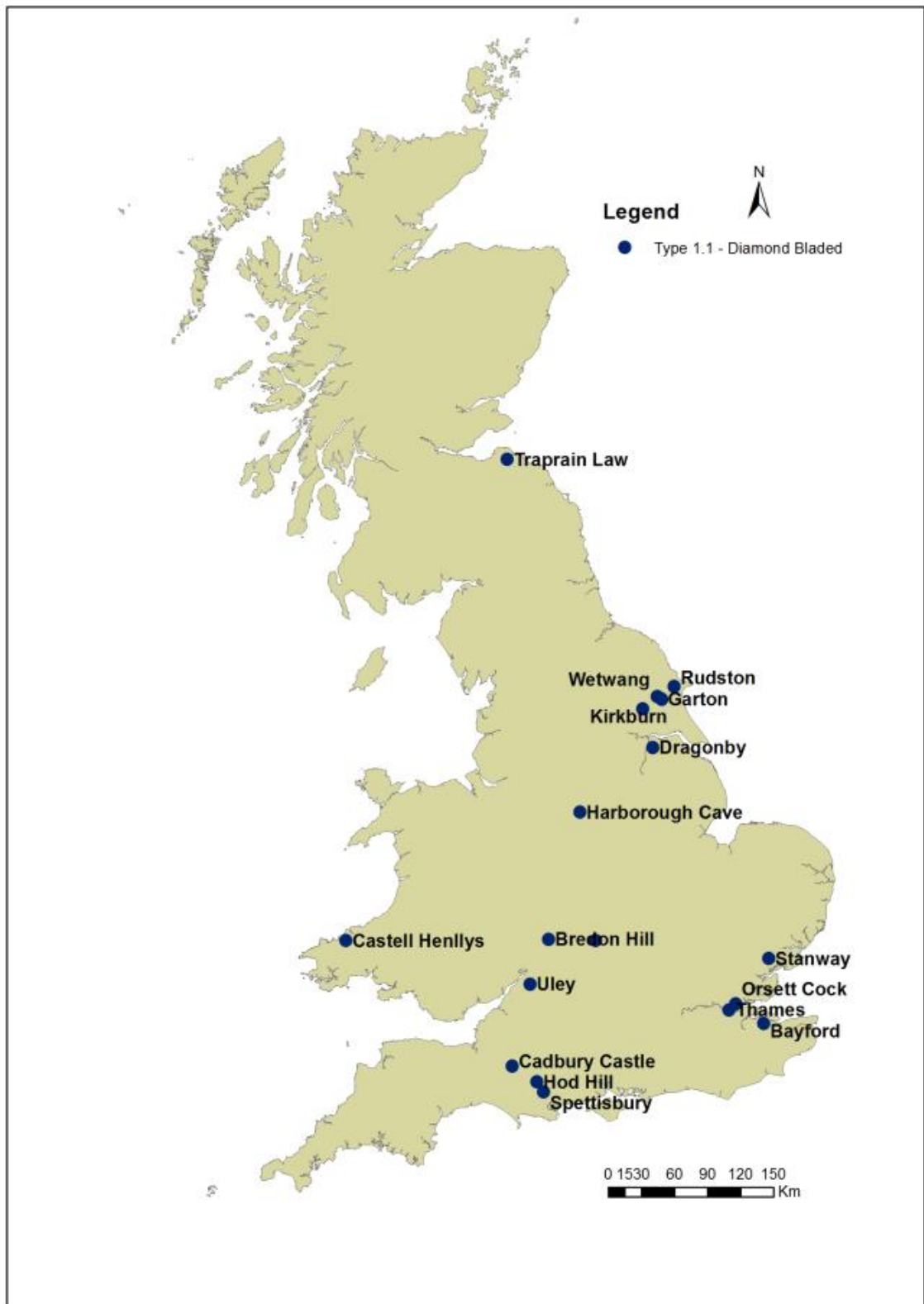


Figure 4.6: Distribution of Type 1.1 diamond-bladed spearhead forms.

Type 1.2 Small leaf-bladed

Type definition: socketed iron spearhead with leaf-shaped blade, no longer than 200mm in total length (Figure 4.7).

There are a small number of spearheads that fit the general type, but which have distinctive blade profiles allowing for the construction of discrete sub-types:

- Type 1.2.a – With simple leaf-shaped blade
- Type 1.2.b – Broad-based, a form with just two examples, and
- Type 1.2.c – Features a convex blade profile. Represented by a further two examples.

Iron spearheads featuring small, leaf-shaped blades are represented by 50 examples in the database. The spearheads in this group are all shorter than 200mm, with most examples measuring between 100mm and 150mm, the longest complete example measuring 191mm. The type is widely distributed with examples recorded from 14 sites listed in the database (Figure 4.8).



Type 1.2.a Garton (BM 1985,0305.44) Database ID 46



Type 1.2.a Dragonby (CRDR584) Database ID 146



Type 1.2.a Hod Hill (BM 1892,0901.1043) Database ID 331



Type 1.2.b Hod Hill (BM 1892,0901.1073) Database ID 361



Type 1.2.c Traprain Law (NMS GVM384) Database ID 401

Figure 4.7: Type 1.2 small leaf-bladed spearheads.

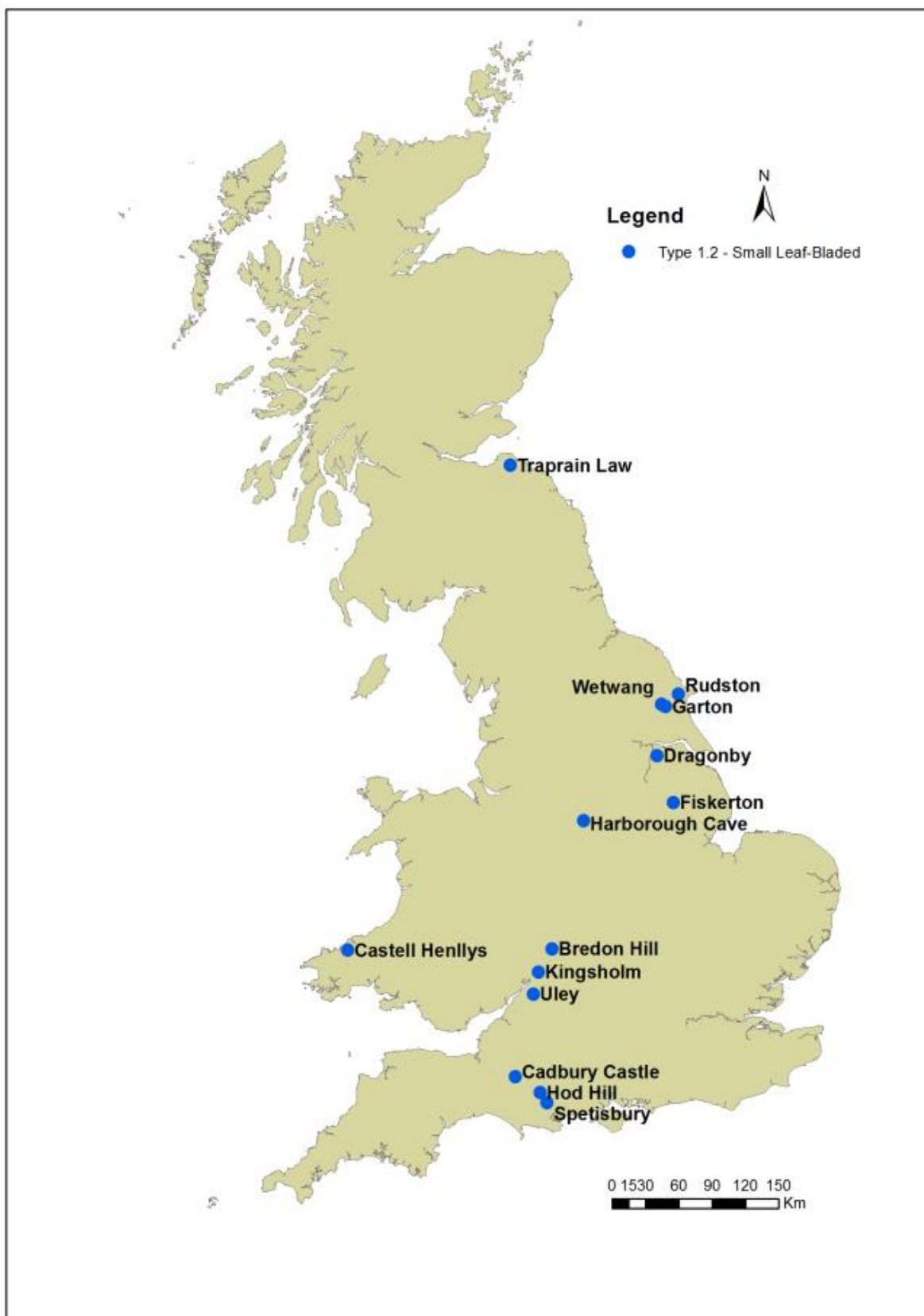


Figure 4.8: Distribution of Type 1.2 small leaf-bladed spearheads.

The contexts from which spearheads of this form have been recorded are principally settlement finds. However, four examples have been recorded from Arras Culture burials, a further three examples were recorded from votive contexts: the sanctuary deposit at Uley, Gloucestershire, a river deposit associated with an Iron Age timber causeway at Fiskerton, Lincolnshire, and one example from the Thames.

A higher proportion of spearheads in this type group featured identifiable midribs. Of the 50 examples recorded in the database, seven featured noticeable midribs. Two (IDs: 318 and 339, both from Hod Hill, Dorset) had midribs which could be discerned on one side of the blade only. A further five examples (IDs: 138 from Castell Henllys, Pembrokeshire and 319, 331, 341, 361 – all from Hod Hill) featured midribs on both sides of the blades. Four examples (IDs: 152 from Dragonby, Lincolnshire; 333 and 367 from Hod Hill; and, 369 from Kingsholm) may have had midribs, although again, this could not be stated with certainty. As with the Type 1.1 diamond-bladed spearhead form, those spearheads to feature midribs are all examples from southern sites, with the possible exception of ID152 from Dragonby.

Type 1.3 Small triangle-bladed

Type definition: small, socketed iron spearheads with a short blade, which exhibits a triangular blade profile (Figure 4.9).

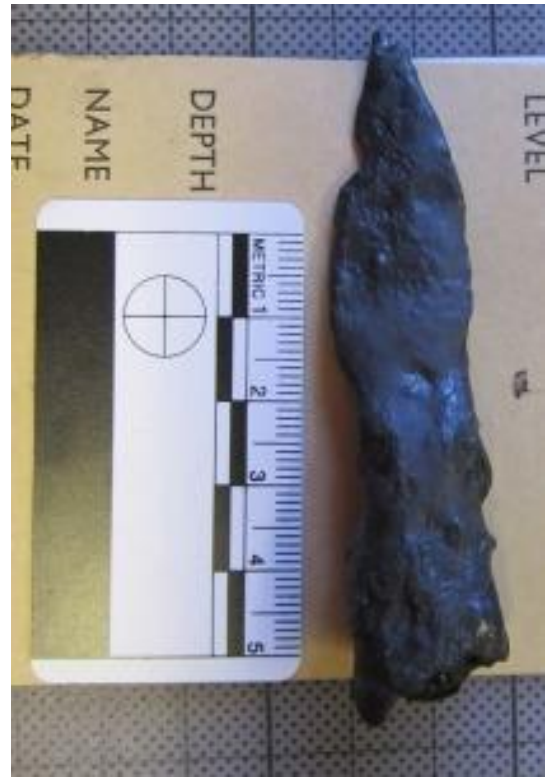
There are 22 examples of small, triangle-bladed spearheads in the database averaging 83mm in length, with no example exceeding 150mm in total length. Some of the shorter examples may have functioned as bolt heads.

The type does not appear to have been as broadly distributed as the diamond-bladed and leaf-shaped spearhead forms (Figure 4.10), appearing at only Hod Hill, Dorset, South Cadbury Castle, Somerset, Uley, Gloucestershire in the south and at Dragonby, Lincolnshire and Garton Station, East Yorkshire in the north. A further example can be noted from Maiden Castle, which has been identified as a Roman ballista bolt (discussed in detail in Chapter 8). Unfortunately, it was not possible to collect data on this object in time for its inclusion in the database. Other examples may come to be recognised from other sites; however the data does suggest that this was a less common spearhead form.

Positive identification of a midrib was made for only two spearheads in type 1.3 small-triangular-bladed, one (ID 350) from Hod Hill, Dorset visible on both sides of the blade, the other (ID 156) from Dragonby, Lincolnshire could be discerned on one side of the blade only. A third spearhead (ID 153), also from Dragonby, may have had a midrib, although this was uncertain.



Garton Station (BM 1985,0305.33) Database ID 61



Dragonby (CRDR597) Database ID 144



Hod Hill (BM 1892,0901.1058) Database ID 322

Figure 4.9: Type 1.3 small triangle-bladed spearheads.

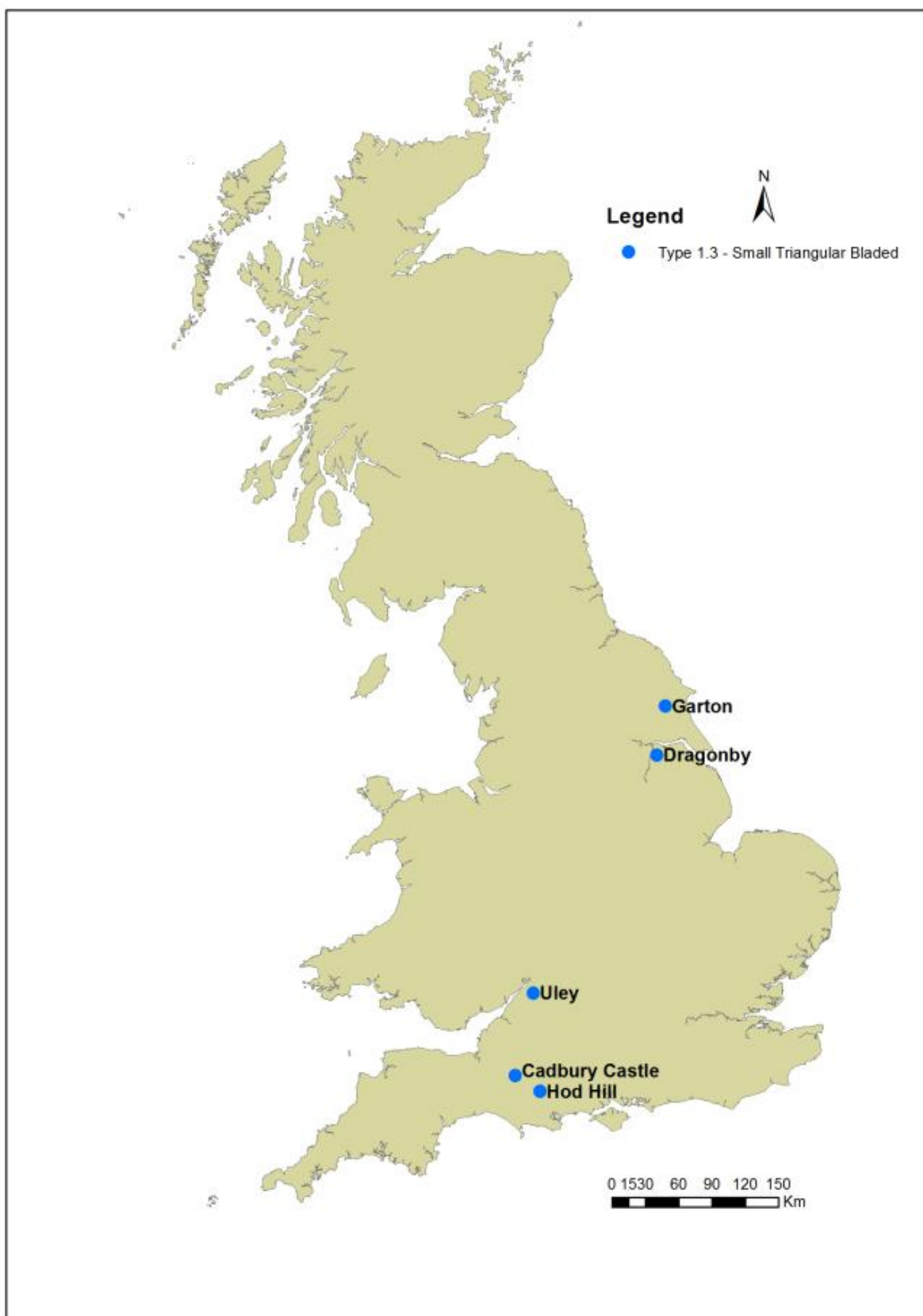


Figure 4.10: Distribution of Type 1.3 small, triangular-bladed spearheads.

Type 1.4 Narrow-necked

Type definition: socketed iron spearhead with a leaf-shaped blade profile and a distinctly narrow shank between the base of the blade and the flaring of the socket (Figure 4.11).

- Type 1.4.a – Socketed iron spearhead with a convex leaf-shaped blade profile and distinctly narrow shank between the base of the blade and the flaring of the socket.
- Type 1.4.b – Socketed iron spearhead with a broad-based, leaf-shaped blade profile and a distinctly narrow shank between the base of the blade and the flaring of the socket.
- Type 1.4.c – Socketed iron spearhead with a narrow leaf-shaped blade, which may present almost parallel blade edges, and a distinctly narrow shank between the base of the blade and the flaring of the socket.

There are 21 examples of this type of throwing spearhead recorded from 12 of the sites in the database (Figure 4.12). The type is widely distributed with examples appearing as far north as Camelon and Traprain Law in Scotland down to Hod Hill, Dorset in the south. Examples have been recovered from burial, settlement and river contexts. The spearheads all share a significant narrowing of the shank between the socket and the shoulders of the blade. The narrowing of the shank at this point is often delicate and may have been intended to bend or snap under the force of impact when thrown (Manning, 1985: 167). The examples range in length from 99mm to 232mm, averaging 158mm in overall length. Type 1.4.a, with a convex blade profile, is the most common form within this type, represented by 12 examples. The broad-based Type 1.4.b is represented by only two examples, both from Wetwang, East Yorkshire.

A significant proportion of the spearheads in Type 1.4 featured midribs. Eight spearheads had midribs which could be clearly discerned on both sides of the blade and an additional example had a midrib on one side of the blade only. The presence of midribs for this type is outlined in Table 4.2. As with Type 1.1 diamond-bladed and Type 1.2 leaf-bladed, the majority of examples featuring midribs come from southern sites.



Type 1.4.a Garton Station (BM 1985,0305.31) Database ID 59



Type 1.4.b Wetwang (HER KINCM 2010.8.1) Database ID 118



Type 1.4.c Hod Hill (BM 1892,0901.1013) Database ID 304

Figure 4.11: Type 1.4 narrow-necked spearheads.

Table 4.2: Identification of midribs on examples of Type 1.4 spearheads.

Object ID	Type	Site	Midrib
103	1.4.a	Stanway	Both sides
135	1.4.a	Llyn Fawr	Both sides
262	1.4.c	Thames	One side
273	1.4.c	Waltham	Both sides
291	1.4.a	Hod Hill	Both sides
315	1.4.c		Both sides
375	1.4.a		Possible
371	1.4.a	Kingsholm	Both sides
414	1.4.a	Traprain Law	Both sides
428	1.4.a	Camelon	Both sides

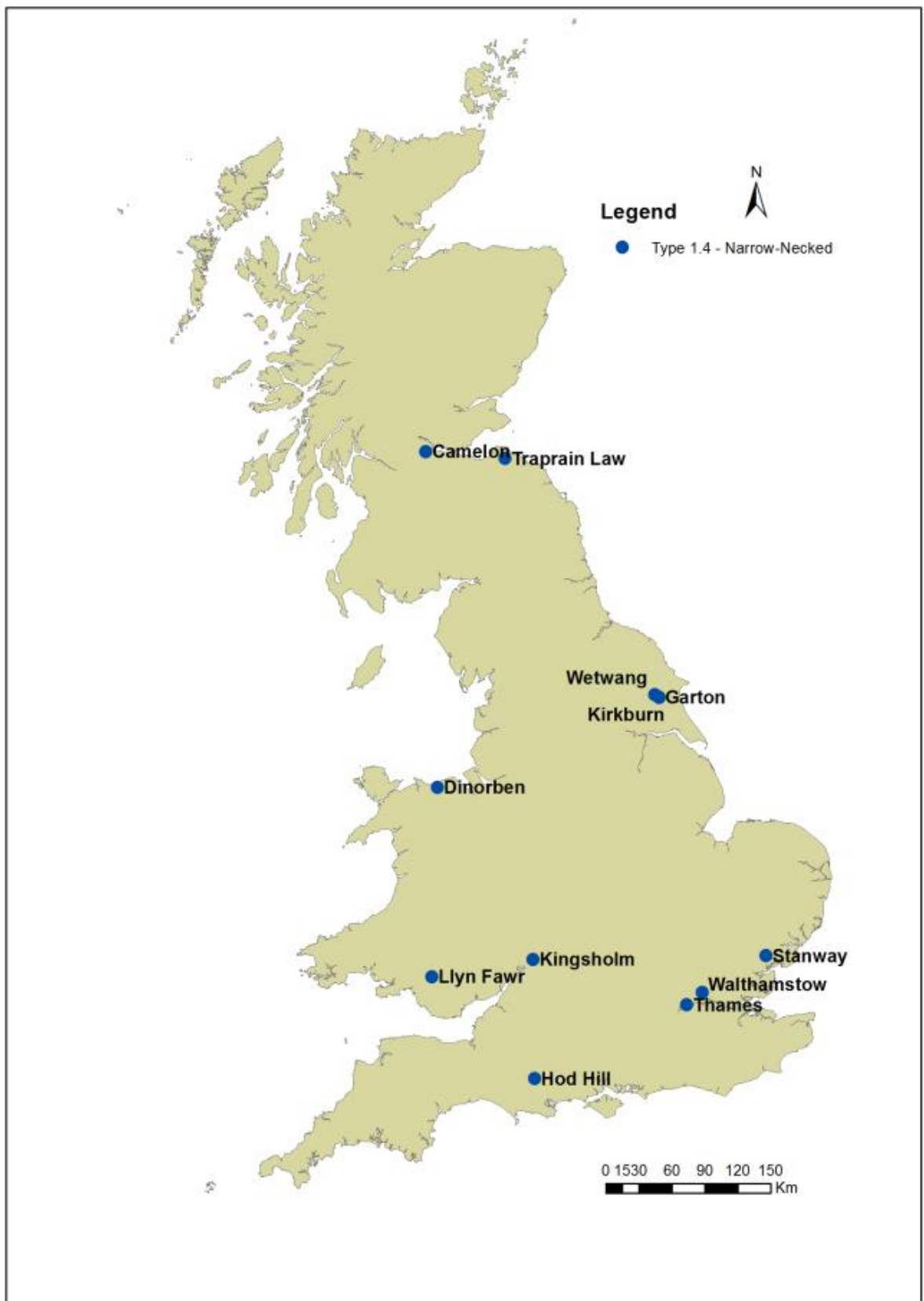


Figure 4.12: Distribution of Type 1.4 narrow-necked spearheads.

Type 1.5 Triangle-bladed

Type definition: socketed iron spearhead with a short, broad blade which has a triangular profile (Figure 4.13). There is some variation in blade form and the type can be divided into two subtypes as follows:

- Type 1.5.a – Socketed iron spearhead with a broad triangular blade profile and rounded blade shoulders.
- Type 1.5.b – Socketed iron spearhead with a broad triangular blade profile and angular shoulders.

There are 28 examples recorded in the database from 10 sites (Figure 4.14), four of which – Rudston/Burton Fleming, Garton Station, Wetwang, and the South Cave Weapons Cache – are located in East Yorkshire. The type is distributed as far south as Spettisbury, Dorset and as far north as Merlsford, Fife in Scotland. Spearheads of this type have the widest blades of any form which can be assigned a throwing function. Complete examples range in overall length between 90mm and 230mm with an average length of 130mm. The blades are consistently short with only two examples (IDs 73 and 437) exceeding 100mm (at 101mm and 110mm respectively). The example (ID 437, Figure 4.13, bottom) from Spettisbury is something of an outlier. It is the longest member of the type, with the longest blade and longest socket, measuring 120mm, with the next longest example (ID 31 Figure 4.13, left), from the South Cave Weapons Cache, measuring 96mm.

Nine of the 28 spearheads allocated to this type feature midribs, eight on both sides of the blade and one spearhead with a midrib which could be seen on one side of the blade only. A tenth spearhead may possibly have had a midrib, although this could not be identified with any certainty.



Type 1.5.a SCWC Spear 32
(2005/99/54 RF98) Database ID 31.



Type 1.5.b Traprain Law (NMS GVM 392) Database
ID 399.



Type 1.5.b Spettisbury. Database ID 437 (Gresham, 1939).

Figure 4.13: Type 1.5 triangle-bladed spearheads.

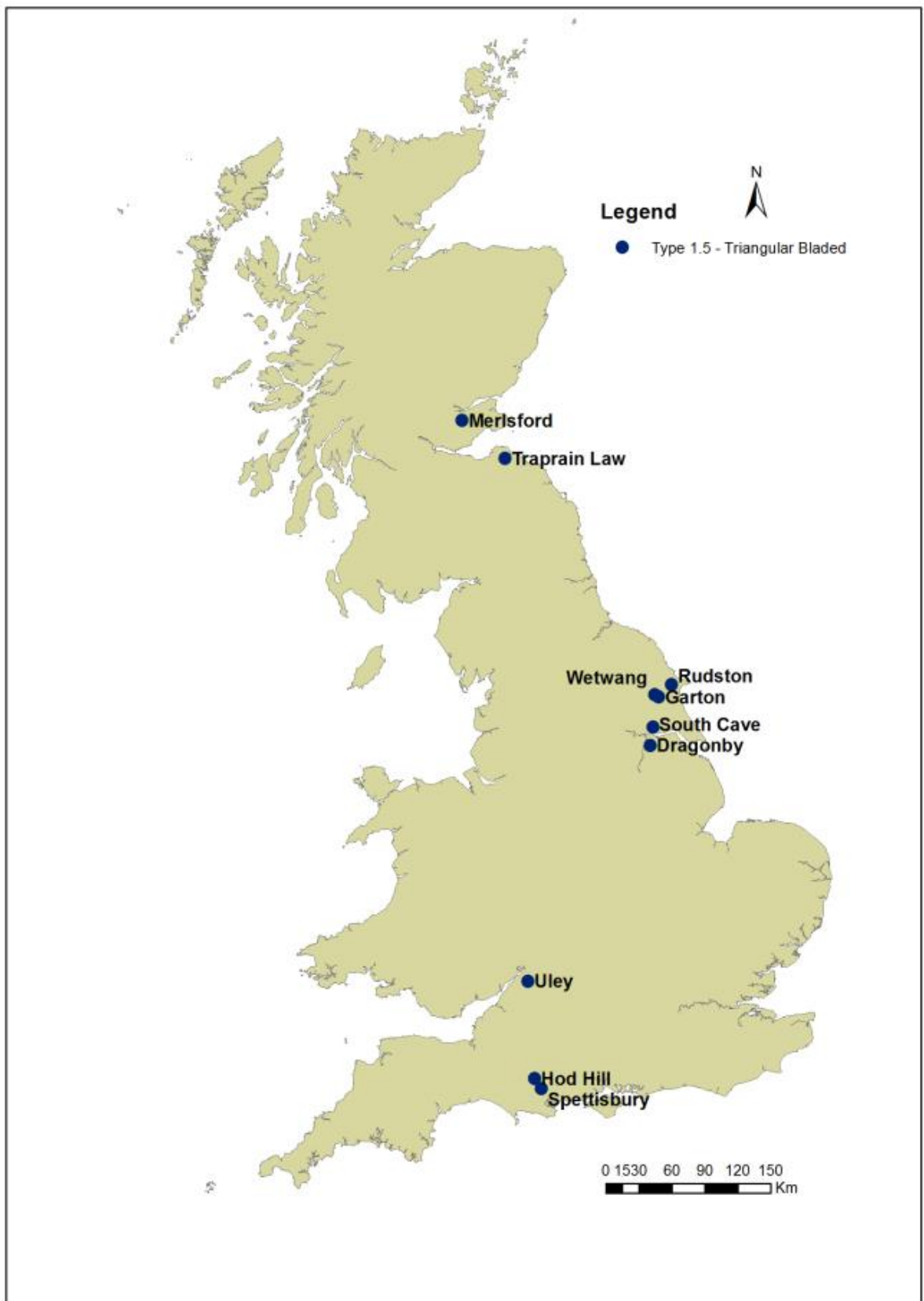


Figure 4.14: Distribution of Type 1.5 triangle-bladed spearheads.

Type 1.6 'Celtic pila'

Type definition: socketed iron spearheads, with small blades and very long, thin shanks.

Two sub-types can be identified on the basis of the blade profile (Figure 4.15):

- Type 1.6.a – Leaf-bladed, featuring a small blade with a leaf-shaped profile.
- Type 1.6.b – Triangular-bladed, featuring a small blade with a triangular blade profile.

This is a very rare group of spearheads in Britain, which has been recorded from only two sites: the South Cave Weapons Cache in East Yorkshire and Four Crosses, Powys (Figure 4.16). Both are Late Iron Age finds, recovered from ditches. An isolated spear blade (ID 63), from an Arras Culture burial at Garton Station, may represent a fragmentary example from a Middle Iron Age context. However, no traces of a shank or socket were noted in the excavation report. Consequently, the allocation of this object to Type 1.6 is highly tentative, and it is possible that this object may be a member of Type 1.2 small, leaf-bladed spearhead.

The blades are very small and delicate with a length ratio as a proportion of total length between 7:1 and as much as 15:1. Complete examples range in length from 315mm to 750mm, with an average total length of 522mm. None of the recorded examples shows any evidence of a strengthening midrib to the blade.

While the type appears to have a limited distribution in Britain, and may be restricted to the Late Iron Age, earlier examples have been noted on the Continent. Brunaux and Rapin (1988) noted examples in Umbria, Northern Italy from the fourth century BC. Similar spearhead forms were noted in the Iberian peninsula from the early fourth to second centuries BC, where they have been recovered from some of the wealthiest burials of the period (Quesada Sanz, 2002: 38 and fig.35A, Almagro-Gorbea & Lorrio, 2004, García Jiménez, 2011: 81-82). Examples of this kind of spearhead from Almedinilla, Cordoba (inv.10423) and the Valdenovillas Necropolis at Alcolea de las Peñas, Guadalajara (inv. 1940/27/VL/862 – reproduced in Figure 4.17) are currently on display in the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid. However, spearheads of this form do not seem to be included in either Late Iron Age burials or sanctuary sites on the Continent.



Type 1.6.a SCWC Spear 9



Type 1.6.a Four Crosses



Type 1.6.b SCWC Spear 4

Figure 4.15: Type 1.6 'Celtic *pila*'.

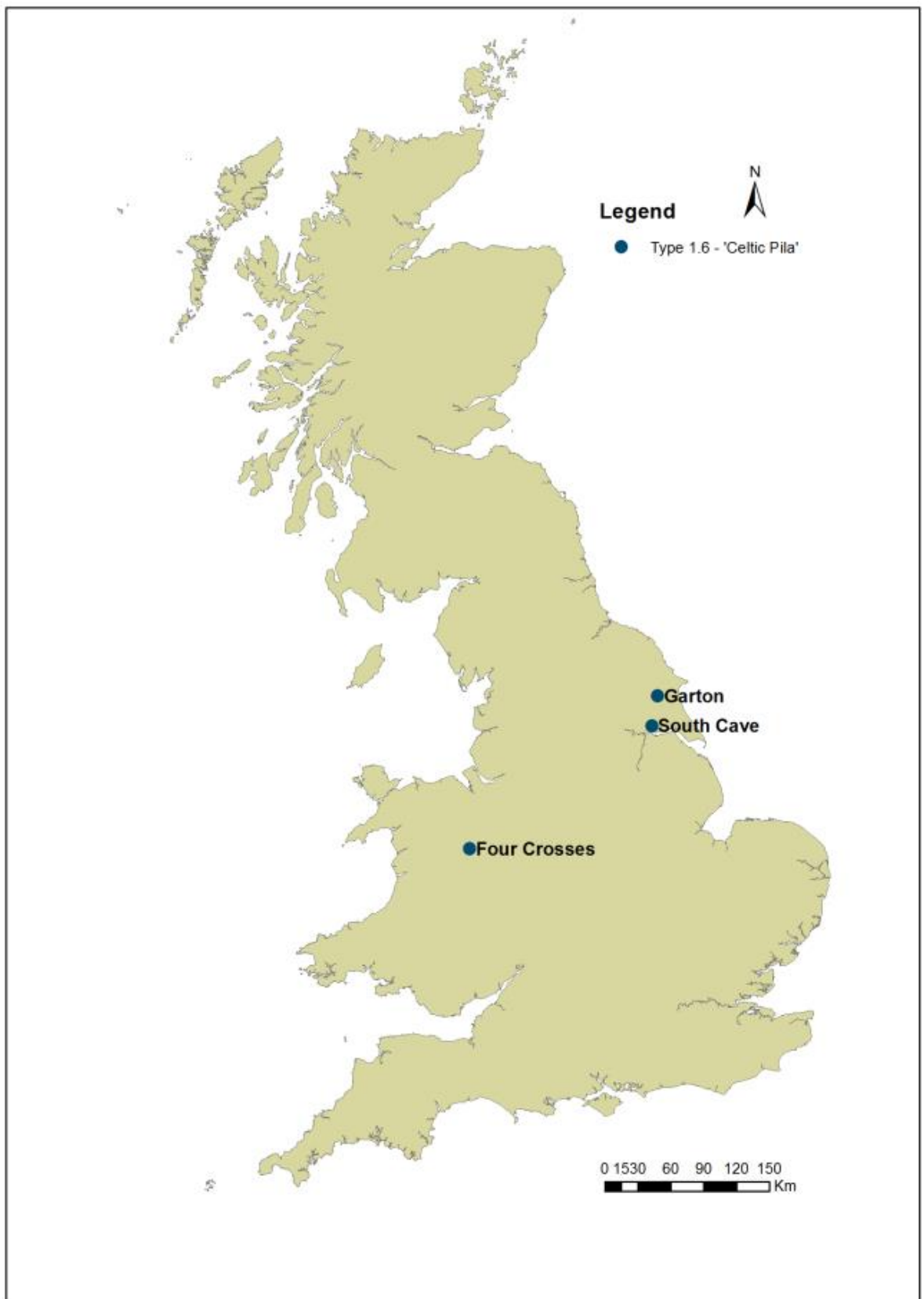


Figure 4.16: Distribution of Type 1.6 'Celtic *pila*'.

The forms which appear in the South Cave Weapons Cache and at Four Crosses are distinct from contemporary Roman forms and would seem to belong to a divergent tradition. Excavations at Castellruf, Barcelona in Spain demonstrate that by the Republican period the Roman *pilum* had already diverged from the ‘Celtic *pilum*’ form observed by Brunaux and Rapin (1988) and Quesada Sanz (2002) and was closer in form and function to the legionary *pilum* of the Imperial period (Álvarez Arza & Cubera Argente, 1999).



Figure 4.17: Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid (Inv. 1940/27/VL/862) from Necrópolis de Valdenovillos, Alcolea de las Peñas(Sierra de Guadalajara (comarca), Guadalajara (third-second century BC) © MAN.

Type 1.7 Hybrid of diamond and pilum forms

Type definition: socketed iron spearhead with a small leaf-shaped, triangular or diamond blade profile and a long, conical socket which is approximately three times the length of the blade, or longer (Figure 4.18).

This class of spearhead shares some traits in common with both the Type 1.6 ‘Celtic *pilum*’ and the Type 1.1 diamond-bladed spearhead forms. Just four examples have been recorded in the database, two from South Cadbury Castle, one from Hunsbury Camp, and another from the South Cave Weapons Cache (Figure 4.19). Both of the Cadbury examples were associated with the so-called ‘massacre’ deposit in the south-western gateway, which is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6. This form may have been chosen for votive deposition and less common as a functional form. This can also be inferred for the example from the South Cave Weapons Cache. Information regarding the finds context for Hunsbury Camp does not appear to have been recorded. At least one example has been recorded from Danebury hillfort, Hampshire, though it was not possible to collect data and include this object in the database (Cunliffe, 2003: 70-72, fig.30 No.1).

Only the example from Hunsbury Camp had an identifiable midrib, which was shallow, but discernible on both sides of the blade. The form does not appear to have any obvious Continental parallels.



SCWC Spear 34 (2005/99/56 RF100) Database ID 33



Hunsbury Camp (BM 1896,0411.95) Database ID 280

Figure 4.18: Type 1.7 hybrid of diamond and 'Celtic *pilum*'.



Figure 4.19: Distribution of Type 1.7 hybrid diamond/*pilum* spearheads.

Type 1.8 Bone points

Type definition: socketed projectile points constructed of bone (Figure 4.20).

As discussed in Chapter 2, bone points have been resistant to typological classification and no serious attempt had been made to categorise British Iron Age examples. Schatte (2013) has recently created a typology of bone points which appears to take into account the limitations of the raw materials and allows for categorisation by bone element and method of manufacture. The typology is simple, with clear type definitions and has adequate utility for the purposes of identifying possible function and documenting geographic and chronological distribution. Thus, a decision has been taken to employ this typology in assessing the British material. Certainly, Schatte (2013) included some British examples in his assessment, demonstrating the applicability of the typology to the British setting. Schatte's (2013) typology may be outlined as follows (writer's translation):

- Type I, constructed from the proximal end of tibiae with triangular socket sections:
 - Type I a, with rivet holes
 - Type I b, without rivet holes
- Type II, constructed from a range of bone materials including:
 - Type II.1 constructed from the distal end of tibiae, with oval socket sections
 - Type II.2 constructed from metatarsals, with round, or rounded socket sections
 - Type II.3 Radii, with semi-rounded sections
 - Type II.3 a – with rivet holes
 - Type II.3 b – without rivet holes
- Type III constructed exclusively from antler
 - Type III.1 conical points
 - Type III.2 slightly curved points
 - Type III.2 a – with rivet holes
 - Type III.2 b – without rivet holes
- Type IV special forms (any other forms or types of bone)

This class of object was unexpected at the outset of data collection. Bone points have been recorded from over 40 sites across Britain (Olsen, 2003), however, as discussed in Chapter 2 their function has been variously interpreted, with only a limited acceptance that some examples may have functioned as spearheads. The discovery of more than 50 bone points associated with the Iron Age timber causeway at Fiskerton (Field & Parker Pearson, 2003), where weapons appear to have been singled out for deposition (discussed in Chapter 5), suggests that a martial function should be considered for many bone points.

While examples have been noted at more than 40 sites (Figure 4.21), ranging from Maiden Castle, Dorset to Howe, Orkney, it was only possible to record data on bone points from 10 sites (Figure 4.22), the majority of examples recovered from the key site of Fiskerton, Lincolnshire. The points had been deposited in the River Witham, and were extremely well-preserved. Other examples from wet deposits come from the Thames and the River Wensum. It was possible to examine a small number of bone points which had been deposited in Arras Culture burials, including two of the 16 bone points which had been included in the Grimthorpe Warrior burial (Mortimer, 1905: 150, Stead *et al.*, 1968). More than 60 bone points were reported from the interior of the settlement at South Cadbury Castle, and some examples were sufficiently well-published for inclusion in the database, although they were interpreted by the excavators as weaving implements (Barrett *et al.*, 2000: 183-186). That bone points did function as spearheads, in at least some instances, is particularly evident from the Thames bone point (Figure 4.23), which had clearly been shaped to imitate metal spearhead forms. A similarly shaped example (now lost) from Fiskerton was reported by Franks (1860) when he announced the discovery of the Thames bone spearhead.



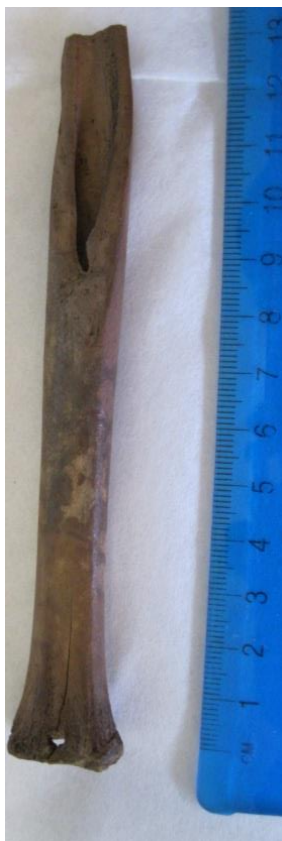
Schatte Type I point from Bac Mhic Connain (NMS Inv. GNB14) Database ID 406



Schatte Type II.1 point from Fiskerton (Collection Inv. 228) Database ID 234



Schatte Type II.2 point from Fiskerton (Collection Inv.446) Database ID 244



Schatte Type II.3 point from Fiskerton (Collection Inv.289) Database ID 211



Schatte Type III.1 point from Fiskerton (Collection Inv.144) Database ID 216



Schatte Type IV point from Rushall Down (BM 1902,0616.33) Database ID 392

Figure 4.20: Type 1.8 bone points in accordance with Schatte's (2013) typology.



Figure 4.21: Distribution of bone points recorded in Britain, based on data from Olsen (2003) and data collection conducted for the thesis, (map: T. Sparrow).

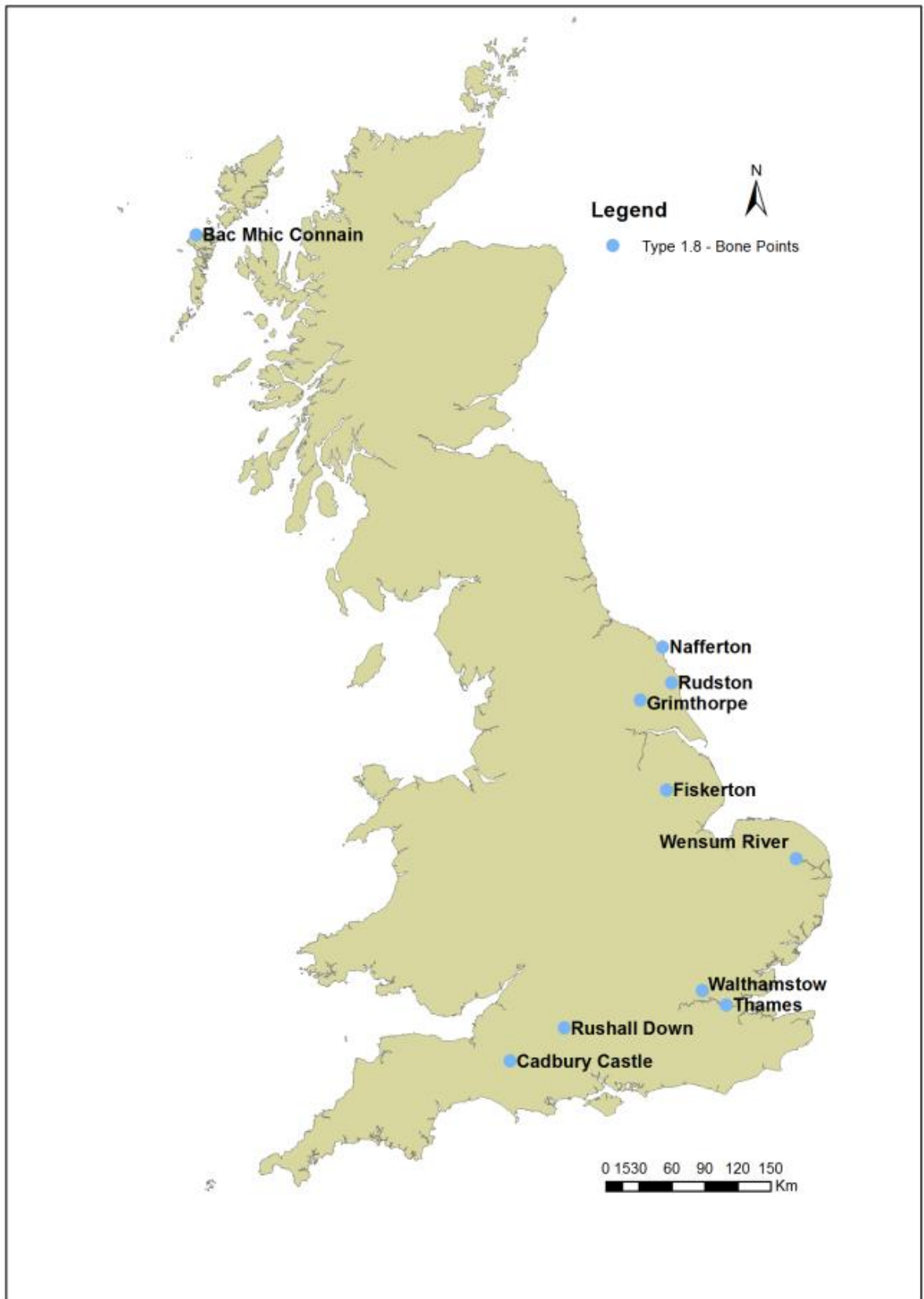


Figure 4.22: Distribution of Type 1.8 bone points recorded in the database.



Figure 4.23: Type 1.8 (Schatte Type IV) bone spearhead (ID 393) recovered from the Thames (BM 1861,0304.3).

Bone points in Britain have been constructed from a limited range of bone elements with the tibiae of sheep/goat most common. Sheep/goat metatarsals, metacarpals and radii, pig tibiae, roe deer and cow bones have also been used. Bones come from both juvenile and adult animals, and it is likely they were conveniently available materials for working after the meat had been consumed, some bones showing clear evidence of butchery (e.g. database object IDs 224, 228 and 243). Many of the bone points were very highly polished and few working marks are visible to the naked eye.

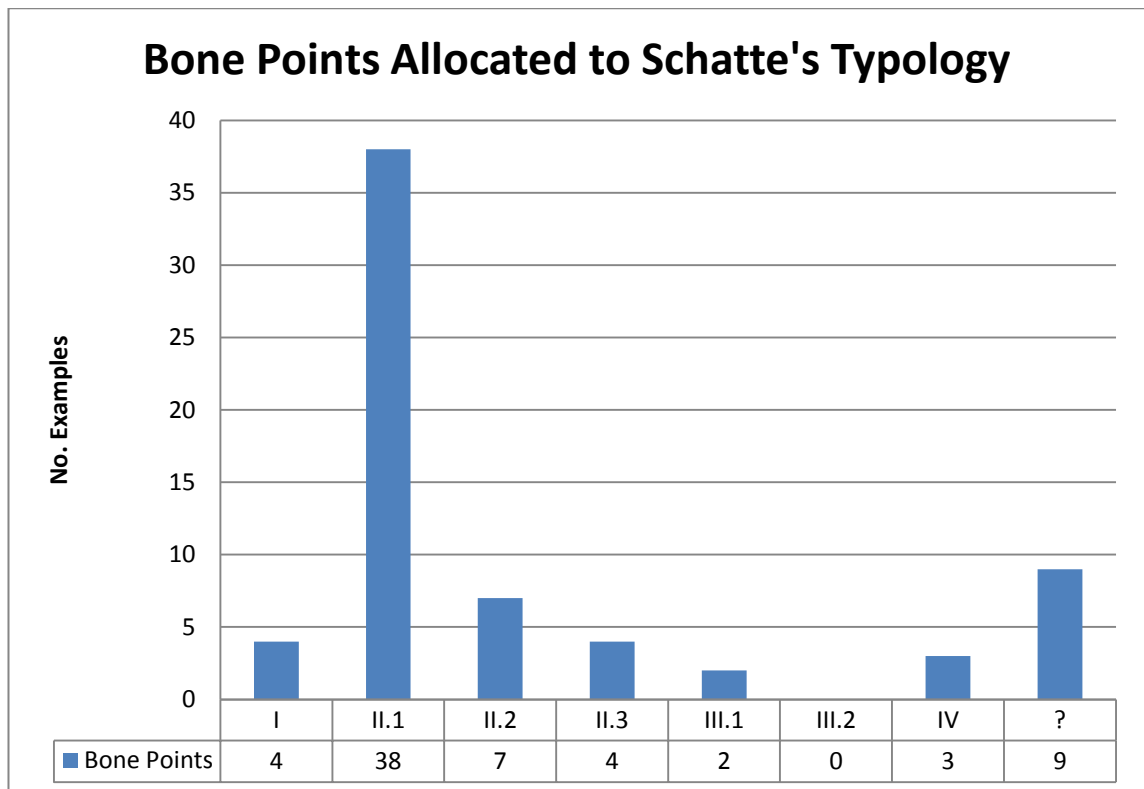


Figure 4.24: Type 1.8 bone points in the database as allocated to Schatte's typology of bone points.

Sixty-three bone points were included in the database and they have been allocated to Schatte's typology as shown in Figure 4.24. The majority of bone points can be allocated to Schatte's Type II.1, constructed from the distal end of tibiae. This differs significantly from the typological allocation of Continental material. Schatte's (2013: and pers. comm.) geographical analysis of over 900 bone points from Continental Europe and Britain (principally from the southern hillfort dominated zone) revealed that, on the Continent, Type I bone points dominate the assemblage, with the exception of Poland where Type II points accounted for approximately half of all bone points assessed in Schatte's (2013) study. The analysis presented in the database, which focusses primarily on the material from Fiskerton, supports Schatte's (2013) findings that Type II points predominated in the British Iron Age.

Miscellaneous Throwing Spearhead Forms

Six spearheads fit within the functional grouping of throwing spearhead forms, but did not meet the criteria for any of the types outlined above (Figure 4.25). Three of these come from East Yorkshire. Two spearheads come from Arras Culture burials – one from Garton Station, the other from Rudston – and another was included in the South Cave Weapons Cache. One spearhead comes from Aberavon, one from the Stanwick hoard, and a fifth object, held in the National Museum of Wales (accession No. 89.19H) is an unprovenanced object which was clearly never intended to serve any martial function.



SCWC Spearhead 26.
Database ID 25



Garton Station spearhead.
Database ID 57



Rudston Spearhead. Database ID 80



Aberavon. Spearhead
(NMW 32.135)
Database ID 130



Unprovenanced (NMW 89.19H)
Database ID 131



Stanwick (BM 1847,0208.79)
Database ID 282

Figure 4.25: Miscellaneous throwing spearhead forms.

The form of the spearhead from the South Cave Weapons Cache (ID 25) is consistent with the Type 1.5 triangle blade form. However, a small protrusion at the base of the blade appears to be the remnant of a barb, and it seems that the shoulder of the blade may have been re-worked to construct it. The angle of the barb, pointing towards the tip of the blade, indicates that it was not intended to hinder extraction of the blade, and thus must have been intended to serve some other function. It is unclear what martial function could have been served by a barb at this angle.

The small conical spearhead from Garton Station (ID 57) may have served as, or been adapted from, a ferrule. The tip of the object appears to have been flattened into a rudimentary blade, and may have been intended to serve as a spearhead rather than a counterpoint. A ferrule was included in a 'speared corpse' burial recently excavated in Pocklington (ID 431). Counterpoints are uncommon in British Iron Age contexts, however, a function as a counterpoint remains possible, and it is feasible that a ferrule may have been finished in such a manner to facilitate it serving as a back-up point if the spear shaft were to fail.

The example from Rudston (ID 80) is similar to the small, triangular-bladed Type 1.3, and its dimensions are consistent with that general type. However, the profile of the weapon is more angular and the blade section is unusually thick and flat, measuring 5mm thick throughout. While the spearhead could be included with the Type 1.3 examples on metric bases, and it likely served a similar martial function, on visual inspection it appears distinct from members of Type 1.3 and does not seem to fit comfortably with them. The spearhead has also been significantly bent at an angle of approximately 20°, and may represent an act of deliberate damage.

Similarly, the spearhead from Aberavon (ID 130) shares many traits in common with Type 1.7 hybrid diamond/*pilum* spearheads. It features a long, narrow shank which transitions smoothly into a conical socket. However, the blade, at 133mm is considerably longer than any of the Type 1.7 examples, which do not possess blades in excess of 60mm. The object compares favourably with Swanton's Type D2 Saxon spearhead, and has been only tentatively allocated an Iron Age date by the National Museum of Wales. Swanton sees the form as having emerged during the sixth century AD, frequently found in association with Frankish pottery forms (Swanton, 1974: 11-

12). Consequently, the possibility that this spearhead should be reinterpreted as a Saxon artefact should be considered.

A fragmentary spearhead from the Stanwick Hoard (ID 281) also fits very neatly with one of Swanton's Saxon spearhead types. The barbed point matches Swanton's Type A1, identified as a type introduced to Britain by Germanic soldiers stationed along Hadrian's Wall in the third and fourth centuries AD. However, the secure Iron Age context of this find demonstrates that other possibilities should be considered for the appearance, and particularly the chronology, of this spearhead form.

The spearhead-shaped object held in the National Museum of Wales collection (ID 131) is rather peculiar. It is unprovenanced, although is recorded in the museum database as likely to be of Iron Age date. The object has a very thick (8mm), flat section and unusually angular shoulders. The tip of the object is broken so it is not possible to ascertain whether the object originally had a sharpened point. It is perhaps likely that this object has been misidentified as an Iron Age spearhead and that it may in fact be an iron tool. Furthermore, given the lack of provenance, it is unclear whether its Iron Age allocation is *bona fide*.

4.2.2 Thrusting/slashing spearhead forms – Type Group 2

The functional grouping of spearheads designed for the delivery of thrusting or slashing blows is made up of heavy spearheads which would not have easily been thrown. Thrusting or slashing spearheads make up the smallest functional group within the database with only 28 members. As a group, they are generally longer in their overall dimensions than throwing spearhead forms. With the exception of the Type 1.6 'Celtic *pila*', all throwing spearhead forms were shorter than 300mm, with the majority of spearheads shorter than 200mm. All thrusting spearhead forms exceeded 200mm in total length and 24 out of the 28 exceeded 300mm (Figure 4.26). As with the throwing spearhead types, there is a diversity of forms within the group, which can be divided into six types and some miscellaneous forms.

Within each of the thrusting spearhead types, the blade makes up the greatest proportion of the spearhead, and (with a single exception) all examples possess short sockets. Further, 20 spearheads in this functional group feature strengthening midribs, with a poorly preserved spearhead from Fiskerton also showing indications of a midrib, although this could not be discerned with certainty. The midribs are generally prominent

and may have enabled the spearheads to withstand the significant stress associated with a thrusting function.

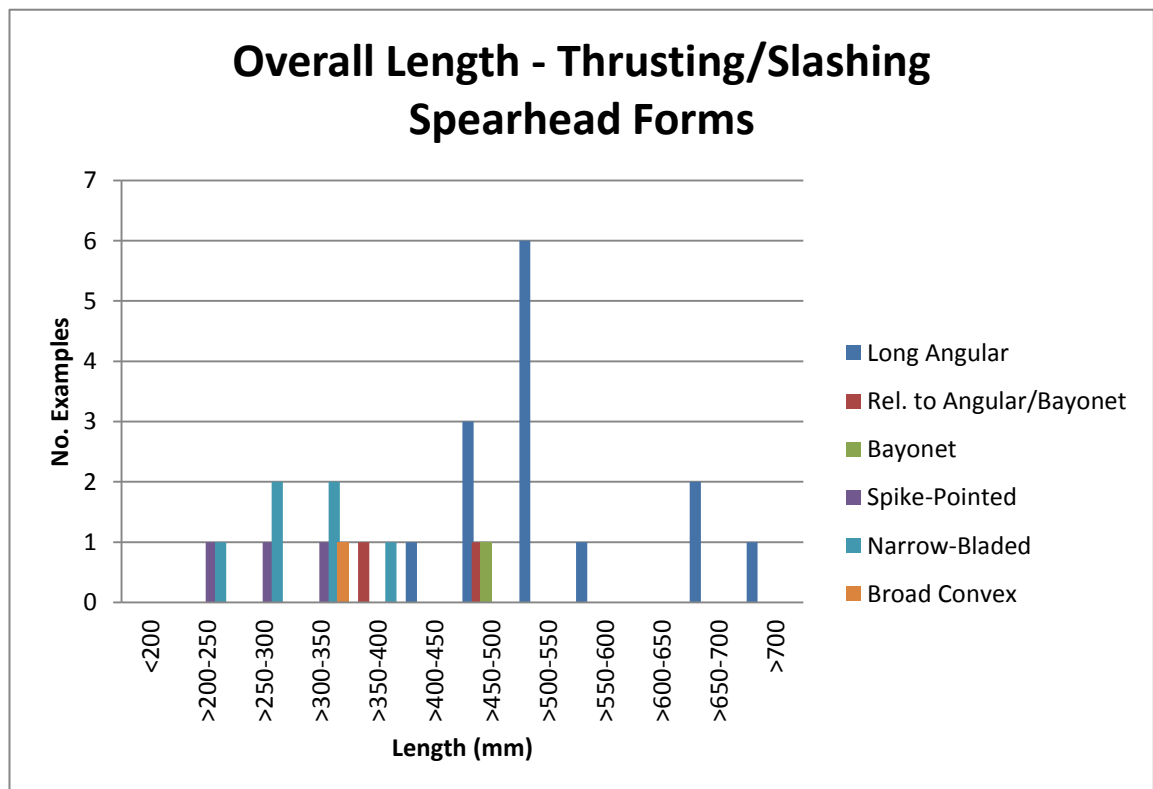


Figure 4.26: Overall length of spearheads with a thrusting or slashing function.

Type 2.1 Long angular spearhead form

Type definition: long, socketed iron spearhead form with a total length in excess of 400mm consisting of a long blade and proportionately short socket, which makes up one third or less of the total length. Most, but not all examples, feature a prominent midrib. The form can be divided into two sub-types based on the shape of the blade shoulders.

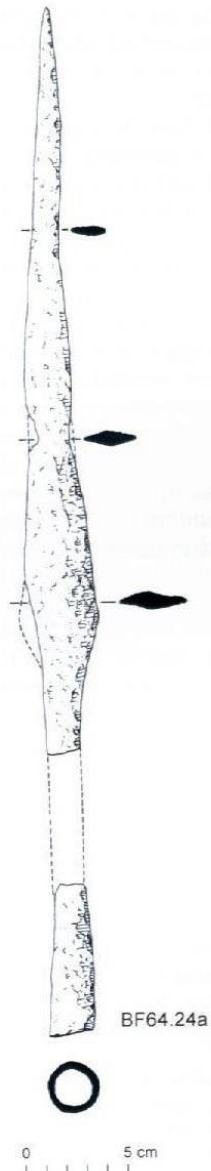
Sub-types:

- 2.1.a – Prominent shoulder – the shoulders are prominent and may be heavily rounded or angular in profile (Figure 4.27).
- 2.1.b – Smooth transition from socket to blade. The transition of the overall profile from the socket to the blade curves smoothly so that there are no distinct blade shoulders (Figure 4.28).

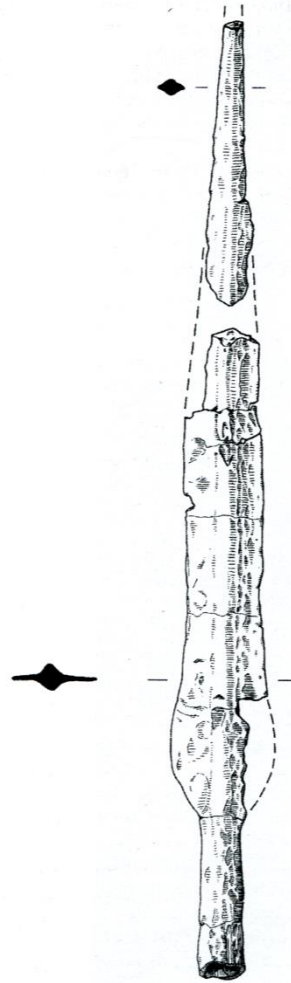
During the initial visual assessment, this group of spearheads stood out from the rest of the sample due to their very long blade forms. These spearheads were substantially longer than most other spearheads in the sample. The shortest example of this type has a total length of 470mm and the longest 727mm. The type is represented by just 14 spearheads from eight sites in the database (Figure 4.29). Several were recovered from some of the most significant Iron Age martial burials in Britain. These include the Kelvedon Warrior burial, the two Brisley Farm Warrior burials in Kent, an extremely well equipped Aylesford cremation burial from Stanway, Essex and a purported funerary deposit of five spearheads from the Playgolf excavations in Colchester. Other examples have come from wet depositions at Llyn Cerrig Bach, Anglesey and Llyn Fawr, Rhigos (which is not included in the database), and the Iron Age timber causeway at Fiskerton in Lincolnshire. Dry deposition finds include the South Cave Weapons Cache, East Yorkshire and Four Crosses, Powys. The importance of including this particular type of spearhead in burials and votive deposits will be discussed in greater detail in Chapters 5 and 7. The earliest example is that from Llyn Fawr, which can be dated to the Early Iron Age. The three examples from Llyn Cerrig Bach are datable to the Middle Iron Age, and all other examples of the type come from contexts which are datable to the Late Iron Age.



SCWC (ID 23)



Stanway (ID 104)
(Crummy *et al.*,
2007)



Kelvedon (ID 105)
(Sealy, 2007)



Llyn Cerrig Bach
(ID 134)

Figure 4.27: Type 2.1.a long, angular spearheads with prominent shoulders.



SCWC (ID 1)



Llyn Cerrig Bach (ID 122)



Fiskerton (ID 257)



Playgolf (ID 422)

Figure 4.28: Type 2.1.b long, angular spearheads with smooth shoulders.

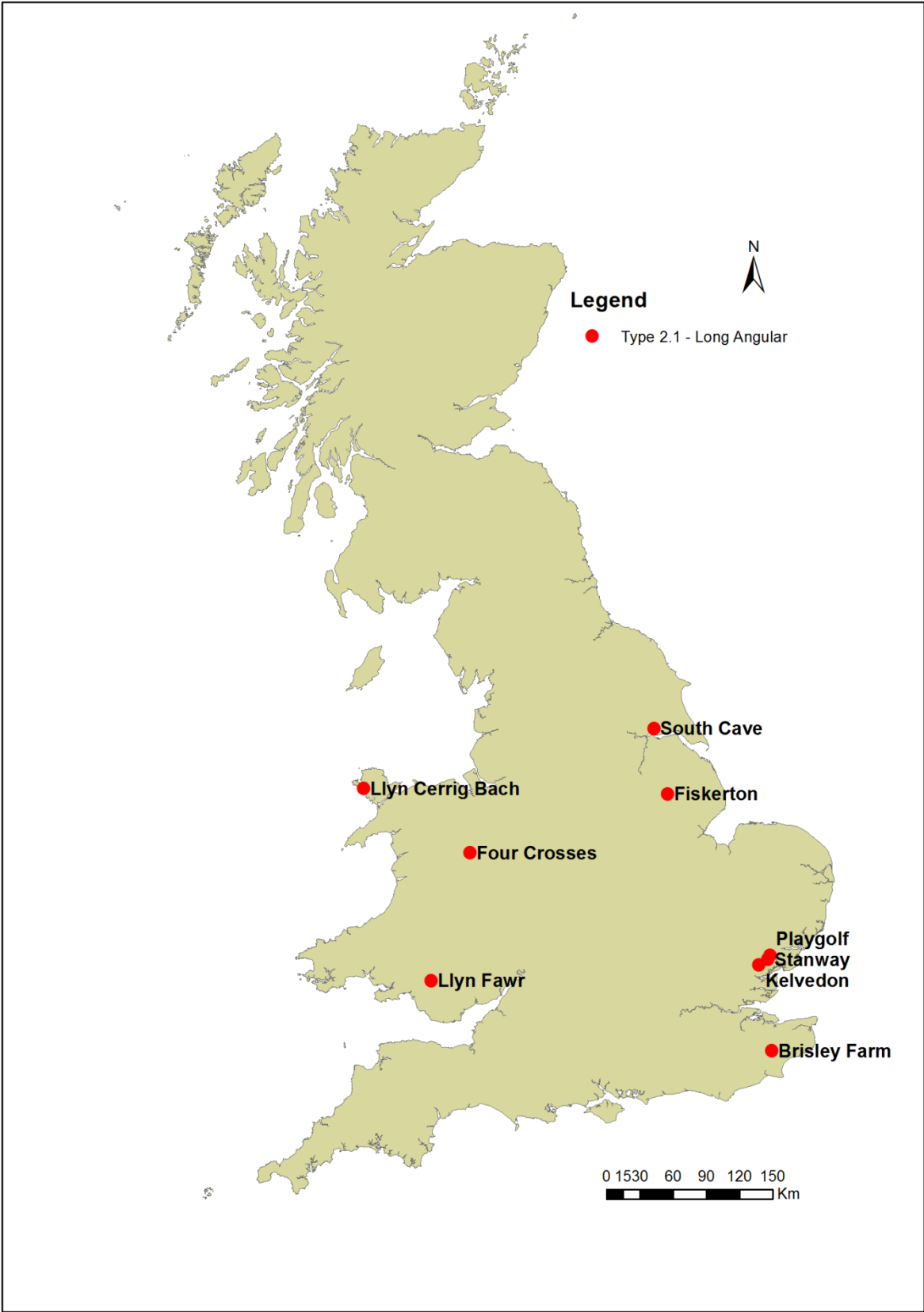


Figure 4.29: Distribution of Type 2.1 long, angular spearheads.

Type 2.2 A form possibly related to long, angular or bayonet

Type definition: short-socketed iron spearhead with biconvex blade base featuring an indented rivulet rather than a midrib. This rivulet has a lenticular profile and transitions to a prominent midrib running approximately one third of the way along the blade, which tapers sharply to a long point.

A small and unusual pair of spearheads constitutes this type group (Figure 4.30). The spearheads, measuring 376mm and 470mm may differ in length by approximately 100mm but have almost identical blade profiles. The prominent midribs can be clearly observed on both sides of the blade. The convex blade bases echo the form of the Type 2.3 bayonet spearhead from the South Cave Weapons Cache, while the long, angular blade presents similarities to the Type 2.1 long, angular spearhead form. The possibility that the development of this form is related to one or both of these types should be considered.

Both examples come from London, one recovered from the Thames, the other from Walthamstow (Figure 4.31). Both objects were acquired by A. W. Franks, in the 1860s and they have been interpreted since that time as artefacts of Iron Age date. Swanton (1974: 20-21) saw this spearhead form as a native precursor to his Type I Saxon spearhead form. The rivulet at the base of the blade was identified by Swanton as an insular development, designed to strengthen the blade in a manner similar to the inclusion of a midrib.



BM 1868,0904.10 from the Thames (Database ID 268)



BM 1869,0726.27 from Walthamstow (Database ID 269)

Figure 4.30: Type 2.2 spearheads, a form possibly related to long, angular (Type 2.1) or bayonet (Type 2.3).



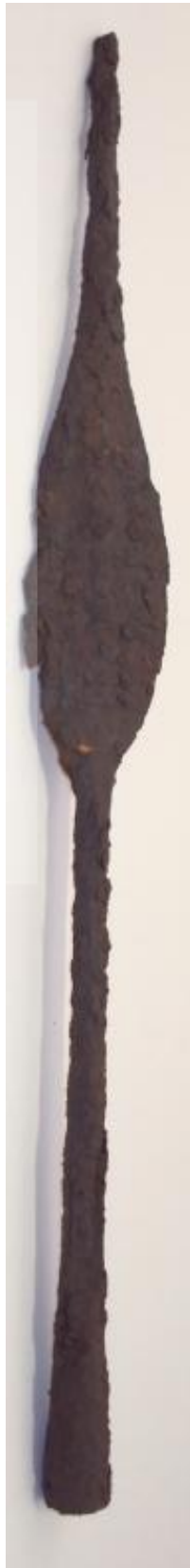
Figure 4.31: Distribution of Type 2.2 spearheads, a form possibly related to long, angular (Type 2.1) or bayonet (Type 2.3).

Type 2.3 Bayonet

Type definition: a long, socketed iron spearhead with a biconvex blade profile which terminates in an elongated, narrow point.

Type 2.3 is represented by a single example in the database, recovered from the South Cave Weapons Cache, East Yorkshire (Figures 4.32 and 4.33). The spearhead clearly conforms to a known Continental type, and thus warrants a typological classification. The spearhead conforms to the '*formes baïonnettes*' identified by Brunaux and Rapin (1988: 124-125) in their assessment of spearheads from Gournay-sur-Aronde, Picardy. Thus the spearhead could be considered a member of their Type IV and fits closely with their sub-type b, which is dated in Brunaux and Rapin's seriation around the mid-second century BC. The socket of the South Cave Weapons Cache example is considerably longer than the sockets indicated in Brunaux and Rapin's examples, and it is thus possible that we have here an insular interpretation of a Continental form.

The date of this example would also appear to be considerably later than the Continental examples observed by Brunaux and Rapin. The South Cave Weapons Cache has been contextually dated to the second half of the first century AD, based on associated sherds of a Dressel 20 amphora (Evans, 2003). The possibility that the weapon was a curated or heirloom object may be considered. Stead (2006: 203) has suggested that some of the swords included in the South Cave Weapons Cache can be dated stylistically to an earlier period, and may have been in excess of 100 years old when they entered the archaeological record.



**Figure 4.32: Type 2.3 bayonet spearhead from SCWC (Database ID 3)
Beverley Treasure House 2005/99/26 RF70. Length: 478mm, width: 49mm.**



Figure 4.33: Distribution of Type 2.3 bayonet spearhead form.

Type 2.4 Spike-pointed

Type definition: medium length, socketed iron spearhead with a broad-based leaf-shaped blade profile and prominent midrib on both sides of the blade. A distinctive feature of the type is the profile of the blade tip, which is bevelled in such a way that it presents as a spike.

Type 2.4 correlates directly to Swanton's (1974: 6-7) Type B2 spearhead form. Three spearheads in the database fit the type description (Figures 4.34 and 4.35). Two are from river contexts (Thames and Avon). The third comes from a burial at Soham Lode, Cambridgeshire, which has been tentatively identified as Late Iron Age or possibly Saxon. Consequently, the identification of this type as Iron Age must also be tentative, and the possibility that these spearheads be reinterpreted as Saxon should be seriously considered. Until an example from a secure Iron Age context can be identified, the type should be interpreted as a tentative Iron Age form.



Thames BM 1856,07199.2 (ID 260)



Avon BM 1913,0313.2 (ID 261)



Soham Lode BM 1918,0709.9 (ID 266)

Figure 4.34: Type 2.4 spike-pointed spearheads.

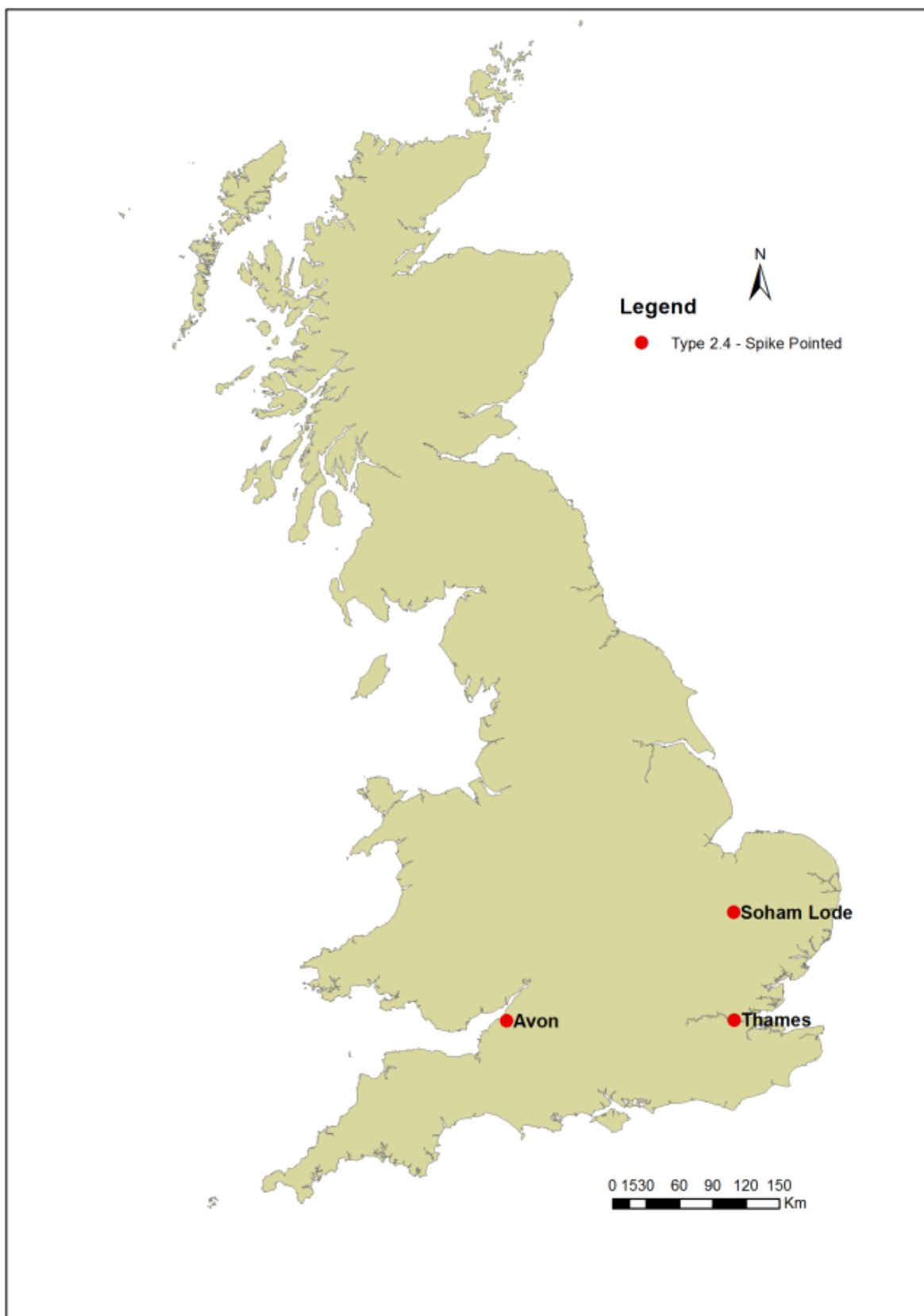


Figure 4.35: Distribution of Type 2.4 spike-pointed spearheads.

Type 2.5 Narrow-bladed

Type definition: socketed iron spearheads with a long, narrow blade profile. The blade edges are almost parallel, or taper slightly to the point.

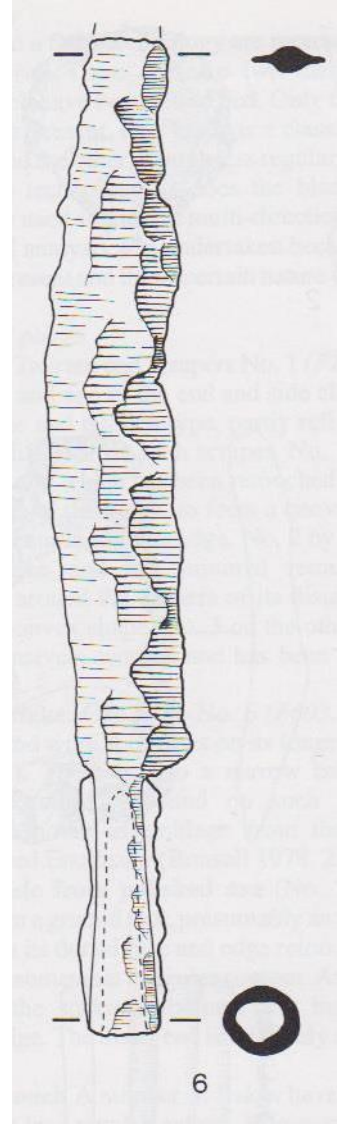
There are six examples from five sites in the database, only three of which are complete (Figures 4.36 - 4.38). They range in length from 265mm to 370mm. Four of the spearheads feature strengthening midribs. Two examples are recorded from the settlement of Hod Hill, Dorset, and the precise find location of the example from Abingdon is not recorded. Two spearheads of this type have been recorded from caches of weapons recovered from settlement ditches, at Orsett 'Cock', Essex and the South Cave Weapons Cache in East Yorkshire. Another Yorkshire example was recently discovered during excavations conducted by MAP Archaeological Practice Ltd at Pocklington, which the writer had an opportunity to view *in situ*. The spearhead was included amongst the grave goods of an Arras Culture barrow burial. This is the only example of this spearhead form to have been noted from an Iron Age burial.



Hod Hill BM 1892,0901.10.20 (ID 313)



SCWC Spear 11 (ID 11)



Orsett 'Cock' Spear 6 (ID 111),
(Carter, 1998)

Figure 4.36: Examples of Type 2.5 narrow-bladed spearheads.



Pocklington 5.372012 15741 27
(ID 115)



Abingdon NMW18.8/3 (ID 127)



Hod Hill 1892,0901.1012 (ID 303)

Figure 4.37: Further examples of Type 2.5 narrow-bladed spearheads.

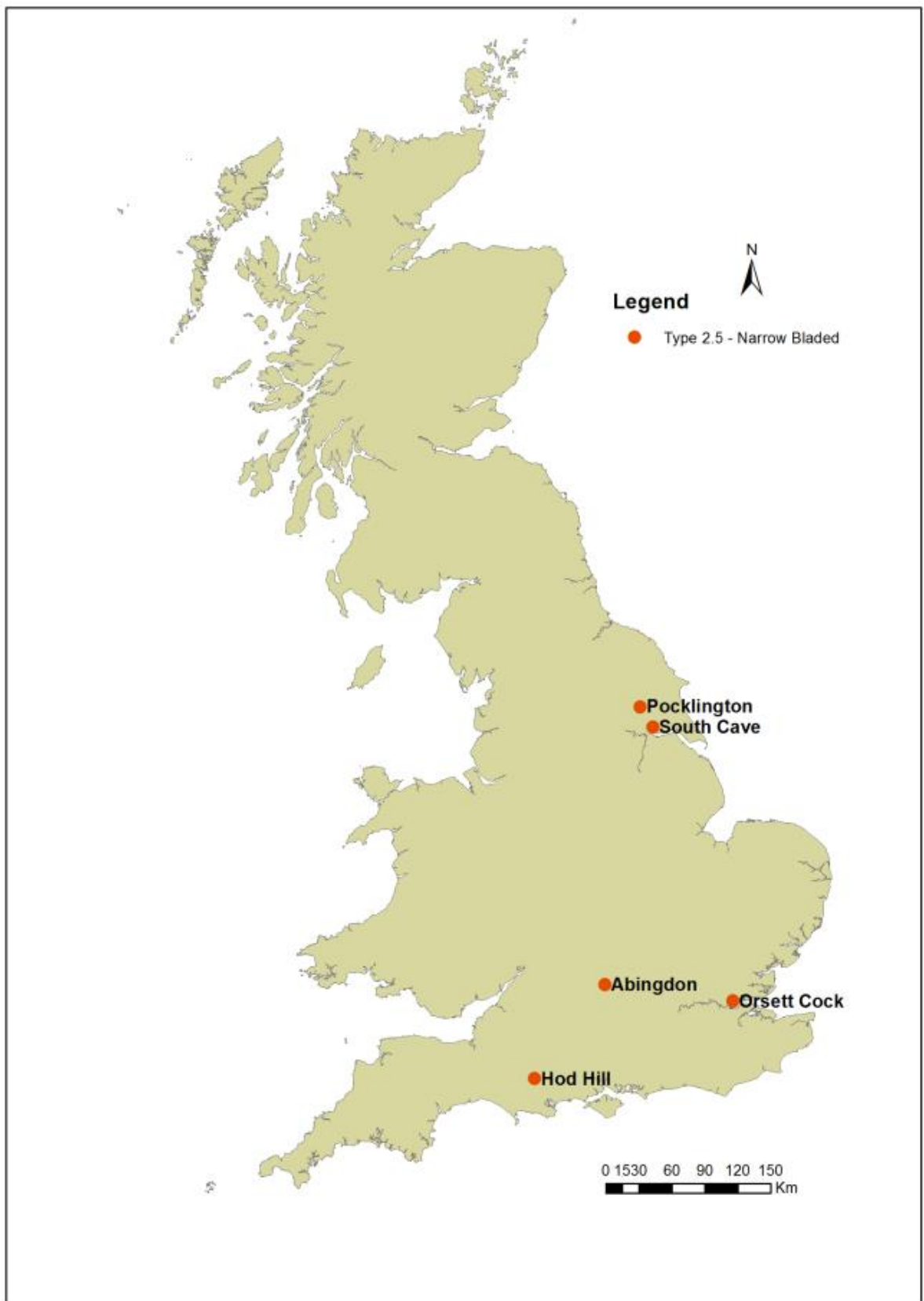


Figure 4.38: Distribution of Type 2.5 narrow-bladed spearheads.

Type 2.6 Broad convex

Type definition: socketed iron spearhead with a very broad convex blade, widest around the mid-blade, featuring a prominent midrib on both sides of the blade.

Only one spearhead in the database fits this description: ID. 263 from the Thames displays a very broad (77mm), convex blade with a very prominent midrib on both sides of the blade (Figures 4.39 and 4.40). The spearhead has Continental comparanda and can be allocated to Brunaux and Rapin's (1988: 124-126) Type II biconvex spearhead form. It is a form with a distribution in France, and Switzerland, datable to the third century BC, and thought by Brunaux and Rapin not to have continued in use after that time.



Figure 4.39: Type 2.6 broad convex spearhead from the Thames (BM 1857,0706.1), Database ID 263.



Figure 4.40: Distribution of Type 2.6 broad convex spearheads in Britain.

Miscellaneous thrusting/slashing spearhead form

An unusual spearhead from Llyn Cerrig Bach bears some similarities to the Type 2.5 narrow-bladed spearhead form but features a very rounded tip and flanged socket which distinguish this example from members of that type (Figure 4.41). Additionally, the blade is remarkably thin with a flat section, measured at 2mm thickness. The overall impression of this example is that it could not have been a serviceable weapon, and perhaps served as an analogue, and may have been made for display, or explicitly for deposition in the wet context from which it was recovered.



Figure 4.41: Miscellaneous thrusting spearhead Llyn Cerrig Bach (NMW 46.320/2), Database ID 141.

4.2.3 Versatile spearhead forms – Type Group 3

Versatile spearhead forms demonstrate some features in common with thrusting spearhead forms, to facilitate the delivery of thrusting blows, but remain light enough that they could easily be thrown. Most spearheads within this group measure between 150mm and 300mm as shown in Figure 4.42. It should be noted the only example measuring less than 50mm is an incomplete blade fragment (ID 87). Given the dual function of this group of spearheads there tends to be some overlap between versatile, throwing and thrusting spearhead forms, as shown in Figure 4.1. This overlap can create some difficulty in the identification of versatile spearhead forms, especially if one were reliant on purely metric data, as observed in Anderson's (2012) typology (discussed in Chapter 2). Using a morphological approach it was possible to identify five different types of spearhead which would be suited to either the delivery of thrusting blows, or deployment as a thrown missile weapon.

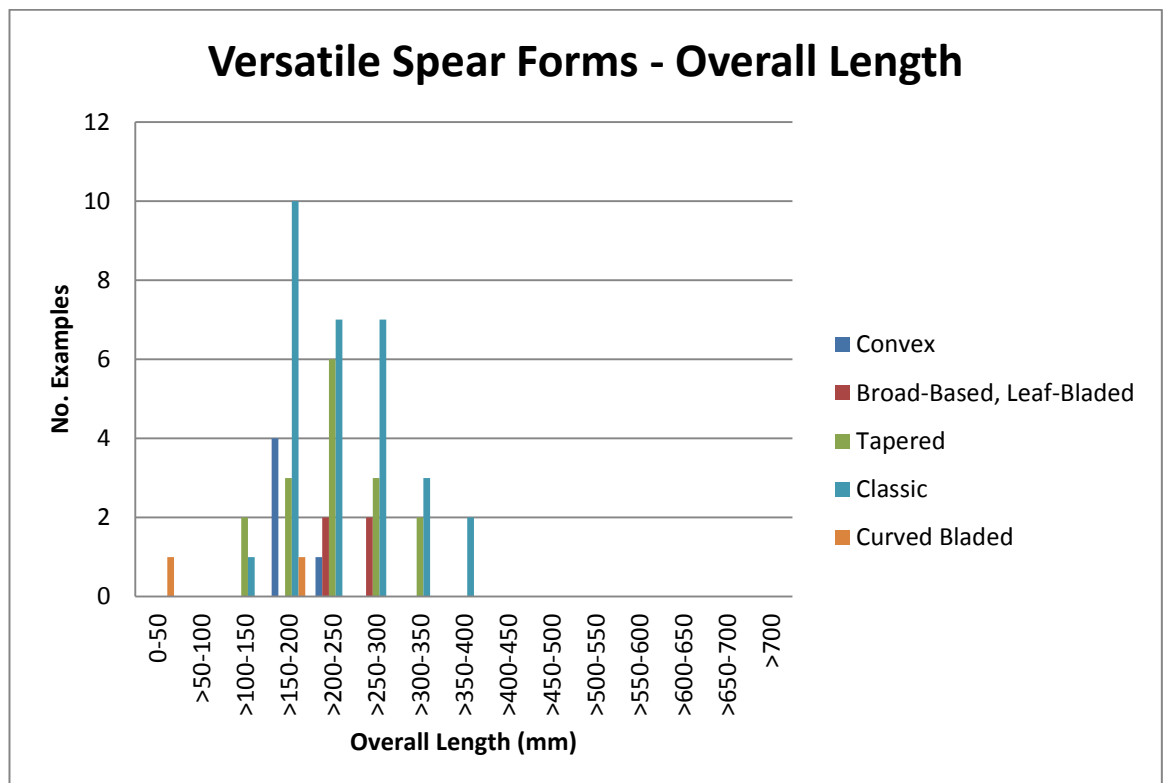


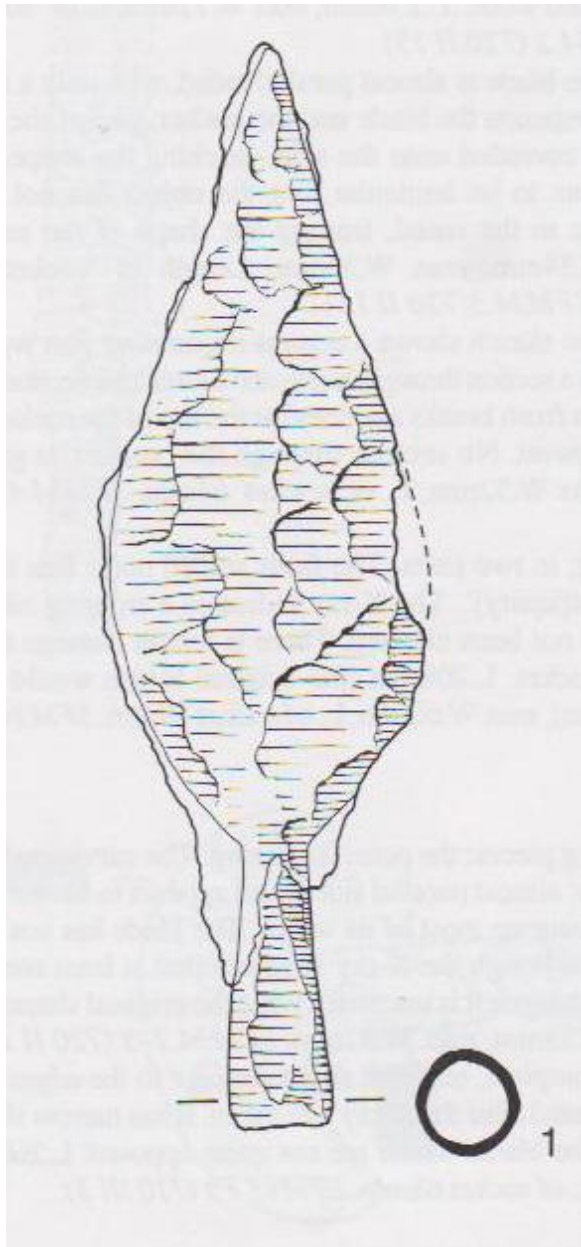
Figure 4.42: Overall length of versatile spearheads.

Type 3.1 Convex

Type definition: socketed iron spearhead with a broad, convex blade profile. The blade is broadest close to, but generally below the mid-blade.

Examples range in length between 173mm (Kells Crannog, ID 129) and 208mm for an example from Orsett 'Cock' (ID 110), which is missing the tip of the blade.

Three British spearheads in the database can be allocated to this type, all from a first century AD cache recovered from a settlement ditch at Orsett 'Cock', Essex (Figures 4.43 and 4.44). A further two spearheads from Kells Crannog in Ireland also feature a morphological profile consistent with this type, demonstrating that the type has a broader distribution than a single site. The type thus appears very uncommon, though it is possible that further members will be identified in future. Ultimately, convex spearheads of this form may be a local development as no clear Continental parallels have been noted, although the possibility that its development is related to Type 2.6 broad convex thrusting spearheads should be considered.



Orsett 'Cock' Spear 1 (ID 106) (Carter, 1998)

Figure 4.43: Type 3.1 convex spearhead form.



Kells Crannog spearhead (NMW 21.472/1/a) (ID 128)

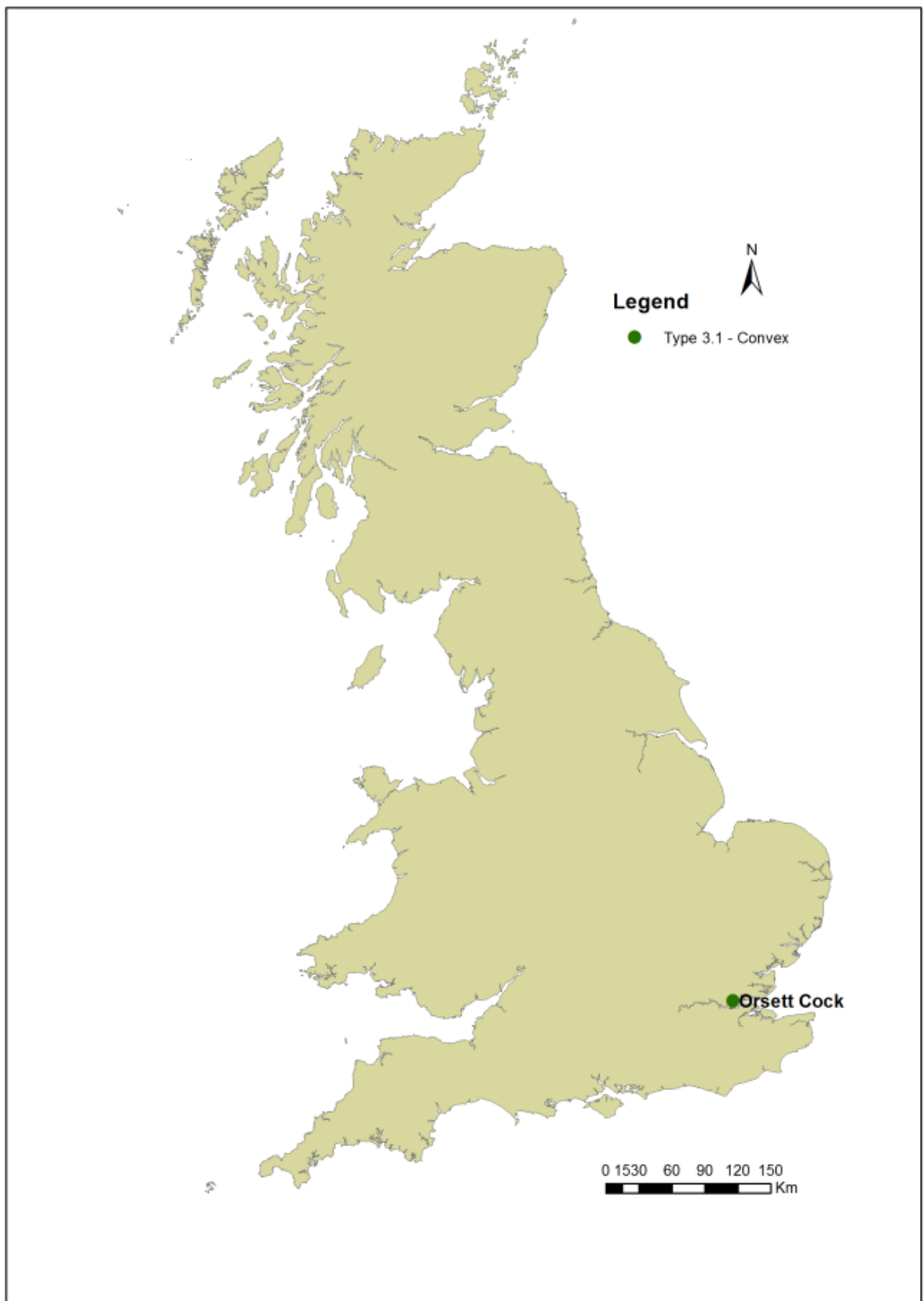


Figure 4.44: Distribution of Type 3.1 convex spearheads in Britain.

Type 3.2 Broad-based leaf-shaped

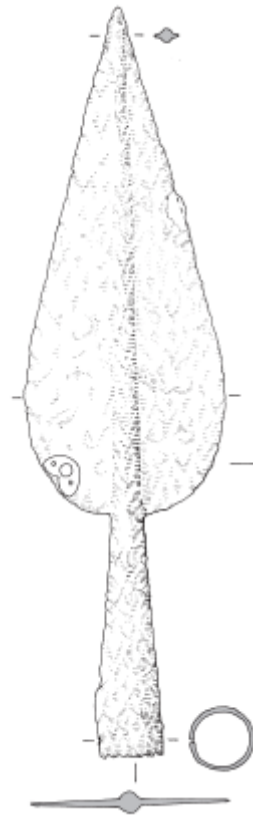
Type definition: socketed iron spearhead with a broad, leaf-shaped blade, which is broadest at the base of the blade. The blade has rounded shoulders and prominent midribs, visible on both sides of the blade (Figure 4.45).

This is a small but important group of iron spearheads, with a seemingly limited distribution (Figure 4.47). The form is very similar to Type 3.1 convex spearheads, and two of the four examples (IDs 107 and 112) also come from Orsett ‘Cock’, one from the same cache as the three Type 3.1 spearheads, the other from the fill of another, nearby ditch. The example from the Thames (ID 37, Figure 4.45 left) bears ornate copper alloy scrollwork applique and is very similar to the example from Orchard Hill (Figure 4.45, right), also in London. According to Fitzpatrick (forthcoming) the copper alloy applique may indicate that the spearhead served as a standard, rather than as a functional weapon. While this is certainly possible, the inclusion of the Orsett ‘Cock’ example in direct association with other spearheads implies that a martial function remains a viable interpretation.

Spearheads with similar blade profiles have been recorded from Gournay-sur-Aronde, Picardy (Figure 4.46, left) where Brunaux and Rapin (1988: 124, 132) classify them as members of their Type III spearhead. In their seriation of spearhead forms they place the type in the third century BC based on comparative examples from burial assemblages from Pecine, Karaburma and Krenovice in the former Yugoslavia, Sobice in the Czech Republic and Steimbichel in Bavaria. Similarly, Ramsel (2002: 81-83) noted an example from burial 975 at the Iron Age necropolis at Pottenbrunn, Austria (Figure 4.46, right), dated between the fourth and late third centuries BC. However, none of these examples feature applique copper alloy decoration such as that so famously prominent on the Thames, and now also the Orchard Hill, examples. Fitzpatrick (forthcoming), has suggested that the copper alloy decoration may be an insular feature, although there is an applique-decorated spearhead recorded from Mannersdorf, Austria (Ramsel, 2011: 157, 192-155, Abb. 126-157, 162-154, Taf. 153). More common on the Continent is incised decoration. Such decoration has been noted from a number of Continental sites and across a range of spearhead forms (Brunaux & Rapin, 1988, Szabó & Petres, 1992, Ramsel, 2011).

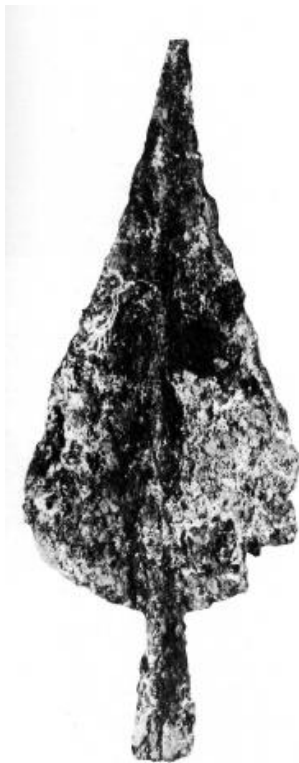


Type 3.2 spearhead from the Thames (BM 1938,0504.1), Database ID 37

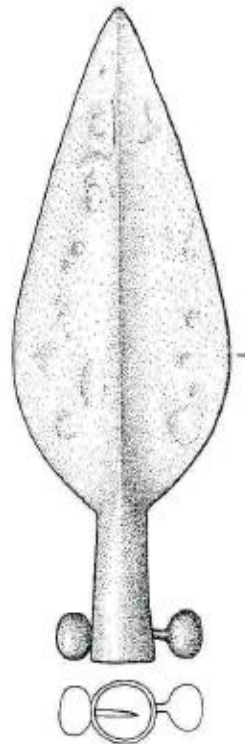


Type 3.2 spearhead from Orchard Hills ON132 [3998], Database ID 430 (Fitzpatrick, forthcoming)

Figure 4.45: Type 3.2 broad-based leaf-shaped spearheads.



Gournay-sur-Aronde, France No. 3524 (Brunaux & Rapin, 1988: 113)



Pottenbrunn, Austria burial 975, (Ramsl, 2002: Taf.76)

Figure 4.46: Continental comparanda for Type 3.2 Broad-based leaf-shaped spearheads.



Figure 4.47: Distribution of Type 3.2 broad-based leaf-shaped spearheads.

Type 3.3 Tapered

Type definition: socketed iron spearhead, with angular shoulders and a blade which tapers directly to a point. The blade profile does not feature any leaf-shaped curvature. The type can be divided into two sub-types, as follows:

- Type 3.3.a – Evenly tapered
- Type 3.3.b – Sharply tapered

Sixteen spearheads with tapering blades are included in the database from three sites (Figures 4.48 and 4.49). Six of these (IDs 170, 173, 174, 186, 188 and 190) were recovered from the ‘massacre’ deposit in the south-western gateway at Cadbury Castle, Somerset (Barrett *et al.*, 2000). Nine examples (IDs 289, 299, 310, 311, 334, 335, 338 and 345) were recorded from Hod Hill, Dorset (Manning, 1985). An example (ID 444) was also noted amongst the ‘massacre’ deposit at Spettisbury, Dorset (Gresham, 1939). It is possible that the type is specific to the hillfort dominated zone, although other examples may come to be identified from other sites.

Only three of the spearheads in this type were complete, with most examples missing their tips or having incomplete sockets. The evenly tapered Type 3.3.a examples are generally longer than the Type 3.3.b spearheads with average extant lengths of 240mm and 181mm respectively. Six spearheads in this type (IDs 289, 299, 338, 345, 376 and 444) from Hod Hill and Spettisbury, featured identifiable midribs.



Type 3.3 a from Hod Hill BM 1892,0901.1017 (ID 310)
Figure 4.48: Type 3.3 tapered spearheads.



Type 3.3.b from Hod Hill BM 1892,0901.1039 (ID 345)



Figure 4.49: Distribution of Type 3.3 tapered spearheads.

Type 3.4 Classic

Type definition: socketed iron spearhead with a leaf-shaped blade profile and rounded shoulders. The blade is widest at the bottom third of the blade.

The most numerous and broadly distributed of the versatile spearhead forms Type 3.4 exhibits a leaf-shaped blade profile (Figures 4.50 and 4.51). The type appears at sites across Britain from Spettisbury, Dorset in the south to Traprain Law in Scotland and from Llyn Cerrig Bach, Anglesey to the Playgolf site in Colchester.

Spearheads of this form are widely recorded across Europe throughout the Iron Age and can be correlated with Brunaux and Rapin's (1988: 132-133) *formes classiques*, which they see as continuing throughout the entire seriation of their typology from the late fourth to the early first centuries BC. Within their seriation they observe some shorter-lived variant sub-types. The examples in the database display significant variation in overall length, with complete examples ranging between 130mm (ID 94 from Bredon Hill, Gloucestershire) and 381mm (ID 121 from Llyn Cerrig Bach, Anglesey). Brunaux and Rapin noted similar variation in overall length, ranging from approximately 100mm to over 400mm in total length. Two members of this general type were recorded by Ramsel (2011: 156-158) from Mannersdorf, Austria, where he also identifies the type as a common Iron Age form. All of the Continental examples noted above feature easily discernible midribs, and this is described by Brunaux and Rapin as one of the significant features of the type. By contrast not all of the British examples feature prominent midribs.

Positive identification of midribs appearing on both sides of the blade could be made for 16 of the 30 examples in the database. A further two examples (IDs 126 and 307) had a midrib which could only be discerned on one side of the blade and three examples (IDs 159, 423 and 426) where there was a thickening of the blade section, suggestive of a midrib, although one could not be observed with any certainty. Those examples which did not include any indication of a midrib come from the South Cave Weapons Cache and Wetwang, East Yorkshire (IDs 32 and 120), Dragonby, Lincolnshire (IDs 155 and 160), Cadbury Castle, Somerset (ID 166), Spettisbury (ID 274), Hod Hill, Dorset (IDs 300 and 301) and Traprain Law, East Lothian (ID 409).



Garton BM 1985,0305.30 (Database ID 58)

Figure 4.50: Type 3.4 classic spearheads.



Llyn Cerrig Bach NMW 44.32/13 (Database ID 121)

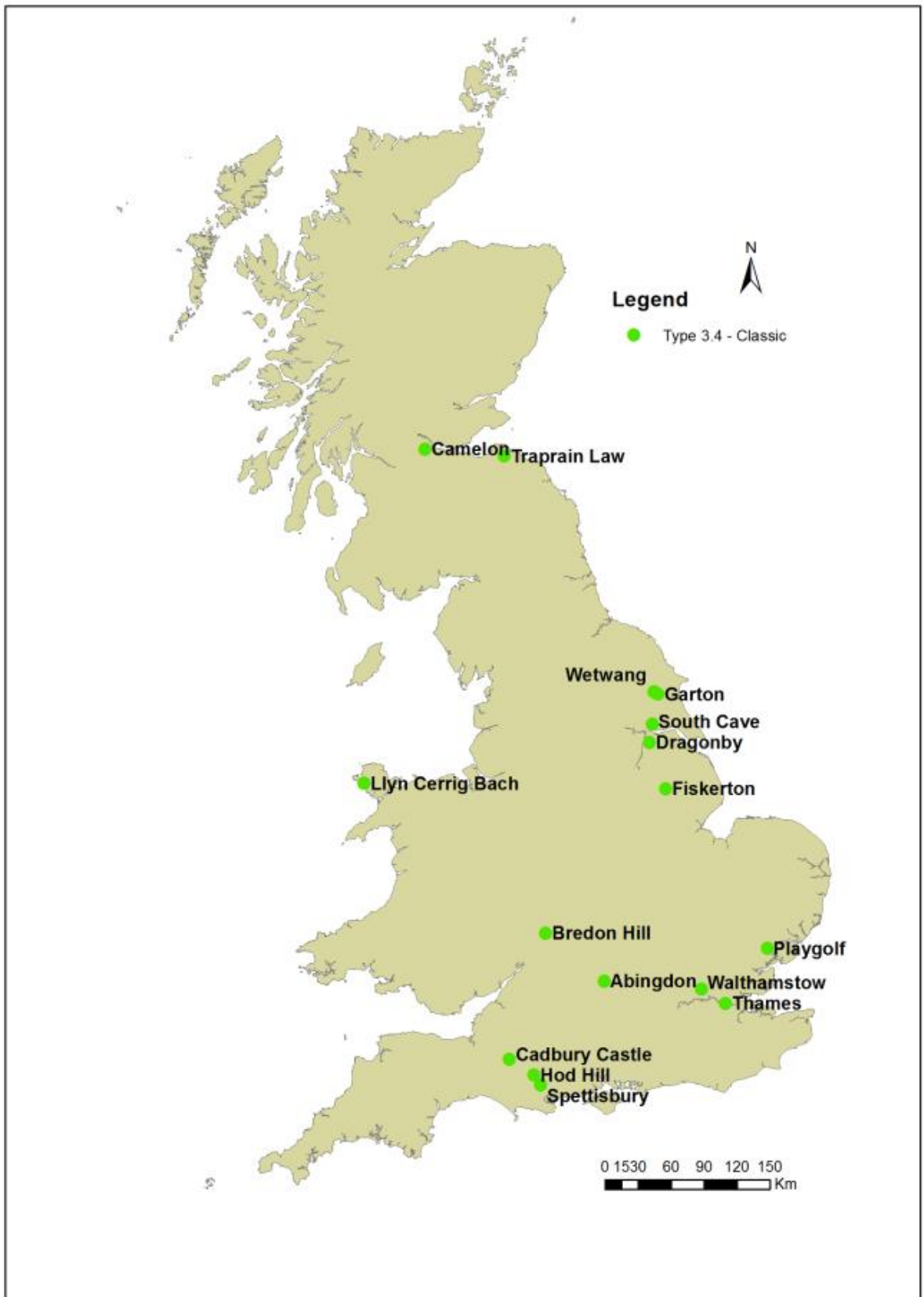


Figure 4.51: Distribution of Type 3.4 classic spearheads.

Type 3.5 Curved-bladed

Type definition: socketed iron spearhead with curved blade profile. The type can be divided into two discrete sub-types:

- Type 3.5.a – Curved blade tip
- Type 3.5.b – Curved blade edges

Three spearheads in the database (IDs 77, 87 and 93) exhibited curved blade profiles (Figures 4.52 and 4.53). Two Type 3.5.a examples come from burials at Rudston, East Yorkshire and exhibit similar profiles, while an example from Bredon Hill, Worcestershire, allocated to Type 3.5.b, featured an undulating blade profile, which has Continental parallels.

The two Type 3.5.a examples from Rudston appear to be unique to this site, although it is possible that other examples with this feature will be identified from other sites in future. By contrast, the Type 3.5.b example from Bredon Hill falls into a much broader Continental tradition of spearheads with undulating blade forms. Curved-bladed spearheads are known from La Tène (De Navarro, 1972, Farley, 2009). A similarly undulating bladed spearhead was recovered from Gournay-Sur-Aronde, Picardy, and Brunaux and Rapin (1988: 122-123) noted examples from Ainsi, near Nîmes and Introbio in Northern Italy.



Type 3.3. a from Rudston: BM 1976,0504.19 (ID 77)



Type 3.3.b from Bredon Hill (ID 93) (Hencken, 1939)



Rudston BM 1976,0504.18 (Database ID 87)

Figure 4.52: Type 3.5 curved-bladed spearheads.



Figure 4.53: Distribution of Type 3.5 curved-bladed spearheads.

Miscellaneous versatile spearhead forms

Two spearheads in the database (IDs 265 and 403, Figure 4.54 left and centre) fit within the functional grouping of versatile spearhead forms, but do not correlate with any of the types defined above. A third spearhead, from Hod Hill (ID 312, Figure 4.54, right) fits the general type description for Swanton's Type H1 Saxon spearhead. However, despite this, the provenance reveals that this spearhead form was known in Britain during the Iron Age. Swanton's interpretation of the type as a Saxon form is thus called into question.

Spearhead ID 265, from the Thames, features a narrow, leaf-shaped blade profile with a very sharp, fine point and a possible midrib which is indicated only around the mid-blade.

Spearhead 403 from Castlehill at Dalry is very similar in form to the sharply tapered Type 3.3.b; however, its very broad blade base of 36mm and comparatively short blade of 110mm makes it an outlier which does not sit comfortably with other members of the type.



Thames BM 1859,0122.9a
(Database ID 265)



Castlehill at Dalry NMS 340 (Database ID
403)



Hod Hill BM 1892,0901.1019
(Database ID 312)

Figure 4.54: Miscellaneous versatile spearhead forms.

4.3 Discussion

The typology presented in this chapter offers a broad assessment of the spearhead forms observed from a greater number of Iron Age sites, and a larger sample size than any previous study of British Iron Age spearheads. As outlined in Chapter 3, the morphological, taxonomic approach to this class of material taken in the construction of this typology follows ‘best practice’ for the study of projectile weaponry. This method has allowed for the easy identification of the functional classifications of throwing spears, those designed for the delivery of thrusting or slashing blows, as well as versatile forms which could be used to execute both thrusting and throwing manoeuvres. The new typology presented here demonstrates that a broad range of forms existed, within each of the three functional categories, and that most of these were in use throughout the Iron Age. Further, the typology facilitates the study of both the geographic and chronological distribution of spearhead forms, provides a basis for a range of contextual analyses (Chapters 5, 6 and 7), and opens the way for future research.

4.3.1 Geographic distribution

From the data collected it is possible to see some geographic patterning, but the limitations of the data must be borne in mind. It is clear that Type 1.1 diamond-bladed and Type 1.8 bone throwing spearheads have the broadest distribution across Iron Age Britain. Similarly, the Type 3.4 classic spearhead form was widely distributed, and appears to form part of a broader pan-European tradition. Continental connections are also revealed through the distribution of the thrusting/slashing Type 2.3 bayonet and Type 2.6 broad convex forms, Type 3.2 broad-based spearheads, and possibly the rare examples of Type 3.5 curved-bladed spearheads.

Other spearhead forms have more limited distributions, such as the Type 3.3 tapered spearheads, which appear to be restricted to the hillfort dominated zone. However, it is entirely possible that this is an artefact of data collection, and that future research will reveal a broader distribution. Type 1.3 small, triangular-bladed spearheads have been recovered predominately from sites in the hillfort dominated zone, although a small number of examples have also been recovered from Garton Station, East Yorkshire and Dragonby, Lincolnshire.

Midribs, a prominent feature of Continental spearhead forms, appear with greater frequency on the spearheads of southern Britain. In contrast, insular tradition featured a distinct bias against the inclusion of midribs on many throwing spearheads. This may be indicative of their intended function, with little perceived need for the blades to withstand the stresses of thrusting blows. Those sites where midribs on throwing spears were most common, Hod Hill, Dorset and Dragonby, Lincolnshire, were also sites which had clear Roman connections and it is possible that this preference may be associated with the Roman presence in the region. Ultimately, the interplay between Roman and native spearhead forms seems to be more complex than either of Manning's two typologies would indicate (Manning, 1976, 1985).

4.3.2 Chronology

One of the core functions of many typologies has been chronological seriation. However, as discussed above, previous experience looking at South Italian material indicates that spearhead forms are very long-lived (Inall, 2009). This means that seriation is extremely difficult and it is not generally possible to date spearheads based purely on their form. Where spearheads are from unsecure contexts they are extremely difficult to place chronologically. The issue is further complicated by the general chronological complexities of the British Iron Age.

The typology clearly shows that several previous assumptions about the chronology of some spearhead forms are incorrect. In particular, the identification of some spearheads as belonging to the Anglo-Saxon period is called into question. For example, Swanton's (1974: 5) argument for the introduction of his Series A, barbed spearhead forms, to Britain in the later third century AD is clearly erroneous. Swanton's (1974: 14) statement that the chronology for his type E3 (equivalent to Type 2.1 long, angular in the current study) should be seen as the culmination of a development that ran through the courses of the sixth and seventh centuries AD is also called into question. Of particular note, the Anglo-Saxon interpretation of the undated examples of his E3 form recovered from the upper Thames, should be seriously reconsidered. However, his observation that this form appears to be concentrated in regions rich in iron resources would seem to be valid (Swanton, 1974: 14).

There appear to have been changes in the contexts that were deemed appropriate for the deposition of certain spearhead types. These patterns in deposition will be considered

more closely in Chapters 5 and 6 and 7, which examine the Iron Age contexts in which spearheads have been found.

4.4 Guidelines for practical application

A typology is a tool and tools must have utility. While considerations of purpose must be held in mind throughout the process of type formation, the ‘end-user’ must also be considered. If the typology lacks utility it will go unused and will be of no benefit. To assist in the application of the typology this section offers some brief notes on usage.

As a hierarchical type system, the user can apply the typology in greater or lesser detail, as required. Visual comparison with the type ideals presented, aided by the type definitions, should enable the user to assign spearheads to a type. However, as discussed in Chapter 2, there is a subjective component to type allocation. When there is disagreement or uncertainty, the user should use the hierarchical approach to identify which of the three functional groupings a spearhead belongs to.

Some metric guidance may be helpful, although, there is noticeable overlap in length and blade length between the three functional groupings (Figure 4.1). If the spearhead features a small blade, less than 100mm in length, it will almost certainly belong to Function Group 1 – throwing. Similarly, if the spearhead presents a blade in excess of 300mm length, it will be readily identifiable as a Group 2 thrusting spearhead form. Thus, Group 2 thrusting spearheads are the most easily identifiable functional group, although a small number of examples had blade lengths shorter than 300mm.

By nature of their versatile function, Group 3 are not as easy to differentiate. Examples range in blade length from *c.*90mm to 280mm. However, the overall length of versatile spearheads is generally longer than throwing forms (with the exception of Type 1.6 ‘Celtic *pila*’ and 1.7 hybrid forms). The average overall length for throwing spearhead forms (excluding Types 1.6 and 1.7) is 112mm, while the average length for versatile spearhead forms is 230mm.

If it is not possible to refine the allocation beyond the Function Group level, this should be adequate for some purposes, and the user should not feel compelled to force spearheads into types which do not seem to match. If a spearhead clearly does not match any of the existing types, it may be a form which has not previously been observed, and therefore, not accounted for in the typology. To address this issue the typology is

designed as an open system, which can accommodate the introduction of new types. If a new type is identified, it can be added to any of the three Function Groups by simply allocating a new designation (e.g. Type 1.9 for a newly identified throwing form). This functionality allows for the typology to develop and evolve as new data become available.

Should it prove possible to allocate a spearhead to a general type with confidence but there is uncertainty about whether it fits best with one or another of the sub-types (e.g.: it is unclear whether a spearhead belongs to Type 1.1.a.1 or Type 1.1.a.2), the user should not feel pressured to force an allocation. In such an instance it should be sufficient to say, for example that the spearhead is Type 1.1.a, without offering a position on whether the spearhead should be allocated to either of the finer sub-types. Similarly, if it is apparent, for example, that a spearhead should be allocated to Type 1.1 diamond-bladed, but it is unclear whether the spearhead has an elongated blade the user should conclude their allocation at that level. The user should advise in reports and publications that it was not possible to refine the allocation to Type 1.1.a or Type 1.1.b.

It is anticipated that the flexibility offered by this type system should allow for tentative type allocations and the construction of new types.

5 Depositional Practices

5.1 Introduction

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 have culminated in the presentation of a new typology of spearheads for the British Iron Age. The typology is a tool which can aid the archaeologist in exploring a range of questions about function and distribution. Functional considerations include use in warfare, as spearheads are weapons, however, non-martial functions should also be considered. Spearheads did not exist in a cultural vacuum, and it is likely that they had a role to play in the construction of individual and group identities, and that they may have held a place in the cosmology of Iron Age communities. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 seek to place spearheads into their broader Iron Age setting, considering the contexts in which spearheads have been found. The current chapter explores depositional practices across a number of Iron Age sites (Figures 5.1-5.3), with a particular focus on deposits which included spearheads.

5.2 *Objects in space: identification of structured deposits*

The majority of the Iron Age weapons found in Britain have been specifically placed in certain locations, at particular times, for particular reasons (addressed in section 5.3, below). Consequently, what we find is not necessarily representative of the entire range of objects that were in use. These items were deliberately removed from circulation and are imbued with meaning. A large proportion of spearhead finds have come from burial contexts, interred with the deceased as funerary accoutrements, and these will be discussed in Chapter 7. However, not all weapons come from explicitly mortuary contexts. As shown in Figure 5.1 a significant proportion of spearheads had been deliberately deposited in dry or wetland contexts which were not of a funerary nature. Swords appear in a similarly diverse range of contexts (Hingley, 2006, Stead, 2006). The South Cave Weapons Cache (SCWC), East Yorkshire forms such an example. Initial interpretations of the SCWC implied that these weapons may have been concealed on the eve of the Roman occupation of the Humber region, presumably as a direct response to the *Lex Julia de vi publica*, which forbade civilians from carrying weapons (Evans, 2003, Halkon, 2013: 117-118). However, other interpretations are possible, compelling a deeper exploration of the underlying motivations and the role of agency in the deposition of weapons in archaeologically visible contexts. Groups or individuals deposited objects in ways which may have observed a range of culturally learned or accepted conventions. These would have dictated the appropriate manner in which

relationships or contracts might be negotiated with living beings or supernatural entities. The extent to which such conventions might be reinforced or subverted through acts of individual agency is open to interpretation.

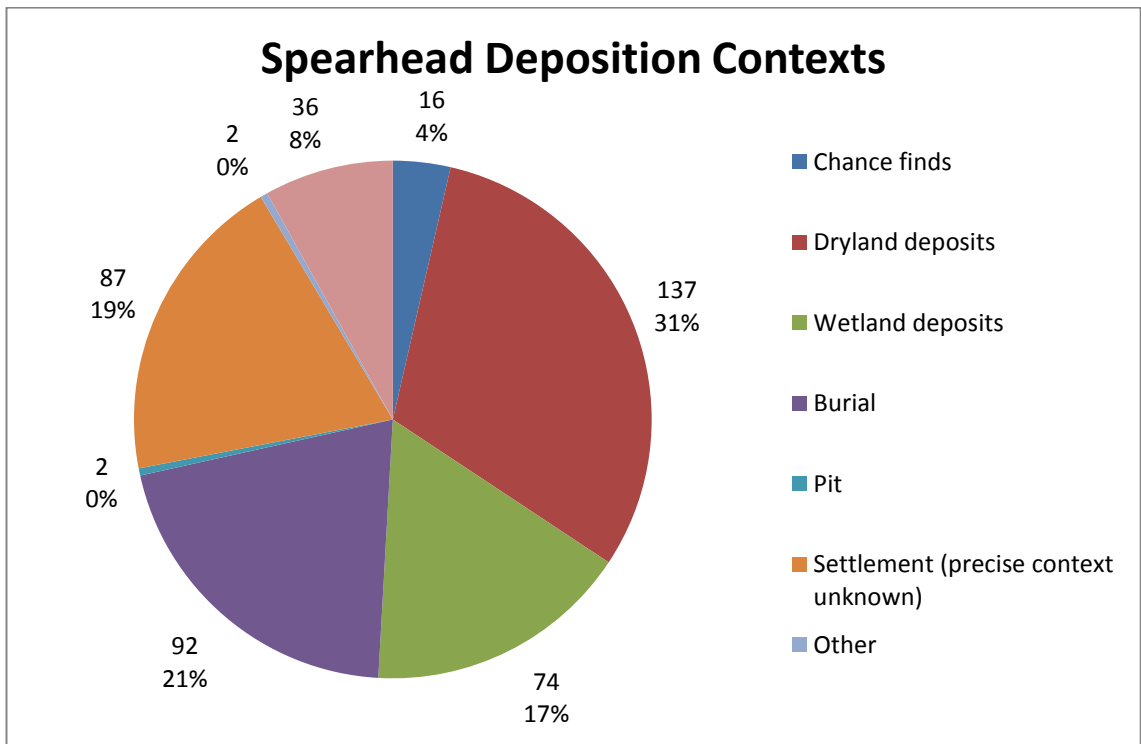


Figure 5.1: Contexts in which spearheads included in the database were found.

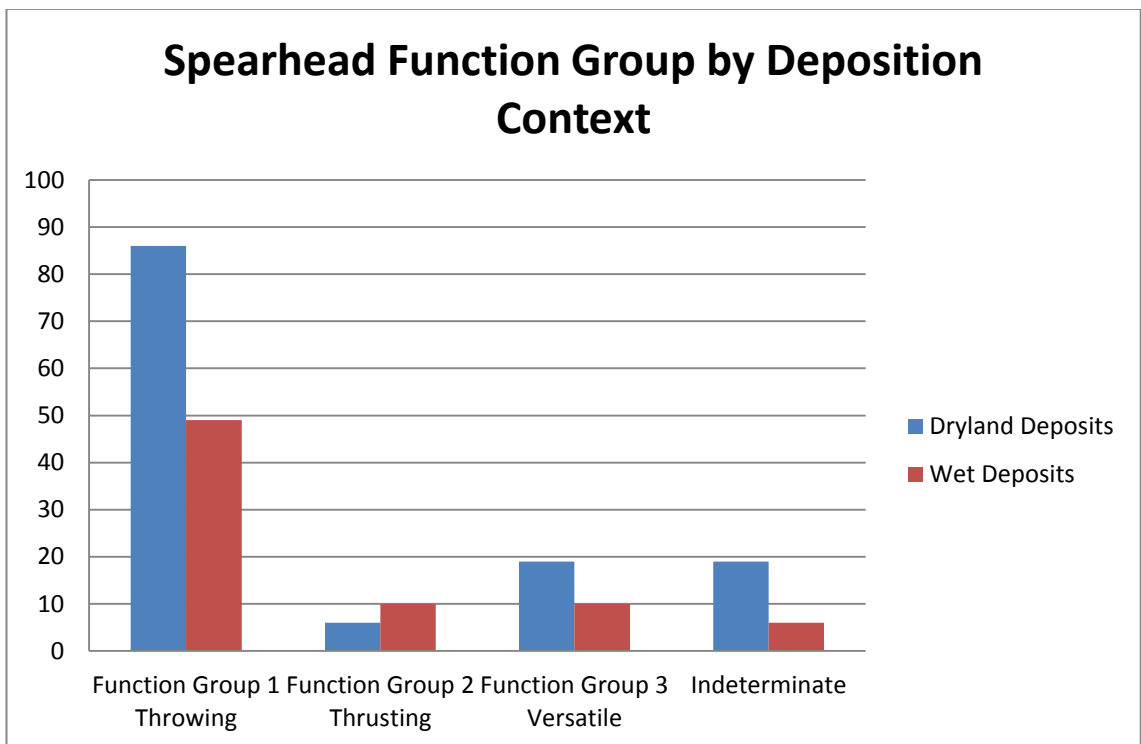


Figure 5.2: Breakdown of spearheads by functional grouping and deposition context for spearheads in the database.

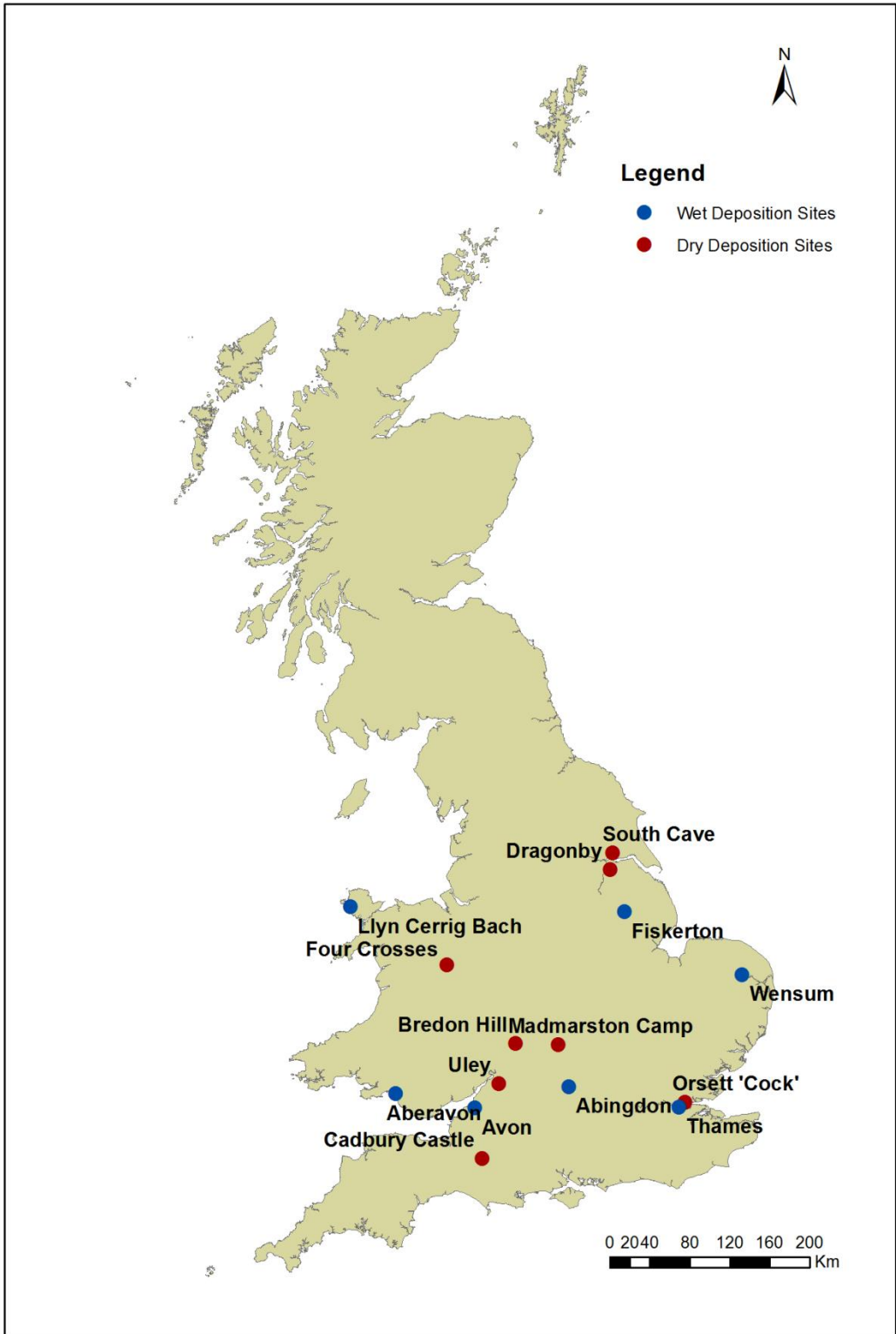


Figure 5.3: Wetland and dry-land deposition sites discussed in this chapter.

The interpretation and definition of ‘structured deposition’ has been a matter of considerable debate (Hill, 1995b). Structured deposits are a specific object, or discrete groups of objects, gathered together at a particular time, and deliberately placed, in a structured manner, into a specific context, thereby removing them from general circulation (Bradley, 1998: 6-20). There are underlying conventions and decision-making processes, which determine what classes of objects are selected, or deemed appropriate, for deposition. Within the archaeological record it is the observed ‘structured manner’ which differentiates these deposits from chance loss and refuse (Manning, 1972: 238-239, Bradley, 1982: 108-109, Hill, 1995b, Osborne, 2004: 1). Finds of collections of metalwork, found in a single context (be they weapons like the SCWC, ornaments, currency bars, coins such as the Hallaton Hoards, or groups of mixed objects) have frequently been interpreted as utilitarian: termed ‘hoards’ and presumed to have been buried by metalworkers, traders or individuals concealing valuables in moments of crisis (Manning, 1972, Bradley, 1998, Hingley, 2006). Common to all of these interpretations was the belief that these objects had been deposited with intent to recover them. However, it is not clear that utilitarian motives underlay all deposits identified as ‘hoards’. Hingley (2006) has drawn attention to a number of depositions of ironwork in Britain during the late pre-Roman and Roman Iron Age, many previously described as hoards. He argues that the sheer volume of this material, along with repeated patterns in the artefact classes chosen for deposition, and the contextual associations of such deposits with settlement boundaries (like the SCWC), call into question these utilitarian interpretations, and indicate ritual or votive practice. Larsson (2007: 87-88), examining Neolithic practices in Sweden, has argued that repeated deposits of objects, concentrated in tightly delimited areas, over extended periods of time suggests cosmological expression at sites which were ritually significant.

Western European and British scholars in particular have long shied away from considering votive or ritual interpretations, which are not in accordance with modern concepts of practicality (Bradley, 1982: 109-113, 1998: 11-17, Brück, 1999, Hingley, 2006: 213-215). Richard Bradley first highlighted the need for greater consideration of ritual interpretations in his watershed volume *The Passage of Arms*, published in 1990, with a second edition published in 1998. His work focussed on deposits of weapons in particular. The recognition of distinct patterns in deposition has been the key to

identifying past ritual practices, rather than random events reflecting chance loss or moments of individual crisis (Bradley, 1982, 1998, Fulford, 2001, Osborne, 2004, Hingley, 2006, Haselgrove & Hingley, 2006, Fogelin, 2007). The discovery of more than 1,000 offensive weapons (with spearheads the most numerous class of object) deposited at the site of La Tène in Switzerland has been formative for our understanding of ritually deposited weapons in prehistoric Europe (De Navarro, 1972, Farley, 2009). While non-ritual interpretations were initially proffered for the site, the overwhelming quantity of material (more than 4,000 objects in total), deposited over an extended period of time, led to the gradual acceptance that the weapons, ornaments and skeletal material (both animal and human), had been deposited for votive or ritual purposes (Bradley, 1998: 156-170). This led to a broader acceptance that depositions in watery locations throughout the European Bronze Age and Iron Age had underlying ritual motivations. For Bradley, the ritual motivation was clear from the perceived difficulty in retrieving objects from watery contexts (Bradley, 1998: Chapter 1) and this justification has been picked up by others (e.g. Hunter & Ralston, 1999: 107, Aldhouse Green, 2002: 24, Yates & Bradley, 2010).

Much of *The Passage of Arms* focuses on the issue of deposition in watery locations. However, Bradley comments in his preface to the second edition that, on re-reading the work, he wished he had paid greater attention to dry-land depositions, in accordance with ideas he had previously begun to develop in an article published in *Man* (Bradley, 1998: i-xxxii, 1982). Indeed, deposits found in dry-land contexts have continued to be viewed primarily as non-ritual in purpose, leading to Hingley's (2006) argument that the sheer quantity of material, deposited in contexts not conducive to iron preservation, calls for a re-evaluation of underlying motivations. Fischer (2011) conducted an analysis of Late Bronze Age deposits in the vicinity of Swiss pile dwellings, and observed that there were complex interrelationships between dry-land, littoral and watery deposits. Further, depositional practices were "codified in a similar way" across all three contexts (Fischer, 2011: 1310). More nuanced approaches to depositional practices for the British Iron Age, could also reveal complex associations between finds from dry-land and watery contexts.

The distinction between wet and dry contexts is not as clear-cut as it initially seems. Diachronic changes in landscape may obscure the original context, inundating deposits which were originally dry, leading them to become submerged, or leaving 'wet'

deposits high-and-dry. Larsson (1998: 74-77, 2003) has drawn attention to the need to consider the impact of environmental and climate change, not only on the contexts in which artefacts were deposited, but also the impact such changes had on past societies, particularly cosmological impacts. The landscape of the Humber region underwent significant changes during the Iron Age and Roman periods, with the Humber estuary and its tributaries experiencing episodes of marine transgression and regression (Shennan & Andrews, 2000, Halkon, 2008, 2011).

Modern changes to the landscape must also be taken into account. The introduction of mechanised agriculture and modern drainage projects has caused the drying out of many contexts which had previously formed wetland environments (Van de Noort, 1998, Pryor, 2001a). Seasonal and periodically wet places must also be considered. Settlement ditches, which were frequently a focus for structured depositions, may have periodically held water (Hingley, 2006: 238). Further, some environments which were seasonally wet appear to have been a focus for depositional practices only during the wet season (Larsson, 2007: 82). During excavation, special attention must be paid to taphonomy as well as changes in soil, or residues adhering to objects, which may indicate they had originally been placed in a wet environment (Larsson, 2007).

The following section presents the evidence from a number of major British Iron Age sites in which spearheads have formed a significant component of the objects deposited. The inference will be discussed in section 5.3.

5.2.1 Wetland deposition practices in Britain

Several prominent Iron Age wetland deposition sites have been identified in Britain, which included finds of spearheads, and thus are directly relevant to the current study. Depositions at each site included a range of objects, and the classes of object appropriate for deposition changed over time. The following section offers an overview of several key Iron Age wetland deposits from which weapons have been recovered.

5.2.1.a Fiskerton Causeway, Lincolnshire

Fiskerton, located at a narrowing of the River Witham, east of modern day Lincoln, has yielded significant wetland depositions dated to the Iron Age. Dredging and drainage activities, commenced from the late eighteenth century AD, have led to the discovery of numerous finds of metalwork, animal bone, and the discovery of a timber causeway structure in 1978 (Field & Parker Pearson, 2003: 1). Excavation of the causeway

structure was conducted during the 1980s, and subsequent analysis revealed the causeway dated to mid-first millennium BC, with evidence of on-going construction and maintenance from c.456 to 321 Cal BC (Field & Parker Pearson, 2003: 36). The causeway appears to have been a focus for depositional practices throughout the Middle Iron Age and into the Romano-British period, with evidence for two earlier causeways, dated to the Bronze Age and Early Iron Age, approximately 400m and 500m upstream respectively, at Washingborough (Field & Parker Pearson, 2003: 159-166). Other material recovered in the vicinity can be dated to the Neolithic and Bronze Age, demonstrating the continued use of the location for acts of deposition over an extended period of time. Weapons appear to have formed part of the votive tradition throughout the long duration of focus on this section of the river (Field & Parker Pearson, 2003: 150-158). During the Neolithic, a number of stone axes were deposited at Fiskerton. The axe was noted by Bradley as a class of artefact appropriate for votive deposition during this period (Bradley, 1998: 70-71, Field & Parker Pearson, 2003: 150), recorded at sites such as the Sweet Track in Somerset, where an exotic jadeite axe was recovered (Coles & Coles, 1986, Bond, 2004). Axes continued to form part of the depositional vocabulary during the Bronze Age, but the weapons repertoire broadened, with the introduction of new technologies, to include swords, daggers and spearheads. By the Iron Age, however, daggers were no longer being deposited and shields came to be included in the range of objects appropriate for deposition (Field & Parker Pearson, 2003: 149-158).

The 1981 excavation of the Iron Age causeway yielded six iron swords (one with coral decoration similar to that noted on one of the SCWC swords), 11 iron spearheads, and 55 bone spearheads. Other classes of object included metalworking and woodworking tools (Field & Parker Pearson, 2003: 49-72). The weapons, though often poorly preserved, show no indications that they had been subjected to any kind of deliberate damage prior to their deposition in the river. The sword scabbards exhibit La Tène decoration, which places the Iron Age deposits to the late fourth and third centuries BC, broadly contemporary with the Arras Culture cemetery at Rudston and overlapping with the Wetwang cemetery (Stead, 1991a: 169-170, Field & Parker Pearson, 2003: 173-174, Jay *et al.*, 2012), discussed in Chapter 7. The stratigraphy of the finds suggests that the weapons may have been deposited during a limited window of time, possibly a “single event” associated with the end of the use-life of the causeway (Field & Parker Pearson,

2003: 175). Given the carbon-dating for the maintenance of the causeway *c.*456-321 Cal BC, if the deposit is associated with the end of its use-life, a date around the last quarter of the fourth century BC is most likely.

It was possible to examine and collect data on 50 spearheads from Fiskerton, 41 of which were Type 1.8 bone points. Almost all of the bone points had been constructed of sheep tibiae. Accordingly, 35 points can be allocated to Shatte's Type II, which is consistent with finds of bone points from other sites in the database. Additional bone elements included two pig tibiae, one Roe deer metacarpal and a cattle radius. The points ranged between 62mm (an incomplete example) and 175mm total length with an average length of 140mm. The open ends of the points had been fashioned into sockets with either two or four rivet holes. The external socket diameter ranged from 10mm to 38mm, with an average of 20mm. The internal socket diameter averaged 12mm, consistent with the average internal socket diameter for all spearheads in the database. The possibility that bone points with smaller external socket diameters (less than 15mm) may have served as arrow or bolt heads should also be considered. It was possible to observe butchery marks on several of the bones, and three examples (IDs 220, 228 and 234) came from juvenile sheep. Very fine working marks were visible on the points, and Olsen's (2003) examination under magnification suggests that a range of metal tools were used in their manufacture, including chisels, files and drills. Rivet holes had been made using a drill, and many had counter-sunk exteriors.

The bone points were very highly polished, and are actually quite beautiful objects (Figure 5.4). Olsen (2003: 109) was unable to determine whether the polished effect was part of the original manufacturing process, or the result of use-wear. While, as discussed in Chapter 2, the function of bone points has been variously interpreted as weaving tools, gouges or spearheads, Olsen (2003: 109-111) suggested that the examples from Fiskerton functioned specifically as spearheads. The tips of all but eight bone points had been damaged, indicative of contact with a hard surface. Those examples which presented undamaged tips had an air of lethality about them (Figure 5.5). Indeed it was upon visual inspection of these examples, that the writer first became convinced of the martial function of these objects.



Figure 5.4: Fiskerton bone point No.445 (ID 241).

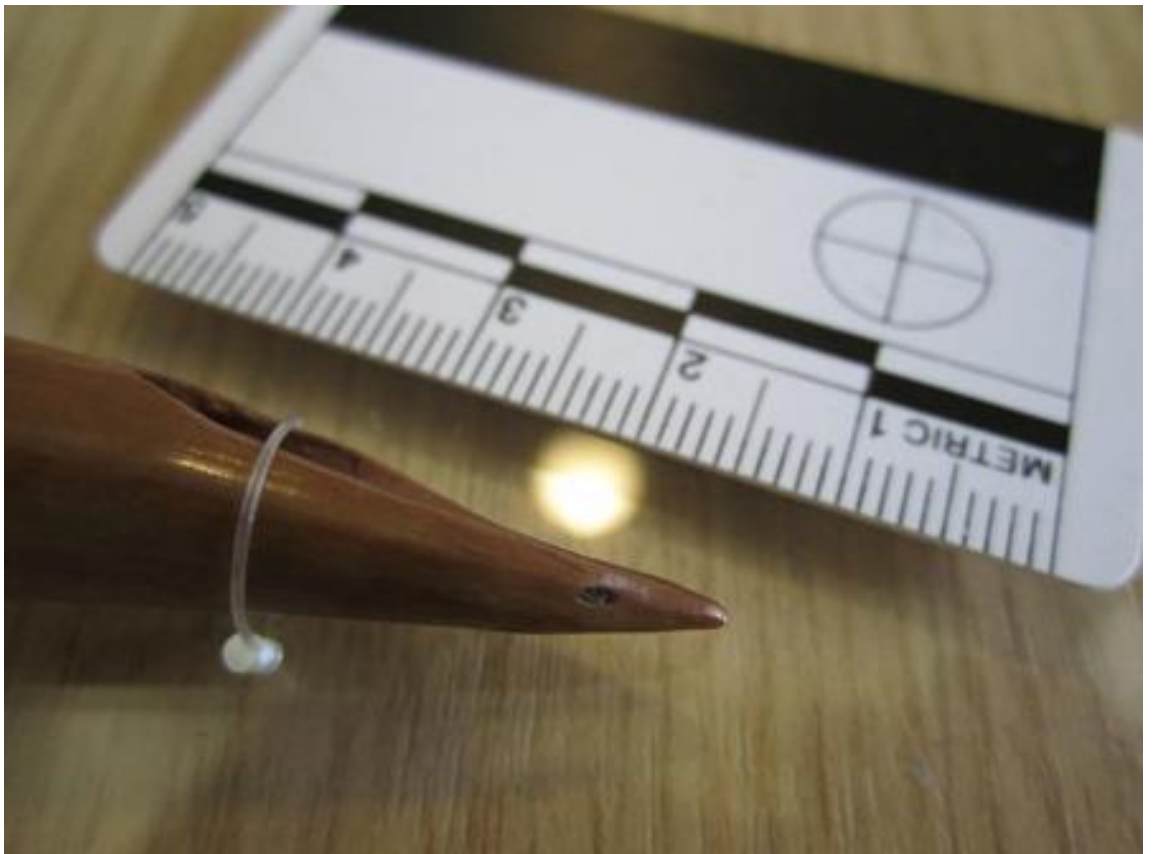


Figure 5.5: Fiskerton bone point 153, tip (ID 236).

Bone spearheads have also been deposited in wet contexts on the Continent, most famously at Hjortspring, Denmark (Kaul, 2003). Like Fiskerton, the bone points were found in direct association with iron spearheads – making clear their martial function (Schatte, 2013: 91). The Hjortspring find also appears to have been deposited in a single event, which featured three boats and numerous weapons including 169 spearheads, 11 swords, over 50 wooden shields, and at least 10 mail shirts (Kaul, 2003: 215-217). Thirty-one of the spearheads were constructed from either bone or antler, with sheep metatarsals the most common bone element, and Kaul (2003: 216) has commented on the observed sharpness of their tips. Some of the iron and bone spears from Hjortspring preserved their shafts, and wood from the shafts and the boat have been radiocarbon dated to c.400-260 Cal BC, broadly contemporary with the Fiskerton deposit (Kaul, 2003: 213). The Hjortspring find has been interpreted as a votive offering commemorating victory in battle, and the weapons deposited presumed to have been captured from defeated foes (Bradley, 1998, Kaul, 2003, Green, 2011, Schatte, 2013). While the finds from Hjortspring are geographically and culturally removed from Fiskerton, the possibility that the Fiskerton deposit relates to an episode of violent conflict should also be considered. Such an interpretation need not exclude a function as a closing deposit associated with the end of the use of the causeway. The deposit could have served multiple functions, in accordance with Needham's (2001) argument that we should allow greater flexibility in our interpretations of structured deposits.

Five of the iron spearheads from Fiskerton were too poorly preserved to allocate to a spearhead type. Each of the spearheads of indeterminate type was broadly consistent with throwing spearhead forms. One spearhead (ID 225), measuring 71mm, is an identifiable member of the small, leaf-bladed Type 1.2. Another spearhead (ID 251) is a member of the versatile Type 3.4 classic spearhead form, which measures 324mm long. Two iron spearheads (IDs 252 and 257) can be identified as members of Type 2.1 long, angular spearheads, one from each of the two sub-types, 2.1.a and 2.1.b. Neither of these thrusting spearheads is well preserved, recovered in multiple pieces (Figure 5.6). However, there is nothing to indicate that they had been subjected to deliberate damage prior to their deposition in the river. Both spearheads retained traces of wooden shafts in their sockets, both made of ash (*fraxinus* sp.).

The survival of wood in the sockets of only the iron spearheads led Field and Parker Pearson (2003: 176-177) to suggest that the bone spears had been dismantled prior to

deposition, while it appears, by contrast, that the shafts associated with the iron spearheads were broken. The position of the weapons, clustered close to the western side of the causeway, indicates that there was careful placement of the objects from the causeway itself (Field & Parker Pearson, 2003: 174). By contrast, the 2001 discovery of a complete spear at Fiskerton with a 330mm long Type 3.4 classic iron spearhead and an intact ash shaft, measuring 1.65m (Will Mumford, *pers. comm.*), indicates that some weapons may have been deposited, possibly even hurled, into the river as complete weapons (Figure 5.7). This suggests that there may have been strong performative aspects to the acts of deposition. Further, these differences highlight that the practice was not static and that the associated rituals performed may have been specific to the underlying purpose of the ritual, or may have changed over time.

While it was not possible to collect data on all of the spearheads from Fiskerton, it is clear that the majority of spearheads were consistent with throwing spearhead forms. The high concentration of bone spearheads at Fiskerton appears to be unusual for a river context. However, finds of bone spearheads are not unknown from other rivers in Britain, with examples recovered from the Thames and River Wensum, discussed below.



Figure 5.6: Fiskerton spearheads 154 and 268 (IDs 257 and 252).



Figure 5.7: Fiskerton spearhead and shaft under excavation in 2001 (photograph: Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd).

5.2.1.b Flag Fen Causeway, Peterborough

Flag Fen was also a timber causeway which was initially constructed during the thirteenth century BC, and maintained until the second half of the tenth century BC (Pryor, 2001a: 421). The causeway continued in use until the Romano-British period and, like Fiskerton, was a focus for votive depositions throughout the Bronze Age, Iron Age and Romano-British periods. Further, just as observed at Fiskerton, the depositional practices were not static, changing significantly throughout the use-life of the causeway. During the Bronze Age, weapons formed an important part of the votive vocabulary, with seven complete bronze swords, dirks and daggers, along with components belonging to several further examples, and six bronze spearheads all being deposited here. A smaller number of axes and knives were also recorded amongst the finds, all of which can be dated to the Middle and Late Bronze Ages (Pryor, 2001a: 255-265). Other deposits included personal ornaments, tools, ceramics and animal and human remains (Pryor, 2001a). However, by the Iron Age, weapons were rarely deposited, with only two iron sword hilts datable to the Iron Age noted in the finds recorded during the excavations of the 1980s and 1990s. One of the sword hilts bears comparison with the sword recovered from Grave R146 at Rudston, East Yorkshire (Pryor, 2001a: 292-295). It is unclear why weapons left the repertoire of depositional objects during the Iron Age.

Many of the objects deposited at Flag Fen appear to have been subjected to deliberate breakage prior to their deposition. The bronze spearheads, however, appear to have been deposited undamaged, although Pryor (2005: 153-154) suggests at least one was carefully hidden under a log that had been heavily damaged with an axe. The two iron sword-hilts appear to be the only parts of the swords deposited at Flag Fen. Other iron objects, such as pins, have survived so it is likely that the rest of the swords (had they been deposited) would also have been recovered. It is possible that the hilts may have stood proxy for complete weapons, with part of the weapon symbolising the whole. An alternative hypothesis is reflected in the Anglo-Saxon Staffordshire Hoard (Leahy, 2009), where the preponderance of artefacts consisted of portions of the hilts and pommels of swords without blades. The parts of the swords which would have had close personal contact with the bearer were singled out for deposition. Objects recovered at Flag Fen were also generally placed very close to, and appear to have been carefully

deposited from, the timber causeway. This appears to be consistent with the deposition of bone and the majority of iron spearheads recorded at Fiskerton.

5.2.1.c Llyn Cerrig Bach, Anglesey

On the Isle of Anglesey in northern Wales, a small fenland area at Llyn Cerrig Bach yielded a number of Iron Age finds, recovered during the extension of a runway for a Royal Air Force Base during the Second World War (Fox, 1946, Steele, 2012). The objects, which included weapons, had been deposited into the fresh-water lake between c.800 BC and the second century AD, with the majority of weapons deposited between the third century BC and the first century AD (Steele, 2012: 70-71). The more than 130 finds from Llyn Cerrig Bach included 11 iron swords, seven iron spearheads and copper alloy fittings from at least two shields, as well as horse equipment and chariot-fittings (similar to fittings found in East Yorkshire), an iron slave-gang chain, currency bars, iron-working tools, and a fragmentary copper alloy trumpet (Steele, 2012). Fox believed many of the objects had been imported to the site from other parts of Britain and Ireland, although more recent research suggests some of the iron and bronze work could easily have been locally produced (Fox, 1946: 61-63, Steele, 2012: 72).

Roberts (2002) offered a non-votive interpretation for the finds at Llyn Cerrig Bach, suggesting that they were the result of a single shipwreck, which occurred around 50 BC. However, the core of his argument, that the objects were recovered in close proximity to each other, does not rule out the possibility that they were deposited with deliberate intent. Nor does his argument convincingly overcome the accepted dating of the artefacts, which suggests that they were deposited over an extended period of time (Fox, 1946, McGrath, 1968, Catling, 2012, Steele, 2012). Further, his description of the “last voyage” of the imagined vessel is highly debatable (Roberts, 2002: 36). Thus, the accepted interpretation of the site remains that it served as a focal place of votive deposits throughout the British Iron Age.

The spearheads discovered at Llyn Cerrig Bach are held in the National Museum of Wales and it was possible to examine them directly. Seven complete spearheads, and one fragmentary spear blade, were recovered from Llyn Cerrig Bach. Six of the seven complete spearheads were clearly functional and three of these (IDs 122, 133 and 134) can be allocated to the thrusting Type 2.1 long, angular spearheads. Respectively, they measure 470mm, 520mm and 720mm in overall length. The 720mm spearhead (ID 134,

and Figure 5.8, left) is the longest example of this type in the database. Only two other Type 2.1 spearheads are of similar length, both from the South Cave Weapons Cache (discussed below). The shorter Type 2.1 examples (IDs 122 and 133 – Figure 5.8 (right), and Figure 5.9) are consistent with other spearheads of this form, which have an average length of 546mm. Spearhead ID 133 appears to have been subjected to deliberate damage prior to deposition (Figure 5.9). None of the other spearheads show signs of manipulation in this manner, however, two of the swords recovered from Llyn Cerrig Bach had also been deliberately bent (Steele, 2012).



Type 2.1a



Type 2.1b

Figure 5.8: Llyn Cerrig Bach Type 2.1 spearheads. IDs 134 (L) and 122 (R), (NMW 44.32/16 and NMW 44.32/14).



Figure 5.9: Llyn Cerrig Bach Type 2.1 spearhead showing signs of apparent deliberate destruction (ID 133, NMW 44.32/16).

Three spearheads (IDs 121, 136 and 137) are members of the versatile Type 3.4 classic spearhead form. Again, Llyn Cerrig Bach provides the longest examples of this type in the database, with ID 121 and ID 136 measuring 381mm and 372mm respectively. The third example (ID 137) is missing the very tip of the blade, and has an extant length of 272mm. The total length of this spearhead cannot have been much in excess of 280mm, and is close to the average length for spearheads of this type. A fragmentary spearhead (ID 123) appears to be the tip of a narrow spear blade, with a midrib which is clearly discernible on both sides of the weapon. The form of the blade is consistent with members of Type 2.5 narrow-bladed thrusting spearheads, although it is not possible to allocate this object to that type with absolute certainty. The length of the blade fragment suggests that the overall length of this spearhead was likely in excess of 200mm, and it can be ruled out as a possible member of any of the throwing spearhead forms. Whether this object's fragmentary state is an accident of preservation, or an indication that it was deposited as an incomplete object is unclear. As observed at Flag Fen, incomplete weapons could be deposited in watery contexts, and such a possibility should be considered for the Llyn Cerrig Bach example.

Spearhead, ID 141, is a highly unusual object (Figure 5.10). The profile of the blade is similar to the Type 2.5 narrow-bladed thrusting spearhead form. However, the blade is so thin that it could never have withstood the application of any force. The blade has a flat section and is just 2mm thick. The socket is also flanged and of the same thinness as

the blade. A plausible interpretation is that this spearhead was a non-functional proxy, possibly offered in place of a more serviceable weapon.



Figure 5.10: Llyn Cerrig Bach non-functional spearhead (ID 141 NMW 46.320/2).

Llyn Cerrig Bach presents some unusual and unique aspects as a site which featured the deposition of spearheads during the Iron Age. We have evidence supporting a range of different practices involving spearheads at Llyn Cerrig Bach, including deliberate destruction and possible proxies symbolising functional weapons. We also have some of the largest examples of individual spearhead types. Fox (1946: 6) interpreted the spearheads as throwing forms, based on their socket dimensions. Ancient Arts in Conwy performed some experimental archaeology with replicas of two Llyn Cerrig Bach spearheads (Ancient Arts, n.d.). The experiments conducted were not rigorous. The group simply accepted, and failed to test, Fox's hypothesis that these were throwing weapons. They did not test their capabilities as thrusting weapons. As throwing spears,

they were found to be effective to a range of 20m, indicating that they were, in fact close range weapons (Ancient Arts, n.d.: 6). The form and limited aerodynamic performance of these weapons suggests they are far better suited to a thrusting function, as indicated by the typology outlined in Chapter 4. The assertion that the shafts would have been too weak to sustain the force of thrusting blows is speculative and fails to consider the similar socket diameters observed in thrusting weapons from the Continent (Brunaux & Rapin, 1988: 97). While throwing spearhead forms dominate the assemblages of most sites examined in this thesis, Llyn Cerrig Bach is one of the few sites in Britain where throwing spearhead forms are entirely absent.

5.2.1.d Thames and other River Contexts

The Thames and other rivers across Britain were foci for the deposition of objects including weapons from the Neolithic, through the Bronze and Iron Ages, into the Romano-British period and appear to have continued in Anglo-Saxon times. With such a long tradition of depositional activity it can be extremely difficult to date spearheads recovered from rivers to a specific period. Many finds were recovered during drainage activities in the nineteenth century, and records about specific find locations are often limited. Such objects frequently ended up in museum collections with very little detail about them. On visits to collect data on Iron Age spearheads from museums a decision was taken to include spearheads from river contexts which may be of Iron Age date. On this basis 16 spearheads were recorded from the Thames, Avon, Aberavon, Abingdon, and Wensum rivers. Thirteen of these spearheads are held in the British Museum's collection, the others held by the National Museum of Wales. These examples represent a very small fraction of the spearheads which have been recovered from river contexts, and most certainly form a biased sample. Given the uncertainty around the date of many of these river finds, it was felt that seeking out and including a great number of objects which may not date to the Iron Age might skew the data, and introduce spearheads into the typology which may in fact belong to other periods. However, a sample of spearheads from rivers could complement finds from more securely dated contexts.

The spearheads feature a diversity of types, with a mixture of throwing, thrusting and versatile spearhead forms, summarised in Table 5.1. Whether this is representative of spearhead depositions in river contexts, or is an artefact of the process of data collection is unclear. It must be noted that the majority of finds recorded in the database are from

the Thames. River Thames finds include the well-known, ornately decorated Type 3.2 broad-based, leaf-shaped versatile spearhead (ID 37), which compares well to the Orchard Hill example (ID 430), which has been dated to the mid third century BC – both illustrated in Chapter 4 (Fitzpatrick, forthcoming).

The bone spearhead from the Thames (ID 393, also illustrated in Chapter 4) is a particularly unusual example as it has been shaped to imitate metal spearhead forms. This object was originally noted in the British Museum database as being of Neolithic/Bronze Age/ or Iron Age date. However, the imitation of metal forms clearly rules out a Neolithic date for the spearhead. Franks (1860) noted a similarly shaped example from Fiskerton when he reported the find, although the Fiskerton example would appear to have since been lost. As there were a number of causeway structures, which were foci for deposition of weaponry during the Bronze Age and Iron Age, it is not possible to assign the Thames or Fiskerton examples to either period with absolute certainty.

Table 5.1: Summary of spearheads from rivers

River	ID	Type	Overall Length	Blade Length
Aberavon	130	Misc. throwing	268	133
Abingdon	126	3.4 classic	302	235
Abingdon	127	2.5 narrow-bladed	322	302
Avon	261	2.4 spike-pointed	345	274
Thames	271	1.1.2.a diamond-bladed	140	90
Thames	262	1.4 narrow-necked	176	93
Thames	393	1.8 bone point (Schatte Type IV)	164	103
Thames	268	2.2 poss. related t long, angular	376	315
Thames	260	2.4 spike-pointed	245	174
Thames	263	2.6 broad, convex	312	235
Thames	37	3.2 broad-based, leaf shaped	300	218
Thames	264	3.4 classic	224	146
Thames	267	3.4 classic	238	165
Thames	270	3.4 classic	198	126
Thames	265	Misc. versatile	242	195
Wensum	396	1.8 bone (Schatte II.1)	242	122

5.2.2 *Dry-land deposition practices in Britain*

Dry-land structured deposits datable to the Iron Age have been noted at an ever-increasing number of sites across Britain. Hingley (2006) includes a list of 40 sites with one or more structured deposits of iron objects from dry-land contexts. His list is incomplete, and new discoveries have been made in the years since his publication. Not all depositions are composed of iron objects. Finds, like those from Hallaton, Leicestershire, where at least 16 deposits of coins, silverwork and military equipment occur, highlight the diversity of deposits (Score, 2012). It is beyond the scope of the current study to conduct a comprehensive examination of all dry-land deposits. However, a number of deposits have yielded spearheads, some of which have been examined directly in the data collection for this thesis. Thus, the following section presents a summary of dry-land deposits, which are included in the database (illustrated in Figure 5.3, above). Some deposited spearheads were contextually associated with human remains, other than funerary deposits, and have often been considered to relate to violent conflict or ‘massacres’. An alternative interpretation of these finds will be presented in Chapter 6.

5.2.2.a *The South Cave Weapons Cache, East Yorkshire*

Discovered by metal detectorists in 2002, the South Cave Weapons Cache was a deposit of 33 iron spearheads and five iron swords, sheathed in ornate copper alloy scabbards (Figure 5.11). Regrettably, driven principally by the land-owner’s desire to dissuade further detectorist activities, more than a decade after its discovery, the excavation report remains unpublished, and the contextual details are not widely known. However, the context of the discovery provides one of the most secure for dating, due to the association of the weapons with Romano-British pottery (Didsbury, 2003, Stead in Evans, 2003: 18). The Cache was placed in a pit, which had been cut into a pre-existing ditch that bounded an enclosed Iron Age ‘ladder settlement’. It was positioned in alignment with the entrance of an earlier, enclosed Iron Age promontory site, possibly a fort, located to the north-east of the ladder settlement. The Cache was also located within 100m of a freshwater spring, and approximately 40m from the line of a Roman road which ran between the Parisi centre, *Petuaria* (modern day Brough) and the Roman fort, *Eboracum* (York) (Evans, 2003: 8). It is unclear whether the Cache pre-dates the Roman road or is contemporary with it. It is also unclear whether the

promontory site was still in use at the time the Cache was deposited. The possible motivations for depositing the SCWC are discussed in section 5.3, below.

The weapons had been gathered into two separate bundles, before being placed in the pit, which measured approximately 1m long, 0.5m wide and 0.36m deep. The 33 spearheads were all bundled together (Figure 5.12), cushioned by straw-like plant matter, and either tied or wrapped in a leather binding or bag, and placed in the base of the pit. The five iron swords were bound separately and placed over the top of the spearheads, with the most ornately decorated scabbard topmost (Evans, 2003: 93). No evidence of the binding that held the group of swords together survives, but due to their position in the pit, “partially overlaying the spears”, Evans (2003: 13) suggests they had been bound together in some fashion. The tips of the spearheads and the sword hilts pointed north-east, in the direction of the spring and perpendicular to the alignment of the settlement ditch, which the pit had been cut into (Evans, 2003). Seven of the spearheads appeared to retain traces of wood in their sockets, with confirmation via SEM for three of the spearheads, although it was not possible to determine species (Powell, 2012). The small dimensions of the pit indicate that the shafts of the spears must have been broken to facilitate their placement within the pit, and it seems that the shafts of most of the spears had either been carefully removed, or that the spearheads were unused, and had never been attached to any shaft.

The pit was filled with a “dark-brown, fine sandy-loam” (Evans, 2003: 12), which included fragments of stone (iron stone and sandstone), a very small quantity of charred plant matter and fragmentary animal bone, of which part of a cow’s sacrum and pelvis may have been deliberate inclusions. Pottery sherds within the pit-fill were predominantly locally produced hand-made fabrics. The whole deposit was then covered by carefully placed body sherds from a Dressel 20 Roman amphora and a quern fragment which appeared to have seen re-use in a hearth (Evans, 2003: 32). The Dressel 20 amphora was one of the most common forms distributed in Britain from the first to third centuries AD, routinely used for transporting and storing olive oil (Tyers, 2012). The ceramic assemblage, which included wheel-thrown Roman greyware and handmade local wares, suggests a date in the second half of the first century AD, and demonstrates that those who deposited the Cache had some level of contact, either directly or indirectly, with the Roman world (Didsbury, 2003).



Figure 5.11: The South Cave Weapons Cache under excavation in 2002.



Figure 5.12: The bundle of South Cave Weapons Cache spearheads during block excavation in 2003 at York Archaeological Trust conservation laboratory.

The spearhead assemblage from the SCWC is perhaps the most diverse for any structured deposit of spearheads in Iron Age Britain, with eight distinct spearhead types included in the deposit. There are members of throwing, thrusting and versatile spearhead forms (summarised in Table 5.2). Most numerous is Type 1.6 ‘Celtic *pilum*’, represented by 17 examples, and forming over half of the spearhead assemblage. The form is rare in Britain, with the only other known, complete example from Four Crosses, Powys (discussed below). The possibility that these weapons had never been used should be considered. The shanks of these spearheads were very delicate, with minimum diameters between 5mm and 10mm, averaging 8mm. None of the Type 1.6

spearheads showed any signs that their shanks had bent as might be expected as a result of contact with hard surfaces. Such deformation is common on Roman *pila*, which have seen use, as can be seen in the example from Hod Hill, illustrated in Figure 5.13. Other throwing forms include eight examples of Type 1.5 triangular-bladed spearheads, and one Type 1.7 hybrid form.

A miscellaneous spearhead (ID 25) is consistent with the triangular-bladed Type 1.5. However, the base of the blade appears to have been worked to form a small barb. Thus, throwing spearhead forms predominate in the Cache. However, five spearheads do conform to thrusting forms. This includes three spearheads (IDs 1, 2 and 23) allocated to Type 2.1 long, angular thrusting forms – one Type 2.1.a (ID 23) and two Type 2.1.b (IDs 1 and 2). Spearhead IDs 1 and 23 measure 690mm and 685mm total length respectively, making them some of the longest examples of this type in the database. Only spearhead ID 134 from Llyn Cerrig Bach, Anglesey is longer. The Type 2.3 bayonet form (illustrated in Chapter 4: Figure 4.32) appears to be an insular variation of Brunaux and Rapin's (1988: 124-125), Type IV, which could perhaps be dated to a much earlier period than the first century AD date of the Dressel 20 amphora which sealed the Cache. Spearhead ID 11 is allocated to Type 2.5 narrow-bladed, and bears close similarity to a spearhead (ID 115) recently excavated from an Arras Culture burial in Pocklington, East Yorkshire (both illustrated in Chapter 4: Figure 4.36, centre, and Figure 4.37, left).

The weapons in the Cache appear to hark back to an earlier period. The Celtic *pilum* is a form which has been noted in fourth and third century BC contexts in northern Italy and the Iberian peninsula (Quesada Sanz, 2002: 38 and fig.35A, Almagro-Gorbea & Lorrio, 2004, García Jiménez, 2011: 81-82). The swords recovered from the Cache also show influences from an earlier period, with just one of the swords demonstrating elements suggestive of Roman influence (Evans, 2003: 18, Stead, 2006: 203).



Figure 5.13: Left - Roman *pilum* from Hod Hill (BM 1892,0901.1111).
Right – Spear ID 4 from the SCWC.

Table 5.2: Summary of spearheads in the South Cave Weapons Cache

Type	Number of Examples	IDs	Average Length (mm)	Average Blade Length (mm)
1.5.a triangular-blade form	5	14, 15, 26, 27 and 30	144	79
1.5.b triangular-blade form	3	12, 13 and 31	158	78
1.6 'Celtic <i>pilum</i> ' (subtype unidentified)	2	24, 29	465	N/A
1.6.a 'Celtic <i>pilum</i> '	6	9, 10, 17, 18, 20 and 28	580	70
1.6.b 'Celtic <i>pilum</i> '	9	4-8, 16, 19, 21 and 22	475	42
1.7 hybrid of diamond and <i>pilum</i>	1	33	268	60
Misc. throwing form	1	25	143	85
2.1.a long, angular	1	23	685	585
2.1.b long, angular	2	1 and 2	585	435
2.3 bayonet	1	3	478	245
2.5 narrow-bladed	1	11	265	215
3.4 classic	1	32	156	89

5.2.2.b *Four Crosses, Powys*

In the Upper Severn Valley at Four Crosses, Llandysilio, Powys, close to a confluence of the Severn and Vyrnwy rivers, a series of ring-ditches were excavated between 1981 and 1985. The site formed a complex of at least 14 barrow ring-ditches and pit alignments, which showed signs of use from the Middle Neolithic until the Romano-British period, and possibly beyond (Warrilow *et al.*, 1986). The round barrows appear to have been constructed during the Bronze Age, and burials at the centre of these barrows were interpreted as graves, although no skeletal material survived in the acidic soil conditions (Warrilow *et al.*, 1986: 60). Two spearheads (Figure 5.14) were discovered on the northern side of Site 2, a round-barrow, surrounded by a ring-ditch 13m in diameter, up to 3.2m wide, and approximately 1m deep (Warrilow *et al.*, 1986: 57-62). There have been some potentially significant discrepancies in the reporting of the finds contexts. Both spearheads were deposited at an angle between 10° and 15°, with their tips deeply embedded in one layer of stratigraphy, their sockets in the layer above (Barford *et al.*, 1986, Warrilow *et al.*, 1986). While Barford *et al.* (1986: 103) advise that there were no associated finds, Warrilow *et al.* (1986: 61) report “two other small unidentifiable iron fragments were found close to them” and “several large reddened or fire-cracked cobble-stones, possibly associated with the weapons.”

Pottery sherds in the upper layer of the ditch fill have been dated to between the second to fourth centuries AD (Barford *et al.*, 1986: 103). Recent re-evaluation of the stratigraphy by Michael Marshall at Museum of London Archaeology, indicates that the spearheads were likely to have been deposited before the second century pottery entered the fill, and possibly date to the Iron Age (*pers. comm.*). The spearheads had been positioned so that their tips pointed towards the east, and the possibility that they were associated with a burial was suggested, although no burial was found (Warrilow *et al.*, 1986: 61).

The barrow appears to have been a focus for later Iron Age activity, with a small inhumation cemetery directly to the south of the ring-ditch, with one burial radiocarbon dated 100 ± 70 BC (Warrilow *et al.*, 1986: *ibid.*). The presence of these burials, and the location of the spearheads in the ring ditch of a Bronze Age barrow, may indicate that the deposition of the spearheads did have funerary associations. On the southwest side of the barrow mound a hearth and two pits were revealed, which are thought to be contemporary with the hoard. Ash from the deposit above the hearth, potentially

associated with metalworking, was radiocarbon dated to 180 ± 60 BC (Warrilow *et al.*, 1986: 60). The base of the hearth “was partly covered with reddened and fire-cracked, flat siltstone slabs” (Warrilow *et al.*, 1986: *ibid.*). The identification of the stone type as siltstone suggests that it is not the same as that which was reportedly found in association with the spearheads, although this is unclear. The presence of stone which had been subjected to fire may have some significance. As discussed, above, a fragment of quern stone was present in the pit in which the South Cave Weapons Cache had been placed. The stone showed evidence of burning and Evans (2003: 32) suggested it had seen reuse as a hearth.

Barford *et al.* (1986) were of the opinion that the spearheads had been thrust into the ditch with their shafts intact and notes wood preserved in the sockets of each. This was not obvious on visual inspection of the objects in the National Museum of Wales, although there was mineralised patina adhering to the interior of the sockets, which may have been wood. The spearheads (IDs 132 and 142, Figure 5.14) can respectively be allocated to the Type 2.1a long, angular thrusting spearhead with angular shoulders, and Type 1.6 ‘Celtic *pilum*’. The Type 1.6 spearhead, measuring 744mm, is the longest example of this form in the dataset, and is visibly a much heavier weapon than the examples from the South Cave Weapons Cache, East Yorkshire. The blade, at 175mm, is also 70mm longer than the next longest example. The closest comparable example is perhaps that from Necrópolis de Valdenovillos, Alcolea de las Peñas (Sierra de Guadalajara (comarca), Guadalajara) in Spain, currently on display in the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid (Figure 5.15). That example measures 770mm in total length with a blade 160mm long, and was recovered from a grave datable between the early third and late second centuries BC (Almagro-Gorbea & Lorrio, 2004: 87).



Type 2.1a



Type 1.6

Figure 5.14: Spearheads from Four Crosses, Powys (NMW 86.79H/2 and 86.79H/1).



Figure 5.15: Museo Arqueológico Nacional (Inv. 1940/27/VL/862)'Celtic *pilum*' from Necrópolis de Valdenovillos, Alcolea de las Peñas, Guadalajara, Spain ©MAN.

Barford *et al.* (1986: 104) and Warrilow *et al.* (1986) interpreted both spearheads as datable between the fourth and seventh centuries AD, based entirely on the spearhead forms. Barford *et al.* (1986) explicitly refer to Swanton's (1973) work on Anglo-Saxon spearheads. This is a clear case of excavators seeking to fit their finds into an existing typology. In this case it appears that, upon finding a match in a typology of Anglo-Saxon spearheads, the excavators decided to allocate the date posited by the typology over that suggested by the stratigraphic sequence.

5.2.2.c *Bredon Hill, Worcestershire*

Bredon Hill, also known as Kemerton (or Kemmerton) Camp is a hillfort on the western fringes of the Cotswolds, overlooking the Avon and Severn Valleys. The fort, located on the north-western promontory of Bredon Hill, was excavated by Hencken from 1935-1937, at which time county boundaries placed the site in Gloucestershire (Hencken, 1939). The region appears to have been densely settled in the Iron Age, and another Iron Age hillfort, known as Conderton (or Danes) Camp was later excavated on the southern side of Bredon Hill in the 1950s (Hurst & Jackson, 2006). During Hencken's excavations of the inner gateway at the south-east corner of Kemerton Camp, an iron spearhead was recovered from "high in the filling of the original ditch-end of the overlapping entrance" (Hencken, 1939: 13). The spearhead (ID 93) features an undulating blade profile and a prominent midrib, reportedly visible on both sides of the blade, which has been allocated to Type 3.5.b curved bladed spearheads. Hencken (1939: *ibid.*) identified comparable spearheads from La Tène, and on that basis, dated the spearhead, and the associated entrance way, to the period c.100-50 BC. However, Hurst and Jackson (2006: 10) have suggested that this should be revised to the fifth to second centuries BC based on the pottery assemblage.

A second iron spearhead (ID 94) was recovered from outside the north east entrance, which can be allocated to Type 3.4, classic form.

A complex deposit of spearheads in association with human remains at Bredon Hill will be discussed, along with other similar mortuary practices, in Chapter 6.

Other structured deposits of ironwork have also been recorded from the hillfort. Hencken (1939: 7) relates a report that a "hoard of so-called 'currency bars'" had been found in the eighteenth century, although they had long been lost by the time of his writing. A second hoard of currency bars was also recovered in 1959 (Hurst & Jackson, 2006: 12). The specific locations of these hoards have not been noted, although it would seem that they form part of the broader tradition of depositions of currency bars at Iron Age settlement sites (Hingley, 1997, 2006).

5.2.2.d Orsett 'Cock', Essex

Orsett 'Cock' was a multivallate enclosed settlement in Essex, which yielded evidence of occupation from the Middle Iron Age to the Saxon period (Toller, 1980, Carter, 1998). The site was excavated from 1976-1979, with Toller's preliminary report published in *Britannia* in 1980. Thereafter, finds and materials were placed in storage and post-excavation analysis was not conducted until the late 1980s, with a full report published in 1998 (Carter, 1998: 4). The rectilinear plan of the settlement led to an early, and persistent, interpretation of the site as a Roman fort of Claudian date (Toller, 1980: 41). However, excavations revealed much earlier occupation, with the construction of rectilinear ditches around an area of Middle and Late Iron Age settlement, and Toller (1980: *ibid.*) argued that Orsett 'Cock' was a native settlement, with no evidence of Roman influence in its plan or construction.

Seven spearheads in total were recovered during excavations on the site and six of these came from the same context, located in the north corner of ditch F2, which is dated to phase III of the site's occupation, equated with the time of the Roman Conquest (Carter, 1998: 18). The seventh spearhead was recovered from the nearby, contemporary, ditch F3 (Carter, 1998: 83). Unfortunately, no more specific contextual information was included in the published report. It was not possible to examine the spearheads first-hand; however, the publication was adequate to permit their inclusion in the database. Five of the seven spearheads can be allocated to versatile spearhead forms. Three of the spearheads (IDs 106, 109 and 110) are allocated to the versatile Type 3.1, with a convex blade form, (illustrated in Chapter 4), two of which feature prominent midribs on both sides of the blade. There are no other British examples of this spearhead form noted in the database. However, the recovery of two similar spearheads (IDs 128 and 129) from Kells Crannog, Ireland suggests the form may have had a broad distribution. Two spearheads (IDs 107 and 112) are members of the broad-based Type 3.2 versatile form, although they lack the ornate copper alloy decoration observed on examples from the Thames (ID 37, illustrated in Chapter 4) and Orchard Hill (ID 430). Spearhead ID 112 was that recovered from ditch F3. A single spearhead can be allocated to Type 2.5 narrow-bladed thrusting spearhead form, and another to the Type 1.1.b.1 diamond-bladed throwing form. This was the only throwing spearhead form recovered from the site.

5.2.2.e *Dragonby, Lincolnshire*

Excavations at Dragonby conducted in the 1960s and 1970s uncovered a ditched enclosure with evidence of Iron Age and Romano-British occupation (May, 1996). The settlement was thought to be a clan centre during the Iron Age and the finds suggest a degree of social stratification, although May (1996: 628-631) argues against the identification of Dragonby as an *oppidum*. The layout and design of structures underwent significant change during the Romano-British period, with a shift from roundhouses to rectilinear structures, built within a number of larger rectangular enclosures. There is little evidence of Romano-British activity datable before the late first to second centuries AD (May, 1996: 127-129).

Eighteen spearheads were recorded during excavations at Dragonby. Nine of these were uncovered during R. H. Arrand's excavations at the eastern end of Money Field during 1963, and their contextual details were poorly recorded, although one was noted as having been found in the fill of Kiln 3. Of the nine spearheads for which finds contexts are known, five were unstratified, or recovered from topsoil. One was recovered from the limestone metalling of a Romano-British road. Another spearhead was recovered from a layer of "dark brown sandy soil" within a building constructed late in the Romano-British period (May, 1996: 56-58 & 290). The Romano-British building had been constructed over several Iron Age features, and it is unclear from the excavation report whether the spearhead is directly associated with the building, or the earlier features. There is no mention of the cutting of any pit associated with the spearhead so it seems unlikely that this object was placed where it was found in any structured manner. Thus, each of these 16 spearheads is interpretable as a chance loss.

Two spearheads were recovered from a pit (F2567), where they were found in association with pottery datable to the early second century AD. The 1.5m deep pit was thought by the excavators to have been dug to obtain sand for use in pottery making associated with the nearby Kiln 3 (May, 1996: 135). The fill of the pit, which also included rubble, fragments of bone and lumps of unfired clay, was thought to be refuse, and the filling of the pit was probably associated with the filling of Kiln 3, which had also contained an iron spearhead (May, 1996: 136 & 290). Thus, it is perhaps unlikely that any of the spearheads from Dragonby had been deposited with any ritual or votive intent. Further, the discovery of two Roman ballista bolts, both discovered during Arrand's 1963 excavations on the eastern side of Money field, where Kiln 3 was

located, led May (1996: 293) to suggest possible connections with the Roman military for all of the weapons discovered at the site, despite the non-military nature of the settlement. Wait (1985: 59) has argued for a continuation of the deposition of objects and metalwork in pits with underlying ritual intent into the Romano-British period. Thus, the deposit in F2567 must be approached with caution, and it may ultimately be necessary to reserve judgement on whether this particular example should be considered a structured deposit.

The stratified spearheads from Dragonby represent perhaps the latest examples recorded in the database. The possibility that they may have Roman influence, or possibly be of Romano-British manufacture, offers an opportunity to compare the spearheads against other examples, and to explore possible cultural and chronological changes. The examples from Dragonby are predominantly throwing spearhead forms identifiable as members of Types 1.1 diamond-bladed (IDs 143, 145 and 147), 1.2 small, leaf-bladed (IDs 146, 150-2), 1.3 small triangular-bladed (IDs 144, 153 and 156) and 1.5 triangle blade form (ID 154). Three spearheads could be identified as members of the versatile Type 3.4 classic form. The remaining four spearheads were too poorly preserved to allocate to a specific type, although three were clearly small, and consistent with members of the throwing function group more generally. The fourth spearhead (ID 157) was larger, with an extant length of 148mm and appears to have been very broad (preserved to 35mm), and was perhaps another member of the versatile Type 3.5. There is a total absence of thrusting spearhead forms recorded from the site. However, if the surviving examples are the result of chance loss, this may explain the absence of larger spearhead forms.

The spearheads from Dragonby are generally consistent with those recovered from other sites in the region. However, there appear to be a greater number of examples featuring midribs than was noted at other Northern sites. The seeming preference for spearheads with midribs appears more consistent with finds from Hod Hill, which also yielded evidence of Roman occupation.

5.2.2.f *Madmarston Camp, Oxfordshire*

Madmarston is a multivallate hillfort at Swalcliffe in the north of Oxfordshire. The hillfort had suffered badly from plough damage by the time limited excavations were conducted in 1957-8 (Fowler, 1960). There was an observable entrance on the southern side of the hillfort, and a structured deposit including Iron Age pottery, fragments of quern stone and animal bone was discovered close to the entrance (Fowler, 1960: 10). Inside the northern rampart of the fort, under a layer of stones, a hoard of iron artefacts was discovered (Fowler, 1960). Adjacent to the hoard was a small pit, which contained “charcoal and other burnt material”, although it is unclear from the report whether the pit and the hoard were stratigraphically related (Fowler, 1960: 13).

The hoard included 12 iron currency bars, another iron bar featuring a square section, a sickle, an iron poker, an iron axe head, and two pairs of horse bits. The contents of the hoard were thought by Fowler (1960: 41) to be of Iron Age date, broadly comparable to material which had been recovered from Llyn Cerrig Bach, Anglesey. However, in a later publication Fowler (1971: 207) suggested the hoard belonged to the Romano-British period. The currency bars had corroded together, and Fowler (1960: 40-42) believed that they had been bound together, along with the poker, prior to deposition. Of particular interest to this study is currency bar four (Figure 5.16). This currency bar bears a profile very similar to Type 1.6 ‘Celtic *pilum*’. The bar measures 847mm in total length, longer than any of the Type 1.6 spearheads recorded in the database. However, the morphological similarity raises the possibility that the form was meant to imitate, and possibly symbolise, this spearhead form – similar to the way many other currency bars are thought to replicate sword forms (Hingley, 1990, 1997: 13). Fowler (1960: fig.18) illustrates three other currency bars from the hoard, and all indeed resemble swords, and are consistent with Crew’s Type B, Beckford type (Crew, 1995).

A small Type 1.1 diamond-bladed spearhead was also recovered from the northern rampart, from a stratigraphic layer thought to be associated with Romano-British occupation of the site (Figure 5.17). Fowler (1960: 44) identifies the spearhead as an Iron Age form with comparison at Bredon Hill and Maiden Castle, also citing a Continental comparison from La Tène. The spearhead does not appear to have formed part of the hoard, which was sealed below a layer of stones, and may represent chance loss. Alternatively, the spearhead may have formed a structured deposit of a single

object. Whether the spearhead itself should be dated to the Romano-British occupation of the site, is unclear from the report.

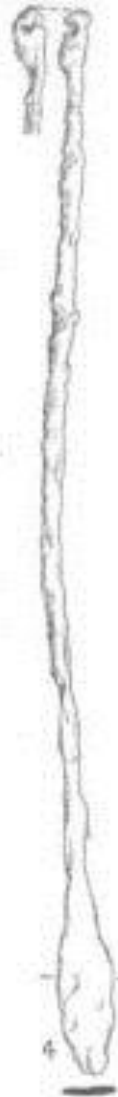


Figure 5.16: Currency bar four from Madmarston, (Fowler, 1960).



Figure 5.17: Madmarston spearhead (ID 113), (Fowler, 1960).

5.2.2.g *South Cadbury, Somerset*

South Cadbury Castle is a multivallate hillfort in Somerset with views overlooking the Somerset Basin and Glamorgan Hills. The fort was systematically excavated from 1966-1970 with a further season of excavation in 1973 (Alcock, 1972, Barrett *et al.*, 2000). The site has more recently been the subject of a wider contextual examination; the South Cadbury Environs Project (Barrett *et al.*, 2000, Oxford, 2010). Three entrances to the hillfort have been recorded, although only the south-western gateway has been excavated. The gateway included a significant deposit of human remains in association with martial objects, which will be discussed in Chapter 6 (Barrett *et al.*, 2000: 12). The north-eastern entrance has a similar layout to the south-western entrance, while the eastern entrance was smaller, and appears to have been the earliest entrance to the site.

In addition to the complex deposit of human remains and metalwork, a hoard of mixed objects was discovered in a pit dug into an occupation layer behind Bank 1 on the southern side of the site. This deposit included a currency bar, an iron axe head, multiple iron knives, awls and reaping hooks (Barrett *et al.*, 2000: 62, 83). There were bone, antler, stone and wooden objects as well as a number of clay sling-shot-bullets. Over 25 objects in total had been placed in the pit. Some had been wrapped in straw, and the clay sling-bullets had been subjected to extreme heat prior to deposition. The pit had been badly disturbed by the cutting of another, later pit, so that it is not possible to determine whether the pit had been sealed with stones, as has been observed in some other structured deposits. A similar pit featuring a deposit of mixed objects was recorded at Burrough Hill, Leicestershire, which included two iron knives, hooks and a tanged weapon, interpreted by the excavators as a spearhead (Thomas & Taylor, 2013). This object is similar to two tanged weapons from Hunsbury Camp, which have been recorded as spearheads in the British Museum finds database. However, as discussed in Chapter 4, the writer believes this interpretation to be erroneous. It is likely that this object, like those from Hunsbury, functioned as a dagger.

Another small structured deposit was excavated on the south-eastern rampart. This deposit consisted of a single iron billhook, which appeared to have been wrapped in straw prior to deposition (Barrett *et al.*, 2000: 59). The deposit, which was dated to the Middle Cadbury period (300 BC to AD 100) was filled with rubble and sealed under a

section of stone paving. The deposition of this single object holds some features in common with other structured deposits of iron objects discussed in this chapter. The object was wrapped in organic material, likely straw, as was also observed for the SCWC in East Yorkshire. The sealing of the deposit under stones, holds some similarity with the Madmarston hoard, which was also sealed under stones, and possibly the deposition of the two spearheads at Four Crosses, which may also have been buried under cobble stones (Fowler, 1960: 13, Warrilow *et al.*, 1986: 60). The carefully chosen amphora sherds which sealed the SCWC may have served a similar function to the stones observed in these southern deposits (Evans, 2003: 32).

5.2.2.h Uley, Gloucestershire

West Hill shrine at Uley, Gloucestershire, situated to the north east of Uley Bury hillfort on the western fringes of the Cotswolds, appears to have been in use as a ritual site from the Neolithic until the seventh century AD and possibly beyond (Woodward & Leach, 1993: 1). The site was subject to rescue excavations during the late 1970s ahead of the installation of a water main. Excavations revealed an early first century AD, pre-conquest deep-ditched enclosure. The eastern ditch of this enclosure, F264, yielded a number of iron spearheads (Woodward & Leach, 1993: 10, 133-135). Cut into this ditch was a pit, F251, interpreted by the excavators as votive, and a number of spearheads were also recovered from this pit. The report does not identify any organic or environmental finds from these contexts, which are simply reported as deliberate fills. Fourteen objects identified by Woodward and Leach (1993) as spearheads are currently held in the British Museum and it was possible to collect data on these. A further 25 objects, classified as bolt-heads are not held by the British Museum and the location of many of these is now unknown. It was not possible to collect data on these objects directly, although illustrations in Woodward and Leach's report (1993: fig.113) suggest that 21 of these could easily be allocated to Type 1.3 small triangular forms.

Ditch F264 was associated with a timber enclosure and was disturbed by the construction of the later Roman temple structure (Woodward & Leach, 1993: 20-22). The earliest of the spearheads (ID 391), included as part of a deliberate deposit datable to phase 2b – early first century AD – was a small, fragmentary iron spearhead, which could not be allocated to a type, although the general form is consistent with a throwing function (Woodward & Leach, 1993: 20). A later deposit in F264, dated to the mid first century AD, included a further eight iron spearheads, two of which are held in the

British Museum. These two spearheads (IDs 384 and 385) are both small throwing forms, allocated to Type 1.1 and 1.1.2b respectively. One further point from this context was illustrated by Woodward and Leach (1993: fig.113, No.5), and this can be allocated to Type 1.3 small triangular-bladed. Within Pit F251 were three deliberate deposits which included several iron spearheads and brooches datable to the first half of the first century AD. Only one of these was held in the British Museum and it was too poorly preserved to be conclusively allocated to a type. The spearhead was small, surviving to 68mm length, and was perhaps a member of Type 1.1 diamond-bladed form, although this could not be stated with certainty. The other points from this context were identified as bolt heads, and can be allocated to Type 1.3 based on Woodward and Leach's (1993: fig.113) illustrations. Two spearheads (IDs 378 and 382), allocated to Type 1.5, triangle blade form, held in the British Museum, were included in the data collection. However, their contexts place them in the fourth century AD or later, following the abandonment of the Roman temple structure (Woodward & Leach, 1993: 11, 135). Ultimately, all of the Iron Age spearheads recorded from the Uley ritual complex are small, throwing spearhead forms.

5.2.2.i Hod Hill, Dorset

A brief comment needs to be made with regard to the Iron Age hillfort, and later Roman fort site of Hod Hill in Dorset. The site is located in close proximity to another Iron Age hillfort, Hambleton Hill, both overlooking the River Stour (Brailsford, 1962). Eighty seven of the spearheads in the dataset were recorded as having been recovered from Hod Hill. Brailsford (1962: 5-6) examined 79 spearheads, which had been acquired by Henry Durden, during the nineteenth century. Richmond (1968) recovered five iron spearheads, several Roman bolt-heads and a possible arrowhead, during his excavations between 1951-1958. All of these objects are now held in the British Museum's collection, and it was possible to examine them directly. The spearheads from Hod Hill were examined by Manning (1985), and form the basis for his typology (discussed in Chapter 2). During the process of data collection it became evident that some of the objects illustrated and described by Manning (1985) did not match the quoted accession numbers, and it was not always possible to reconcile his catalogue with the physical artefacts. Similarly, it was not always possible to identify specific examples with the spearheads published by Richmond (1968).

Unfortunately, contextual information for the spearheads acquired by Durden is unavailable. The western half of the site (which includes the Roman fort) was ploughed extensively during the nineteenth century and much of Durden's collection was recovered during that activity (Brailsford, 1962: vii-viii). Some of the spearheads were bent out of shape. However, without contextual information, it is impossible to know whether this may have been the result of deliberate damage associated with acts of votive deposition, or whether it was caused by the plough.

Information about the finds contexts for those spearheads recovered by Richmond (1968: 115 and fig.158a) indicates that one Type 3.3 tapered spearhead was recovered from the "East entrance [of the Roman fort], from upcast above front post-holes of south tower." Two Type 1.2 small, leaf-bladed spearheads (including ID 287) were recovered from the foundation trench of Barrack I and another small spearhead, said to be of similar form was excavated from "the north-west post-hole of the south gateway" (Richmond, 1968: *ibid.*). Whether these objects were deliberate foundation deposits, or incidental inclusions is unclear from Richmond's description. Like Dragonby, the possibility that these spearheads were chance losses cannot be discounted.

5.3 Discussion: structured deposits – hoarding, ritual, or rubbish?

The above section has presented the major Iron Age sites, both in wetland and dry-land contexts, in which spearheads have been deposited. It is clear that most of these were the deliberate actions of human agents, although this does not discount the possibility of casual loss. One of the most common explanations for the structured deposition of objects is that they played a part in ritual activity. Chadwick (2012) has recently written of the need for greater recognition of structured deposits during excavation, with a particular focus on developer-funded contract archaeology. His comments are indicative of a growing acceptance that such deposits may have ritual underpinnings, and warrant deeper consideration. Yet, defining what *is* and what *is not* ritual remains theoretically challenging within the discipline of archaeology. Joanna Brück has argued that there is a perceived dichotomy between ritual and functionality: that actions with no clear functional interpretation must *a priori* indicate ritual action, projecting modern post-enlightenment rationalism onto past cultures that likely perceived 'rational' behaviour in different ways (Brück, 1999: 317). Following Brück's (1999) influential article, the theoretical association between 'ritual' and the absence of identifiable 'rational' function has begun to be seriously questioned, and Brück's position is gaining traction

(Pollard, 2001, Insoll, 2004, Chadwick, 2012). However, there remain proponents of the view that identification of ritual practice is directly tied to non-functional or “inexplicable” deposits, as Fogelin (2007: 59) observes. Needham (2001) has also called for a reconsideration of the ‘ritual’ versus ‘utilitarian’ dichotomy when interpreting hoards. He argues for a more nuanced view of the complex and changeable social motivations that underlie deposition practices, allowing for hoards to have coexisting ritual and utilitarian functions, as well as the potential to be “simultaneously ritual and impermanent” (Needham, 2001: 287). Evidence from the Neolithic period in Britain indicates that many pits were dug explicitly to receive structured deposits, forming part of a long tradition of deliberate, depositional practice extending back to the Mesolithic, as noted at sites like Star Carr (Mellars, 2009, Thomas, 2012). Ultimately, while we may not be able to reconstruct or comprehend the reasoning that led to deposition, we can accept that ‘reason’ underlay the decision to create structured deposits.

Brück (1999: 316) also noted that understanding of ritual practice is complicated by the lack of a clear definition of what ‘ritual’ *is*, and how it can be identified archaeologically. Consideration of whether ritual must be religious in nature, or whether secular rituals may also be observed, muddies the waters further still. J.D. Hill (1995b: 96) has demonstrated that deposits of refuse can be placed in a structured manner in accordance with social conventions. Hill (1995b: 97) goes on to conclude that attempts to find an overarching definition of ritual are misguided and unhelpful, suggesting “...ritual is not difficult to *recognise* or *study*, even if it might be impossible to *identify* or *define* ritual’s essential form or qualities” [original emphasis]. Pollard (2001: 316) has argued that ritual depositions, whether religious or secular, have a communicative aspect that can be likened to language. This expressive component appears to be the way forward for distinguishing whether a deposition *is* or *is not* ritual. While certain conventions may have applied to the location and deposition of refuse (as indeed they do today, with designated landfill and waste removal processes), the observation of *patterns* in the choice and placement of specific objects, or object classes within structured deposits is a consistent component of definitions of ritual practice (Hill, 1995b, Fulford, 2001: 215, Needham, 2001: 280-81, Osborne, 2004: 4, Hingley, 2006: 218, Fogelin, 2007: 58).

5.3.1 *Public and private ritual*

Pollard (2001) has argued that many of the ritual or votive acts associated with structured deposition cannot be recovered archaeologically. We cannot know who was present, or whether particular words, gestures or other performative conventions were observed. If the deposit formed a contractual or other relationship with living persons, social groups, or, supernatural entities, we cannot know who was involved or how these relationships were negotiated. The underlying motivations for removing objects from circulation have been the cause of much speculation, and form the crux of the ritual/utilitarian dichotomy, which both Brück (1999) and Needham (2001) have sought to overcome through their respective analyses of cosmological and socioeconomic functions.

Such dualistic interpretations are particularly relevant for finds like the South Cave Weapons Cache. Both Evans (2003) and Halkon (2008: 181-182, 2013: 117-119) have argued that the SCWC was indeed a *cache* of weapons – hidden away with an intent that they should later be recovered – while simultaneously observing that aspects of the deposit are suggestive of votive practice. The two functions should not be seen as mutually exclusive. The possibility that these weapons were a deposit made by a war band or community as a form of concealment or storage, enacted in accordance with ritual or votive conventions should be considered. Rites may have been observed to secure supernatural protection for the cache, or to ensure that the weapons' potency would not be affected by the process of burial. The deposition may have been openly performed as a show of resistance, or perhaps linked to social prestige as a form of conspicuous consumption.

The placement of deposits like the SCWC, in the ditches bounding settlement sites, suggests that the act of deposition may have been viewed by multiple persons, possibly even the entire community. The stratigraphic record of the SCWC reveals that the swords with the most ornate scabbards were placed on the top of the Cache, where they could be displayed to greatest effect (Evans, 2003: 93), indicating that they were intended to be seen by multiple persons and were exposed to view for some, though perhaps brief, period of time. Deposition of quantities of wealth objects served a social as well as ritual function and, as such, would need to be seen to be deposited as Needham (2001: 294) describes: "...with some care, ceremony and performance". The deposition of the SCWC was completed with a careful and deliberate sealing of the

Cache with specifically chosen body sherds from a Dressel 20 amphora, an imported vessel which had held exotic, and undoubtedly costly, olive oil. The absence of rim or handle sherds suggest that the vessel had been previously broken and these sherds specifically selected for the purpose of sealing the Cache (Evans, 2003: 13, 2006), another indication of a performative aspect to the act of deposition.

While depositional practices across Bronze Age and Iron Age Europe appear to share certain conventions, such as deposition of weapons in wet contexts or ditches, we cannot assume that the shared nature of these practices was known from one community to another. Lewis (1980) highlighted the potential for common practices to be thought of as unique to one's own community. In an anthropological study of the Gnau people of Papua New Guinea, Lewis recorded conversations of Gnau men as they went about constructing a ritual house. One of the men describes an occasion on which he travelled to a village five hours walk away, where he observed local puberty rites being performed. He expresses surprise that the rites were the same as those performed in his own village, as he had thought the rituals unique to his own community (Lewis, 1980: 55). Broader, inter-community knowledge of shared cultural practices may not have extended to ritual or religious practice. Care may have been taken to ensure that outsiders were not privy to negotiated interactions with supernatural forces. Such exclusivity may be evident in Iron Age Wessex, where Hill observed distinct differences in depositional practices between Iron Age sites and between different phases within a single site, where "the same basic elements were involved but combined and expressed in different ways" (Hill, 1995b: 74). Conversely, if deposits were enacted to cement alliances between social groups, knowledge of the ritual practice may have been widely communicated as a means of publicising the contractual obligations of the relationship. Such nuances cannot be readily reconstructed from the archaeological record, although the range of possibilities must be considered when attempting to interpret deposits of groups of objects, particularly in public places like settlement boundaries.

As mentioned above, the placement of individual objects in structured deposits is more problematic to identify. Sole objects are difficult to distinguish from chance loss (Chadwick, 2012: 295). However, investigation and mapping of individual finds over time may reveal patterns of deposition and greater attention is being paid to finds of this nature as Chadwick (2012) has observed. The smaller-scale nature of single object

depositions raises the possibility that these deposits are representative of individual rites, as opposed to larger scale ritual activities participated in, or observed by, groups of people. Other small scale rituals may be representative of rites of passage or kin-group rites (Needham, 2001: 289, Pryor, 2001a: 430). Certainly, the economic argument can be made that single objects would have been more affordable, and more readily able to be taken out of circulation, than larger collections of objects. Larger-scale deposits, such as the SCWC, East Yorkshire, Fiskerton, Lincolnshire, or Uley, Gloucestershire, suggest a greater call on resources. Gathering together a large number of weapons in a small community and removing them from circulation could have been a significant drain on resources.

Excavations at an Iron Age and Romano-British hillfort site at South Cadbury (discussed above, and in Chapter 6) reveal that a range of depositional practices were implemented. At different points around the enclosing earthworks, deposits ranging from the so-called massacre deposit of 37 iron spearheads, 21 bolt-heads, six shield bosses, more than 100 brooches and partial human skeletal remains from numerous individuals at the south-western gate complex (discussed in Chapter 6), to a mixed hoard of approximately 25 objects (16 of which were iron), to a single iron billhook wrapped in straw and deposited in a small pit (Barrett *et al.*, 2000). Currency bars also have long been observed as single objects deposited time and again in boundary contexts (Manning, 1972, Hingley, 1990, Fulford, 2001, Hingley, 2006). Spearheads likewise appear to have been subjected to individual deposition in, or close to, boundary ditches, such as the Type 3.5.b curved bladed spearhead, recovered from Bredon Hill (Figure 5.18). Similarly, many finds of spearheads from river contexts may also have been deposited as single objects.

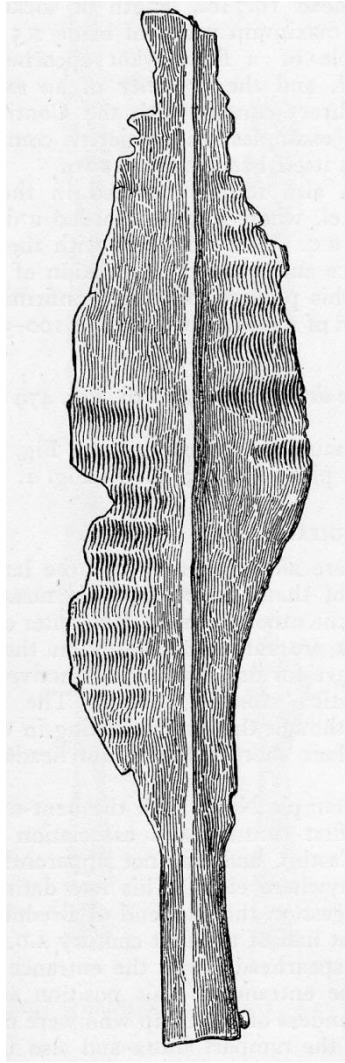


Figure 5.18: Bredon Hill spearhead (ID93), (Hencken, 1939: fig.7, scale 2:3).

The further question of whether deposits of individual objects served the same ritual function, i.e. were aimed at achieving the same outcome, as larger deposits must also be considered. Deposits in watery places in particular have come to be associated with dedications to supernatural entities and/or to the dead (Bradley, 1998, Pryor, 2001a, Wait, 1985). Mortuary contexts and burials will be considered in Chapter 6.

In addition to clear patterns in geographic distribution, chronological patterns have also been observed. The appropriateness for deposition of a particular class of object may change over time, and associations could potentially shift from votive contexts to funerary contexts, for example. Parker Pearson's (1993: 221-223) study of Iron Age Denmark observed that, between 500 BC and 300 BC, Danish votive depositions consisted of personal ornaments, agricultural paraphernalia and evidence of human sacrifice. During this period, votive depositions of weapons were extremely rare. In the

first century BC votive depositions declined before a strong resurgence at the end of the second century AD and, during this interval, funerary assemblages became wealthier. From the second to the fifth centuries AD, ritual depositions in Denmark included large numbers of weapons (Parker Pearson, 1993: *ibid.*). Bradley, likewise, observed a relationship between funerary and votive depositions in the Bronze Age. In later Bronze Age Essex, during periods when votive depositions of swords were common, this class of object rarely appeared as a grave good (Bradley, 1982: 113). More broadly, Bradley observed an alternation between the make-up of 'hoards' and funerary assemblages (Bradley, 1982: *ibid.*).

In Britain, much of the Iron Age chronology remains unclear. However, it is clear that the spearheads which appeared in votive contexts exhibit subtle, geographic, chronological or typological differences from those appearing in funerary contexts. For example, the large Type 2.1 long, angular spearheads recovered from Llyn Cerrig Bach, Anglesey in the Middle Iron Age are distinct from the small throwing spearhead forms which predominate in contemporary Arras Culture burials in East Yorkshire. However, during the Late Iron Age, Type 2.1 spearheads were recovered from a number of burials, including at Kelvedon and Brisley Farm, Kent, Stanway, Essex, while also appearing in the Late Iron Age depositions at Fiskerton, Lincolnshire, and the South Cave Weapons Cache in East Yorkshire. At South Cave, and at Fiskerton, there is a diversity of spearhead forms included in votive deposits, with throwing, thrusting and versatile forms all represented. At this time weapons do not seem to be a feature of funerary assemblages in Yorkshire. Thus, there appear to be conventions which dictate the appropriateness of particular spearhead forms within a particular region, and that these conventions seemingly changed over time.

5.4 Significance of place: liminality and objects of power and memory

Just as we can observe patterns in the choice of objects placed within a votive or ritual deposition, there are clear patterns in the geographic placement of structured deposits, which are ritual or votive in function. Bradley (1998) observed the widespread distribution of deposits of high status objects such as weapons and ornaments throughout Bronze Age and Iron Age Europe, arguing for a ritual function. The ritual nature of such deposits is now widely accepted (Wells, 1998, Pryor, 2001a, Aldhouse Green, 2002, Kristiansen, 2002, Osborne, 2004). Deposits recur in wet contexts including rivers, lakes and bogs across Continental Europe and Britain throughout the

Bronze Age and Iron Age. Depositions in dry-land contexts occur repeatedly in the boundary ditches of enclosed sites, both of settlements, such as the SCWC, and enclosed sanctuary sites like Uley, Gloucestershire, Hallaton, Leicestershire, and Gournay-sur-Aronde in northern France (Manning, 1972, Bradley, 1982, Brunaux & Rapin, 1988, Woodward & Leach, 1993, Hill, 1995b, Osborne, 2004, Hingley, 2006, Score, 2012). As mentioned, ditches are a special case as they may have been wet or dry at different times of year. Boundaries can also be viewed as liminal places, as van Gennepe (1960: 17-22) observes, with certain directionality or focal points for particular ritual activities, which will be discussed further below. Many deposition sites, such as pit deposits, like the Uley enclosure or enclosing ditches at Hallaton, appear to have been focal points for repeated depositions over time (Wait, 1985: 53, Hill, 1995b, Fulford, 2001, Score, 2012).

As discussed, structured deposits of wealth objects occur in a range of contexts. The recurrent placement in certain contexts, such as watery locations and settlement ditches, indicates that *where* objects are deposited was important to those who deposited them. This raises the question of whether it is possible to interpret *why* particular contexts may have been chosen, what motives underlay the decision-making processes? Brück certainly has considered the issue of motive and cautions against the application of modern logic to the cosmological understandings of ancient peoples (Brück, 1999: 327). As mentioned, Needham has persuasively argued that the motives and intentions held by depositing peoples cannot be neatly pigeonholed into categories of ‘ritual’ versus ‘utilitarian’ (Needham, 2001). Pope (2007: 206, 212), while critical of many existing cosmological arguments, has argued against “binary oppositions” in interpretations of function and meaning of domestic space, suggesting that ritualistic and functional concerns are inextricably interrelated. Mauss (1970: 22) highlighted that concepts of possession, ownership, pledge and obligations of reciprocity may be entwined in gift exchange, even with supernatural entities. In an attempt to ascertain the significance of deposition practices, Hingley conducted a nuanced assessment of contexts in which iron objects had been deposited in Britain during the Iron Age (Hingley, 2006). He identified seven distinct contexts in which iron objects had been repeatedly deposited during the late pre-Roman and Roman Iron Age in Britain (Hingley, 2006: 221):

1. *‘natural’ = cave, wetland, river*
2. *‘shrine’ = temple, or shrine, or possible shrine*

3. *'enclosure' = in, or close to, the ditch or bank of an enclosed settlement*
 - 3a = *the ditch or bank of the enclosure*
 - 3b = *the entrance area to the enclosure*
 - 3c = *close proximity to enclosure earthworks (within 10m)*
4. *wells or deep pits (over 2m deep) dug into, or very close to (within 10m), the boundary of a settlement or site*
5. *wells or deep pits (over 2m deep) dug within the area of a settlement or site*
6. *other contexts within the area of a settlement or industrial site*
7. *other features on the edges of a settlement or in the landscape*

Hingley assessed the frequency with which iron objects appeared in each of these contexts and found that throughout the second half of the first millennium BC the majority of depositions (75 percent) were associated with domestic sites and the majority of these were from the settlement boundaries (Hingley, 2006: 222). Further, of those deposits placed around boundaries, approximately 90 percent had been recovered from the enclosure ditch, the associated bank, or within 10m of the boundary (Hingley, 2006: *ibid.*). Clearly, boundaries were highly meaningful places, and depositing wealth objects (particularly iron objects), in or around boundaries was an act that was significant and imbued with meaning. The act of cutting a ditch and forming an associated bank may have been an inherently sacred act. The ditch intrudes upon the Underworld realms of chthonic and fertility deities, while the formation of the bank from material extracted from the ditch inverts natural order, placing that from below the surface 'above', (Dowling, 2006: 25-29). Ditches, whether constructed to enclose a sacred space, a settlement, or to modify the broader landscape, thus formed places of supernatural power. Such places were potentially dangerous, and requiring of special treatment and maintenance so that people could interact with them safely, with entrances and boundary crossings in greatest need of protective rituals (van Gennepe, 1960: 19-25, Dowling, 2006: 24). Inversions of the natural order in deliberate acts such as the inverted oak tree at Holme-next-the-Sea (also known as Seahenge), Norfolk could become focal points for ritual activities (Pryor, 2001b: 276, Brennand *et al.*, 2003: 70-71). Similarly, the act of digging a ditch, grave or associated barrow ditch may have been seen as a way of opening a liminal gateway to the realm of the dead (Giles, 2012: 407, Parker Pearson, 1999a: 132).

The objects chosen for deposition, therefore, needed to be powerful (Mauss, 1970), imbued with protective properties, or which could appease the supernatural forces which may have been disturbed by the act of ditch-cutting. Deposits of human and animal remains and metalwork have frequently been recovered from Iron Age ditched enclosures such as the human and animal bone recovered from the outer ditch terminals at Sutton Common, South Yorkshire (Van de Noort *et al.*, 2007: 137-142). It is important to note that cattle bones recovered from the South Cave Weapons Cache may have been deliberately placed in articulation (Evans, 2003: 87). Such deposits have been recovered from settlement sites such as Danebury, Hampshire and Dalton Parlours and Wetwang in Yorkshire (Morris, 2011: 45, 60). Depositions of articulated bone groups and depositions of metalwork also appear at sanctuary sites, (Hill, 1995b, Hingley, 2006, Morris, 2011). Domestic livestock were frequently chosen for deposition but birds and dogs were also commonly found in ritual deposits in Continental Europe, Britain and Ireland (Parker Pearson, 1993: 221, Hill, 1995b: 28, Aldhouse Green, 2002: 45, Fulford, 2001, Dowling, 2006, Dent, 2010, Morris, 2011). Dogs are known to have been associated with the Celtic deities Sequana, Epona, Sucellus, and Nehalennia, all of whom have associations with healing but also with death and the Underworld, in what appears to be a broader tradition in European prehistory from the Mesolithic onwards (De Grossi Mazzorin & Minniti, 2006, Green, 2011). Dogs perhaps had a role as guardians or protectors of the gateways to other realms, making them an appropriate animal for deposition, particularly close to entranceways, as seen at Hallaton, Leicestershire (Dowling, 2006: 31, Score, 2012). However, there is also evidence that dogs had broader associations during this period and may have been considered persons and members of the community in their own right (Hill, 1995b: 105-108, Ingold, 2000, Fowler, 2004: 65-66). Morris (2011: 45-48) found distinct associations between animal species and deposit location, with deposits of cattle found on hillforts and a greater number of sheep/goat on non-hillfort sites. Pig was more closely associated with graves, a correlation evident in Arras Culture burials, where pig and sheep were included in the grave goods (Stead, 1991a: 140-144). Ravens and crows, which – like dogs – have close social ties to humans and associations with numerous deities, appear to have been particularly appropriate for deposition in pits (Serjeantson & Morris, 2011). Pits were the most common location for placement of animal bone groups of domesticated species, followed by ditches, most of which were boundary ditches (Morris, 2011: 46).

Metalwork, particularly ironwork, has magico-religious associations (Budd & Taylor, 1995, Haaland, 2004, Hingley, 2006) and iron objects, especially those associated with metalworking, agriculture and warfare, were imbued with “transformative power” (Giles, 2007b: 403). Giles (2007b: 405) has suggested that metalworking was perhaps thought of as being a liminal practice in which supernatural, and ancestral forces “might be negotiated and controlled”. Ironworking may have had deeper supernatural associations than other metalworking practices, due to the possible use of techniques such as using bone-coal as a source of carbon for carburisation (Gansum, 2004), and the quenching of blades in blood (Scott, 1990: 197, 199). Weapons, with their potential for taking human life had added potency, and the actualisation of lethal potentiality may have formed an important part of the biographies of weapons (Hingley, 2006: 216). Van Gennep (1960: 15-16) also highlights an association between sharp implements and protection against supernatural dangers. Iron ore sources may also have been mysterious and powerful. In East Yorkshire particularly, the most common iron ore was bog ore, intrinsically associated with the liminal landscapes of fens (Field & Parker Pearson, 2003: 190-194, Halkon, 2011, 2013: 106). Iron weapons were thus objects valued for more than their metal content and held particular power, rendering them appropriate offerings to placate supernatural forces or to secure contracts or negotiations with either natural or supernatural beings.

Settlement boundaries were liminal places that demarcated the human inhabited world from the broader landscape, beyond immediate human control (Parker Pearson, 1993: 204, Dowling, 2006). Constructed boundaries and linear earthworks directed movement through the landscape of people and livestock, and drew focus to natural features such as springs and streams, as well as to constructed features such barrow cemeteries (Dowling, 2006: 23, Halkon, 2008). The complex systems of enclosures, earthworks and trackways often respected much earlier features, indicating continuity from the Neolithic through to the Iron Age, highlighting connections to the ancestors as well as the broader landscape (Halkon, 2008: 159-160, Dent, 2010: 76). Linear earthworks, enclosures and droveways, created by human alteration and manipulation of the landscape were frequently oriented on watercourses and wetlands. Sutton Common was sited on an island surrounded by fenland (Van de Noort *et al.*, 2007). A survey of the Foulness Valley, Yorkshire revealed the majority of linear enclosures in the region were associated with watercourses, and the entrances of rectilinear enclosures opened to face

watercourses (Halkon, 2008: 163-165), further highlighting the difficulties of disentangling 'wet' and 'dry' contexts in the cosmology of Iron Age peoples in East Yorkshire, for example. The enclosure from which the South Cave Weapons Cache was excavated, was oriented on the nearby enclosed hilltop site of Mt. Airy, a site which in turn was oriented on watercourses (Halkon, 2008: 163 and 179). The Cache itself was positioned so that it aligned with the entrance of the hilltop enclosure and, the weapons had been positioned so that the spear tips and sword hilts pointed in the direction of a freshwater spring located within 100m of the Cache (Evans, 2003: 8).

In the past, arguments were made that the underlying motive for placing deposits in settlement ditches was for ease of relocation (Manning, 1972: 238). However, as Hingley (2006: 215) has cogently argued, iron in particular does not preserve well when deposited in the earth, rendering the interpretation of such deposits as utilitarian hoards unlikely. Further, Bradley (1998: 17-19) has shown, through accounts of modern hoarding practices, that the placement of private hoards in public locations is undesirable. The placement of these deposits then, in the communal areas of a settlement, raises questions of communal ritual practice as well as the possibility of individual practice in communally sanctioned or recognised contexts. Hill (1995b: 79) has convincingly argued that attention was paid to the interior and exterior of the boundary, the cardinal points of the compass, particularly the east, a concern with what appear to have been the 'front' and 'back' of the site, with a great emphasis, above all else, on entrances. All of these factors thus appear to have influenced which classes of object were appropriate for deposition at any point along a settlement boundary.

When structured deposits appear away from habitation areas they tend to be placed either in natural features such as springs, lakes, rivers and caves, or at built shrines. Ancient sources speak of natural features being a focus for religious activity for the Druids (Tacitus: *Annals*, 14.30, Strabo: IV.4.4). Insoll (2004: 73, 91, 147-148) has also demonstrated that natural places often feature strongly in religious rituals and highlights the limitations of modern interpretative nomenclature like 'shrine', which are laden with particular connotations that may not express the nuanced complexities of religious or ritual activity. Structured deposits were undoubtedly nuanced, and certain object classes were apparently more 'appropriate' for deposition in particular contexts. Iron currency bars, for example, have frequently been recovered from enclosure boundaries (Hingley,

2006: 224). Hingley also observed that, while swords and spearheads were deposited in both natural and enclosure contexts, swords were more strongly associated with natural contexts while spearheads were more frequently associated with enclosure boundaries than with natural places (Hingley, 2006: 235).

The South Cave Weapons Cache, therefore, is particularly important given the inclusion of high numbers of both spearheads and swords, positioned in an enclosure ditch that was also clearly associated with a water source (Evans, 2003). Bradley (1998: 153) observed that following the introduction of iron swords in Central and Western Europe, bronze swords continued to be deposited as votive objects in wet contexts, while iron swords became prestige items in funerary assemblages. Certainly, iron swords are a prominent feature in martial burials during the British Iron Age, which will be discussed in Chapter 7.

5.5 Accident or design: survival in the archaeological record

The practice of depositing wealth with the dead is widely accepted as intended, by the depositors, to be permanent, joining the deceased in another realm, no longer accessible to mortals without potential negative supernatural consequences. Moving beyond the funerary realm, the idea of permanence becomes less certain. Placing objects in contexts from which they might feasibly be retrieved has caused many archaeologists to question whether their survival in the archaeological record is due to what Needham (2001: 278) neatly terms “accidents of body or memory”. For Bradley (1998), ease of retrieval was a key determinant of whether a hoard should be considered ritual or utilitarian. Hingley (2006: 215) argued – in support of a ritual interpretation for ironwork hoards of the Iron Age and Romano-British periods – that the poor preservation of iron objects deposited in dry-land contexts, would render retrieval unproductive and consequently undesirable. For Needham (2001) however, “retrieval potential” has become a questionable, and possibly misleading, measure of ritual intent. He argues that “[a]rchaeologists have traditionally been uncomfortable about the idea of deposits being simultaneously ritual and impermanent...” (Needham, 2001: 287), and goes on to speculate on a range of situations which may call for, or permit, temporary ritual deposits, advocating a more open-minded consideration of retrieval options. For Needham (2001: 290-291), there is a window of opportunity in which certain social conventions might be employed to permit recovery of ritually deposited objects; the active decision *not* to exploit such

opportunities presenting a method for accruing prestige. As a comparative example, Needham (2001: 288) cites Roman practice which allowed for dedicated items to be released from temples by religious officials, allowing the objects to resume or take on a new functional life. Hingley (2006) drew a distinction between the supernatural potency and security of natural features compared with built shrines. Needham also felt some reservation applying the analogy to cultures whose cultic lives centred on natural places, without supporting temple infrastructure. However, such a separation projects modern concepts of sanctity, and the importance of architectural constructions, onto a past that may have perceived natural and constructed environments very differently (Ingold, 2000). Ultimately, the lack of physical infrastructure should not weaken Needham's (2001) line of argument. Larsson (2007: 79-80) argues for the potency of natural places as foci for the expression of social and cosmological interactions. The power of supernatural beings dwelling in the landscape could have resonated with just as much force and provided equivalent supernatural security for ritually deposited hoards. While Needham (2001) was writing in reference to the Bronze Age, there was clearly continuity of practice into the Iron Age (Hill, 1995b: 117). Further, although there is evidence for some shrines or 'temple' structures during that Late Iron Age at sites such as Uley and Hayling Island (Woodward & Leach, 1993, Hingley, 2006: 227), religious and spiritual attention continues to centre on features within the landscape throughout most of Iron Age Britain (Wait, 1985, Fulford, 2001: 213, Hingley, 2006: 227).

Powerful embargoes appear to have been in force preventing the reclamation of wealth items in places like La Tène, where deposition practices continued over extended periods of time, and where the wealth of the deposition site must have been widely known in the contemporary community. Bradley's suggestion that the objects could not easily have been retrieved fails to stand-up when you consider the technically basic 'fishing' expeditions that brought the extent of La Tène's wealth to light in the nineteenth century, a point picked up by Fischer (2011: 1307). Tarzia (1989) has observed possible remnants of the kinds of taboos applied to ritual hoards or treasures in the Germanic epic tradition. While the epics on which he focuses (*Beowulf* and *Sigurth's Saga* [or Sigurd]) were written down in the medieval period, he believes they preserve much older didactic lessons for dealing with the accidental discovery of hoards, and warnings on the consequences of interfering with treasures belonging to supernatural domains. Tarzia (1989: 109-115) notes several recurrent themes in the epic

tradition, including: supernatural guardians protecting hoards, and negative consequences for anyone taking from a hoard. Possible consequences range from the tainted objects fomenting distrust, quarrels and murder within their immediate family, to community level consequences such as warfare and the enslavement by foreigners of the community's women. Another recurrent motif is a need to return the hoard to the place from whence it had been taken to ameliorate these ill-effects. The importance of returning items to supernatural guardians also recurs in Arthurian legend, where Excalibur had to be returned to the Lady of the Lake following Arthur's death (Bradley, 1998: 1-4). Like *Beowulf*, the Arthurian legends are late, but likely preserve much older tropes associated with pre-Christian ritual practice. Deeply-rooted tropes of this nature infer that, while certain circumstances may have permitted retrieval as Needham proposes, these would have been quite specific and tightly controlled. As Tarzia contends, "unsanctioned" manipulation of hoards opens the way for "social chaos" (Tarzia, 1989: 115).

5.6 Conclusions: depositional practices in Iron Age Britain

Some basic patterns can be observed in depositional practices in Iron Age Britain. There is clearly a diversity of ritual or votive practice ranging from the deposition of individual objects to large collections of mixed classes of object. Watery locations remain a focus for the deposition of votive objects, including spearheads, throughout the Iron Age in Britain. The type of spearhead selected for deposition could change over time and there appear to be some geographic patterns. Large, Type 2.1 long, angular thrusting spearheads appear in the prominent deposits of Llyn Cerrig Bach, Fiskerton and the South Cave Weapons Cache. Yet this class of spearhead is absent from sites like Uley, Orsett 'Cock' and Bredon Hill. Spearheads were wholly absent from the Iron Age finds at Flag Fen, suggesting that the appropriateness of certain classes of object may have differed substantially inter-regionally. The South Cave Weapons Cache demonstrates that a diversity of spearhead forms could be deemed appropriate for deposition during the Late Iron Age. At most sites throwing spearhead types are a prominent feature of deposits, dominating the assemblage at Fiskerton and, are the sole functional class represented at Uley. The absence of throwing spearhead forms at Llyn Cerrig Bach appears to be unusual and contrary to the rites observed elsewhere in Iron Age Britain. The martial functions of these spearhead forms will be discussed in Chapter 8.

Larger depositions, like the South Cave Weapons Cache, clearly represent a significant investment of wealth. The Cache was placed with great care and aesthetic consideration, so that the most elaborate and costly pieces were on display. The aesthetic placement suggests the Cache may have been deposited in the presence of an audience. The inclusion of a cut of articulated cattle bones raises the prospect that feasting may have formed part of the proceedings, although the possibility that these were an incidental inclusion cannot be discounted. The Cache was sealed with carefully selected sherds from an imported amphora, associated with the consumption of olive oil, a luxury import. The inclusion of a fragment from a quern stone, which may have seen reuse in a hearth may also have held symbolic meaning.

A possible association with fire-cracked stones for the spearheads from Four Crosses, Powys, raises the prospect that there is a connection between the deposition of weapons and objects which had been subjected to fire. Hill (1995b: 110) has suggested that items from the hearth were sometimes singled out for special treatment in Iron Age votive contexts. It could further be suggested that the amphora fragments from the South Cave Weapons Cache, having undergone a firing process in their manufacture, also have an association with exposure to extreme heat. At South Cadbury, the mixed hoard included clay sling-shot, which had been subjected to extreme heat prior to deposition. A pit burial at Weston-super-Mare, Somerset, was also reported to have included sling-shot associated with charred grain and three human skeletons (Whimster, 1981: 285). At Sutton Common charred grain was also noted in the small enclosure ditch (Pearson *et al.*, 1997: 248). Thus fire, or objects which had been exposed to extreme heat, may have formed part of the ritual process. At Madmarston Camp a pit with charred material was located adjacent to the hoard of currency bars, though a stratigraphic association between the pit and the hoard is unclear. With only these limited examples, it is a highly speculative suggestion. However, should further examples come to notice, this may form a recurrent pattern of association.

The covering of deposits with stones is also a repeated practice, observed at South Cadbury, where the south-western gateway complex and the deposition of a single billhook had both been sealed over with paving. At Madmarston Camp, the hoard of currency bars was sealed below a layer of stones, a practice which may also have been enacted at Four Crosses, and possibly Bredon Hill, where Hencken (1939: 22) observed the collapse of the walling of the inner entrance over the deposit of human remains and

martial objects (discussed in Chapter 6). At South Cave, the use of large amphora sherds and a piece of quern stone, may have served the same function as stones in sealing the deposit. If opportunities that permitted the reclamation of deposited objects existed, sealing deposits with stones may have offered some protection slowing or preventing water from seeping into the deposits, and aiding in relocation. The evidence is more suggestive than conclusive, but highlights the need to pay particular heed to the repetition of subtle associations, which may indicate aspects of ritual practice.

Another repeated motif in structured deposits is the wrapping of objects in straw or other organic matter. The spearheads included in the SCWC had been wrapped in straw, as had the billhook deposited as an individual object at South Cadbury Castle. Likewise, the sling bullets which formed part of a mixed hoard at South Cadbury, had also been enveloped in straw. Hill (1995b: 23) highlighted that little attention was paid to plant and other environmental remains, although this situation has changed significantly since the time of his writing, such as the intensive palaeoenvironmental analyses undertaken at Sutton Common (Van de Noort *et al.*, 2007: 147-150). At Madmarston Camp the hoard of currency bars, which imitate weapon forms, had also been bound prior to deposition. The process of carefully wrapping these objects prior to deposition could have had ritual connotations, or may have been intended to offer some kind of protection for the objects. If there were circumstances under which structured deposits could be safely reclaimed, such measures might have created micro-environments which aided preservation.

Very few of the weapons recovered from structured deposits show signs of ritual destruction. One spearhead and two swords from Llyn Cerrig Bach and six spearheads from the south-western gateway at South Cadbury Castle (discussed in Chapter 6) had been subjected to deliberate manipulation prior to deposition. The placement of weapons, particularly iron weapons, into environments which were not conducive to their preservation, by burying them, or submerging them in water, could have been perceived as passive acts of destruction, resulting in a similar outcome, without the need for violent damage.

The chronology of some of the deposits discussed in this chapter also offers the potential to shed light on aspects of ritual and the cosmological and religious life of the native peoples of Britain. The deposit of spearheads in ditch F2 at Orsett ‘Cock’ has

been dated to around the time of the Roman Conquest. Similarly, the deposits of spearheads in ditches F264 and F251 at Uley are dated around the mid first century AD. The South Cave Weapons Cache and the Hallaton hoards can also be dated to the period when the Romans were moving into the local area. It is thus possible that the impetus for these deposits may have been a spiritual or religious response to the crisis of Roman conquest, perhaps seeking aid from, or appeasement of, supernatural entities.

It is clear that weapons, and spearheads in particular, played an important role in the cosmology and culture of Iron Age peoples in Britain. The inclusion of spearheads in structured deposits from the Middle and Late Iron Ages suggest that spears were a potent class of object, which was appropriate for dedications in both settlement and sanctuary contexts. There was a clear association between depositions and boundaries, and spearheads could have been seen to possess protective powers. Such deposits may well have served to cement or negotiate relationships between living persons or communities, or between persons and supernatural entities.

The current chapter has offered an overview of depositional practices involving spearheads. Chapter 6 furthers this theme, offering a synthesis of the current state of research into Iron Age mortuary and burial practices, particularly where there are associations with weapons or violence. Chapter 7 delves more deeply into martial burials, as a critically important sub-set of funerary practice which often included spearheads.

6 Mortuary and Funerary Practices in the British Iron Age

6.1 Introduction: rituals and the dead

This chapter, and the following chapter, will explore a range of mortuary treatments including formal funerary practices, propitiatory rites and the structured deposition of fragmentary human remains, which may be the result of trophy-taking practices. Greatest attention will be paid to those practices which featured an association with weapons or acts of violence. Chapter 7 will explore martial burial as a subset of funerary practice.

“The dead do not bury themselves” as Parker Pearson (1999a: 3) reminds us, however, much of our understanding of past societies is drawn from mortuary contexts and the British Iron Age is no exception. The death of an individual creates a moment of crisis within a small community and specific rites must be performed to ensure the deceased passes from the living state to the ancestor state in the correct way (Parker Pearson, 1993: 204). Conventions are observed which see individuals treated in specific ways. Decisions are made about how the body should be treated, including the performance of practices such as burial, cremation or excarnation. Objects which might accompany the deceased are selected with care and may carry weight of meaning, expressing strong statements about the life of the deceased, the social status of those performing the mortuary rites and cosmological belief systems of the community more broadly (Parker Pearson, 1993: 207, Aldhouse Green, 2002: 55). It is important to recognise, however, that not all mortuary treatments are funerary in nature (Duday, 2006: 30).

In general, funerary and mortuary rites for individuals appear to have been observed with greater frequency in Iron Age Britain and Europe than rites associated with multiple interments. Wells argues that this creates a wealth of data about individuals within Iron Age communities, allowing for exploration of individual identity for the Iron Age period in Europe (Wells, 1998: 245). However, conversely we could argue that we lack insights into social structures and variability. Furthermore, it is apparent that archaeologically detectable mortuary practices are uncommon for much of the British Iron Age, and, where identified, there is notable variation in those practices which have been recorded (Whimster, 1981: 4-36, Tracey, 2012: 367, Armit *et al.*, 2013). As such, we need to be aware of the limitations inherent in our studies of burial during the Iron Age, but it is noted here that the current focus on burials with weapons or those with

evidence for violence, whilst skewed, is necessary in this study. Despite this biased approach, the following sections will outline the nature and breadth of burial practices in evidence across the Iron Age period in Britain.

6.2 *Variation in mortuary practice*

Significant variation is evident in the mortuary practices of the British Iron Age. Whimster (1981) attempted to consolidate the archaeological evidence for these, and to define the range of known mortuary practices. At the time Whimster (1981) was writing, archaeological theory did not generally draw a clear distinction between funerary practices and mortuary practices (for a broadly contemporary theoretical assessment see: Binford, 1971, or Tainter, 1978, and, for a more recent theoretical review, see: Chapman, 2003). Funerary rites are practices which involve the formal disposal of human remains which commemorate the life of the individual. Mortuary practices involve human remains, but are not necessarily commemorative acts recognising a person, and may express cosmological concepts unrelated to the life of the individuals whose remains are being utilised. Whimster (1981: 190) identified six distinct funerary practices, although the paucity of evidence for much of the Iron Age led him to conclude that funerary practices for the majority of people who lived in Britain from 1,000 to 400 BC were archaeologically invisible. Much of the evidence on which he based his assessment dates from the second half of the first millennium BC. During this period identified practices included pit burials; Durotrigian inhumation; cist burials; barrow burials (including associated secondary burials); Aylesford-Swarling Culture cremation burials; and, a small but distinct group of inhumation burials with swords (Whimster, 1981: 191-195). His analysis focuses primarily on southern England, where archaeological investigations had been most intensive. Nevertheless, he also included a significant chapter on the barrow burials of East Yorkshire, identified as ‘La Tène inhumation’ alongside a brief précis of practices in northern and western Britain. This work was perhaps more reflective of the extent of archaeological inquiry than of actual funerary or mortuary practices. His work was intended as an “interim classification” of burial practices, with the expectation that future research would bring a greater understanding of the variety and meaning of mortuary practices (Whimster, 1981: 2). Unfortunately, as Armit *et al.* (2013: 73) observe: “in the 30 years since Whimster compiled his synthesis, Iron Age funerary practice remains poorly understood.” Some subsequent research has been conducted into each of the mortuary

practices Whimster observed, and the following section addresses the current state of research for each mortuary practice in turn.

6.2.1 *Pit burials*

Pit burials are the deposition of complete, articulated human skeletons in pits which had previously served as grain stores (Cunliffe, 1992). The pits would appear to have been the primary burial location for these individuals. Slow progress towards an understanding of the mortuary practice of pit burials has been made over the past three decades, and Cunliffe (1992, 2003: 146-148), Hill (1995a), Redfern (2008, Redfern & Chamberlain, 2011), Tracey (2012), Armit *et al.* (2013) and others have made significant contributions to the debate; suggesting new interpretations of the evidence, and opening new avenues of inquiry. The articulated nature of pit deposits demonstrates that the deceased individuals were placed in the pits very shortly after death (Duday, 2006: 33). The original function of pits selected for the deposition of these individuals, being grain stores, indicates that the intent of these burials was not funerary (Cunliffe, 1992). Thus, pit burials, identified by Whimster (1981: 5-17) as a funerary practice for a select number of individuals, are now generally accepted as propitiatory offerings to ensure fertility, and the signs of physical trauma observed in the osteological analyses of some of these individuals is seen as indicative of human sacrifice (Cunliffe, 1992: 77, 2003: 146-147, Bradley, 1998: 164). The individuals interred in the pit burials could have come from either inside or outside of the community. Support for this observation may be forthcoming from Caesar's *De Bello Gallico* (VI.16) in which he states that criminals and prisoners of war are appropriate for sacrifice amongst the Gallic peoples. Tacitus also describes similar practices amongst the Germanic peoples (*Germania*, 10, 12). Caesar goes on to note that, when criminals or prisoners were unavailable for sacrifice, the "*innocentium*" (innocent) would make acceptable sacrifices (VI.16.5). Sacrificial practices, such as bog bodies (discussed below), observed in northern Europe have also been recorded in Britain (Aldhouse Green, 2002: 51). Many of these activities were reported to be administered by priestly classes, including the Druids, whose presence in Iron Age and Roman Britain is well-attested (Tacitus: *Annals* 14.28.30). Alternatively, individuals may have volunteered for sacrifice (Aldhouse Green, 2002: 125). Thus, complete human remains from Iron Age pit contexts should not be interpreted as a funerary rite, rather as a mortuary practice with propitiatory intent.

In addition to complete human remains, pit deposits include a range of objects from specific classes, including fragmentary human remains (with a preference for skull and long-bone fragments), articulated animal bone groups, ceramics and metalwork, all of which have been deposited in a structured manner as demonstrated in Hill's (1995b) watershed analysis. Pit deposits of this nature very rarely include weapons and, in those instances where weapons were included, it would seem that the underlying factor which determined their inclusion was their material of manufacture (iron), rather than their function as weapons *per se* (Hill, 1995b: 108). Deposits of fragmentary remains in pits form part of a broader mortuary tradition of depositing fragmentary human remains, discussed in more detail, below.

6.2.2 *Ditch and rampart burials*

The inclusion of individual or multiple interments in the entrance ditches or ramparts of settlements and hillforts is a rite that has come under review as a mortuary practice. In Chapter 5 the deposition of animal remains in ditches and other settlement contexts was discussed. However, human remains have also been recovered from ditch contexts. Whimster (1981: 29) associated the practice with pit burials in his assessment, deeming the two rites to be related as they both involved burial within settlement boundaries. Excavations at southern English hillfort sites such as Bredon Hill (Hencken, 1939: 54-58), Weston-super-Mare (Whimster, 1981), Spettisbury (Gresham, 1939), Maiden Castle (Sharples, 1991a, Redfern, 2008, 2009, 2011), Cadbury Castle (Barrett *et al.*, 2000), and Danebury (Cunliffe, 2003: 149-158) recovered human remains from ditch or rampart deposits, frequently showing signs of physical trauma (Collis, 1973: 129, Whimster, 1981: 420-425, Cunliffe, 2003: 77). At Spettisbury (Gresham, 1939), Bredon Hill (Hencken, 1939) and South Cadbury (Barrett *et al.*, 2000) the ditch and rampart deposits also included multiple weapons, some of distinctively Roman types (Collis, 1973: *loc. cit.*, Whimster, 1981: 420-425). When these southern sites were initially excavated there was a tendency for the excavators to link these deposits with the Roman conquest (Hingley, 2006: 226). For example, the deposit of at least 22 individuals in the south-western gate complex at Cadbury Castle was initially linked to the Roman conquest and later to the Boudican revolt, and is still colloquially referred to as the 'massacre' deposit (Barrett *et al.*, 2000: 106). However, more recent analyses have stepped away from attempts to link such deposits with specific episodes of violent conflict recorded in Classical sources and to examine them stratigraphically, and

contextually. Whimster (1981) was one of the first to recognise that such deposits often coincide with episodes of construction or renewal, a finding which has been reaffirmed by subsequent studies (Barrett *et al.*, 2000: 106, Cunliffe, 2003: 156).

The deposit of human remains as part of settlement or boundary renewal may be interpreted as a community-level rite of passage, aimed at making the settlement safe and protected for the resident community, rather than as a formal funerary rite (van Gennep, 1960: 24, Dowling, 2006: 21-22). The inclusion of weapons in such deposits may strengthen their protective power (Aldhouse Green, 2002: 22). Pliny's *Natural History* notes the magico-religious power of iron weapons, particularly those which had been used to kill a human being (quoted in Hingley, 2006: 216), and van Gennep has also noted a common association between sharp implements and protection against evil (van Gennep, 1960: 15-16). The liminal nature of settlement boundaries and the particular significance of entrance ways were addressed in Chapter 5.

The phenomenon does not appear to have been unique to southern Britain, however, with excavations at Fin Cop, a hillfort site in Derbyshire, revealing the remains of at least nine individuals in secondary fill deposits within the site's defensive ditches, which were connected with the destruction of the associated wall (Waddington, 2011: 81). These included the articulated skeletons of three adult females, an adolescent of indeterminate sex, a number of neonates/perinates and a child of approximately two years of age (Waddington, 2010: 39-48, 2011: 53-83, 2012: 184-188). The remains have been AMS radiocarbon dated to 410-40 Cal BC, and their deposition was contextually associated with the final destruction phase of the fort's occupation (Waddington, 2012: 193-203). None of the remains exhibited skeletal evidence for injuries which could account for their cause of death, although this does not preclude death by violence (Waddington, 2010: 55-56, 2011: 106). A violent death is certainly plausible for the adolescent skeleton, whose wrists appear to have been bound (Waddington, 2012: 187). Waddington (2011: 106-108) argues that the deposition of these women and children is the unceremonious disposal of the victims of Iron Age warfare. However, their seemingly casual disposal, quickly sealed by the tumbling of the associated walls, may more appropriately be considered a sacrificial rite, ritually closing the site, which was not used again until the medieval period.

The following section offers a brief description of British Iron Age sites, included in the database, where human remains and spearheads were discovered in settlement entrances or ramparts.

6.2.2.a *Bredon Hill*

Bredon Hill, Worcestershire, introduced in Chapter 5, also included a significant deposit of human remains in association with spearheads.

An outer rampart was interpreted by Hencken (1939: 19) as a second phase of Iron Age construction, datable to the first century AD. However, Cunliffe (2005: 359) has cast doubt over the chronology of the rampart relative to the refortification of the inner entrance to the site. Above the latest paving level to the inner entrance, the excavators encountered what Hencken believed to be evidence of a massacre:

On the last paving level the remains of over fifty individuals were found, consisting mainly, as far as could be determined, of young adult males. From the position of the bodies it was clear that the men had fallen during a desperate struggle around the entrance...The position of the bodies upon the roadway makes it quite impossible to consider them in any way as burials, for the bodies lay exactly where they had fallen or been thrown. Any further occupation of the camp under such circumstances would have been thus quite impossible. The skeletons were in an extremely fragmentary condition, due partly to the collapse of the walling upon them...Enough remained, however, to show that the bodies had undergone extensive mutilation, possibly as some ritual observance, but also possible merely as a barbarous outrage (Hencken, 1939: 21-22).

Hencken (1939: 23) noted the underrepresentation of limbs and skulls, with the exception of a careful placement of the tops of human skulls across the gateway and mounted upon the gateway itself, which appeared to have been fired, after the skulls had been placed on display. While Hencken identified between 27 and 64 individuals – based on the cranial, mandibular and post cranial osteological elements – more recent analysis has suggested that there were perhaps no more than 16 individuals represented in the inner gateway (Hencken, 1939: 54, Hurst & Jackson, 2006: 13). Osteological analysis conducted in the 1990s for an unpublished MA thesis at the University of

Leicester also found no evidence of physical trauma that could be directly associated with interpersonal violence. The lack of any indicators for interpersonal violence led to an alternative interpretation, that perhaps the gateway had been used as an excarnation site (Hurst & Jackson, 2006: 12-15). Hingley (2006: 226) has suggested that the deposit may form part of a broader tradition of “ritual deposits associated with sacred locations.”

Found in association with the human remains were a number of items of metalwork including seven iron spearheads. Other finds included an iron sword scabbard and copper alloy elements, which Hencken interpreted as dagger chapes, but which Stead later identified as fittings from a hide-shaped shield (Hencken, 1939: 24, 66, Stead, 1991b: 24). Stead (1991b: *ibid.*) has also suggested that the date for the ‘massacre’ deposit should be pushed back to the first century BC, based on these shield fittings and the form of the associated sword scabbard. Hingley (2006: 226) posited that the weapons may also have been on display, along with the human remains, prior to deposition. An eighth spearhead (ID 94) was also recovered near to the north east entrance of the site (discussed in Chapter 5). The spearheads were well-illustrated, and their dimensions were published in Hencken’s (1939: 76-78) report and it was thus possible to include them in the database. Four of the spearheads (IDs 97, 98, 100 and 101) can be allocated to Type 1.1 diamond-bladed spearheads. One (ID 99) can be identified as a small, leaf-bladed Type 1.2 spearhead. Another spearhead (ID 95) from the ‘massacre’ deposit can be allocated to the versatile Type 3.4 classic form, similar to the spearhead (ID 94), which was recovered from outside the north east entrance. The sixth spearhead was a fragmentary tip that was not illustrated, and no dimensions were given. However, Hencken’s description suggests a similar blade form to ID 95, and thus this may also have been a versatile spearhead form. Ultimately, the spearheads recovered from Bredon Hill are a mixture of widely distributed versatile and throwing spearhead forms, with no heavy thrusting spearheads represented.

6.2.2.b *South Cadbury, Somerset*

The south-western gateway complex, which is of greatest significance to the current study, was excavated between 1968 and 1970. Excavations revealed that the gateway had undergone repeated phases of construction and erosion, with later phases of activity cutting into earlier phases (Barrett *et al.*, 2000: 18). Consequently, the stratigraphy for this part of the site was often inverted and difficult to interpret. During excavation of the

gateway, a complex deposit of human remains and metal objects was uncovered, which included spearheads (Figure 6.1). The discovery was described by Alcock (1972: 105):

Down the length of the Ultimate Iron Age passage-way were scattered well over a hundred bronze brooches – some of them broken, but others still in working condition. Then there was a large collection of iron pikes and javelins, indicating a battle between native defenders and Roman assailants...

As for the bodies, there were fragments of about thirty men, women and children, in every imaginable state of dismemberment, strewn along the passage. So gruesome was the scene that some of our volunteers refused to work there.

Thus the deposit was initially interpreted as the result of a massacre, directly connected with the Roman conquest. When the ceramics and brooches were dated to the later first century AD, the deposit was reinterpreted as a massacre associated with the Boudican revolt (Barrett *et al.*, 2000: 106). The reassessment of the gateway conducted as part of the South Cadbury Environs Project identified five separate context groups relating to this so-called massacre deposit (Barrett *et al.*, 2000: 107):

- I. Outside threshold
- II. Middle passageway
- III. Upper passageway
- IV. West guard chamber
- V. Sealing rubble: lower and middle passageway

Analysis of finds from the five context groups revealed, in total, the remains of a minimum of 22 and perhaps as many as 92 individuals. Four individuals could be confidently sexed as adult male, two as adult female, one infant less than a year old, 16 pre-pubescent children, 23 adolescents under 19 years and up to 46 adults over the age of 19, none of which could be sexed with any confidence (Barrett *et al.*, 2000: 107). There was an episode of burning associated with the deposit, which appeared to be limited to the wooden gate, with a later burning of the stone passageway. Unfortunately, it was not possible to obtain clear radiocarbon dates for either event, with contradictory

results thought by Barrett *et al.* (2000: 106) to have been caused by later organic material contaminating the sample.



Figure 6.1: Cadbury Castle, spearhead associated with human remains in context group III, south-western gateway (Barrett *et al.*, 2000: fig.58).

The majority of the human remains were found in context groups I and II, i.e. outside the threshold and in the main passageway. The remains may have been left exposed for a period of time, and to have been covered by a natural silting up of the area before the deposit was sealed over with rubble when the gateway was restructured (context group V) (Barrett *et al.*, 2000: 108). A number of Iron Age and Romano-British pottery sherds were discovered in the fill of context groups I-IV suggesting a mid to late first century AD date for the silting up of these deposits (Barrett *et al.*, 2000: 108-109). Some remains showed evidence of burning, possibly, although not necessarily, associated with the burning of the gateway. Other bones showed signs of gnawing, suggesting they had been exposed, and Alcock (1972: 106) dramatically suggested they had been “pulled to pieces by wolves and other wild beasts.” Yet, other remains, particularly articulated hands and feet, indicated that they had not remained exposed for any length of time (Barrett *et al.*, 2000).

Alcock (1972: 105) identified just one individual with signs of physical trauma, a chipped ulna, he thought might represent a defensive parry injury. In their reassessment,

Barrett *et al.* (2000: 111) identified nine individuals with indicators of physical trauma: “mainly injuries to the upper leg, but included one slashed skull fragment.” Redfern (2011: 115) reported that the remains had “weapon injuries to all areas of the body and many bones have evidence for violent blows and cutmarks” citing an unpublished MSc thesis from Bournemouth University. Tucker (2013) reported four individuals with trauma consistent with decapitation, citing the same source. Ultimately, there appears to be a significant level of violence represented in the skeletal remains from South Cadbury, and while the massacre interpretation cannot be ruled out, the prospect “that these deposits represent the intentional deposition of parts of human bodies” must also be considered (Barrett *et al.*, 2000: 111). These two interpretations are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Indeed, it is possible that what may be represented here is the result of an episode of violent destruction, followed by a period of repeated or ongoing deposition of further human remains and other objects, in a process of enshrinement. Fogelin and Schiffer (2015: 6) have argued that such acts can “occur at...places immediately after a horrific loss of life.”

In association with the skeletal remains was a significant quantity of martial objects, summarised in Table 6.1. While it was not possible to collect data on the weapons recovered from South Cadbury first-hand, the spearheads were well-published and it was possible to include the majority of them in the database using the published information.

Table 6.1: Weapons recorded from the south-western gateway complex at South Cadbury Castle.

Context Group	Spear-head	Ferrule	Balista Bolt	LORICA Segmentata	Sword Chape	Iron Shield Boss	Iron Shield Grips	Knife Scabbard	Cylindrical Socket
Context Group I	2			1					
Context Group II	12	1	8	1	1	1		1	1
Context Group III	5		6						
Context Group IV	13	1	3			2	2		
Context Group V	1	1	1						

Of the 51 objects from the south-western gateway identified in the published report as either spearheads or bolt-heads, 38 have been included in the database, summarised in Table 6.2. Ten spearheads meet the criteria for allocation to the Type 1.3 small, triangular-bladed form, nine of which were described as “catapult bolt-heads” by Barrett *et al.* (2000: 122). These points were thought to be functionally similar to the more traditionally recognised Roman bolt-heads, which feature a square pyramidal section. Five examples of this kind of bolt-head were also recovered from the south-western

gateway. The majority of spearheads are throwing or projectile forms, with a smaller number of versatile spearheads. None of the spearheads are members of the heavy thrusting types. The inclusion of examples of *lorica segmentata*, along with recognised Roman artillery forms, indicates contact with the Roman military. However, the nature and extent of this contact remains uncertain.

Table 6.2: Summary of spearhead types from the south-western gateway 'massacre' deposit at South Cadbury Castle.

Type	Number of Examples	IDs	Average Length (mm)	Average Blade Length (mm)
1.1.a.1 Diamond-bladed	2	179, 185	59	36
1.1.b.2 Elongated diamond-bladed with long socket	2	161, 199	122	45
1.1.b Elongated diamond-bladed	1	196	135	75
1.2 Small leaf-bladed	6	163-5, 167, 193, 197	122	66
1.3 Small triangle-bladed	10	171, 172, 177, 178, 180, 182, 191, 192, 195, 200	76	42
1.7 Hybrid	2	175, 181	255	60
3.3.a Tapered	6	170, 173, 174, 186, 188, 190	243	177
3.4 Classic	1	166	275	189
Indeterminate	10	162, 168, 169, 176, 183, 184, 187, 189, 194, 198	67	70

The martial objects appear to have been placed in discrete groups, and at least seven of the spearheads (IDs 166, 179, 184, 185, 189, 190 and 194) had been subjected to deliberate damage. Barrett *et al.* (2000: 112) concluded from their treatment and placement “that the objects were deliberately placed in the west chamber and passage, and were not the result of casual loss in battle.” Similarly, the brooches recovered from context groups I-V do not appear to have all been “directly associated with the deposit of massacred bodies” and seemingly represent a depositional practice which took place over a period of time (Barrett *et al.*, 2000: 112-113).

6.2.2.c Spettisbury, Dorset

Spettisbury Rings is a univallate hillfort close to Hod Hill in Dorset, with an entrance on the north-west side of the fort. At the north-eastern corner of the site a gruesome discovery was made during the cutting of railway works in 1857 (Gresham, 1939). In the enclosing ditch, the remains of 80-90 individuals were located in a pit, reported to

measure approximately 10m long and 4.5m wide, ranging in depth from 1.2m to 3m (Gresham, 1939: 116). The record of excavation was preserved by Henry Durden, a local antiquarian, who also collected much of the early material recorded from Hod Hill (discussed in Chapter 5). Gresham (1939) consulted Durden's report on Spettisbury and relates his description that the skulls of at least two of the skeletons exhibited signs of violence: one with a possible sword cut to the left side, and another with a spearhead embedded in it. An iron sword and several spearheads were also recovered from the deposit. These indicators of violence, and the reported state of disarray with which the skeletons appear to have been placed in the pit, have led to the deposit frequently being interpreted as a mass grave associated with the Roman conquest of the site (Cunliffe, 2005: 148). However, other objects were notably recovered in direct association with the skeletal remains, which are not consistent with battle. These included brooches, iron currency bars, a copper alloy cauldron, weaving comb, finger rings, and sherds of pottery. The pit thus appears to have been a structured deposit of human remains and metalwork similar to that uncovered at the south-western gateway complex at South Cadbury. Like Cadbury Castle, the possibility that this represents a violent episode followed by acts of enshrinement is a plausible interpretation.

Thirteen iron spearheads found at Spettisbury were published by Gresham (1939), and it was possible to directly examine three of these during the data collection for this thesis. Four of the spearheads were thought by Gresham to be of Roman manufacture, based on their similarity to examples recovered from Maiden Castle. The publication of these spearheads was detailed enough to allow their inclusion in the database. It was possible to allocate 12 of the spearheads to a type, and, once again throwing spearhead forms dominate the assemblage. Five spearheads (IDs 275, 439, 440, 441 and 445) are members of Type 1.2, small leaf-bladed, another three (IDs 276, 442 and 443) are Type 1.1.b elongated diamond-bladed spearheads (two Type 1.1.b.1, one Type 1.1.b.2). A single example could be allocated to each Type 1.4 narrow-necked (ID 438), and Type 1.5 triangle-bladed (ID 437). The Type 1.5 spearhead (ID 437, illustrated in Chapter 4) is something of an outlier, with a much longer socket than any of the other examples of the type. A small, incomplete spear blade (ID 446) could not be allocated to a type, however, its form and small dimensions are consistent with throwing spearhead forms. Two spearheads could be identified as members of versatile spearhead forms with one example allocated each to Type 3.3 tapered (ID 444) and Type 3.4 classic (ID 274)

spearheads. None of the spearheads recovered from Spettisbury were identifiable as members of the thrusting spearhead types. Spearhead ID 440, allocated to Type 1.2, (Gresham, 1939: 122, spearhead No.3), was recorded as found in direct association with a skeleton, perhaps the skull identified by Durden. Unfortunately, the specific locations of the other objects in the deposit do not appear to have been recorded.

6.2.3 *Excarnation and structured deposition of fragmentary remains*

Excarnation, one of Whimster's (1981) 'invisible' mortuary rites has been tentatively associated with a class of four-post structures, sometimes interpreted as excarnation or exposure platforms (Redfern, 2008: 283, Edwards *et al.*, 2009: 47). However, this interpretation is far from universally accepted (Tracey, 2012: 373), and interpretations that they functioned as raised grain stores are more broadly recognised, supported for example by the palaeoenvironmental analyses of post-hole deposits from Sutton Common, South Yorkshire (Van de Noort *et al.*, 2007: 114-117 and 126-129).

There is, however, plentiful evidence for the secondary mortuary rite of depositing disarticulated or fragmentary human remains within settlement contexts, and such rites appear to be associated with excarnation practices (Redfern, 2008, Fitzpatrick, 2011: 124, Armit *et al.*, 2013). Redfern (2008) conducted a re-analysis of 27 fragmentary human skeletal remains from structured deposits in pits, ditches and one possible house at the Iron Age hillforts of Danebury and Maiden Castle, Dorset. The deposition of fragmentary human remains within such contexts was practiced at Danebury with remarkable consistency throughout the span of its occupation between the fifth and first centuries BC (Tracey, 2012: 370). Redfern (2008) observed cut-marks on the bones from Danebury, associated with de-fleshing and dry fractures indicative of dismemberment, arguing that these provide evidence for exposure or excarnation practices, although this evidence may simply indicate that the bodies were being processed. She also found some evidence of perimortem trauma (that is, physical trauma which occurred at or around the time of death). Both sharp-force and blunt-force trauma were noted, raising the possibility that at least three fragments came from individuals who may have suffered violent deaths (Redfern, 2008: 287-294). Tracey (2012: 373) also conducted a re-analysis of fragmentary skeletal material from Danebury and found evidence of perimortem trauma relating to the remains of seven individuals.

Redfern (2008: 294) has argued that the deposition of fragmentary remains, particularly skull and long-bone fragments, are evidence of secondary burial rites following a period of exposure as part of the funerary rite for individuals who had lived within the settlement, a position supported by Fitzpatrick (2011: 124). Beyond the hillfort dominated zone, the practice of depositing fragmentary human remains within settlement boundaries and domestic contexts appears to have been widespread throughout Britain's 'Long Iron Age' (c.700 BC – AD 800). Depositions of this nature have been recorded at settlement sites from Wessex (Hill, 1995b: 12-13, 55, 106) to Atlantic Scotland, where Armit and Ginn (2007) analysed fragmentary remains recorded from domestic contexts at 37 Iron Age sites. The practice appears to have been so widespread that Armit and Ginn (2007: 116) suggested the absence of such deposits may be more attributable to a lack of preservation in the archaeological record than to an absence of practice.

Finds of skulls from riverine contexts may also be representative of ritual or funerary activity. Schulting and Bradley (2013) have argued that finds of human crania recovered from the Thames (many exhibiting signs of ante-mortem or perimortem trauma), datable to the Bronze Age and Early Iron Age form part of a broader, northern European practice of depositing weapons and human remains in watery places. However, the depositional processes underlying river finds can be difficult to discern, and river finds are open to a wider range of interpretations than finds of fragmentary remains within settlement boundaries (Knüsel & Carr, 1995, Edwards *et al.*, 2009).

Recent analysis of fragmentary human remains from Broxmouth, an Iron Age hillfort in East Lothian, Scotland, places the practice of depositing fragmentary remains within settlement contexts in a different light, which may not have been of a funerary nature (Armit *et al.*, 2013). The site of Broxmouth yielded three distinct contexts in which human remains were discovered: a small, formal cemetery where eight individual inhumations and one double inhumation were discovered (none of which exhibited indicators of perimortem trauma); four isolated inhumations from within the settlement boundaries (one showing evidence of perimortem trauma); and, "22 disarticulated fragments or fragment groups" predominantly recovered from houses or ditches, similar to the contexts at Danebury and Maiden Castle (Armit *et al.*, 2013: 84). AMS radiocarbon dates indicate that the deposition of fragmentary remains was practiced over an extended period, between 545 and 130 Cal BC (Armit *et al.*, 2013: 88). As

Redfern (2008: 296) found for the Dorset material, the fragmentary remains showed canid gnawing marks indicative of a period of exposure prior to deposition (Armit *et al.*, 2013: 84). Further, similar to the evidence from Dorset, six of the fragmentary remains from Broxmouth exhibited signs of perimortem sharp-force and blunt-force trauma. Indicators for physical trauma will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 8. Armit *et al.* argue that, despite the small sample size, this suggests 25 percent of the individuals represented may have suffered violent deaths “an extraordinarily high incidence even if complete skeletons were present, but when dealing with such small fragments it must indicate exceptional levels of violence” (Armit *et al.*, 2013: 84).

Carbon ($\delta^{13}\text{C}$) and nitrogen ($\delta^{15}\text{N}$) isotope analyses, conducted by the Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre (SUERC), comparing the fragmentary remains against the cemetery population at Broxmouth, showed clear differences in the $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ values. Armit *et al.* (2013) inferred from these results that the fragmentary remains represent individuals from a “more inland-dwelling” group of non-locals compared to the complete interments, and, taken with the prevalence of physical trauma, that the data combined to “represent the remains of human trophies taken from outsiders killed in violent conflict” (Armit *et al.*, 2013: 93). However, using the results of these particular isotopic analyses to infer geographic origin is tenuous. Without a comparative dataset of faunal isotopic values it is not possible to ascertain the baseline trophic levels of the food sources being consumed and how these may have impacted on the values represented in the human population (Jay & Richards, 2006: 654). Further, stating that the difference between ratios of $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ and $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ values is indicative of regional diet excludes the possibility of dietary variation reflective of social stratification (discussed, below) or individual agency (Montgomery, 2010: 325). To offer a more secure indication for regional origin, oxygen and strontium isotope analyses would need to be conducted.

By contrast, isotopic analysis conducted on the human skeletal material from Danebury was accompanied by isotopic analysis of faunal remains and a comprehensive examination of other dietary indicators including food residues from ceramics and storage pits as well as butchery marks on associated fauna (Stevens *et al.*, 2010). Comparative analysis of the $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ and $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ from both human and faunal data-sets indicated that “individuals with socially distinct burial practices consumed isotopically similar diets to those without socially distinct burial practices” (Stevens *et al.*, 2010:

422). Further, comparative isotopic analysis of human skeletal material from other contemporary southern English sites indicates that the diet throughout the region was fairly homogenous, making individuals from other communities difficult to identify (Stevens *et al.*, 2010: 425). There were several outliers in the Danebury sample, all deposited as bone fragments or incomplete skeletons, and Stevens *et al.* (2010: 423) allowed for the prospect that “these individuals may represent trophies of war”. However, this speculation could not be proven without detailed strontium studies of all of the remains from this location.

The trophy-taking interpretation, inferred by Armit *et al.* (2013), and considered possible by Stevens *et al.* (2010), is supported by ethnographic parallels. Tracey (2012: 373) cites comparisons with indigenous populations from the North American Plains suggesting the possibility that the practice of depositing skull fragments in settlement contexts may be related to inter-group trophy-taking. Trophy-taking is recorded from prehistoric Central California where it appears that human radii and ulnae were taken as trophies; the practice is associated with indicators for perimortem trauma and leaving distinct butchery marks on the humeri (Andrushko *et al.*, 2005). This, and other trophy-taking practices, appear to have been widespread in North America throughout its prehistory and into historic times, observed in geographically and culturally distinct groups from the east to the west coast (Walker, 2001: 588-590, Jacobi, 2007).

Closer to Iron Age Britain, trophy-taking practices have been observed in the Continental European Iron Age, as recorded in ancient sources, with Strabo and Diodorus Siculus (both drawing from the account of Poseidonios), and Livy all making reference to head-taking amongst the Gauls (Aldhouse Green, 2002: 95-96, Armit, 2012: 20-29). The archaeological evidence also supports such practices with the display of human skulls at the sanctuary site of Gournay-Sur-Aronde, Picardy and the subsequent deposition of cranial material and long-bones in the surrounding enclosure ditches (Brunaux & Rapin, 1988: 146-148). Human skulls were mounted within the walls of the Iron Age settlement sites of Castellar in Northern Spain and Entremont in Provence, where the human head also featured prominently in figurative art (Green, 2011: 30, Armit, 2012: 89-90). At Bredon Hill, Worcestershire (discussed above) it appears that human skulls were singled out for special treatment during the Late Iron Age, placed in an alignment across the south eastern gateway, as well as mounted on the gateway itself (Hencken, 1939: 23, Hurst & Jackson, 2006: 16). The practice of

depositing skull fragments in pits and in the ditches of settlement sites forms part of a long tradition in Europe extending back to the Neolithic at sites like Herxheim in Germany (Boulestin *et al.*, 2009).

While the evidence for the origin of individuals from Broxmouth is open to interpretation, the trophy-taking explanation remains plausible, as is the suggestion that the practice of depositing fragmentary human remains does not form part of the normative intra-group funerary rite. In addition, other intra-group rites cannot be entirely discounted. Armit and Ginn (2007: 128) observed a diversity of treatments of the skeletal material from Iron Age sites in Scotland, and note that ethnographic parallels indicate that remains collected in practices of trophy-taking and the veneration of ancestors can result in similar modes of curation and reverence. Berryman (2007: 394-396) has also explored some of the complexities of attempting to distinguish between trophy-taking and secondary burial rites based purely on osteological evidence, arguing that it is only through integration with ethnographic and iconographic sources that distinctions between such practices may be revealed. Without oxygen and strontium isotopic and/or genetic analyses to confirm ‘outsider’ status—such as was performed on material from the Late Stone Age site of Eulau, Germany (Haack *et al.*, 2008)—trophy-taking practices can only be suggested as one possible interpretation. Ultimately, it is difficult to determine whether such practices form part of a secondary burial rite, as Redfern (2008) and Fitzpatrick (2011) have suggested.

The evidence of exposure indicates that the rites associated with these practices may have been lengthy affairs, carried out over a span of time sufficient to allow the flesh and other tissues to decay, and may have involved multiple stages including periods of display and performance prior to their formal deposition in contexts which made homes or settlements safe or protected (van Gennep, 1960: 24, 149, Shapland & Armit, 2012: 100). It should also be considered, however, that the evidence of processing observed by Redfern (2008) and Tracey (2012) may indicate attempts to hasten the conversion to a skeletal state, facilitating the use of fragmentary remains without lengthy periods of exposure or display. Regardless of whether the fragmentary remains are those of locals or non-locals the most important factor is the recognition that they held special importance within Iron Age communities, and their formal deposition in spaces associated with the living made powerful statements about those who deposited and lived with them; more so than the individuals from whom these bones derived. As

Aldhouse Green (2002: 55) has suggested, the association of such deposits with physical violence may have been a way of imbuing the remains with spiritual potency and violent death may have been requisite for their efficacy. It is this violent dimension which makes such deposits relevant for this study.

6.2.4 *Bog bodies: overkill and sacrifice*

A practice which appears to reflect human sacrifice, and thus warrants brief mention here, is that of depositing bodies into bogs. The practice is widely recorded from Scandinavia to Ireland and appears to have been long-lived with numerous examples across the Long Iron Age with recent discoveries pushing the earliest known example back into the Early Bronze Age (Kelly, 2012: 9). A significant number of bog bodies have been found in Britain, with Lindow Man, dated to the first century AD, perhaps the most well-known example (Stead *et al.*, 1986). A consistent feature of bog bodies has been indicators of perimortem trauma, and Lindow Man is no exception in this regard. Forensic assessment of his remains revealed evidence that he had been beaten, struck on the back of the head with a blunt, bladed weapon, possibly an axe, strangled with a garrotte—tightened with sufficient force to break his neck—had his jugular vein severed by a sharp-bladed weapon, and may also have been stabbed in the chest, with any one of these injuries likely to have been fatal (West, 1986). The levels of violence to which many bog bodies were subjected exhibit a degree of overkill that Aldhouse Green (2002: 51-55) associates specifically with sacrificial acts. Kelly (2012: 14-15) notes that, in Ireland, the bogs often form territorial boundaries and can be interpreted as liminal places in the landscape. Just as liminal and boundary zones were a focus for the deposition of weapons (discussed in Chapter 5) bogs were foci for the deposition of human sacrificial victims (Aldhouse Green, 2002: 51, Hingley, 2006: 221-226, Kelly, 2012: 14). Bog bodies are not generally associated with spearheads or swords, however some individuals such as the Bronze Age Cashel Man found in County Laois, Iron Age Oldcroghan Man, County Offaly, and the first century AD Huldremose Woman, from Jutland, Denmark, were found in association with wooden stakes which could have been used as spear-like weapons against them (Kelly, 2006, 2012: 9).

6.2.5 *Inhumation burials*

Whimster (1981) observed several distinct inhumation practices for Iron Age Britain and these practices are briefly summarised here; as it lies beyond the scope of this study to analyse these practices in detail. In contrast to pit and rampart burials, and the deposition of fragmentary human remains, inhumation burials are reflective of practices of a definitively funerary nature. Focussing principally on the south of Britain and on East Yorkshire, Whimster (1981: 37-128) assessed Durotrigian inhumation and cist burials in the south and barrow burials in East Yorkshire. Durotrigian and cist burial cemeteries were small, but the Yorkshire barrow burials could range from isolated burials to cemeteries encompassing hundreds of barrows. In all traditions there was an observable degree of formal organisation and the deceased were generally placed in contracted positions. Differences were noted in the degree of contraction varying from slightly flexed to very tightly contracted, suggestive of binding (Whimster, 1981: 194). Amongst some communities there was a preference to place the deceased on their left side, while in others there was a preference for the right side, or no discernible side preference. For most burials, the deceased was oriented with their head in a northerly direction, although there were a small percentage of examples oriented in other directions. These traits—crouched body position with the head placed in a northerly direction—are common to each of the inhumation practices assessed by Whimster (1981). He concluded that these traits formed the core, native funerary tradition of Iron Age Britain, a practice which appears to have emerged during the late fourth or early third century BC (Whimster, 1981: 194).

6.2.6 *Barrow burials: death and burial in Iron Age East Yorkshire*

East Yorkshire is the centre of an uncommon burial culture in the Iron Age of Britain variously termed La Tène burial, barrow burial or Arras Culture burial (named for the type-site of Arras, on the Yorkshire Wolds). As a funerary practice which includes a number of burials with spears, the Arras Culture barrow burials are of particular importance to this thesis. In contrast to many other parts of Britain, the barrow burials of East Yorkshire included multiple extensive cemeteries, with hundreds of barrows filling the landscape at Arras, Danes Graves, Wetwang, Garton and Rudston/Burton Fleming. Whimster (1981: 77) noted that “...square barrows have now been recognised in groups and in isolation at over 100 sites between the Humber and the southern flanks of the North Yorkshire Moors”. An aerial survey of the Foulness Valley recorded 22

barrow cemeteries (Halkon, 2008: 83). Stoertz (1997: 39) identified more than 3,250 square barrows via aerial photography of the Yorkshire Wolds. Smaller cemeteries, such as those at Beverley and Cowlam were formed from groups of just four or five barrows, numbers not dissimilar to some southern inhumation cemeteries (Whimster, 1981: 113, Stoertz, 1997: 34).

By contrast, Greenwell (1906: 256) estimated approximately 500 barrows once existed at Danes Graves and at least 100 barrows were recorded at Arras in the nineteenth century (Stead, 1979: 7). Ian Stead recorded more than 200 barrows in his excavation of the Makeshift Cemetery at the parish boundary between Rudston and Burton Fleming in the 1960s and 1970s (Stead, 1991a: 6-17). John Dent conducted formal excavation of more than 200 barrows, with more than 400 burials at Wetwang/Garton Slack, excavated from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s (Dent, 1984: 21). The sheer number of barrows and their associated burials highlights the importance of this practice within the communities of the region during the period from the third to mid first century BC, when the barrows were constructed, and the impact they would have had on contemporary and subsequent inhabitants of the landscape must surely have been significant, as discussed below.

At sites like Wetwang and Pocklington, the barrows were so tightly packed that later barrows adjoined and inter-cut earlier barrows described as producing in aerial photography a visual effect akin to frogspawn (Fenton-Thomas, 2005). Prominent in the early modern landscape of East Yorkshire, the barrows attracted attention, and emergent antiquarian interest had clearly formed by the end of the seventeenth century when Abraham de la Pryme declared an intention to excavate at Arras in 1699 (Jackson, 1870, Stead, 1979: 7). The earliest recorded investigation of these barrows is reported in 1721 when a single barrow was opened at Danes Graves (Whimster, 1981: 297). During the nineteenth century, barrows at Danes Graves and Arras were the focus of intensive investigation by Stillingfleet, Greenwell and Mortimer who were in, sometimes antagonistic, competition with one another (Stead, 1979: 16-17). Both Mortimer and Greenwell advanced our understanding of the Arras Culture, but it was not until the latter half of the twentieth century that modern excavation techniques led to the systematic and scientific analysis of the barrows and their associated burials.

Detailed recording of the barrows reveals that they ranged in size from 3.5m to 15m across, and featured low mounds (Whimster, 1981: 111). Their original height is often difficult to estimate, but this was perhaps no more than 1.5m. The depth of individual graves ranged from less than 0.25m to more than 0.65m, with the largest barrow mounds covering the shallower graves (Dent, 1984: 70). The barrows were bounded by irregular, square-ditched enclosures, with the depth of the ditches varying from 0.21m to 0.73m (Dent, 1984: 22). Dent's (1984: 72-82 and 124) analysis of the chronological development of the cemetery at Wetwang revealed that the largest barrows also tended to be the earliest, with later, smaller barrows squeezed into the remaining spaces between older barrows. Thus there appears to have been a desire to associate later barrows with those who had gone before, perhaps indicative of ancestor veneration or legitimisation. Recent ultrafiltration AMS radiocarbon dating of material from the site supports Dent's relative chronology, although calibration has tightened the absolute chronology to the third to early second centuries BC, rather than the prior assessment which dated the burials at Wetwang Slack to the fourth to first centuries BC (Jay *et al.*, 2012).

The desire to associate with, or venerate, the ancestors is reflected in the clearly identifiable practice of secondary burial within Arras Culture funerary rites. Secondary burials are generally accepted as fulfilling a desire to associate with those who had gone before. Osteological analysis has suggested that burials may have been clustered into family groupings (Dent, 2010: 68). Spatial associations may not always have been based on familial connections, however. For example, burials K6 and K2 at Kirkburn were both interments of women who appear to have died during childbirth (Stead, 1991a: 136, Giles, 2012: 91-93). Burial K6 was the primary burial, beneath a square barrow, followed by burial K2, a secondary burial interred at a later time. Giles (2012: *ibid.*) has argued that community members retained the memory of the fate that befell the barrow's first occupant, and chose to inter a woman who shared a similar fate in the same barrow. However, it is also possible that these individuals were related, as some complications which occur late in pregnancy, such as pre-eclampsia, have strong genetic factors (Williams & Broughton Pipkin, 2011).

Three burials at Wetwang, which included two-wheeled vehicles, formed a distinct group at a discreet distance from the core of the cemetery. The burials were all on the same alignment and Dent argued that "living memory must have linked the two later

burials to their predecessor(s)” (Dent, 1985: 92). The 238 barrows excavated at Wetwang by Dent (1984: 24) in the 1970s and 1980s yielded 446 burials. Across the Yorkshire Wolds, Dent (1995: 49) estimated that more than one thousand individuals were accorded burial rites in line with Arras Culture funerary traditions. Secondary burial was more common at Wetwang than at Rudston/Burton Fleming, Garton Station and Kirkburn and possibly reflective of more community level, rather than regional practices (Dent, 2010: 66). In contrast to the rest of Iron Age Britain, inhumation in, or in association with, square-ditched barrows, appears to have been a normative funerary practice, perhaps afforded to the majority of the population. However, the physical remains of the ancestor may have been less important than the act of burial or the funerary monument itself, with several secondary burials disturbing, and in some cases, entirely replacing the primary burial (Dent, 1984: 29).

Children were sometimes accorded secondary burials in, or close to, barrows. Only very rarely do child burials appear to have been primary barrow burials (Dent, 1984: 95). This is in keeping with broader insular Iron Age funerary traditions, in which the burial of children was a rare occurrence, and usually formed a secondary deposit, or accompanied an adult, generally interpreted as the child’s mother, with the two being thought to have died together (Whimster, 1981: 89). It is possible that children had not made the transition to full members of society and that they were required to undergo certain rites of passage or initiation before they could be recognised as full members of the community, entitled to funerary rites (Kamp, 2001).

In addition to the contracted Iron Age burial tradition, a smaller number of Arras Culture inhumations were placed in an extended position, contrasting clearly with the dominant practice. Stead observed a distinct group of extended or lightly flexed burials at Rudston/Burton Fleming, East Yorkshire, which were oriented north to south as well as a distinct sub-group oriented east to west (Whimster, 1981: 103, Stead, 1991a: 35). Likewise, Collis (1973: 130) interpreted extended burials as exceptional and possibly reflective of Continental influences. The limited extent of this practice indeed warrants attention, due to the deviation from core funerary treatment, which could potentially indicate important social or cosmological differences in the perception of these individuals, either in life or death.

Stead (1991a: 179) identified three different burial traditions in the Arras Culture, labelled Types A to C, to which Dent (1995: 50-51, 2010: 64) later added a fourth, Type D, to reflect the secondary burial rite he identified at Wetwang. Type A burials, were considered to represent the normative burial rite of crouched burial with the head oriented either to the north or south. The flexed/extended burials, oriented to the east or west, recorded at Makeshift Cemetery were designated Type B, and these burials further differed from Type A in that none was furnished with pottery and associated food offerings were of pig rather than sheep, and, most pertinent to this study, Type B graves included weapons (Stead, 1991a: 179-184). A third class of flexed burials, which included the chariot burials and the ‘speared corpse’ burials (discussed in the next chapter), were designated Type C.

Parker Pearson (1999b: 53-56) has influentially argued that the differences in funerary treatment exhibited in the extended Type B inhumations within the Arras Culture are indicative of social stratification, marking these persons as members of a select group of high-status individuals. Dent (2010: 64) has also argued that variations in body position and location among contemporary burials within the Arras cemeteries, as well as variations in grave goods, indicate “differing social status”. He further argued that Type D secondary burials represent lower social status compared to the primary Type A burial rite (Dent, 1995: 50). Dent further posits that social status appears to have been, at least partly, associated with age, a conclusion also drawn by Giles (Dent, 1995: 53, 2010: 68, Giles, 2012: 113-116). Thus, despite the general paucity of grave goods for the British Iron Age, expressions of social status were subtly communicated through distinctive funerary practices.

6.2.6.a Death and the landscape

Cemeteries and excarnation sites would have formed distinctive places in the Iron Age landscape and this warrants a brief exploration. Giles (2007b: 405) suggests that the act of burial, like metalworking, was a liminal practice, potentially dangerous and necessarily performed on the periphery of inhabited settlements. For much of Iron Age Britain formal cemeteries were indeed located outside of settlement areas. However, as Whimster (1981: 5) and Armit *et al.* (2013: 74) have both observed, this was not always the case. In East Yorkshire, most Arras Culture cemeteries were sited up on the Wolds, while settlements were located in low-lying areas, with Wetwang the only settlement in proximity to the associated cemetery, both located on a valley floor (Dent, 1984: 116-

135, Stoertz, 1997: 34-39). The separation of cemeteries from settlements marked the Wolds out as a landscape of the dead (Fenton-Thomas, 2005: 53-54). Dowling (2006: 25) explored the concept that the physical act of digging into the earth, particularly for the construction of ditches, like those which bounded the Arras Culture square barrows, “opened ‘conduits’ to the underworld” allowing for direct communication with chthonic forces. The monumental nature of these barrows and ditched enclosures clearly left a visible mark on the landscape, discernible to the naked eye until well into the twentieth century AD, thus creating a constant ancestral presence permeating the consciousness of those moving through the region (Stead, 1979, Tilley, 1994: 202-203). The Arras cemetery, for example, commands views over the Yorkshire Wolds, offering a clear line of sight to the Humber estuary and numerous routes of communication through the physical landscape (Halkon, 1999, 2011, 2013). The position of Arras Culture cemeteries on high ground would have placed the ancestors in a position overlooking the low-lands where most inhabitants of the region lived and must have formed an omnipresent force in their daily lives.

The diachronic build-up of generations of barrows at Arras Culture cemeteries created chains of association between the older and newer barrows. Further, the practice of secondary burial observed by Dent, particularly at Wetwang, explicitly referenced the earlier burial monuments for individuals either perceived to hold some connection with the barrow’s earlier inhabitants, or for whom the community members performing the burial rites wished to create an association with the barrow’s ancestral monumentality. When a new burial replaced an earlier, primary burial, such as Wetwang burial 205 – an act which involved the almost complete removal of the previous burial (Dent, 1984: 31) – this represented a deliberate attempt to provide the barrow’s new occupant with the monumental importance intrinsic to the barrow itself. The replacement of the prior individual underscores that the monumentality had come to be perceived as inherent in the barrow and was of greater significance than the physical remains of its prior inhabitant.

The position of the Arras Culture cemeteries at Wetwang and Rudston/Burton Fleming, aligned on linear earthworks, further emphasizes their monumental nature (Stead, 1991a: 6-7, Dent, 2010: 38). Both cemeteries are bounded by pre-existing ditch alignments, which clearly separated them from settlement areas, and could be interpreted as drawing on, and underscoring, the sense of *otherness* attributed to the

space delineated by these boundaries (Tilley, 1994: 17). An association between square barrow cemeteries and linear earthworks was also noted at Pocklington and Cowlam, and a further eight of 22 square barrow cemeteries assessed by Halkon (2008: 84-85) were closely associated with droveways.

Cemetery sites in East Yorkshire, like settlements, were also oriented on watercourses. The Rudston/Burton Fleming barrow cemetery was oriented on the Gypsy Race while the Garton and Wetwang Slack barrow cemeteries were oriented on the gypsey which ran between Driffield and Malton (Stead, 1991a: 5-6, Halkon, 2008: 173). Parker Pearson (1999a: 132) has suggested that the placement of the cemeteries along the Gypsy Race, where water periodically erupted from the earth, may have been because these locations were seen as entrance places to the underworld. Giles (2012: 216-223) conducted a thorough exploration of the relationship between cemeteries and water sources, concluding that they facilitated the journey of the deceased to the underworld and transformed them to an ancestor state.

The performative aspects of burial, across the various Iron Age insular burial traditions would have created a series of funerary taskscapes, which would have held temporal and spatial resonance for those living in the local community, even in burial traditions that did not create lasting, visible monuments (Ingold, 2010: 63-66). It is clear that some funerary monuments became focal points for repeated acts of remembrance. At Brisley Farm for example, a ditch bounding Brisley Farm burial 20 and burial 19 yielded significant quantities of burnt animal bone and deliberately broken ceramic vessels interpreted by the excavators as evidence of feasting activities, which occurred repeatedly into the Roman period and perhaps as late as the early second century AD (Johnson, 2002: 16-17, Stevenson, 2013: 179). While cemeteries were physically separated from settlements, they formed a part of the living landscape with which the Iron Age peoples of Britain interacted daily, and which must have been ever present in their consciousness.

6.2.7 Cremation burials

Cremation burial was rare in Iron Age Britain, however, during the second-half of the first century BC a cremation rite emerged amongst the so-called Aylesford-Swarling Culture. These cremations appeared in an area from Dorset and Somerset to Essex and Kent and up to the Cambridgeshire Fens, with more recent discoveries expanding the

zone to include parts of West Sussex (Whimster, 1981: 151-159, Fitzpatrick, 2011: 126). The character of these burials was distinct from other Iron Age burial practices, perhaps lending an insular flavour to contemporary Continental practices. The rite appears to have consisted of a pyre cremation, often (but not always) away from the burial site (Fitzpatrick, 2011: 126). Grave goods sometimes show evidence that they had been subjected to intense heat, indicative that at least some grave goods were placed on, or close to, the funerary pyre (Whimster, 1981: 154). In keeping with broader insular traditions the sizes of the Aylesford-Swarling Culture cemeteries were generally small, with less than 20 burials. However, 445 burials were recorded at the King Harry Lane cemetery, Hertfordshire, a figure comparable to the Arras Culture cemetery at Wetwang, East Yorkshire (Whimster, 1981: 156). The cremated remains appear to have been placed in a container, either a ceramic urn, metal vessel or, perhaps, in archaeologically undetectable containers of perishable materials such as leather or wood (Whimster, 1981: 160). Associated grave goods from the wealthiest Aylesford-type burials included a range of wooden, ceramic and metal drinking vessels along with firedogs and cauldrons, all objects associated with feasting (Fitzpatrick, 2011: 123). As discussed, below, there is an aspect of conspicuous consumption in these burials, which does not appear concordant with the other insular Iron Age burial traditions. The Aylesford-type cremation burials are relevant to this study as one burial at Stanway Essex was furnished with a Type 2.1 long, angular spearhead and a shield (Crummy *et al.*, 2007). Another from Ham Hill included an anthropoid-hilted dagger, and a small number of late burials also appear to have been furnished with shields, their metal fittings surviving in the archaeological record (Collis, 1973: 124, Whimster, 1981: 388, Fitzpatrick, 2011: 127). An isolated cremation burial near Canterbury, possibly related to Aylesford practice, was contained within a copper alloy helmet (Farley *et al.*, 2014). These burials are discussed in Chapter 7.

In Yorkshire, a small number of Iron Age cremation burials have also been recorded. Isolated cremation burials under barrows in Garton and Birdsall (which was said to have yielded a bronze ferrule) were thought to date to the Early Iron Age and perhaps reflect a continuation of Bronze Age funerary practices (Whimster, 1981: 401). During the Late Iron Age another cremation tradition emerged in Yorkshire, recorded at Rillington, where cremations were covered by small mounds, or ‘barrowlets’, approximately 2m in diameter, surrounded by steep enclosure ditches. The cremation burials formed small

cemeteries along a trackway running along the edge of a wetland zone. The burials have been speculatively dated, based on their association with Late Iron Age pottery, and no weapons have been noted amongst the recorded grave goods (Powesland, 2003).

6.2.8 *Cave deposits*

The deposition of human remains in caves was a widely-practiced funerary rite performed in Britain from the Mesolithic and Neolithic throughout the Bronze Age and Iron Age, and on into the Medieval period (Whimster, 1981: 171, Schulting, 2007). There is significant variation in the nature of these deposits, ranging from funerary rites to possible trophy-taking or veneration of ancestors, represented through the deposition of multiple skulls. Many cave sites were foci of deposition over prolonged periods of time: the cave site known as The Dog Hole, Haverbrack, Cumbria, for example, showed evidence that it was a focus for the deposition of human remains from the first to ninth centuries AD (Whimster, 1981: 408). Similarly, the Ryedale Windypits, North Yorkshire were used repeatedly as foci for votive deposits and burials from the Late Neolithic to the second century AD (Leach, 2010). Some deposits are identifiable as funerary in nature through the inclusion of grave goods, which sometimes included weapons. The deposition of human skulls in these contexts also raises the possibility of trophy-taking during interpersonal or inter-communal violence in a mode similar to that outlined above for the deposition of skull and long bone fragments within settlement contexts (Armit, 2012: 120-123).

There is one spearhead (ID 283) from a cave context recorded in the database. It is a small throwing form, attributable to Type 1.1.b.1, diamond-bladed. The spearhead comes from Harborough Cave, Derbyshire and is currently held by the British Museum. The site has yielded finds, including at least two burials, ranging in date from the Neolithic, to the Bronze Age and Iron Age (Storrs Fox, 1908, Armstrong, 1923). Harborough Cave was excavated by Storrs Fox in the early twentieth century and the spearhead appears to have been recovered during his excavations from a mixed deposit, which included iron weapons, brooches, weaving combs and spindle whorls and gold rings, in association with burnt stone (a possible recurrent feature of Iron Age ritual deposition, discussed in Chapter 5) (Storrs Fox, 1908, Armstrong, 1923). Thus this object is more rightly a result of structured deposition, than funerary activity.

6.3 *Otherworldly goods*

Iron Age grave goods from Britain are discussed in this section, with a particular emphasis on the Arras Culture. Burials which included objects of martial character will be explored in greater depth in Chapter 7. Grave goods have been one of the most influential and informative media for understanding past societies and the nature of identity construction (Wells, 1998: 245). However, the construction of funerary assemblages is a practice codified with many subtle layers of meaning. The use of grave goods to understand past societies and infer the social status, roles or behaviours of the living is fraught with difficulty (Giles, 2012: 124). As Gowland (2006: 147) advises: “[g]rave goods, can be viewed as a way in which past societies symbolically constructed, reinforced, or subverted social norms.” Decisions about what kinds of objects should be placed in the grave, along with the treatment of the corpse, would have been influenced by the cosmology of those performing the burial rites, but would also have been influenced by a range of other social, political and economic factors. As discussed above, burial seems to have been a non-normative rite throughout much of Iron Age Britain. Possible exceptions are the Arras Culture; where barrow burial and associated secondary inhumations appear to have been practiced for significant proportions of the population from the third to second centuries BC; and Durotrigian inhumation, which Whimster (1981: 192-193) suggests became a “majority rite” during the first century BC. Within most Iron Age British communities, therefore, the decision to bury any individual is indicative of extraordinary circumstances and this must be considered in any assessment of funerary practices.

One of the defining features of formal funerary practices in the British Iron Age is the paucity of grave goods (Whimster, 1981: 5). Whimster (1981: 16) observed that many individual inhumations failed to be recognised as formal burials due to the lack of grave goods. Approximately half of the inhumation graves included in Whimster’s (1981: 5) assessment were not furnished with any grave goods at all, and, Dent (1984: 40) reported that only 25 percent of the 446 burials excavated at Wetwang in the 1970s and 80s were furnished. In many ways, this lack of grave goods has hampered our understanding of Iron Age society. It appears that, for much of the British Iron Age, it was deemed either unnecessary or inappropriate to include any formal grave goods in burials. Those graves which were furnished demonstrated such diversity of objects that it was “difficult to identify any specific items that were considered particularly

appropriate as funerary offerings” (Whimster, 1981: 21). Again, for much of the British Iron Age, we are dealing with non-normative rites, and the decision to include grave goods with any individual must communicate very specific ideas about not only the deceased, but also about the social roles and cosmology of those performing the funerary rites.

The social responsibilities tied to the formal disposal of the remains of a community member would have been extremely important. The loss of any individual in a small community could create tensions and may have significantly altered the social roles and expectations of surviving members of the deceased’s family and other members of the community (Giles, 2012: 124). Decisions about which particular objects should be included, and their specific placement within the grave, may thus have been strongly codified, pregnant with meaning for those either performing or witnessing the funerary rites (van Gennep, 1960: 146-147). So, while Whimster identified a great variety in the choice of grave goods, it is important to examine which classes of objects were chosen and the frequency with which they were included in burial assemblages. Further, it is important to understand how these objects were positioned within the grave (although information from older excavations is often limited in this regard), and whether they had been subjected to any special treatment, such as ritual destruction. The most frequently included classes of object included in burials throughout the British Iron Age (explored below), were pottery, objects of personal adornment, textiles, offerings of food, metalwork and martial objects (which were not always metal and so will be considered as a distinct category), and wheeled vehicles and horse equipment.

6.3.1 Pottery

The pottery included in insular Iron Age burial assemblages varied from locally produced forms to a diverse range of imported La Tène, Gallo-Belgic or Roman forms and fabrics. However, regardless of fabric and cultural associations, the ceramics were predominantly vessels associated with the consumption of food and drink (Whimster, 1981: 22, 50, 107). More lavishly equipped Aylesford-type cremation burials of the later Pre-Roman Iron Age also included storage amphorae for wine and/or olive oil, along with metal vessels generally associated with the consumption or serving of wine, such as the bronze *oenochoe* from Grave Y at Aylesford, Kent, a cremation burial dated to the mid-first century BC (Whimster, 1981: 159). Thus, when it was deemed necessary or appropriate to include grave goods, furnishing the deceased with vessels

associated with eating or drinking appears to have been common to each of the identified funerary rites. As discussed, below, this may be reflective of funerary feasting activity, but for some of the more lavishly furnished Aylesford-type cremations, it also served as an opportunity for expressions of power and wealth through acts of conspicuous consumption. This aspect of conspicuous consumption is of particular interest for the Aylesford-type burial culture as it appears to be out of keeping with the funerary traditions of the rest of Iron Age Britain. Indeed, this aspect is more in keeping with Continental practices (Parker Pearson, 1999a: 79). With particular reference to the inclusion of vessels associated with the consumption of wine, Arnold (1999) has argued that this practice forms part of a broader, Continental tradition in which the control and distribution of alcohol formed an integral part of the legitimisation of power within Celtic groups, citing numerous Continental examples. Given the overall rarity of grave goods, it must be inferred that – with the exception of the Aylesford-Swarling Culture – any expressions of conspicuous consumption associated with the normative funerary practices of Iron Age Britain are often archaeologically undetectable.

Within the Arras Culture burial tradition, the inclusion of ceramic vessels was rare but notable. At Burton Fleming 22 percent of burials included pottery (the largest recorded proportion from any Arras Culture cemetery); at Danes Grave the figure appears to have been approximately 15 percent, while at Wetwang, pottery was exceedingly rare, appearing in just 1.3 percent of burials (Dent, 1984: 187, Stead, 1991a: 94). Mortimer (1905: lv) also observed that pottery – the most frequently included class of object – was found in less than one third of the barrows he excavated. The placement of pottery vessels within the graves does not appear to have been very strongly codified. Straight-sided jars, which sometimes contained joints of meat, could be placed close to the head, the feet or in proximity to the torso, and occasionally in the ditch surrounding the grave. There may be some correlation between placement and social gender, with vessels placed by the face or hands in approximately 23 percent of furnished female burials and by the feet in 13 percent of male burials. These placements do not appear to have been gender exclusive, although placement by the hands of females has been interpreted by Parker Pearson and Giles as expressive of the fulfilment of serving roles (Parker Pearson, 1999b: 53, Giles, 2012: 135). The lack of gender exclusivity makes this interpretation problematic, projecting onto the evidence strongly gender-encoded readings of the role of males and females in Arras Culture society. Doucette (2001)

cautions that such underlying assumptions about gender, must always be questioned, and Pope and Ralston (2011: 394) describe Parker Pearson's (1999b: 53) assessment as: "crude structuralist interpretations, which relegated Iron Age women to the status of servants."

Dent noted that none of the jars recovered from the Wetwang excavations was complete, and a number of those from the Makeshift cemetery were also incomplete or broken vessels (Dent, 1984: 43, Stead, 1991a: 109). While whole vessels are well-known from Arras, Danes Graves, and other barrow-burial cemeteries in East Yorkshire, the prospect that these incomplete vessels had been subjected to deliberate destruction warrants consideration, conceivably forming part of the funerary feasting ritual as Dent (1984: 29) suggests. Why some vessels appear to have been damaged, or incomplete, whilst others were interred whole remains unclear. The inclusion of partial vessels also raises the possibility that the missing pieces of the ceramics were used in other ways. Perhaps these fragments were kept by the mourners as objects of remembrance, or deposited in secondary contexts; in practices like the pit deposits Hill (1995b) noted in Wessex, or in modes similar to the deposition of fragmentary human remains in houses, pits and within settlement boundaries. Fragmentary vessels were noted in the ditch fill at the causeway entrance to Grimthorpe hillfort, where it was possible to reconstruct the profile of just one vessel (Stead *et al.*, 1968: 159). Giles (2012: 143-150) has suggested that glass beads, which appear to have formed incomplete necklaces, may represent participants in the funerary rites removing objects and using them as tokens, possibly a related practice. Fragmentary objects and the use of selected sherds of pottery also appear in structured depositions. Note, for example, the carefully selected Dressel 20 amphora fragments used to seal the South Cave Weapons Cache, discussed in Chapter 5 (Evans, 2003: 32). We should not overlook the potential significance of these practices, and, as Hill (1995b: 22-26) has argued, they highlight the complexity of the formation of the archaeological record. Interactions between the living and the dead were powerfully expressed through such rites and rituals although their meanings remain opaque to us (Parker Pearson, 1993: 226-227).

6.3.2 Offerings of food

In addition to vessels pertaining to the consumption of food and drink, and sometimes associated with them, were grave offerings of food. Food offerings were uncommon, but seem to exclusively represent domesticated species with sheep/goat and pig the most frequently included animals (Whimster, 1981: 50, Stead, 1991a: 143). Within the Arras Culture, offerings of sheep/goat were associated with Type A burials (the normative rite), while offerings of pork were associated with Type B and C burials (which comprise the east-west, oriented group and the 'speared corpse' burials), although offerings of pork were also included in a very small number of Type A burials in the Makeshift cemetery (Stead, 1991a: 179). The food offerings generally represent partial, rather than whole animals (with some exceptions), and usually only the humerus was included. These offerings may have formed part of a funerary feast, with the deceased offered a portion deemed appropriate (Parker Pearson, 1999a: 10-11, Giles, 2012: 181-182).

Pope and Ralston (2011: 393) and Edwards and Pope (2013) observed that three times as many female graves at Rudston/Burton Fleming were provisioned with meat, compared to male graves. Parker Pearson (1999b: 53) noted that the portions are invariably from the front of the animals, featuring the forelegs, skull and ribs of pigs and the left humeri of sheep, the rear portions reserved for the living. He goes on to note that the rear portions are associated with champions in Celtic mythology, while front portions are indicative of lesser status (Parker Pearson, 1999b: n.7). However, this writer would suggest that a more pragmatic, economic motive underlay this preference. By providing the deceased with a meagre cut, the requirement to provision the departed was met while reserving the best, most nutritious portions for the living participants in the feast. Thus, the provision of a paltry portion should not be interpreted as reflective of low status, rather as an economical means of fulfilling a conventional requirement. Indeed, Legge (1991: 144) observed that, in some cases, it appears that the animal bone had been de-fleshed prior to deposition in the burial. Parker Pearson (1999b: 54) ultimately concluded that offerings of pig bone/meat were indicative of elite status (and strongly associated with male power), while sheep bones were associated with the burial of commoners, without deference to the part of the animal chosen for deposition in the grave. Pope and Ralston (2011: 393) also interpret the provision of pig as an indicator

of higher social status, however they do not associate this with male gender as strongly as Parker Pearson (1999b) does.

Conspicuous consumption in the form of lavish grave goods does not appear to be a usual component of British Iron Age funerary rites (noted above), and basic provisioning is entirely in keeping with this cosmology. The provision of food offerings was not exclusive to the Arras Culture and Whimster (1981: 50) noted offerings of food were regularly included in Durotrigian inhumations. Like the Arras Culture tradition, the bones were exclusively from domesticated species and were placed in the grave, often in association with pottery vessels.

Feasting often forms part of funerary rituals and van Gennep (1960: 164) has argued that this is a rite of incorporation for the survivors, unifying them through the shared meal. The inclusion of food offerings or feasting equipment in the graves may also be a way of incorporating the deceased into the realm of the dead, where they might feast with other ancestors (Parker Pearson, 1999a: 27). No direct association can be made between the inclusion of food offerings and weaponry, although Greenwell (1906: 265) reported a vessel from a grave in Essex, comparable to vessels found at Danes Graves, which was said to have originally held an iron spearhead, which had been lost by the time of his writing. Food offerings are included in graves without weapons and the use of exclusively domesticated species would seem to preclude an association with hunting. Greenwell (1906: 289) strongly implies that pig carcasses recovered from the King's Barrow at Arras, which had been described as wild-boar by Stillingfleet, were, in fact, domestic pigs. However, the capture of livestock in raids on other communities was likely an important aspect in the formation of martial identities (discussed in Chapter 8). Excavations at Brisley Farm in Kent also suggest an association between burials with weapons and feasting activity. Two burials within square ditched enclosures (discussed in Chapter 7) were excavated at Brisley Farm in 2001, each included weapons (Johnson, 2002, Stevenson, 2013). The burials have been dated *c.* 10-50AD, and during the early Romano-British period a large square enclosure was constructed in association with the earlier burial and became a focus for the deposition of deliberately broken ceramics and animal bone, both burnt and unburned, in acts which have been interpreted as feasts of veneration (Johnson, 2002: 16, Stevenson, 2013: 179, 2014: 41).

Ultimately, the provision of food offerings was quite rare in Arras Culture burials. Of the 446 burials excavated by Dent just 14 preserved animal bone indicative of such offerings (Dent, 1984: 43). Similarly, Stead's excavation of the Makeshift cemetery at Rudston/Burton Fleming had positive identification of animal bone in just 53 of the more than 200 burials, although the poor state of preservation suggests that they may be under-represented (Legge, 1991: 140). As noted above, there appear to have been several variant burial practices within the Arras Culture tradition, reflective of social groupings or stratification. While Parker Pearson (1999b) has argued that provisioning the deceased with offerings of sheep speaks to their status as 'commoners' it is perhaps warranted to reinterpret these individuals as having higher status than the majority of individuals, for whom food offerings were considered wholly inappropriate.

In an attempt to ascertain possible differences in diet attributable to social status Jay and Richards (2006) conducted a detailed isotopic analysis of the $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ and $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ values on the skeletal remains from 62 humans and 68 animals from Wetwang Slack. The animal material was drawn both from the cemetery and the associated settlement. Their assessment categorised the material based on the burial form, differentiating between chariot burials, primary barrow burials (distinguishing between those with and without grave goods), and, secondary burials (again sub-categorised into those with and without grave goods). Their results showed no significant differences in diet between burials interpreted as 'high-status', such as the chariot burials, and the rest of the cemetery population. Further, they could discern "no significant differences...between individuals buried with the different species" of pig and sheep (Jay & Richards, 2006: 660). However, a later, more detailed, isotopic analysis suggested the individuals from chariot burials may have had a marginally different pattern of subsistence in adulthood from the general population (Jay *et al.*, 2013: 487). These finds infer that, whatever social differences may have existed within the Arras Culture, they had little impact on an individual's general access to nutrition.

Jay and Richards (2006) highlighted one limitation of their analysis: differential animal protein sources, as represented by the pig and sheep offerings, cannot be distinguished by $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ analysis, with domesticated pigs and sheep, having similar trophic values. There were some subtle but interesting differences in the isotopic values for males aged over 35 years, suggestive that these men may have consumed a diet different from women and younger males, lending credence to Dent's (1995: 53, 2010: 68) and Giles'

(2012: 113-116) assertions that social status was partially determined by age (Jay & Richards, 2006: 667). Social stratification at Wetwang – and within the Arras Culture more broadly – thus seems to have been more complex than a simple hierarchy of elites and commoners. Alternate theories of socio-political organisation should perhaps be explored, such as the heterarchical power-structures now attributed to some contemporary British, Celtic and Germanic groups (Sharples, 1991b, Bradley & Yates, 2007, Thurston, 2009: 360-361). Social structures of this nature may also have been a feature of the Arras Culture, and we should consider that these complex social relationships are reflected in the funerary record. However, a detailed examination lies beyond the scope of this research.

6.3.3 *Textiles*

Textiles rarely survive in the burial environment (with peat bogs a notable exception). When traces are observed they are usually preserved as mineralised casts in the corrosion product of metal objects, such as brooches, with which they were in direct contact (Chen *et al.*, 1998). Following the analysis of textiles from Rudston/Burton Fleming, Crowfoot (1991: 119) determined that fabrics were predominately of wool, and some flax, seemingly of local production and in a range of weaves. The weaves included tabby and twill weaves and some examples retained traces of striped, chevron or diamond decoration (Crowfoot, 1991: *ibid.*). Such decorative elements, in addition to showcasing the weaver's skills, may have operated as important signifiers of group or individual identity (Giles, 2012: 127). The decisions underlying choice of funerary garments may have been highly significant, and the layering of cloth preserved in Kirkburn burial 5 and Burton Fleming 20 indicates that at least some individuals were inhumed fully clothed (Crowfoot, 1991: 122). Dent (1984: 99, 167) proposed that funerary dress at Wetwang may have varied in accordance with social status, with lower status individuals buried naked, while others may have been wrapped in simple shrouds, feasibly indicated by metal pins or staples positioned over the face of the individual in Wetwang burial 61, with only the social elite buried in full dress. This nuanced form of cultural expression remains largely invisible in the archaeological record. The fragmentary evidence, such as the textile traces preserved in Arras Culture burials, raises the prospect (which cannot be proven on current evidence) that use of textiles may have signalled complex social organisation.

We can also reconstruct some of the economic importance attached to sheep in Iron Age Britain. Sheep dominate the faunal assemblages of most Iron Age settlements and it is likely that they were principally exploited for their wool, as well as for their meat (Fenton-Thomas, 2005: 56-60, Moore, 2007). Finds of loom weights and weaving combs are common in Iron Age settlements, some combs showing signs of long-term, perhaps even inter-generational usage (Chittock, 2014). Weaving combs were often intricately decorated, suggesting that they were valued items of personal equipment (Coles & Minnitt, 1995: 148, Chittock, 2014).

6.3.4 Metalwork and items of personal adornment

Items of metalwork were often chosen for inclusion in burials. The most common metalwork items were brooches, in a variety of forms, which may have formed part of the dress of the deceased, or have functioned to fasten a shroud or binding sheet (Dent, 1995: 49, Halkon, 2011). The position of brooches in relation to the body is often consistent with how clothing may have been worn in life, or close to the face where a shroud is likely to have been secured (Stead, 1991a: 90). Larger brooches tended to be associated with males, while smaller brooch forms were more often found with females (Giles, 2012: 136). However, given the paucity of grave goods for Iron Age Britain the proportional nature of their provision must be noted. At Wetwang Slack for example, of 446 graves excavated by Dent (1984: 26), only 43 included brooches. At Makeshift cemetery 63 brooches were recorded (Stead, 1991a: 177). The brooches were usually of insular La Tène forms, the earliest being low-arched bow brooches, which correlate with Continental La Tène B2 brooches, suggestive of a late fourth or early third century BC date (Jay *et al.*, 2012: 165). The latest brooch forms are harder to date, leaving open the possibility that some may date into the first century AD (Jay *et al.*, 2012: 167). The provision of a little over 100 brooches across the span of several centuries highlights their rarity in the funerary record.

Some graves also included other items of personal adornment such as bracelets, rings or pins leading Dent (1984: 27) to suggest “the body was dressed as though alive”. Bracelets were of iron, copper alloy, jet or shale, each a prestige material indicative of personal or familial wealth (Dent, 1984: 59-62, Stead, 1991a: 90-91, Halkon, 2011). A smaller number of burials included necklaces of strung glass beads. Giles (2012: 143-150) has recently discussed the variety of bead forms and highlighted their value, beauty and utility as heirlooms or tradable items.

Mirrors were a class of high-status object sometimes chosen as grave goods within insular Iron Age burial traditions, including the Arras Culture (Whimster, 1981: 24-25, Dent, 1995: 57-58, Joy, 2011). Mirrors have been subjected to intensive study and their function as objects of power has been explored by Joy (2010) and Giles (2012: 155-157). Mirrors have rarely been found in association with weapons, with a single, isolated example from Bryher, Isles of Scilly discovered in 1999 (Johns, 2002: 5). The stone cist burial (discussed in Chapter 7) was that of a 20-25 year old individual of indeterminate sex. The body was placed in a tightly crouched position with the head oriented to the north, on the right side facing west with a Stead Group C iron sword placed with the hilt close to the face, in contact with the mirror, which was positioned with the reflective surface angled toward the face (Johns, 2002: 15-20). The grave goods also included shield fittings, their position indicating the shield had been broken prior to deposition (Johns, 2002: 18). The human remains were AMS radiocarbon dated 200 to 45 Cal BC, which Stead felt too early a date for a sword of this type (Johns, 2002: 23, Stead, 2006: 171). Suggestions that the burial was a multiple burial of a male and female cannot be supported (Johns, 2002: 19).

Finds of ironworking tools such as those from Rudston burial R154 are also significant to this thesis (Stead, 1991a: 205). Tools were more commonly found in association with weapons. Rudston burial R154 included an iron sword, two iron spearheads and the possible remains of a wooden shield (Stead, 1991a: *ibid.*). The spearheads had been placed between the handles of a pair of iron-working tongs, which had been laid over the iron sword (Stead, 1991a: 205-206). Other tools in the burial included a hammer, thought to be for light, detailed work and an iron coupler (Stead, 1991a: 79-80). The burial, believed to be that of a young adult male aged between 17 and 20 years of age, was one of Stead's Type B burials, placed in an extended position and oriented east to west. Burials with these characteristics are generally thought to indicate high-status individuals within Arras Culture society (Stead, 1991a: 205). No food offerings or pottery were included amongst the grave goods. Another two Type B burials at Rudston included tools: R87, yielded an iron hammerhead; and, R141 featured a small but diverse selection of tools – an iron file, a tapered tool, broad-bladed knife, iron awl and an antler tine, which may have been used as a burnishing tool (Stead, 1991a: 79). R87 was the burial of an individual aged between 17 and 25, likely male, and there was also an association between tools and weapons with other grave goods including an iron

dagger (Stead, 1991a: 197). R141, another young adult, of indeterminate sex, was placed in a flexed burial orientated west to east, and the associated grave goods included pig bones, interpreted as an indicator that this individual belonged to one of the higher social strata (Stead, 1991a: 202-203, Parker Pearson, 1999b, Pope & Ralston, 2011, Halkon, 2013). Thus we have a clear association between tools, weapons and high-status individuals within the Arras Culture.

6.3.5 *Two-wheeled vehicles and horse equipment*

Two-wheeled vehicles, variously termed ‘carts’ or ‘chariots’, form a notable class of grave good included in some Iron Age burials. To date, 22 British Iron Age burials have been found which included such vehicles. Twenty-one appear in a tightly defined zone centred on Yorkshire, with a single additional example recorded in southern Scotland (Dent, 1985, Carter & Hunter, 2003, Halkon, 2011, 2013: 75-82). The term ‘chariot’, is frequently applied to these vehicles. ‘Chariot’ is a label loaded with martial connotations, and its usage is generally supported with reference to Caesar’s record of his British Campaigns in 55 and 54 BC, which are discussed in Chapter 8 (Caesar: *De Bello Gallico*: IV.24 and IV.33). While no ‘chariots’ have been recovered elsewhere in Britain, there are finds of terrets and other objects associated with such vehicles in Dorset and Anglesey, for example (Fox, 1946: 61-62, Halkon, 2011: 148). A distinctly martial function for these two-wheeled vehicles remains unproven, hence their inclusion in this section, rather than in Chapter 7, which focusses on martial burials in particular. Despite attempts by some scholars to move away from this terminology, the label persists and such finds are commonly referred to as ‘chariot burials’ (for example: Carter & Hunter, 2003, Jay *et al.*, 2012, Jay *et al.*, 2013). Indeed some burials which included two-wheeled vehicles did also include martial objects and those burials are discussed in greater depth in Chapter 7.

Similar two-wheeled vehicles have also been recorded in Iron Age burials in northern France, and the shared practice of vehicle burial was long thought proof that a Gallic group had migrated to East Yorkshire, again supported by Caesar (*De Bello Gallico*: V.12, Halkon, 2013: 79). There are similarities, but also significant differences in the burial rites, which have led to a re-evaluation of the role and extent which migration may have played in the development of this practice. Continental vehicle burials, in France, and also in Etruria, appear much earlier than in Britain, with the practice reaching its peak around the mid-fifth century BC (Emiliozzi, 1999, Anthoons, 2011,

Jay *et al.*, 2012: 182). Wood samples from the Newbridge burial in Scotland have produced calibrated radiocarbon dates of 520-370 Cal BC (91 percent probability – 2350 ± 50 BP and 2365 ± 50 BP – GO-17510-2), which parallels Continental practice more closely than most other British examples (Carter & Hunter, 2003). Some British vehicle burials appear to be much later than on the Continent (or Newbridge). Jay *et al.* (2012: *ibid.*) suggest that the rite of including a two-wheeled vehicle in burials at Wetwang was practiced for “a period of no more than a few decades around 200 Cal BC.” However, not all vehicle burials have been radiocarbon dated (acknowledging the C14 plateau), and Halkon (2013: 75-80) suggests a longer tradition, which evolved over time.

On the Continent, vehicles were usually buried fully intact, with deep cuts made in the base of the grave to accommodate the wheels, and this practice was also observed in the earliest British burial at Newbridge (Carter & Hunter, 2003: 531-532). By contrast, most of the British examples were dismantled prior to deposition, their wheels laid flat in the grave, or in the case of Garton Station burial 6, propped against the grave wall (Dent, 1985: 85-87, Stead, 1991a: 29-32). Just five vehicles were interred intact in Britain, at Newbridge, Scotland, Ferry Fryston, Hunmanby, Pexton Moor, and, Cawthorn Camp, Yorkshire (Carter & Hunter, 2003, Halkon, 2013: 76-78). The Hunmanby, Pexton Moor and Cawthorn Camp burials sit as outliers from the epicentre of vehicle burials in East Yorkshire although Halkon (2013: 79) has argued that the Ferry Fryston burial, which is also an outlier, incorporates elements consistent with Arras Culture burial practices, suggesting a possible connection to East Yorkshire. Jay *et al.* (2013: 475) have also suggested that the individual buried at Ferry Fryston may have been an incomer from a different area, based on isotopic analyses, and this finding lends support to Halkon’s assessment.

Jay *et al.* (2013) also sought to answer the migration question through the application of strontium and oxygen isotope ($^{87}\text{Sr}/^{86}\text{Sr}$ and $\delta^{18}\text{O}$) analyses of a sample of burials from Wetwang Slack, Wetwang Village, Kirkburn, Garton Station and Garton Slack. They found that most individuals examined, including those from vehicle burials, had strontium levels consistent with the local chalk geology, indicating that they had lived on the same, or similar, chalk geology during childhood when tooth enamel mineralisation took place (Jay *et al.*, 2013: 484). However, six individuals did not fit the expected $^{87}\text{Sr}/^{86}\text{Sr}$ values for a childhood lived on the local chalk (Jay *et al.*, 2013:

ibid.). These included the Kirkburn vehicle burial (discussed in Chapter 7), which also included a mail tunic amongst the grave goods, and this was the only vehicle burial which did not fit with the local geology. Jay *et al.* (2013: 485) concluded: “...strontium isotope data indicate that he did not spend his childhood on the Yorkshire Wolds Chalk, while the rest of the data suggest that he may have lived there for some years in later life (before he died aged 25-35 years).”

Comparative analyses of Continental ‘chariot’ burials have highlighted similar vehicle construction techniques for intact vehicles interred in Iron Age burials in the Paris Basin and one might presume that the individual from Kirkburn burial 5 had come from this region (Anthoons, 2011, Halkon, 2013: 87). However, Jay *et al.* (2013: 485) ruled out the Paris Basin region of France as a possible point of origin, due to the similar chalk geology of that region, which would have produced strontium values similar to those of the local Yorkshire Wolds population. Comparative $\delta^{18}\text{O}$ values fit with those expected for Britain and some parts of western France, suggesting that individuals with isotopic values indicative of a childhood spent off the chalk may have moved to the area from communities in those regions (Jay *et al.*, 2013: 487). There does, therefore, appear to have been some level of mobility within the local population and the isotopic analyses would indicate that at least some incoming individuals were accepted into the community and accorded formal funerary rites in local cemeteries.

Regardless of place of origin, individuals accorded the rite of vehicle burial show indicators that they were considered prominent members in the local community. Within Arras Culture burials all but three also included pig bones amongst the grave goods, and, as discussed, above, offerings of food, and pig in particular, have been associated with the highest stratum of Arras society (Parker Pearson, 1999b, Halkon, 2013: 76-78). The isotopic $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ and $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ analyses indicate that these individuals may have consumed a different diet than other members of the community during adulthood, suggesting that this difference in food provision is reflective of a real difference in subsistence practice rather than an element specially constructed as part of the funerary rite (Jay *et al.*, 2013: 487).

The vehicles themselves represent a significant investment in resources. Halkon has calculated that approximately 36kg of iron would be required to construct the tyres, lynch pins and other associated fittings and that the manufacture of these elements

would take a minimum 288 days' labour (Halkon, 2013: 108). In addition to the raw iron their production would consume significant quantities of charcoal and clay for the initial smelt (Halkon, 2011: 139). The Foulness Valley in East Yorkshire was rich in bog-iron ore during the Iron Age and there is ample evidence that this resource was being exploited by the local population (Halkon, 2011). This valuable resource may have been tightly controlled and Halkon (2013: 108) has argued persuasively that those represented in vehicle burials were members of a group with such a controlling interest.

Other grave goods associated with vehicles also indicate a special status, with at least five (possibly six) burials also including martial objects, and two female burials including mirrors, an object class of particular significance, discussed above (Joy, 2010, Halkon, 2013: 76-78). Wetwang Cart Burial 2 also included an iron and gold pin (one of only two gold objects known from Arras Culture burials) and, the so-called 'bean-tin', a cylindrical copper alloy container decorated with ornate incised decoration and red enamel, the function of which remains elusive (Dent, 1985: 90). The individual in Wetwang Cart Burial 1 also appears to have been subjected to the 'speared corpse' rite, a highly select practice, which is discussed in Chapter 7. The combination of these factors creates an image of social elites, whose funerary rites involved a much higher level of investment in time and resources than other members of the community. These rites were clearly intended to differentiate these individuals, and those performing the funerary duties, from the rest of the population, marking them out as possessing special status and perhaps reflective of special roles, which they may have performed within the community.

6.4 Conclusions: being dead in Iron Age Britain

Death involves a significant and irreversible alteration to one's state of being. The death of an individual could create crisis and tension within the small Iron Age communities of Britain, and this chapter has explored some of the archaeologically visible ways in which these tensions were resolved. A number of different funerary traditions have been observed for the British Iron Age, with crouched inhumation burials predominating as the core insular funerary rite. Variation in burial practice has highlighted the complexity of Iron Age societies and the formation of the archaeological record they have left behind. While the study of burial practices has been hampered by a seeming lack of material, closer examination has shown that there are subtle expressions of social status, familial and ancestral associations, and carefully constructed expressions of group and

individual identity through the performance of funerary rites. An absence of acts of conspicuous consumption appears almost universal, with the Aylesford cremation rite the sole exception; that rite representing a deliberate move to incorporate Continental practices associated with the accrual and display of power.

Feasting also seems to have formed an important part of many insular burial traditions and the provision of the deceased with a portion of the funerary feast was deemed appropriate for select individuals. The species represented in such rites are exclusively from domesticates, and perhaps communicate associations with particular social groupings within the community, which may be linked to age or social status. Likewise, variation in funerary dress would seem to subtly indicate a degree of social stratification with those who may have formed the social elite buried in full dress while those of non-elite status were perhaps buried in simple shrouds.

Practices such as pit burials and the deposition of fragmentary human remains speak to rites performed to ensure fertility and protection and may represent inter-group violence and trophy-taking. The association with violence evident in these acts likely served to ensure their potency and efficacy. Significant evidence of overkill in the execution of sacrificed individuals placed in bogs also speaks to a need for significant violence to adequately meet the requirements of sacrificial rites. These practices, while not of a funerary nature, highlight the relationships between life, death, violence and social order perceived in the Iron Age of Britain.

Throughout the Iron Age in Britain and Europe, weapons and other martial objects were exceptional items in the funerary record. In Britain, objects of martial character are exceedingly rare in funerary contexts, and it is not possible to overemphasise the extraordinary nature of such martial assemblages in Iron Age Britain, where the accordance of any archaeologically detectable funerary rite was rare. For those afforded funerary treatment it was rarer still to furnish burials with grave goods and those equipped with martial objects form an extremely small proportion of all Iron Age burials in Britain. Thus, this was an uncommon rite conferred upon a very select few individuals. Why these individuals were singled out for such treatment is difficult to unpick from the evidence. There appear to have been a variety of practices, some seemingly inter-related, with complex associations and profound implications for our understanding of identity and martial practice. As such, discussion of burials with

weapons and other martial objects requires a deeper exploration than the current chapter allows. Thus, the following chapter will examine burials of martial character from each of the major Iron Age burial traditions in Britain in detail.

7 Burials of Martial Character

7.1 Introduction

One of the core objectives of this thesis is to examine the various functions of spearheads in Iron Age Britain. This includes a detailed contextual analysis examining the ways in which the peoples who inhabited Britain during this period chose to dispose of this class of object. Chapter 5 examined the deposition of spearheads in structured deposits in settlement, sanctuary and landscape contexts. Chapter 6 provided an overview of mortuary practices in Iron Age Britain and the current chapter seeks to conduct a closer examination of funerary practices which included spearheads. One cannot overstate the significance of the decision to bury an individual with weapons or other martial objects during the British Iron Age. This was a rare and exclusive subset of funerary practices, conferred upon select individuals across each of the burial traditions of Iron Age Britain. Within each burial practice certain conventions were being observed, and there appear to be some commonalities between traditions. Finds of the full complement of shield, spear and sword together in a single burial – considered by antiquarians and some more recent researchers as the required standard equipment for ‘warrior’ status – are very rare. Finds of armour such as chain mail or helmets are also highly unusual as grave goods. More common, are finds of individual elements such as a single spearhead, shield, sword, or dagger. This chapter will examine examples of burials with weapons and other martial objects from each of the major Iron Age burial traditions in Britain. The chapter commences with an exploration of past studies of martial burials. This is followed by an analysis of well-equipped burials, which have formed the principal focus of research to date. The chapter then offers an examination of all classes of martial object deposited in burials. Where possible, the positioning of the martial objects within the grave, and any special treatment, such as ritual destruction are considered. A complete, updated list of British Iron Age martial burials is included as an appendix at the end of this thesis (Appendix 10.4)

7.2 Historiography and current state of research on martial burials in Britain

One of the most prominent analyses of British Iron Age martial burials was Collis’ ‘Burials with Weapons’ (1973), in which he attempted to catalogue all of the known examples in Britain according to funerary rite. Of the 17 burials catalogued, eight were located in Yorkshire (Collis, 1973: Table 1). It is worth noting that an 18th ‘burial’, from Spettisbury in Dorset (discussed in Chapter 6), does not appear to have been of a

funerary nature, and should more accurately be interpreted as a structured deposit of human remains and weapons (Gresham, 1939, Collis, 1973: 129). Whimster (1981: 129-146), in his survey of burial practices, identified a discreet sub-group of burials with swords, and mentions a series of graves which included spearheads; although he did not attribute any particular significance to those assemblages.

Since Collis' (1973) and Whimster's (1981) publications, archaeologists confronted with a weapons burial have attempted to provide an overview of the current state of knowledge. Johns (2002: 64-68), in his reporting of the Bryher cist burial, provides a list of 36 British and two Irish burials which included swords or spears, and noted whether any shield fittings were found in association with them. Sealy (2007: 33), in his analysis of the Kelvedon Warrior, states that fewer than 25 warrior burials are known for England and Wales, although his enumeration includes the caveat that burials which solely included items of defensive equipment, such as shields or armour, should not rightly be considered 'warrior' burials. Unfortunately, in general, these accounts reflect modern concepts and preconceptions relating to the importance of weaponry, especially offensive weapons, and often obscure the nature and diversity of burials with martial objects during the British Iron Age. These limited accounts also project contemporary ideas about identity and warriorhood onto the Iron Age societies of Britain, drawing arbitrary distinctions between martial identity and other aspects of identity construction, which may not have been perceived by those enacting the practices we observe in the archaeological record.

Only two attempts have been made to create an updated list of burials which included martial objects: Fraser Hunter's (2005) contextual exploration of warrior iconography on British Iron Age Coinage, and Giles (in preparation) will provide "an entwined biographical perspective on the lives of individuals and weapons" (*pers. comm.*). Hunter rightly acknowledged the need to look beyond offensive weaponry and to consider the relationship between burials and other forms of archaeological evidence. His work expanded the corpus to 63 burials, although not all could be confidently attributed an Iron Age date. Certainly, any truly comprehensive account should be broadened to embrace all martial objects, including rare examples of sling-shot for example, as these too could have held martial connotations. This more inclusive approach allows for a more nuanced exploration of the nature of these deposits, and how they may relate to other activities such as structured or votive deposition in ditches, pits and wet contexts

such as rivers and fenland. A more holistic analysis may also reveal expressions of social status and identity construction, which may have previously gone unnoticed.

While the corpus has expanded notably since the time of Collis' writing – and new finds have come to light since Hunter's review – Yorkshire retains a prominent place as a focal point for the practice of including martial objects, especially weapons, amongst grave goods. There would now appear to be at least 80 burials which include martial objects that can confidently be identified as dating to the British Iron Age, with a further 22 burials less confidently assigned an Iron Age date. The full list of burials is included as an appendix to this thesis (Appendix 10.4). Giles (*pers. comm.*) has recorded a similar number of burials. However, the writer has not had an opportunity to compare data.

More than half of the positively identifiable Iron Age martial burials were discovered in East Yorkshire (Figure 7.1). The dominance of Yorkshire in the raw count of martial burials is largely attributable to the fact that the Arras Culture burial tradition appears to have been a majority rite during the Middle Iron Age. Consequently, a greater number of Iron Age burials have been recorded in East Yorkshire than anywhere else in Britain. The proportion of Arras Culture burials which include martial objects is approximately five percent of the total. However, this small percentage does not negate the fact that the decision to bury people with weapons, and other martial objects, appears to have been taken most often in Yorkshire, representing a cultural practice that appears to be particularly marked in this region (Figures 7.2-7.3).

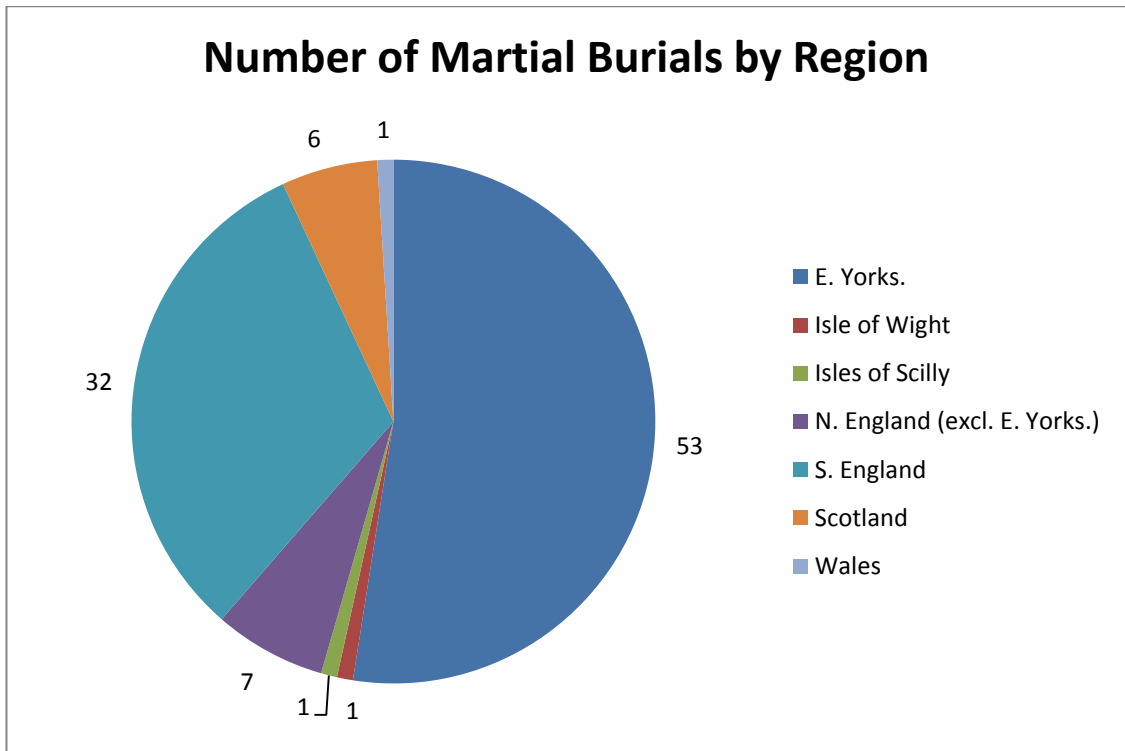


Figure 7.1: Raw number of martial burials recorded by region.

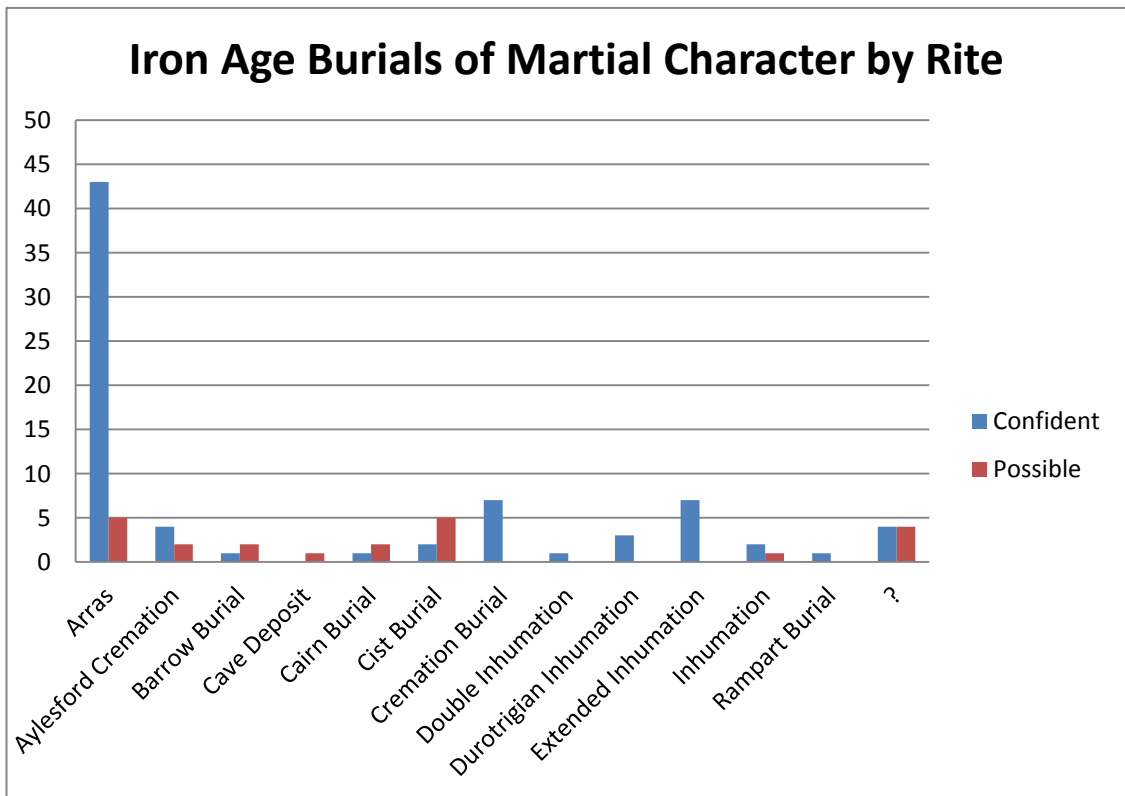


Figure 7.2: Number of Iron Age burials of martial character by funerary rite.

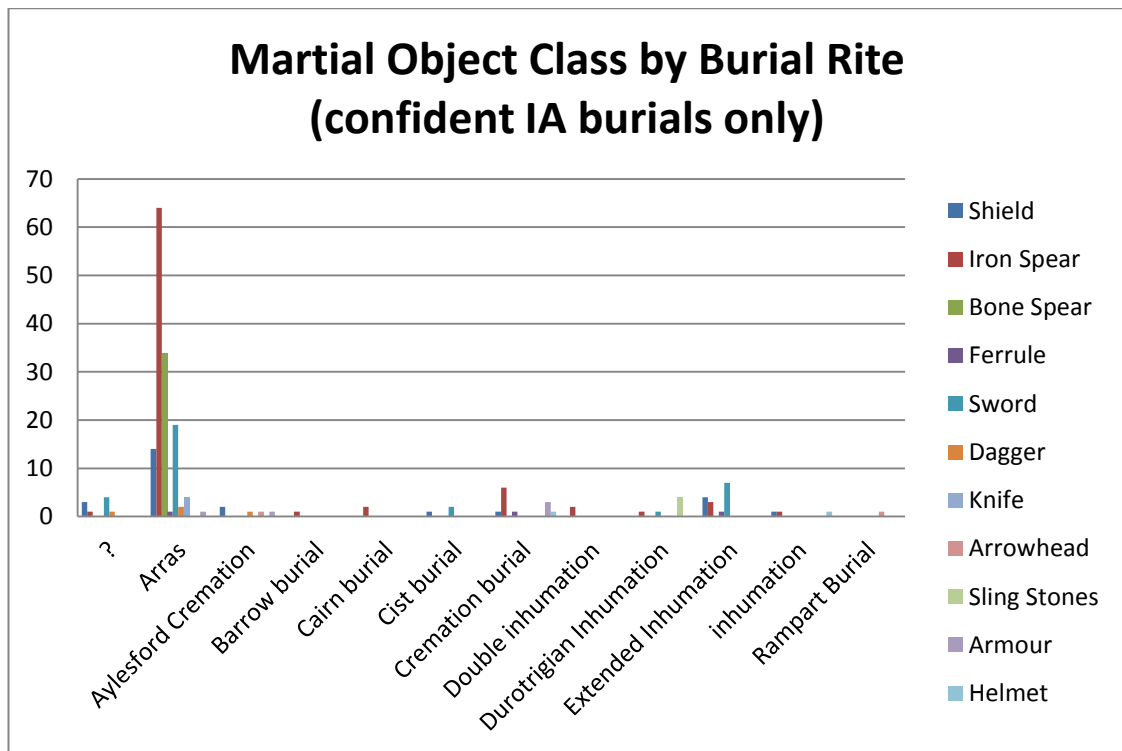


Figure 7.3: Raw number of objects by associated funerary rite (burials confidently dated to the Iron Age).

7.3 ‘Warrior’ burials with the full panoply of shield, sword and spear

Burials of individuals with the full complement of sword, spear and shield did occur in Iron Age Britain, and it is principally these burials that Collis, Johnson and Sealy have focussed their attention on when enumerating ‘warrior’ burials. Of the 80 burials which can be confidently attributed an Iron Age date, nine included a sword, shield and at least one iron spearhead amongst their grave goods. Five of these can be found among Arras Culture burials. Outside of East Yorkshire, burials 19 and 20 from Brisley Farm, Kent, the Owslebury Warrior, Hampshire and the Kelvedon Warrior, Essex round out the coterie of Britain’s most equipped martial burials (Table 7.1 and Figures 7.4-7.5). A double-inhumation cist burial from Camelon, Falkirk in Scotland, which included a round shield-boss, iron sword and two iron spearheads has been excluded from this list as it cannot be confidently identified as a native Iron Age burial. The burial should perhaps be identified as Romano-British due to its proximity to the Roman Fort at Camelon, although there is also evidence of Iron Age settlement in the area (Breeze *et al.*, 1976: 75). The burial was discovered in 1975, and another, incomplete iron sword was discovered in the vicinity in the preceding weeks, however, this may have come from another burial, destroyed during quarrying activities (Breeze *et al.*, 1976). Stead

(2006: 72-73 and 198) included the sword from the cist in his assessment of British Iron Age swords, which he identified as a Group G short-sword, and the form is consistent with those of the pre-Roman period in Britain. However, this arch-hilted sword form is known to have continued into the first century AD, and Scott argued that the shortness of the blade may be influenced by the Roman *gladius* (Breeze *et al.*, 1976). Certainly, other swords recorded for the north of Britain were examples of Stead's Types E and F, which he describes as medium-length swords (Stead, 2006: 55-70). These contrasting cultural associations make an Iron Age date for the Camelon burial an uncertain prospect; although Hunter (2005: 65) included the burial in his count of warrior burials, and the spearheads recovered from this grave (IDs 427 and 428) have also been included in the data collection for the typological assessment conducted as part of this thesis.

Table 7.1 Iron Age burials including shield, sword and iron spearhead (* indicates a burial including aspects associated with the 'speared corpse' rite).

Burial	County	Rite	Period	Objects
Rudston Burial R 154	East Yorkshire	Arras Culture	MIA	1 Shield 2 Iron spearheads (IDs 74-5, Type 1.2 and indeterminate) 1 Iron sword 1 Iron hammerhead 1 Pair of iron tongs 1 Iron coupler
Rudston Burial R174*	East Yorkshire	Arras Culture	MIA	1 Shield 8 Iron spearheads (IDs 77-80, 87-90 Type 3.5 (x2), 1.5.b (x2), indeterminate, misc.1.1.a.2, 1.1.a.1, 1.1.a.3) 2 Bone spearheads (IDs 91-92 Type 1.8) 1 Iron sword 2 bone toggles
Garton Station GS10*	East Yorkshire	Arras Culture	MIA	1 Shield 15 Iron spearheads (IDs 44-50, 52-57 Type 1.1.a.1 (x4), 1.1.a.2 (x3), 1.1.a.3 (x2), 1.1.b.1, 1.1.b.2, 1.2, 1.5.b, misc.) 1 Iron sword
Wetwang Cart Burial 1*	East Yorkshire	Arras Culture	MIA	1 Shield 7 Iron spearheads (IDs 114, 116-20, 419 Type 1.1.b.2, 1.4.a (x2), 1.4.b (x2), 1.5.a, 3.4) 1 Iron sword 1 dismantled two-wheeled vehicle with associated fittings Forequarter of a pig
Grimthorpe*	East Yorkshire	Arras Culture	MIA	1 Shield 1 Iron spearhead (Type 3.3/3.4? seemingly thrusting form) 16 bone spearheads (IDs 416-17, Type 1.8) 1 Iron sword 2 Copper alloy tubular fittings, possibly from a shield Animal bone Pottery fragments
Owslebury Warrior*	Hampshire	Extended Inhumation	LIA	1 Shield 1 Iron spearhead (Type 3.4? seemingly thrusting form) 1 Iron sword 1 Iron ferrule 1 Copper alloy belt hook Charred grain

Burial	County	Rite	Period	Objects
Brisley Farm Burial 19	Kent	Extended Inhumation	LIA	1 Shield 1 Iron spearhead (ID420 Type 2.1.a) 1 Iron sword 1 Platter 1 Butt-beaker 1 Cup Half pig's head
Brisley Farm Burial 20*	Kent	Extended Inhumation	LIA	1 Shield 1 Iron spearhead (ID421 Type 2.1.a) 1 Iron sword 1 Butt-beaker
Kelvedon Warrior	Essex	Unknown	LIA	1 Shield 1 Iron spearhead (ID105 Type. 2.1.a) 1 Iron Ferrule 1 Iron sword 1 Iron dagger 1 Tankard 1 Roman copper alloy bowl Iron fittings of uncertain function 2 Pedestal urns



Figure 7.4: Map showing the sites of Iron Age martial burials which included a shield, sword and at least one spearhead.

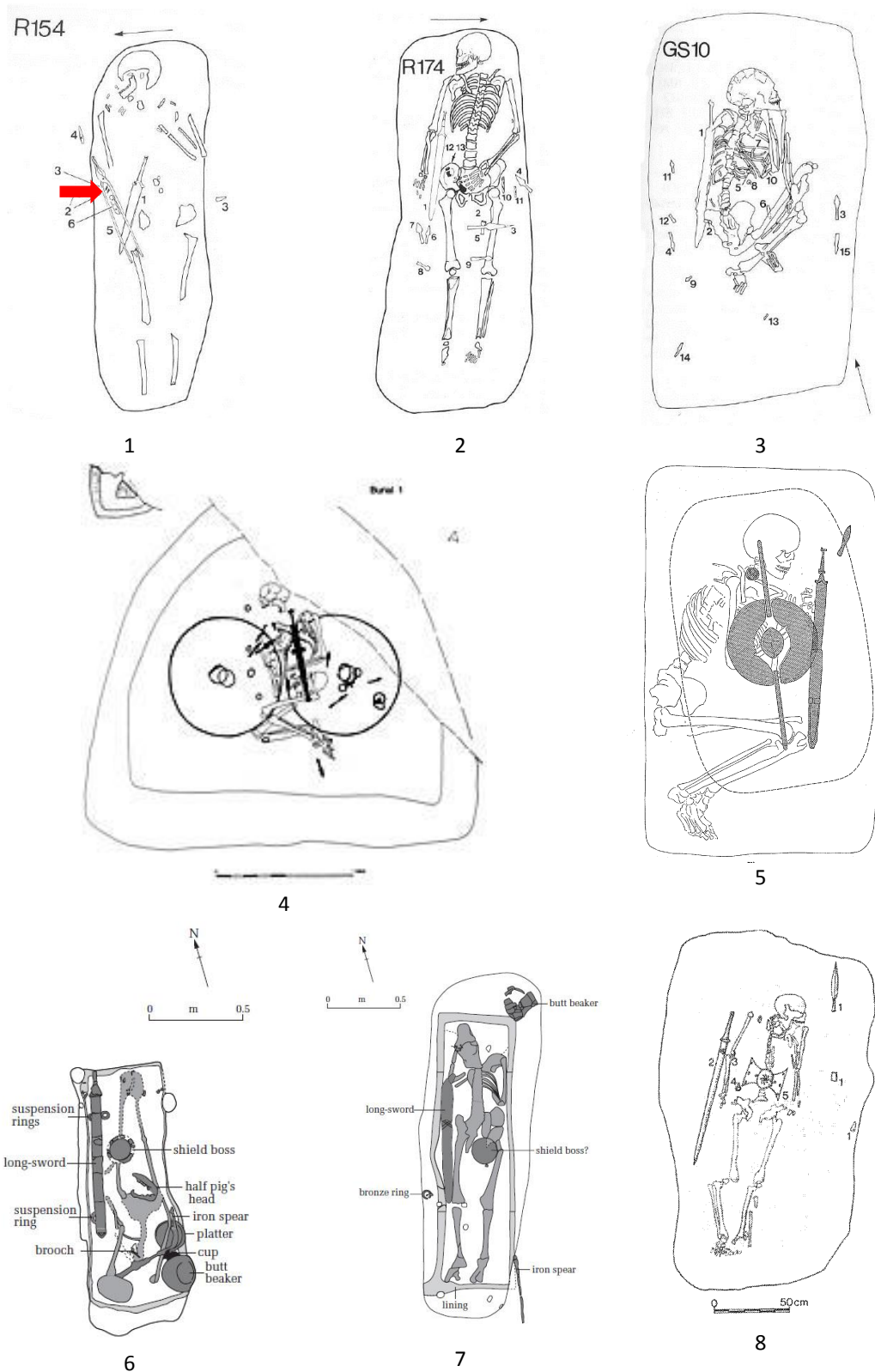


Figure 7.5: Iron Age burials featuring sword, shield and spear. 1) Rudston R154 (location of spearheads highlighte by arrow); 2) Rudston R174; 3) Garton Station GS10; 4) Wetwang Cart Burial 1; 5) Grimthorpe; 6) Brisley Farm Burial 19; 7) Brisley Farm Burial 20; 8) Owslebury. Images: (Stead, 1991a, Dent, 1985, Stead *et al.*, 1968, Johnson, 2002, Collis, 1973), not all to scale.

Certain similarities can be observed in the layout of these nine Iron Age ‘warrior’ burials. The geographic distribution of the burials (Figure 7.4) shows that they are all located in regions believed to have close connections with the Continent, via maritime and riverine routes (Cunliffe, 2005). Five of the burials had been placed in an extended position, and a sixth had been placed on the back with the legs flexed. This demonstrates a clear differentiation from the normative burial position for Iron Age Britain, which, as discussed in Chapter 6, was in a crouched position. The Arras Culture burials, R154, and R174 were placed in fully extended positions, in accordance with Stead’s Type B rite, associated with the social elite. Likewise, the two Brisley Farm burials and the Owslebury Warrior burial had been placed in extended positions; the Owslebury Warrior and Brisley Farm burial 20 with their heads oriented to the north. By contrast, burial 19 at Brisley Farm was oriented with the head to the south (which will be discussed further, below). Grimthorpe, according to Mortimer’s (1905: 150-152) description, was a supine, flexed burial. Unfortunately, the Kelvedon Warrior had been buried in acidic soil conditions so lack of preservation, coupled with poor recording, make it impossible to know whether the funerary rite had been inhumation or cremation, and, if the former, in what position the body may have been placed (Sealy, 2007: 1-4).

At Garton Station, burial GS10 was a contracted Type A burial (the normative Arras Culture rite), with the head oriented to the north. Wetwang Cart Burial 1 was also a contracted burial with a dismantled two-wheeled vehicle, along with its associated horse-fittings. It may be suggested that these individuals represent some form of hybrid burial rite incorporating aspects of ‘warrior’ burial and normative practice in a manner which is not observed in other burials featuring this level of martial equipment.

The positions of the martial objects within these burials also demonstrate some consistency. Shields appear to have been placed over the body at Grimthorpe, Owslebury, and Brisley Farm 20. Placement of a shield over the torso is also noted for Camelton and several other martial burials, suggesting this was the normative position for this class of object, discussed below (Mortimer, 1905: 152, Collis, 1973: 126-129, Johnson, 2002: 16-17). Swords were placed close to the right arm – either between the arm and the ribs, or beside the body – noted for Grimthorpe, R174, Brisley Farm 20, and the Owslebury Warrior; across the torso in Wetwang Cart Burial 1 and R154; and,

along the spine in GS10. In all cases the hilt of the weapon is oriented toward the head of the grave, and the tip towards the foot of the grave. The position of the weapons in Brisley Farm burial 19 appears contrary to the usual placement, with the sword placed by the left leg, tip pointing toward the head of the grave. This variation from apparent normative practice will be discussed in greater detail, below.

The placement and treatment of the spears in each of the nine burials indicate performative aspects of the funerary rites. The spears in the burial of the Owslebury Warrior and Brisley Farm burial 20 had been thrust into the wall of the grave – in the case of Brisley Farm 20, likely thrown from the head of the grave – and each subsequently had their shafts broken, seemingly so that they would fit into the confines of the grave (Collis, 1973: 126, Stevenson, 2013, 2014: 40-41). R174, GS10 and Wetwang Cart Burial 1 all appear to have been subjected to the ‘speared corpse’ rite, in which spears were thrown into the open grave, a practice discussed in greater detail below, along with observations about the placement of spearheads in martial burials more generally.

The Kelvedon Warrior and Brisley Farm burial 19 show evidence of different practices, with the spearheads from both burials having been subjected to acts of ritual destruction. A similar act of ritual destruction is also evident with the sword from Kelvedon. These two burials are not the only instances in which martial objects had been subjected to ritual damage. Acts of ritual destruction will be discussed in greater depth in Section 7.9.

The types of spearheads which were selected for deposition in these well-equipped burials are revealing. The Kelvedon Warrior, and both burials 19 and 20 at Brisley Farm included members of Type 2.1 long, angular thrusting spearhead forms. This could be interpreted as the most ostentatious spearhead form, and may be associated with close fighting and acts of aggressive martial display, which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 8. It was not possible to gather metric information on the spearhead from Owslebury, and the iron spearhead from Grimthorpe has not survived. However, the illustrations of both spearheads suggest that these were versatile forms, possibly members of Type 3.3 (tapered) or 3.4 (classic) (Figures 7.6-7.7). Wetwang Cart Burial 1 and Rudston R174 also included versatile spearheads of Types 3.4 (classic) and 3.5 (curved-bladed) respectively. The indeterminate spearhead from R154, is preserved to a

length of 97mm, in two pieces. It is difficult to estimate the original length of the spearhead, but it may not have exceeded 200mm. This sits within the length overlap between throwing and versatile spearhead forms, making it impossible to determine which functional class this spearhead belongs to with any degree of certainty. Each of the well-equipped Arras Culture burials noted here included multiple spearheads. The additional spearheads are all throwing forms from a number of different types, including both iron and bone examples. GS10 is the only burial to definitively feature exclusively throwing spearhead forms. It is tempting to suggest that the inclusion of a versatile spearhead, in addition to throwing forms, was important. However, with so few examples, such an interpretation remains highly speculative, and the placement of the Type 3.4 (classic) spearhead from Wetwang Cart Burial 1 and the two Type 3.5 (curved-bladed) spearheads in R174 would indicate that they had been thrown into the grave as part of the 'speared corpse' rite.

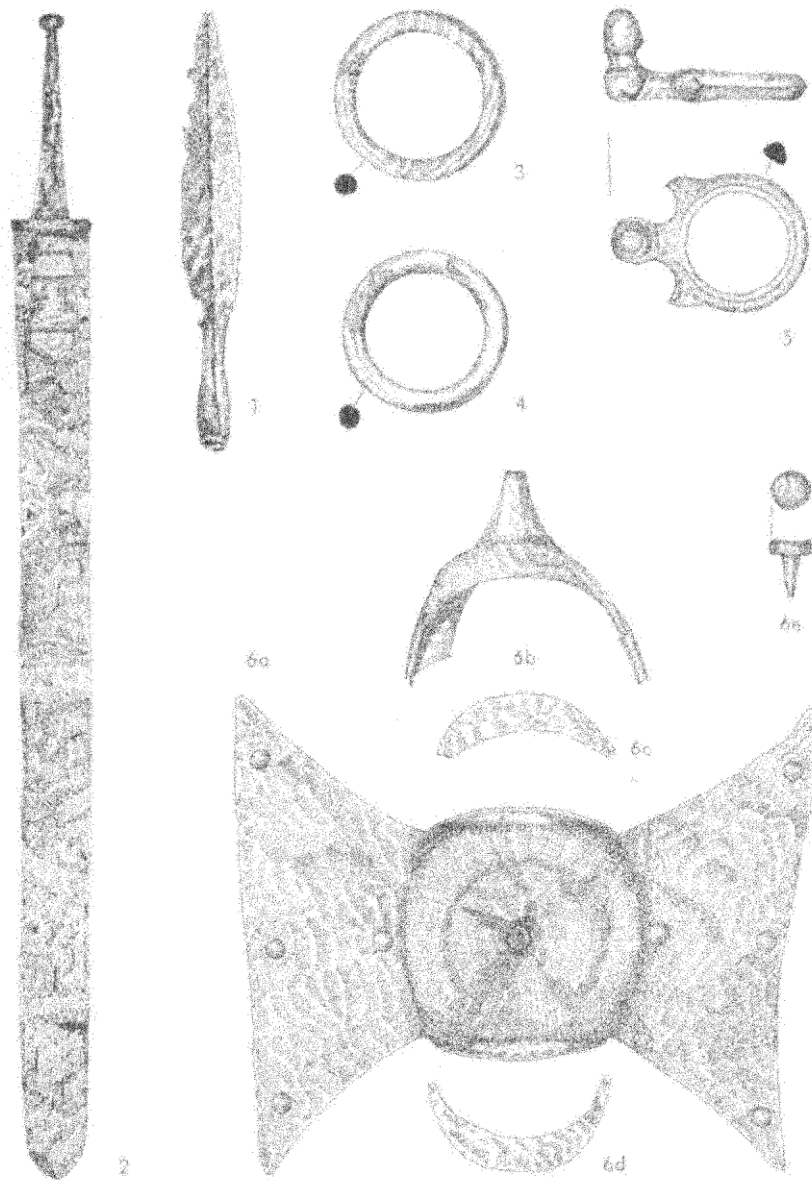


Figure 7.6: The grave goods from the Owslebury Warrior burial (Collis, 1973).



Figure 7.7: Burial assemblage from the Grimthorpe Warrior burial (Mortimer, 1905).

Thus, it can be observed that, within this limited corpus of well-equipped martial burials, despite some common features, there is significant variation in burial practice (Figure 7.5). The placement of most of these individuals in an extended position – a body position that was uncommon in British Iron Age burial practice – served as a signifier that these individuals were somehow different and perhaps held a special position within the communities that buried them. The placement of swords by the right arm (with few exceptions) seems to indicate right-handedness, and could suggest that

wielding the sword with the right arm was something of a standard practice. However, it may also have held other social connotations associated with right-handedness. Osteological analysis has the potential to reveal whether these individuals were right-handed, and could indicate whether they had skeletal developments or muscular attachments consistent with sword-fighting or spear-throwing. The different performative aspects of the funerary rites associated with spears may also have served to highlight special roles in the community, or to represent something different about the way in which these individuals lived or died.

While the number of Iron Age burials to include the full panoply of sword, shield and spear is very small, a far greater number of burials included some martial objects. Martial objects often appear in isolation, or in association with just one other class of martial object (Figure 7.8). Individual martial elements were found in burials from each of the burial traditions discussed in Chapter 6. The following sections will discuss each of these classes of martial object in turn, considering their position within the grave and any patterns of association.

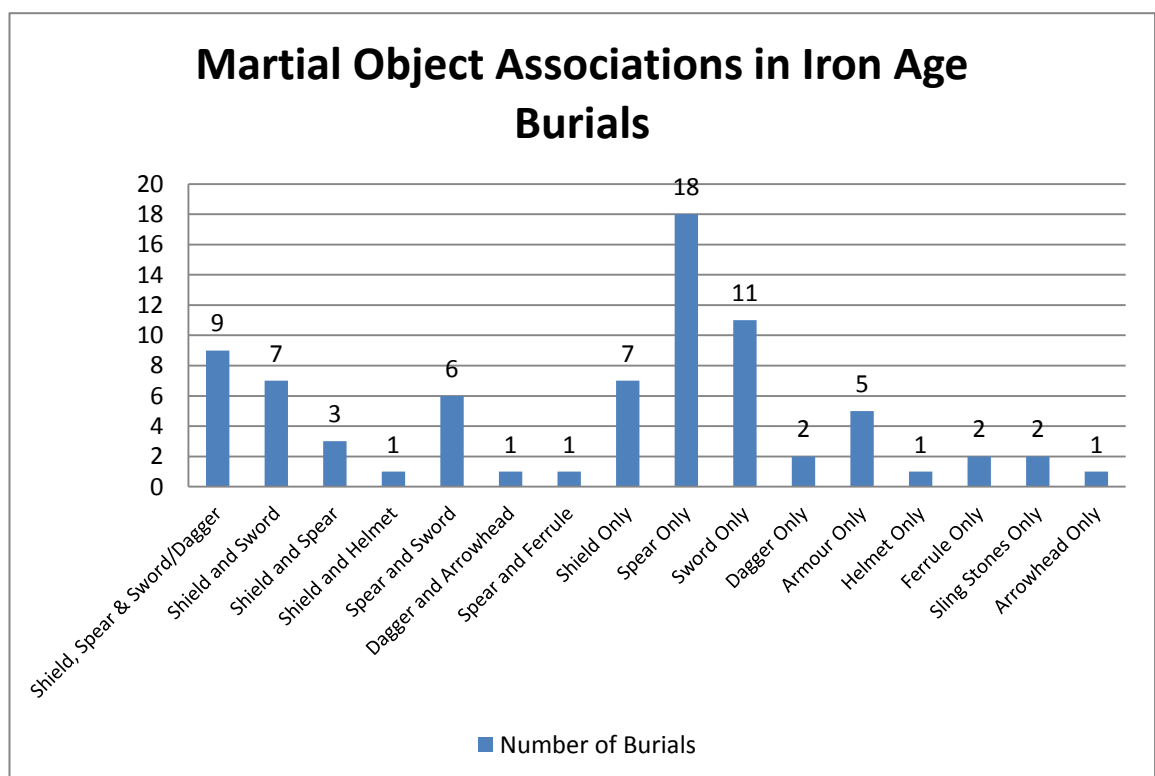


Figure 7.8: Associations between martial objects in Iron Age burials in Britain, confident Iron Age burials.

7.4 *Spears and 'speared corpse' burials*

The spear is the most commonly found martial object, recorded in 37 burials, closely followed by swords, which appeared in 34 burials confidently assignable to the Iron Age. Spearheads were found in association with a limited range of martial objects: shield, sword or both shield and sword, and occasionally, a ferrule. Spearheads were also the class of martial object most commonly found in isolation in burials that can be confidently dated to the Iron Age (summarized in Figure 7.8). The prevalence of this class of object underscores its pre-eminence in the construction and communication of martial identity in Iron Age funerary contexts.

The spearhead forms included in British Iron Age burials vary considerably and include iron and bone examples. As mentioned above, the spearheads represented in the Brisley Farm burials and the Kelvedon Warrior burial were all members of the Type 2.1 long, angular spearhead form. Members of this type were also included in an Aylesford cremation burial at Stanway, Essex, in association with a shield, and as part of a Late Iron Age funerary deposit of five iron spearheads (bound together in a manner similar to the spearheads from the South Cave Weapons Cache) unearthed during the Playgolf excavations in Colchester, Essex, and thought to be associated with cremation burial F3 (Crummy *et al.*, 2007, Shimmin, 2014). Type 2.1 spearheads are also represented in the Middle and Late Iron Age deposits at Llyn Cerrig Bach and in the Late Iron Age South Cave Weapons Cache, discussed in Chapter 5 (Evans, 2003, Steele, 2012: 54). As explored in Chapter 4, spearheads of this form accord with Swanton's Type E3, demonstrating that his posited insular development during the sixth and seventh centuries AD is clearly erroneous (Swanton, 1974: 14).

As discussed in the preceding chapter, the Arras Culture appears to have accorded formal burial as a funerary rite for a majority of individuals between the fourth and first centuries BC. There are more graves recorded for the Arras Culture than for any other British Iron Age burial tradition, and it seems that funerary rites for much of Britain are archaeologically undetectable. Burials of martial character are thus recorded most frequently within the Arras Culture of Iron Age East Yorkshire. However, there was local variation in this practice. Greenwell (1906: 264), for example, reported the total absence of weapons in the barrow burials he excavated at Danes Graves. At the opposite end of the spectrum, the Arras Culture also included a funerary rite involving spears

unparalleled throughout Iron Age Europe. The rite, sometimes referred to as the ‘speared corpse’ ritual is entirely unique to Britain and almost wholly restricted to the Arras Culture. It was a highly select rite accorded to an extraordinarily limited number of individuals.

Martial objects have been recorded from 53 Arras Culture burials and the ‘speared corpse’ rite can be identified for perhaps as many as 23 of these (with varying degrees of confidence, discussed below) from across a number of Arras Culture sites (Collis, 1973: 126, Dent, 1985: 88, Stead, 1991a: 33-35, Giles, 2012: 1-2). The practice, initially thought representative of instances of traumatic death, has been recognised as a post-mortem ritual practice through the stratigraphic record at Rudston and Garton Station (Stead, 1991a: 136), and most recently at Pocklington (which the writer had an opportunity to view *in situ*: Figure 7.9). The rite can be described as follows: the deceased was placed into the grave and then one or more spears appear to have been thrust or thrown into the grave, the spear points sometimes piercing the corpse. The number of spears deployed in this manner varies from a single spearhead, seen for example in Rudston burials R50 and R140 – in the latter the spearhead was found lodged in the pelvic bone of the deceased (illustrated, and discussed in greater detail in Chapter 8) – to Garton Station burial GS10, where 14 spearheads were recovered, scattered around the burial at various angles (Stead, 1991a: 33), or Grimthorpe, which included 17 spearheads in total (Mortimer, 1905: 150). The stratigraphy suggests that the rite may have been performed when the grave was open and continued as the grave was being filled, with some spearheads found in the fill, the tips pointed down into the grave (Stead, 1991a: 33).



Figure 7.9: Pocklington burial 16030, which included five spearheads, an iron ferrule and an iron sword (location of spearheads indicated with red arrows).

The weapons employed in this rite were a combination of iron and bone spearheads and many appear to have suffered damage as a result of the force with which they were hurled into the grave (Stead, 1991a: 75). More than 100 spearheads were recorded from

‘speared corpse’ burials, with 74 iron spearheads, and perhaps as many as 34 bone spearheads. The spearhead types were primarily throwing spearhead forms, with a small number of versatile types represented (summarized in Table 7.2). Type 1.1, small diamond-bladed spearheads are most numerous with 42 examples from 13 separate burials. The 34 bone spearheads come from eight burials. Versatile spearhead forms were noted in four burials, with R174 yielding two Type 3.5 curved-bladed spearheads, the other burials including just a sole versatile spearhead form. Thrusting spearhead types were not represented in any of the Arras Culture ‘speared corpse’ burials. Thus the typological assessment of the spearheads included in ‘speared corpse’ burials underscores the importance of throwing spearhead forms in the region. This importance certainly played a role in the performance and expression of purpose, which underlay the ‘speared corpse’ rite, and likely indicates that the throwing of spears formed a significant role within the construction of martial identities for certain members of Arras communities. Outside of the Arras Culture, thrusting and versatile spearhead forms are represented with greater frequency than throwing spearhead forms (Figure 7.10). Collectively, thrusting and versatile spearhead forms account for 53 percent of the spearheads recovered from non-Arras burials recorded in the database.

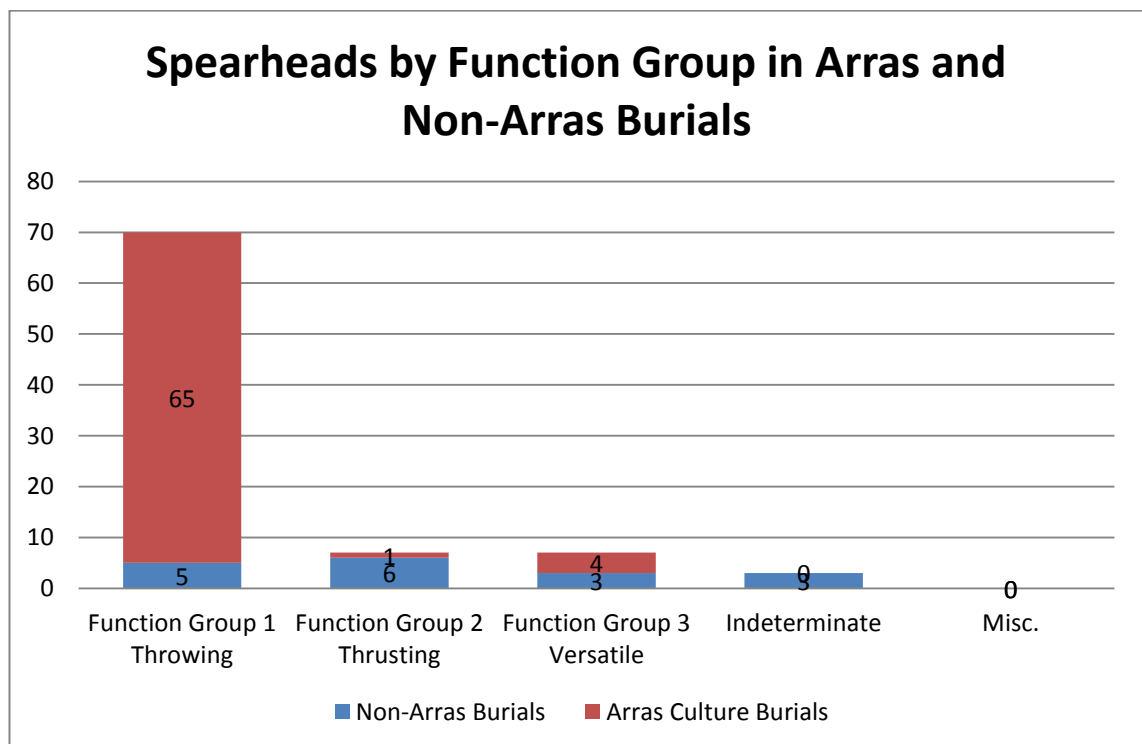


Figure 7.10: Allocation of spearheads recorded in the database by functional grouping for Arras Culture and non-Arras Culture burials.

Only sixteen of the 23 ‘speared corpse’ burials can be identified with confidence, from Grimthorpe, Wetwang, Garton Station, Kirkburn, Rudston and Pocklington (Figures 7.11-7.15). Additional examples are identified with varying degrees of confidence. One such example is an ‘Anglo-Saxon’ flexed burial at Garton Station reported by Mortimer (1905: 237), which included seven iron spearheads, the illustrated examples, allocated to Type 1.1 diamond-bladed, consistent with forms recovered from Garton Station during Stead’s excavations. Stead (1991a: 33-35) has suggested that this burial should be included in the enumeration of ‘speared corpse’ burials.

As can be seen from Table 7.2, eight of the ‘speared corpse’ burials included no other martial objects in amongst the grave goods. With the exception of the ‘Anglo-Saxon’ burial identified by Mortimer (1905: *ibid.*) all can be confidently attributed an Iron Age date. It could be argued that these eight burials represent a practice which is *not* representative of martial identity and could perhaps be considered as distinct from other martial burials which include a single, carefully-placed spearhead, or other martial objects.

The identification of burials which included a single spearhead amongst their grave goods as ‘speared corpse’ burials has been undertaken with some reticence, and it should be noted that these account for six of the eight ‘speared corpse’ burials which were not accompanied by any other martial object. Burial 211 at Wetwang, for example, was identified as the burial of a woman, and the spearhead, “found in the stomach region,” was initially thought to have been the cause of death (Dent, 1984: 176). Stead suggested that the burial should perhaps be considered a ‘speared corpse’ and King later clarified that the remains were too poorly preserved to determine sex or to ascertain whether the spear had been the cause of death as Dent had concluded (Stead, 1991a: 35, King, 2010: 181). The initial interpretation of the individual buried in Wetwang 211 as female may well have influenced the decision to exclude the burial from the list of ‘speared corpse’ burials, although neither Stead nor Dent give explicit voice to any such gendered interpretation.

Those burials which included only bone points have long gone unrecognised as ‘speared corpse’ burials. Of particular note are Wetwang burials 101, 269, 346 and 360, which Dent identified as featuring bone pins which were likely used to secure a shroud. However, burials 269 and 346 include multiple bone points, described as “scattered

around the body” (Dent, 1984: 166) in a manner similar to other ‘speared corpse’ burials. Dent’s identification of the bone points as fasteners is based partly on alternative interpretations of bone points (discussed in Chapter 2), which have seen them associated with textiles. His interpretation appears to have been furthered by the osteological assessment of the individual from burial 269 as a female aged 25-35 years, although King later assessed the remains as an individual of indeterminate sex, aged 36-45 years (Dent, 1984: 166, King, 2010: 301). The bone points recovered from these burials were small, ranging from 23mm to 52mm in length; certainly the smallest bone points encountered by the writer, and none was associated with any other martial object. The identification of these four burials as ‘speared corpse’ burials is thus a highly tentative one. Personal communication with John Dent (July 2014) suggests that the points were incomplete splinters of bone, and that none shows evidence of drilled rivet holes indicative of hafting. Dent’s conclusion that these bone points were shroud-fasteners remains plausible, although alternative interpretations, such as spearheads or arrowheads, should perhaps also be considered.

Table 7.2: Typological summary of spearheads included in Arras Culture 'speared corpse' burials (confirmed and possible).

Burial and Site	Iron Spearheads – No. and Type	Bone Spearheads – No. and Type	Associated Martial Objects
Garton Station – Mortimer 'Anglo-Saxon' burial	7 – not recorded in database, Type 1.1.a.1, Type 1.1.b.1 based on Mortimer's illustrations (1905: Plate LXXX No.599-600). Other examples are not illustrated or described in any detail	None	None
Garton GS4	3 – IDs 63-65, Type 1.6(?), Type 1.1.a.1, Type 1.1.a.3	None	Shield
Garton GS5	4 – IDs 68-67 Type 1.1.a.3, Type 1.1.b.1 (x3)	3 Type 1.8 (not included in database)	Shield
Garton GS7	11 – IDs 38-43, 58-62, Type 1.1.a.1, Type 1.1.a.2, Type 1.1.a.3 (x2), Type 1.1.b.1 (x3), Type 1.1.b.2, Type 1.3, Type 1.4.a, Type 3.4	None	Wooden traces were noted in the grave that possibly related to a shield, though this could not be concluded with certainty (Stead, 1991a: 219)
Garton GS8 (Grantham enumeration)	1 – Type unknown, not recorded in database	None	None
Garton GS10	15 – IDs 44-50, 52-57 Type 1.1.a.1 (x4), 1.1.a.2 (x3), 1.1.a.3 (x2), 1.1.b.1, 1.1.b.2, 1.2, 1.5.b, misc.)	None	Shield, Sword
Grimthorpe	1 – not recorded in database, Type 3.3 or 3.4(?)	16 – IDs 415-16 – both Type 1.8, allocated to Schatte Type II.1	Shield, Sword
Kirkburn K3	3 – IDs 34-36 Type 1.1.a.2 (x2), Type 1.4.a	None	Sword
Rudston/Burton Fleming R50	1 – ID 85 Type 1.5.a	None	None
Rudston/Burton Fleming R94	1 – not recorded in database, type unknown	None	None
Rudston/Burton Fleming R140	1 – ID 71 Type 1.1.a.3	None	None
Rudston/Burton Fleming R144	1 – ID 81 Type 1.1.a.1	None	Sword
Rudston/Burton Fleming R146	1 – ID 83 Type 1.1.a.1	1 – ID 82 Type 1.8 – allocated to Schatte Type II.1	Sword
Rudston/Burton Fleming R152	1 – ID 73 Type 1.5.a	None	None
Rudston/Burton Fleming R170	1 – ID 76 Type 1.1.a.1	None	None
Rudston/Burton Fleming R174	8 – IDs 77-80, 87-90 indeterminate, misc. 1.1.a.2, 1.1.a.1, 1.1.a.3, 1.5.b (x2), Type 3.5 (x2)	2 – IDs 91-92 Type 1.8 – too poorly preserved to allocate to Schatte's typology	Shield, Sword
Pocklington 16030	5 – IDs 432-36 Type 1.1.a.2 (x3), Type 1.1.b.1 (x2)	None	1 iron ferrule
Wetwang 101	None	1 – not recorded in database. Type 1.8	None
Wetwang 211	1 – ID 418 Type 1.2	None	None
Wetwang 269	None	3 – not recorded in database. Type 1.8	None
Wetwang 346	None	7 – not recorded in database. Type 1.8	None
Wetwang 360	None	1 – not recorded in database. Type 1.8	None
Wetwang Cart Burial 1	7 – IDs 114, 116-20, 419 Type 1.1.b.2, 1.4.a (x2), 1.4.b (x2), 1.5.a, 3.4	None	Shield, Sword

Another burial which is a tentative allocation to the ‘speared corpse’ rite is burial R144 at Rudston (Figure 7.16). The burial was an extended inhumation with the head to the west, in accordance with Stead’s Type B rite, although interestingly, the body had been placed face downward into the grave (Stead, 1991a: 202, 2006: 68). Grave goods consisted of an iron sword allocated to Stead’s Group F (Stead, 2006: 66-68 and 195), and a single iron spearhead (ID 81), which has been tentatively assigned to Type 1.1.a.1 (diamond-bladed). No ceramics, other metalwork or food offerings were included. The sword was placed over the back and the spearhead was positioned close to the left foot with the tip pointed towards the foot. The position of the spearhead is at variance with a number of Arras burials which are *not* considered ‘speared corpse’ burials, including R24 (ID 84 Type 1.1.b.2), R54 (indeterminate) and BF63 (Type 1.2, small, leaf-bladed). Each of these burials included a single spearhead, positioned by the left foot with the tip pointing away from the body, towards the foot of the grave. This placement of spearheads is also observed in the dual cist burial at Camelon (Breeze *et al.*, 1976: 77), and seems to have been the normative placement for spearheads in Iron Age Britain. Unfortunately, many older finds were not well recorded and information about the position of objects has rarely come down to us. It should be noted, for example, that the description of the Grimthorpe ‘warrior’ burial notes that a fragmentary iron spearhead was found on the left-side of the grave (Mortimer, 1905: 150-152). Stead (1968: fig.11) places the spearhead close to the skull in his reconstruction of this grave-group (reproduced above in Figure 7.5, No.5). However, there is nothing in Mortimer’s account to confirm this specific placement.

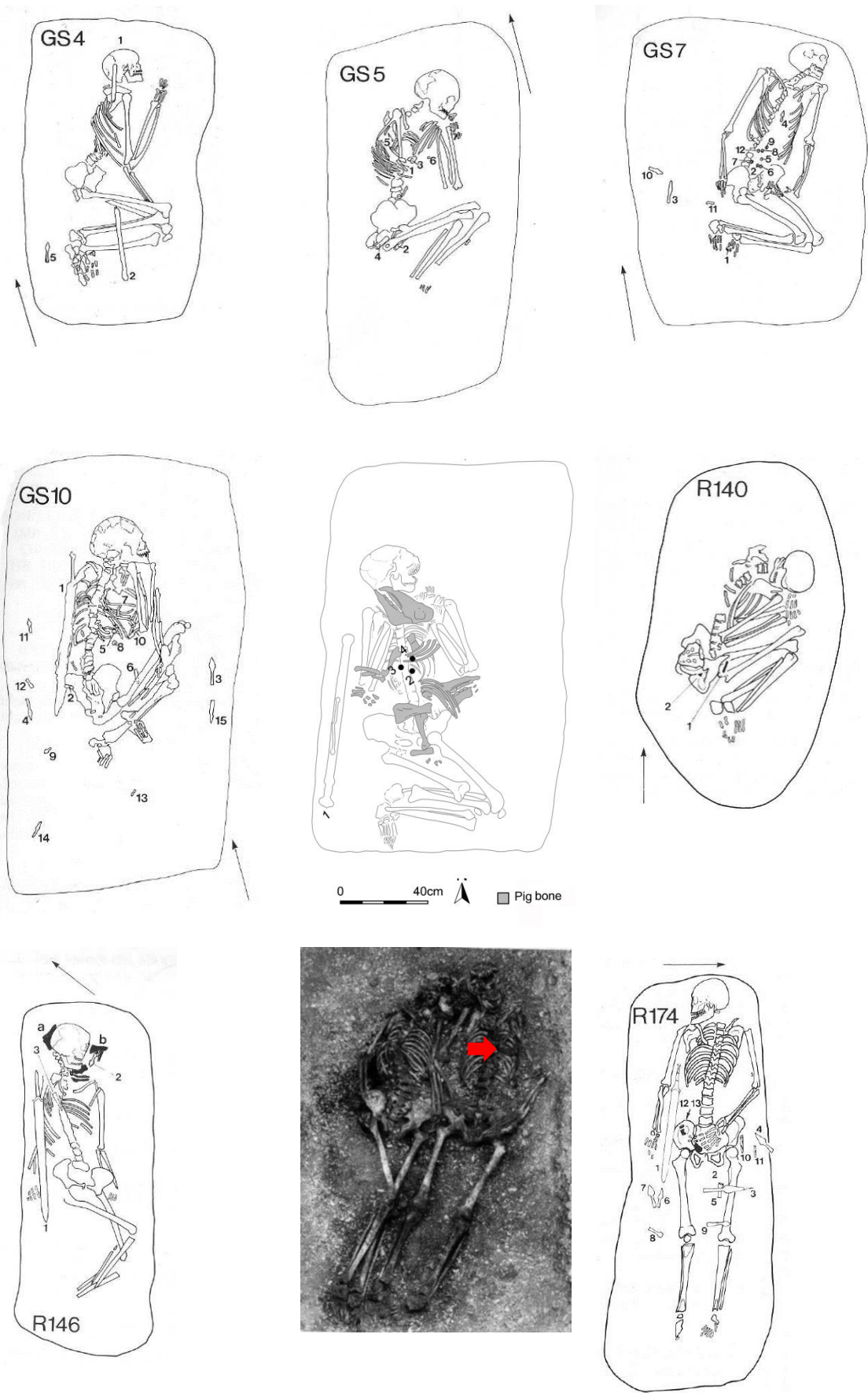


Figure 7.11: Layout of 'speared corpse' burials (Stead, 1991a), not to scale.

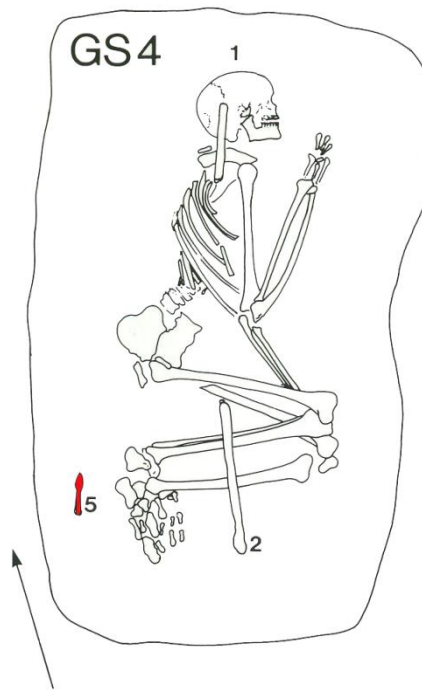


Figure 7.12: Detail of Garton Station burial 4, spearhead 5 highlighted red. Spearheads 3 and 4 were found in the fill, tips pointed downwards after (Stead, 1991a).

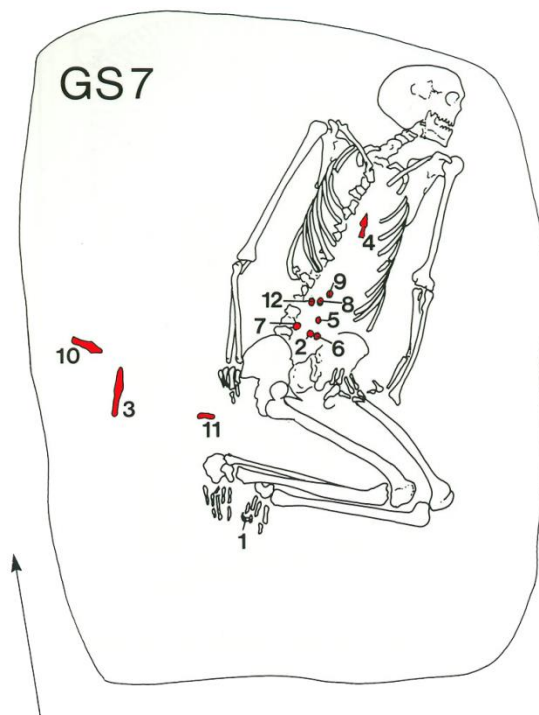


Figure 7.13: Detail of Garton Station burial 7, spearheads highlighted red after (Stead, 1991a). Numbers 5, 7 and 9 were found in the grave fill, tips pointed downward.

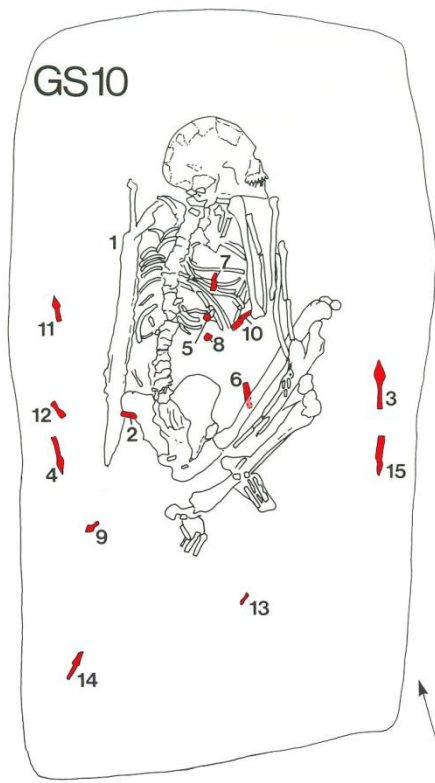


Figure 7.14: Detail of Garton Station burial 10, spearheads highlighted red.

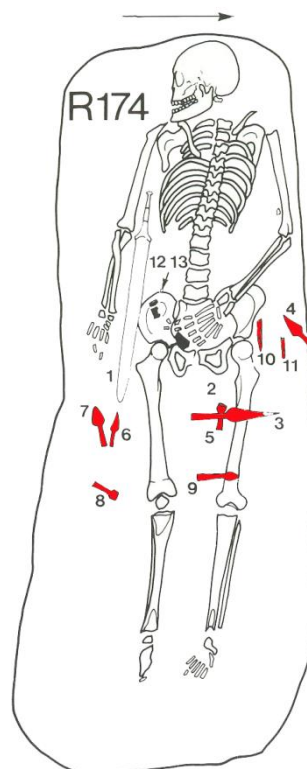


Figure 7.15: Detail of Rudston burial 174, spearheads highlighted red.

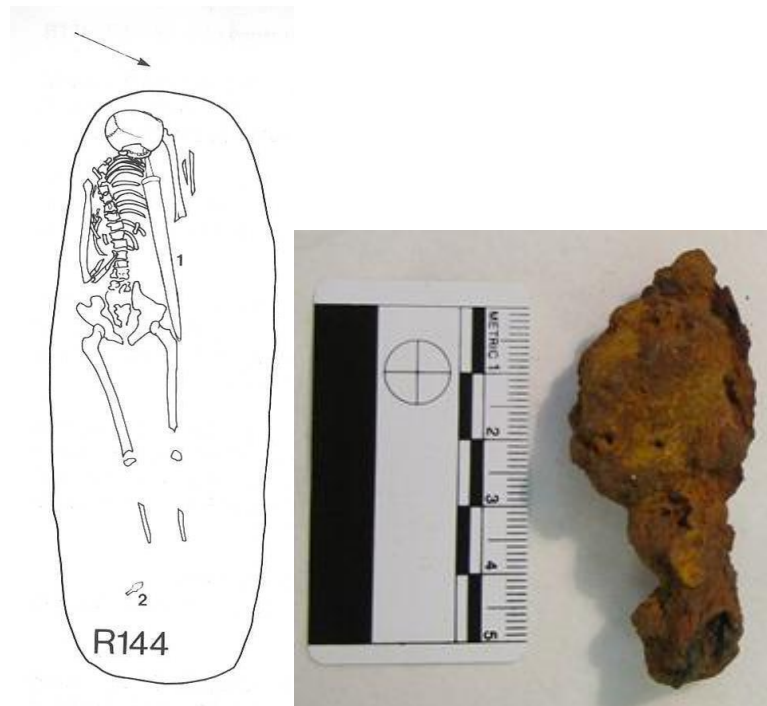


Figure 7.16: Plan of Rudston burial R144, not to scale (Stead, 1991a: fig.111), and Type 1.1.a.1 diamond-bladed spearhead with short socket (ID 81).

Placement of spearheads at the foot of the grave pointing away from the body was also the normative practice in the Champagne region during the La Tène I period, although placement was by the right foot, rather than the left (Stead *et al.*, 2006: 75). While the Continental La Tène I period precedes Arras Culture burials, Stead (1991a: 181) identified a stylistic association with La Tène I in the decoration of sword scabbards, with little evidence of La Tène II or La Tène III influences. In La Tène burials from Pottenbrun, Lower Austria, the placement of spearheads was close to the skull, by the right shoulder with the tip pointed to the head of the grave (Ramsl, 2012). At Mannersdorf, Austria where the deceased were buried in square enclosures, spearheads were placed close to the skull, above the shoulder on either the left or right side of the body (Ramsl, 2011: 23-28). Such a practice also appears to have occurred within Arras burials, represented by a recently excavated flexed burial (15741, oriented with the head to the north) at Pocklington, East Yorkshire, which included a spearhead placed at the head of the grave (Figure 7.17). The spearhead recovered from this burial, (ID 115) a Type 2.5 narrow-bladed spearhead, is the only thrusting spearhead thus far recovered from an Arras Culture burial. The position of the spearhead in the corner of the grave, associated with a pot, may bear some similarity to a purported Iron Age burial in Essex, reported by Greenwell (1906: 265), which included a pot (similar to those found in Arras Culture burials), with a spearhead placed inside. Unfortunately, the spearhead had

long been lost by the time of Greenwell's writing, and no other information about the burial is available.



Figure 7.17: A recently excavated Arras Culture martial burial (15741) at Pocklington, East Yorkshire and the Type 2.5 narrow-bladed spearhead (ID 115).

Outside of East Yorkshire, the versatile spearhead in the Owslebury Warrior burial, Hampshire (Figure 7.5, No.8 and Figure 7.6) and the Type 2.1.a long, angular thrusting spearhead (ID 421) in Brisley Farm 20 (Figure 7.5, No.7) were thrust into the wall of the grave, echoing some of the performative aspects of Arras 'speared corpse' burials (Collis, 1973, Johnson, 2002: 16-17). The final position of the spearhead at Brisley Farm was by the left foot, with the tip pointing away from the body, in the normative position. At Owslebury, the placement was close to the skull, above the left shoulder, consistent with Continental practice (Collis, 1973: 126-129). This placement, combined with the Brunaux and Rapin Type Vc shield boss (discussed, below) suggest strong affiliations with Continental practice for the individual buried at Owslebury and the funerary rites accorded him. One Arras burial at Rudston/Burton Fleming (R50), a

tentative allocation to the ‘speared corpse’ rite, seems to feature a similar practice. A single Type 1.5.a triangle-bladed iron spearhead (ID 85) appears to have been thrust into the wall of the grave, behind the left shoulder (Figure 7.18). Variations in practice like this lend some credence to suggestions of Continental influence in Arras Culture (Dent, 1999: 11).

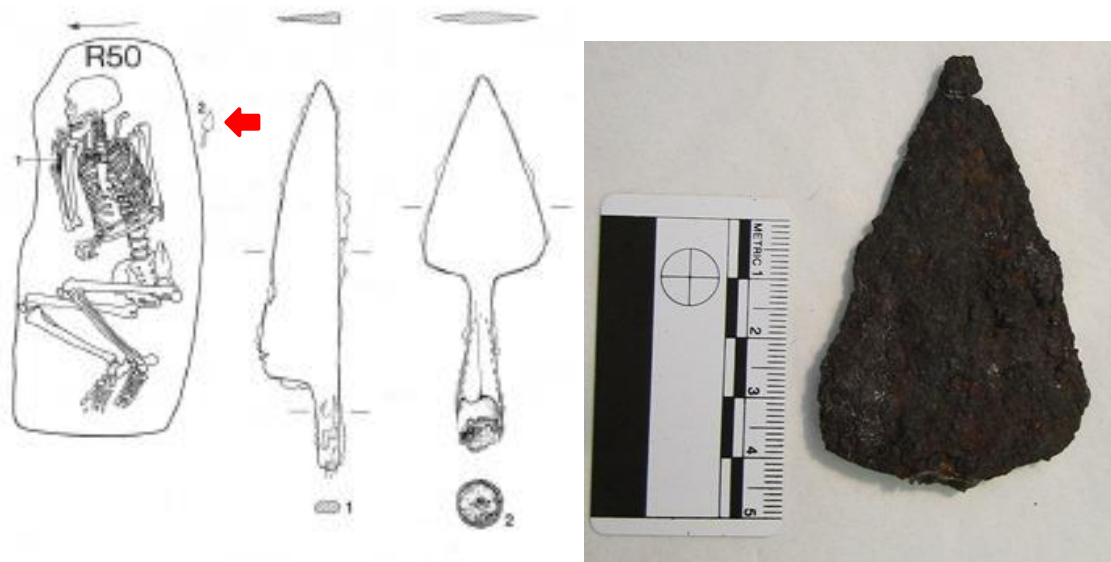


Figure 7.18: Plan of burial R50 (Stead, 1991a) and the Type 1.5.a triangle-bladed spearhead (ID 85) included in the burial, position highlighted with a red arrow.

Other similarities to the ‘speared corpse’ rite at Owslebury and Brisley Farm suggest common cosmological concerns may underlie these burials. The ‘speared corpse’ burials of the Arras Culture were also accorded the square-ditched enclosures typical of Arras funerary rites. Brisley Farm burial 20 was an extended inhumation within a square-ditched enclosure similar to those recorded in East Yorkshire (described in Chapter 6). The depth of the grave – at 0.8m – suggests the grave had been covered by a barrow, again similar to the Arras Culture rite (Johnson, 2002: 16). The Owslebury Warrior was inhumed in a grave surrounded by a large rectangular enclosure which also included other, later cremation burials (Collis, 1968: 25-27). Ultimately, while the Owslebury Warrior burial appears to echo some aspects of the Arras Culture ‘speared corpse’ rite, it would appear to be further removed from it than Brisley Farm burial 20.

The reasons for the performance of the ‘speared corpse’ rite have been the subject of some debate. Indeed Dent (1985) interpreted the spearheads in Wetwang Cart Burial 1

as having been laid in the grave, rather than thrown or forcefully thrust into the burial. Aldhouse Green (2002: 35) and Giles (2012), accepting the 'speared corpse' rite interpretation, have suggested that the practice may have formed part of a ritual aimed at ensuring the deceased would not rise from the grave to trouble the living. The burial of the individual in Rudston burial R144 in a face-down position could lend credence to such an interpretation. This was not the only burial from Rudston to have been placed in a prone position. The individual in R182 was also placed face downwards. Both burials were identified by Stead as Type B burials, a practice seemingly associated with the social elite at Rudston. Further, both graves were furnished with swords, undoubtedly elite objects (Stead, 1991a: 208), and this would seem to preclude a sense of social exclusion.

Ghost-killing rituals have numerous ethnographic parallels, and common to many of them is a distinct variance from normative funerary practices. Individuals subjected to such acts were often buried away from the communal cemetery and were not accorded the usual funerary rites (Arcini, 2009). This does not appear to have happened for either R144 or R182, and does not explain the other 'speared corpse' burials which, aside from the spear ritual, appear to have been bestowed funerary rites in accordance with Arras Culture tradition. Kristoffersen and Oestigaard (2008: 127-128) argue that funerary rites are performed to prepare the deceased for the journey to the next world, and that variation in funerary practice may represent special rites undertaken when the deceased has "died in the wrong way or place." The possibility should be considered that these individuals died in a manner deemed inappropriate to their status within the community, and that additional steps were necessary to ensure their safe passage. As noted in Chapter 5, van Gennep (1960: 15-16) observed a relationship between sharp implements and protective forces.

The variation in the number of spears thrown into the individual burials opens the way for an alternative interpretation. As discussed in Chapter 5, there is a clear association between the deposition of weapons and the 'closing' of a settlement site. Weapons can signal the end of a cycle or period of occupation on settlement sites. Likewise, the deposition of weapons in burials could perhaps form a 'closing' deposit for a martial relationship.

We know little of the processes or rites through which warriors acquired their weapons during the Iron Age. Later Irish epics such as *The Táin* indicate that weapons were given to young men by older men of higher social standing with an expectation of reciprocated loyalty (Kinsella, 1970: 84). Parker Pearson (1999b: 55-59) has argued cogently for a significant degree of social stratification within the Arras Culture and patron/client relationships may well have formed in such a setting. As van Gennep observed, rites of passage include rites of separation as well as incorporation (van Gennep, 1960: 146-149). The deposition of the spearheads may form such a rite, returning the weapons to the individual who disseminated them, thereby freeing clients to commence new relationships. This may have involved negotiations and/or competition amongst survivors as they sought to secure existing social roles or to move into new positions (Giles, 2012: 124). If the 'speared corpses' indeed represent such a rite of separation, the number of spears deployed into each burial may represent the number of retainers who had sworn loyalty, or had other social obligations towards the deceased.

However, a patron/client relationship is not supported by the osteological evidence. Wetwang burials 269 and 346 (it should be noted these were tentatively identified as 'speared corpses') and the Owslebury Warrior are the only individuals over the age of 35 who were treated to aspects of the 'speared corpse' rite (Collis, 1973: 126, Dent, 1984: 166). By contrast seven individuals were aged between 17-25 years of age and 11 aged 25-35 (Stead, 1991a: 185-224). These were individuals in the prime of their fighting lives. The changes in dietary status observed in males over the age of 35 at Wetwang (discussed in Chapter 6) would suggest that this was a time of life by which men had reached some degree of accrued status, which marked them out from their peers (Jay & Richards, 2006: 667). If the practice of throwing spears into the grave was a rite of return, one would expect to see a greater number of individuals in this age group subjected to the rite, with a sharp drop off in incidence the younger an individual was at the time of death. Given the evidence, we could perhaps interpret the practice of throwing spears into the grave more accurately as a rite of separation (van Gennep, 1960), perhaps akin to the modern military salute in which weapons are fired during a funeral.

7.5 Swords, 'sword burials' and daggers

Swords have been recorded from 34 burials, which can be confidently dated to the Iron Age in Britain (summarised in Table 7.3 below). A further nine swords come from possible, but unconfirmed burials, or from burials which could not be definitively dated to the Iron Age. Two burials – Rudston burials R87 and R153 – included daggers as the sole martial object amongst the grave goods, and an Aylesford cremation burial from Ham Hill, South Somerset included an iron dagger in association with an arrowhead. These burials will also be considered in this section.

Swords appear either in isolation or in association with a shield and/or one or more spearheads (Figure 7.19). The swords included in Iron Age burials are insular La Tène forms, which have been comprehensively examined by Stead (2006) in his corpus of British Iron Age swords from a range of contexts. Members of Stead's Groups B, C, D, E, F and G are all represented in burials. Sword forms have distinctive geographic distributions to the north and south of the River Humber, with members of Stead's Groups A-D found in the south (apart from an outlier Group C longsword from North Grimston, East Yorkshire), and Groups E-F in the North. Group G, was a group of short-swords with a distribution that encompassed both the North and the South of Britain.

Table 7.3: Summary table of Iron Age sword burials (confident IA, only). * - indicates incomplete sword.

Grave	Burial Rite	Stead Sword Type	Sword Length (mm)	Sword Position	Associated Martial Objects
R154	Arras	?	450	Over Right Hip	shield, 2 iron spearheads
Mildenhall, Suffolk	Extended Inhumation	?		?	none
Deal (Mill Hill) Grave 112 Kent	Extended Inhumation	B	786	?	shield
North Grimston Sword No.1	Arras	C	740	?	none
Sword No.2		G	509		
Bryher, Isles of Scilly	Cist burial	C	825*	In front of body	shield
Whitcombe, Skeleton 12	Durotrigian Inhumation	D	930	Right side	iron spearhead
Kelvedon Warrior	?	D	770*	?	shield, iron spearhead, iron dagger
Coleford, (High Nash), Gloucestershire	?	D	900*	?	shield
Owlesbury Skeleton 39	Extended Inhumation	D	1020	By right arm	shield, iron spearhead, iron ferrule
St Lawrence	Inhumation	D	946	?	shield
Brisley Farm Burial 19, Ashford Kent	Extended Inhumation	D	940	Along left leg	shield, iron spearhead
Gelliniog Wen	Extended Inhumation	D?	770*	?	shield, iron spearhead
Brisley Farm Burial 20, Ashford Kent	Extended Inhumation	D?	897	Right side	shield, iron spearhead
Eastburn (Kirkburn) G8	Arras	E	720	?	none
Grimthorpe	Arras	E	787	To Left of body	shield, iron spearhead, 16 bone spearheads
GS10	Arras	E	740	Along back	shield, 14 iron spearheads
K3	Arras	E	697	Right side	3 iron spearheads
R146	Arras	E	778	Over Right Arm	iron spearhead
R163	Arras	E	615	Left side	shield
R174	Arras	E	573	Between Right arm and body	shield, 7 iron spearheads, 2 bone spearheads
R24	Arras	E	752	Over torso	iron spearhead
Wetwang Burial 98	Arras	E	590*	Over torso	shield
Wetwang Cart Burial 1	Arras	E	695	Over torso	shield, 7 iron spearheads
Wetwang Cart Burial 3	Arras	E	670	Over torso	shield
Acklam, North Yorkshire	?	E	723	?	none
R57	Arras	E/F	452	?	iron spearhead
R107	Arras	F	500*	Along back	none
R139	Arras	F	632	Left side	-
R144	Arras	F	647*	Right side, over shoulder and ribs	iron spearhead
R182	Arras	F	632	Right side	none
Camelon, Central	cist burial	F	235*	?	none
Birdlip, Gloucestershire	Cairn burial	G	432	?	none
Shouldham	Extended Inhumation	G	540	?	none
Pocklington, East Yorkshire 16030	Arras	Awaiting Conservation		Over torso	5 iron spearheads, 1 iron ferrule

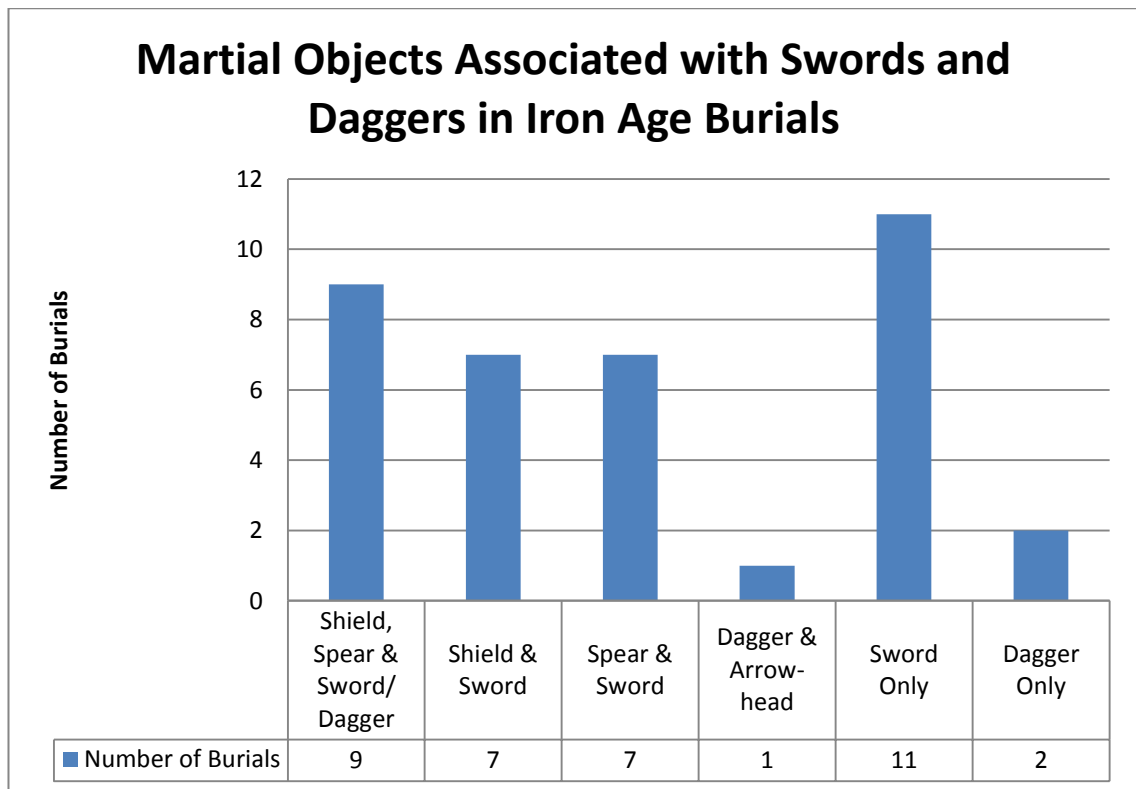


Figure 7.19: Martial objects associated with swords and daggers in Iron Age burials in Britain.

Southern sword Groups A and B were described by Stead as medium-length swords, with blade lengths averaging 579mm and 603mm respectively (Stead, 2006: 22, 138). The two Groups were differentiated on the basis of the form of their chape ends, with members of Group A featuring open chape ends, and members of Group B having closed chape ends (Stead, 2006: 19-34). This typological distinction, based on the scabbard, suggests that Group A and B swords were functionally similar, if not identical. These two sword Groups are seen by Stead as the earliest of the insular Iron Age sword forms, with Group A starting perhaps as early as the first half of the fourth century BC, and continuing into the first half of the third century BC (Stead, 2006: 27). Group B swords commence at this time and continue into the second half of the second century BC (Stead, 2006: 34). No Group A swords have been recorded from Iron Age burials to date and the only Group B example comes from the inhumation burial at Deal, Kent, which has been dated to the late third century or first half of the second century BC. The skull has yielded a radiocarbon date of 360-100 Cal BC (Stead, 2006: 166 & fig.159, Garrow *et al.*, 2009: 114).

Medium-length swords seem to go out of circulation in the South in the second half of the first century BC, when Group C longswords replaced Group A and B sword forms.

Stead (2006: 37-38) saw this shift to longswords as sudden and dramatic, attributable to contact with the Continent, where the transition from medium-length to longswords was marked but gradual. Two Group C swords have been recorded from burial contexts. Both burials are unusual. North Grimston, East Yorkshire is the only British burial to include two swords, the second sword an anthropoid-hilted short-sword, with comparanda across Europe (Halkon, 2013: 118, Pearce, 2013). The Group C longsword from North Grimston, considered an outlier in Stead's (2006: 35) assessment, is the only member of this sword Group to be found north of the Humber. The cist burial from Bryher, Isles of Scilly is the only insular burial known to include a mirror and martial objects in association (Johns, 2002: 15-20). Other burials to include mirrors, such as Birdlip, Gloucestershire and Wetwang, East Yorkshire were found in close proximity to martial burials, and the association between mirrors, gender and social status remains problematic and uncertain (Joy, 2011, Pope and Ralston, 2011).

From the mid-second century BC onward southern swords regularly exceed 800mm in overall length (Figure 7.20). The trend for greater length continued with the development of Group D swords at the end of the second century BC, the longest of which, from the Owslebury Warrior burial, Hampshire, measuring 1020mm with a blade 835mm in length (Stead, 2006: 53). The form continued into the first century AD, and it is during the floruit of Group D swords (during the first century BC and the first century AD) that we have the greatest number of southern burials to include swords.

There are eight southern burials featuring Group D swords, including the Owslebury Warrior, Hampshire the Kelvedon Warrior and the two Brisley Farm burials (all in Kent), which are some of the best equipped martial burials for all of Iron Age Britain, discussed above (Collis, 1973: 126-129, Johnson, 2002, Stead, 2006: Nos.105, 115, 116, 146, Sealy, 2007: 5-8). In addition to these are the Whitcombe Warrior, a Durotrigian inhumation in Dorset, who was also buried with an iron spearhead and a small toolkit, which included an iron hammer; St Lawrence, Isle of Wight, and Coleford, Gloucestershire, both inhumation burials which also included shield fittings; and, possibly the heavily corroded sword from Gelliniog Wen, Anglesey, recovered from a cist burial in 1909 (Stead, 2006: Nos.114, 117, 128 & 142).

The swords in Group D have scabbards made of iron, such as at Gelliniog Wen, copper alloy, seen at Kelvedon, or made from organic materials, for Owslebury, Whitcombe

and St Lawrence, where they were identified by their metal fittings (Collis, 1973, Stead, 2006, Sealy, 2007). The scabbard forms were simply decorated and thought by Stead (2006: 43-49) to be an insular development.

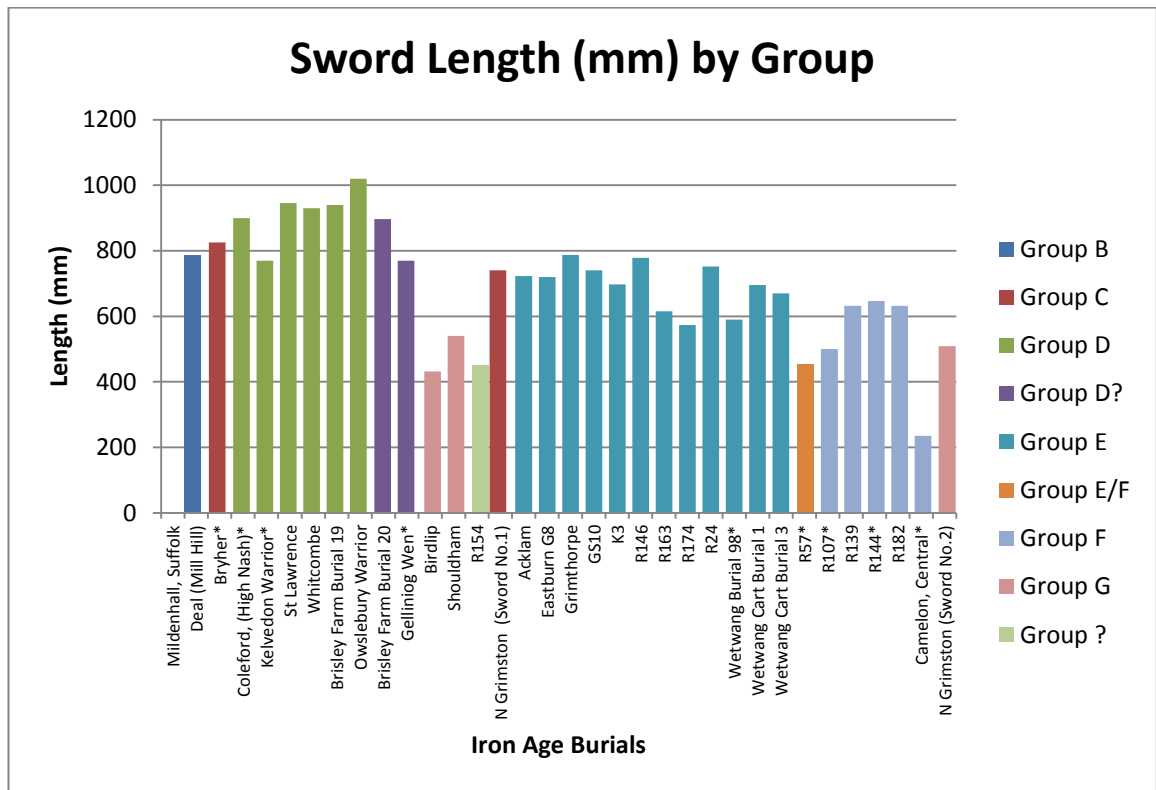


Figure 7.20: Sword length (mm) in accordance with Stead (2006) sword Groups B-G. Groups B-D are southern forms, and Groups E-F are northern forms. Group G is distributed north and south of the River Humber. * indicates incomplete sword. NB – The sword from Pocklington is excluded as it was not possible to obtain metric data on this sword in time for inclusion in this thesis.

In the north, swords never reached the lengths observed in southern burials, with no sword exceeding 800mm in total length (Figure 7.20). While the North Grimston sword was classified by Stead as a member of his Group C longswords, it fell short of this 800mm mark, and, at 740mm, is the shortest complete Group C example included in Stead’s (2006: No.79) comprehensive catalogue. Swords in northern burials generally fall either into Stead’s Group E or Group F, both Groups identified as medium-length swords, differentiated on the basis of the form of their hilt bases (Stead, 2006: 55-70). Group E swords feature campanulate hilt-ends and were thought by Stead (2006: 63) to have developed perhaps in the third century BC, continuing into the second century BC, making the Group broadly contemporary with Groups A and B in the South. Group F swords feature straight hilt bases and have an uncertain start date, but with early examples possibly dateable to the second century BC. Later examples are dateable to

the first century AD (Stead, 2006: 63). With the exception of North Grimston, and possibly Rudston burial R154, all of the swords recovered from Arras Culture burials can be allocated to either Group E or Group F. The complete swords range in length from 573mm (R174) to 787mm at Grimthorpe, which is longer than the Group C 'longsword' from North Grimston. However, the sword is no longer complete and Stead (2006: 187) voiced scepticism regarding the reported total length. The length of swords in the North is consistent with La Tène I swords in Switzerland and Stead (1991a: 181) observed La Tène I influences in the decoration of sword scabbards from Rudston with no evidence of later stylistic influences.

A small number of swords recovered from burials can be identified as short-swords – members of Stead's Group G. The swords from Birdlip, Gloucestershire and Shouldham, Norfolk are the only southern examples to come from burials, although other examples have been recorded in the south from wet and dry-land contexts including Flag Fen, Peterborough and the Roman temple site at Wanborough, Surrey (Stead, 2006: 197-198). In the north, Group G swords have been identified with the anthropoid-hilted short-sword from North Grimston, and two cist burials from Camelon, Falkirk (although, as discussed above, the proximity of one of these burials to the Roman Fort suggests it was influenced by the Roman *gladius*). The complete examples measure between 432mm (Birdlip) and 540mm (Shouldham) in length, suggestive of close-quarter fighting. However, the association of the anthropoid-hilted short-sword with a much longer sword in the North Grimston burial suggests that the short-sword may have served as a secondary weapon, at least in some instances. It should be noted, however, that non-martial interpretations have also been suggested for anthropoid-hilted swords and daggers, suggesting that these were possibly ritual weapons (Fitzpatrick, 1996).

The difference in length between northern and southern sword forms may indicate differences in fighting style. Certainly, the southern longswords provided significantly greater reach than their northern counterparts, and are better suited to use from on horseback. It should be noted that while some of the Arras Culture burials took place during the period when Group A and B medium-length swords were in use in the south, Arras burials continued into the period when longswords came to dominate the southern panoply. Beyond funerary contexts, the South Cave Weapons Cache included five

Group F medium-length swords, so it seems the decision not to take up longwords was a conscious one. The martial function of swords will be discussed in Chapter 8.

As noted above, the placement of the swords within burials is generally to the right side of the body, along the back, or overlaying the torso, with few exceptions (Table 7.3). In Arras Culture burials seven of 23 sword burials had the sword placed either along the spine, or wholly or partially over the torso. Those individuals who were found with swords placed along their spines may have been buried with them positioned as worn in life. Approximately nine Iron Age chalk figurines found in East Yorkshire depict males wearing a sword strapped vertically to their back (Stead, 1988: 13). The scabbard associated with the sword in Rudston burial R144 had a backing covered in fleece, which may have been for the comfort of the wearer (Stead, 2006: 66). Anthoons (2011: 38-39) has observed that the position of the suspension loop on sword scabbards recovered from northern sites was not close to the mouth – as seen in the south – but much lower down, around the middle of the scabbard. She argues that this indicates a different mode of wearing swords in the north of Britain than in the south. The position of the suspension rings in the Owslebury Warrior, Bryher, Whitcombe and Brisley Farm burials all support the interpretation that swords were worn on the right-hand side, by the waist in the south (Stead, 2006: 52).

The decision to wear swords strapped along the back may explain the preference for medium-length swords in the north. Osteoarchaeological analyses of skeletal remains from Rudston/Burton Fleming, Kirkburn and Garton Station suggest average stature for males in the region was 1.7m (*sd* 0.048) (Leese, 1991). For an individual of this height, a sword in excess of 800mm length would not have been easily worn strapped vertically to the back. More detailed analysis of the skeletal material from martial burials, and sword burials in particular, may reveal differences in stature associated with social, and possibly martial, status.

In addition to their martial function swords were clearly high-status objects. Sword hilts and scabbards often incorporated exotic or prestige materials such as Mediterranean coral, red and yellow glass, and, in the South Cave Weapons Cache, ivory elements (Halkon, 2011: 158-160). Red was a popular colour and red inlays of glass or coral have been noted from horse-fittings and terrets, sword hilts and scabbards, shield fittings and brooches (Giles, 2012: 165). Sword scabbards were also decorated with insular La Tène

motifs including wave patterns, palmettes, birds' heads, and trumpet voids – the Kirkburn sword (Figure 7.21) representing a particularly fine example (Stead, 2006: 15, Garrow *et al.*, 2009).



Figure 7.21: The Kirkburn Sword, from burial K3, © British Museum.

The aesthetic appeal of weapons and other martial objects was clearly important (discussed in Chapter 8), and this appears to have carried over to the funerary context. The scabbard in the Deal Warrior burial seems to have formed a matching set with the accompanying shield. However, the hilt-end of the Deal sword differs markedly from the form of the scabbard mouth, clearly indicating that the scabbard was not made for the sword which was buried in it (Stead, 2006: 166). This raises the question of how the mismatched sword and scabbard came together. Was the original sword lost or deemed inappropriate, and a replacement needed to be found for the burial? Or, did the

individual who owned these items have the sword and later acquire the matching scabbard and shield and wished to keep his own sword despite its ill-fit with the new scabbard? The scabbard buried with the Kelvedon Warrior was too narrow to ever have accommodated the sword included in the burial. Again, this raises the question whether it was considered necessary to find a scabbard to include as part of the grave goods, and whether it may have been less important that it be one that fit the sword. The Kelvedon sword had been subjected to an act of deliberate destruction (discussed below) and was buried wrapped in linen cloth rather than in the scabbard.

While the scabbard and shield at Deal formed a matching set, the sword and shield at Owslebury were clearly mismatched. The sword was housed in an organic scabbard with an iron mouth-guard decorated in a style consistent with insular motives (Stead, 2006). However, the shield featured a copper alloy boss (discussed, below) of a form which has Continental associations. Thus the choice of martial objects, suggests a mix of traditions, reflective of both insular and Continental practices and matériel. The possibility that these objects represented heirlooms, trophies or funerary gifts should also be considered.

The two daggers recovered from Rudston burials R87 and R153 were both badly corroded, although it was possible to establish that their blades were shorter than 250mm (Stead, 1991a: 71). Such short weapons could only have been used in close quarters and likely served as reserve weapons in warfare, and may also have served as items for personal protection in daily life. Both daggers had organic hilts: that from R87 constructed of bone, and the example from R153 from horn. The dagger from R87 retained traces of a leather sheath, and the dagger from R153 was sheathed in fleece. The placement of these martial objects in the grave was similar to the placement of swords, both positioned by the right humerus (Stead, 1991a: 197 & 205). By comparison, the knife recovered from Pocklington burial 15741 was positioned at the waist. The placement of the daggers in a similar position to swords in these burials suggests a martial rather than utilitarian function.

The dagger from Ham Hill, South Somerset was recovered from a cremation burial, and was reported by Walter (1923) as a “prototype” anthropoid-hilted dagger. The dagger measured 11.75 inches (c.300mm), making it a longer weapon than those recovered from Rudston but significantly shorter than the anthropoid short-sword from North

Grimston. While it is possible that this object served as a weapon, the possibility of a non-martial function, in accordance with Fitzpatrick's (1996) interpretation, should be considered.

7.6 Arrowheads and sling-shot in burials

The bow and the sling are classes of weapon which have non-martial functions. The bow has strong associations with hunting and the sling with pastoral activities. However, both could also have been used in warfare, and they are represented in a small number of Iron Age burials. Sling-shot and arrowheads were noted from the poorly recorded Durotrigian cemetery at Jordan Hill, Dorset (Whimster, 1981: 40). Other weapons recorded from the cemetery include an iron sword, bone spearhead, and an iron ferrule (Whimster, 1981: 65, 350). Due to the limitations of the data it is not possible to ascertain whether any graves included multiple weapons, or to establish any relationships between weapons and other classes of grave good. Three sling-stones, were recorded from burial 78 (skeleton P34) in the so-called, 'War Cemetery' at Maiden Castle, Dorset, two placed near to the right humerus, the third close to the left shoulder (Wheeler, 1943: 355, Whimster, 1981: 361). Many of the skeletons from the 'War Cemetery' exhibit signs of sharp-force trauma thought to be the result of sword-cuts. These individuals were not generally buried with weapons (although one burial included an iron axe – perhaps better interpreted as a tool). This lends some credence to Wheeler's (1943: 61-68) interpretation that the 'War Cemetery' was hastily dug to permit the burial of individuals who were massacred during the Roman conquest of Maiden Castle. A Type 1.3 small, triangle-bladed spearhead, which was embedded in one of the deceased's thoracic vertebrae, has been repeatedly interpreted as a Roman ballista bolt (Wheeler, 1943: 63, Whimster, 1981: 265-270, Wilkins, 2003: 20). The broader implications of this object and indicators of violent trauma at Maiden Castle are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 8.

Also at Maiden Castle, one burial from the 'Peacetime Cemetery' (so-named because it was thought to represent the normative burial practice) included sling-stones (Whimster, 1981: 62). Burial T10, of an adult male in a crouched position, included two sling-stones placed close to the skull, one near the left shoulder and a fourth close to the legs (Wheeler, 1943: 349). No examples of sling-stones have been recorded from northern burials and it may be inferred that this class of object did not hold the same cultural significance in the North as in the South of Britain.

As noted, there is an association between sling-stones and shepherding. Ethnographic parallels demonstrate the sling is as a useful tool for directing livestock as well as warding off predators (Brown Vega & Craig, 2009). Sheep were an important economic resource during the Iron Age (Legge, 1991, Arabella, 2007, Morris, 2011), and the possibility that including sling-stones amongst the grave goods expressed or underscored pastoral activities cannot be discounted. Such an association would not preclude a martial connotation, however, and anyone present at the burial may have identified the importance of both practices in this one class of object, and a covalent interpretation should be considered. The possible martial function of sling-shot will be discussed in Chapter 8.

Arrowheads form one of the rarest classes of martial object in Iron Age burials. An arrowhead was noted amongst the grave goods for an Aylesford cremation burial from Ham Hill, South Somerset, found in association with the anthropoid-hilted dagger, mentioned above (Walter, 1923). This is the only burial for which it is certain that the arrowhead was deliberately deposited as part of the grave goods. An arrowhead was noted in burial 48 (skeleton T29) at Maiden Castle. Wheeler (1943: 350-351) described the arrowhead as “in a position suggesting that the shaft had been held in the hands”. However, Whimster (1981: 356) argues that this object came from the grave fill raising the possibility that it was a chance inclusion. Excavations at the Durotrigian inhumation cemetery at Jordan Hill, Dorset were also said to have yielded two arrowheads. However, their context cannot be stated with certainty leaving open the prospect that they too were chance finds and may not have formed part of any formal grave assemblage.

The lack of arrowheads in Iron Age burials has been noted elsewhere and it raises the question of how widely practiced archery was during the British Iron Age (Finney, 2006: 26, Redfern, 2009: 401, Giles, 2012: 188). There can be no doubt that archery has been practiced in Britain from the Mesolithic right through to the modern era. However, the art was likely not perceived of in the same way during the Iron Age as it was during the Medieval period, for example. The international renown of English archers during the Medieval period has left a distinct impression of the importance of archery and this perception should not be projected back to the Iron Age. During the Iron Age, archery may have been a minor practice and it is possible that it did not feature strongly in the construction of individual or communal martial identities.

7.7 Shields

Shields were one of the more common classes of martial object included in British Iron Age burials, and formed the object class most likely to be found in association with other martial objects (Figure 7.22). Hunter (2005: 52) highlights that shields are likely underrepresented in the archaeological record due to the poor survivability of wood and hide/leather in many burial environments. Most examples are identified on the basis of their metal fixtures, although Stead (1991a: 63-64) has noted four organic shields, which had no metal fittings, from Rudston burials R154 and R174 and Garton Station burials GS5 and GS10. Recent excavations at Pocklington, East Yorkshire have also revealed a burial (16370) which included an entirely organic shield (Paula Ware, *pers. comm.*). In all, shields have been positively identified in 27 Iron Age burials.

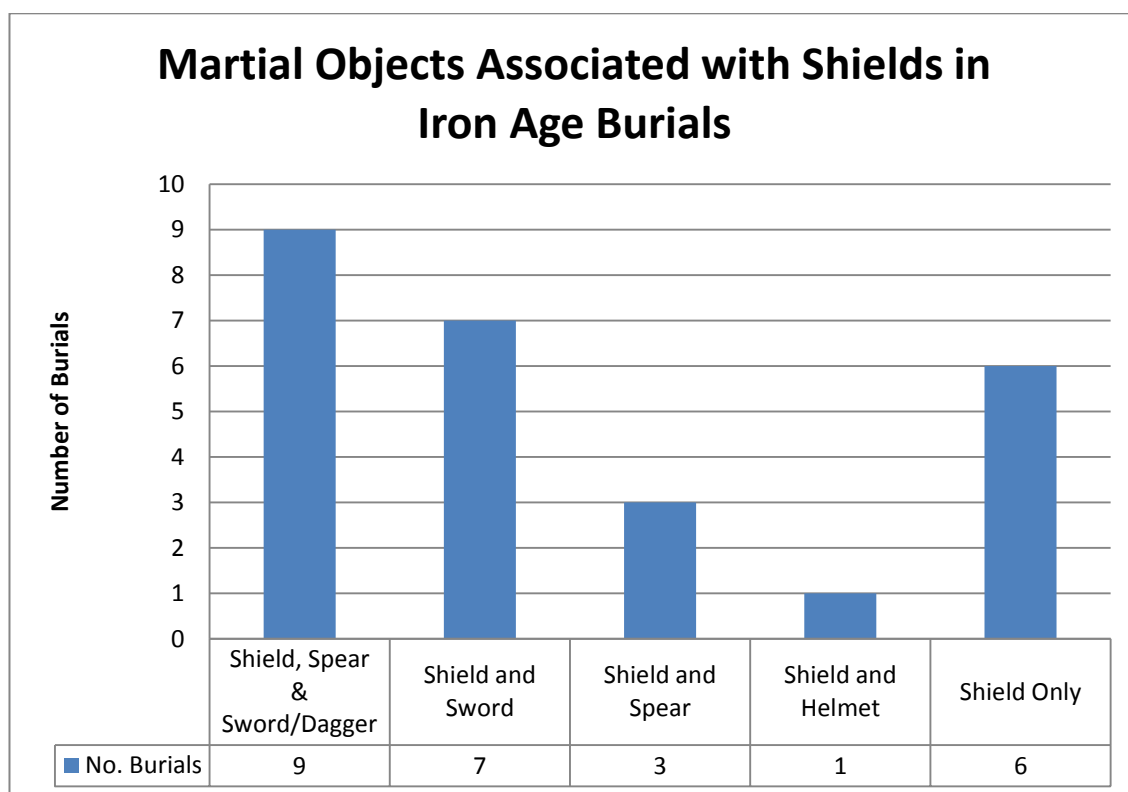


Figure 7.22: Breakdown of martial objects found in association with shields (confident Iron Age only).

In addition to the shields from the nine well-equipped ‘warrior’ burials (discussed above), a further 12 Arras Culture burials included a shield. Collis (1973: 123-124) identified a further three shield bosses from some of the better equipped Aylesford-type cremation burials: two of which can be confidently assigned to the pre-conquest period. In terms of the social context of shields, Collis (1973: 131) has commented that burials which contained only a shield or shield fittings “suggest some greater significance”

perhaps indicative of the individual's "position in a military hierarchy, independent of the social hierarchy".

Other Iron Age funerary rites to include shields comprise a cremation burial from Stanway, Essex, which also yielded an iron spearhead; the cist burial from Bryher, Isles of Scilly and an extended inhumation from Deal (Mill Hill), Kent, both of which were found in association with an iron sword. An inhumation from North Bersted, West Sussex, yielded shield fixtures in association with a copper alloy helmet of Coolus-Mannheim type, dateable to the mid-first century BC, discussed below (Farley *et al.*, 2014).

The placement of shields within the grave was noted for 21 of the 27 burials. Eleven of these shields were placed covering the torso:

- The Owslebury Warrior,
- Brisley Farm burial 20,
- Garton Station burials GS4, GS5, and GS10,
- Rudston burials R148 and R174,
- Wetwang Cart Burials 1 and 3, and burial 98,
- Grimthorpe.

The shield in Rudston burial R154 showed slight variation to this placement. Indications of the presence of a shield were identified through scant wood traces adhering to one of the spearheads which had been thrown into the grave. The position of the spearhead, at the extreme southern side of the grave, indicates that the shield had been placed to the left side of the body, partially covering the torso (Stead, 1991a: 63, and fig.112). The shield included in the North Bersted, West Sussex burial was also laid to the left side of the body (Taylor, 2014). Burial 19 at Brisley Farm, Kent displays another variation, with the shield placed over the legs and lower torso (Stevenson, 2013). Ultimately, for the majority of burials, placement was either partially or wholly over the body, suggesting that this was considered the normative placement for shields in inhumation burials during the British Iron Age.

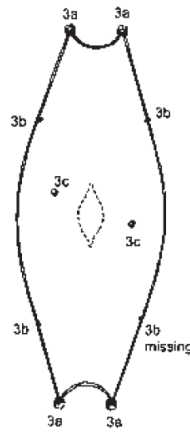
Exceptions to this practice are observed, however. The recently excavated shield at Pocklington, appears to have been placed directly under the torso (Paula Ware *pers comm.*). In the Bryher cist burial, Deal and in the Aylesford-type cremation burials, the

shields were placed to the side of the grave. Further, in the case of Bryher and Deal, there is evidence that the shields were broken prior to deposition, discussed further below (Johns, 2002: 18). At Stanway, Essex, an alternative practice is observed. The shield was placed boss-down towards the southwest corner of the grave and the concave interior of the shield appears to have held the cremated remains of the individual buried there (Crummy *et al.*, 2007: 170-196). This use of a martial object as a cremation vessel was also noted for the Canterbury Helmet, discussed below. This perhaps forms part of a broader practice of placing objects in inverted positions within graves, as there are other examples of shields placed boss-downward in the grave, which will be discussed further in section 7.9.2, below.

Reconstructions of the shields show a diversity of forms, with highly individualistic bosses. In addition to the fragmentary examples recovered from burials there are better preserved specimens from riverine contexts, such as the Witham Shield, from Lincolnshire, the Battersea Shield, London, the Chertsey Shield, Surrey and the shield from Tal-y-Llyn, Gwynedd. In general, shield forms appear to have been oval, rectangular, or hide-shaped (Figure 7.23). The origin for the so-called 'Celtic' shield form stretches back to at least the sixth century BC and was perhaps first taken up during interactions with Etruscans and Latin tribes (Keppie, 1998: 18, Warry, 2006: 165). Stead has argued that British shield types differed from those on the Continent, although they were likely to have evolved out of Continental La Tène II forms (Stead *et al.*, 1968: 173). Like brooches and sword scabbards, the forms seem to express a distinctly insular identity. The addition of metal fixtures along the spine of the shield, for example, appears to be an insular development. Such fittings were not noted by Brunaux and Rapin in their typology of Continental shield elements (Brunaux & Rapin, 1988: 15-16).



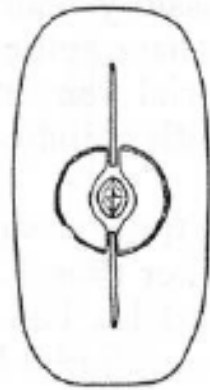
Battersea Shield
©British Museum



Bryher Shield
(Johns, 2002)



Chertsey Shield
©British Museum



Grimthorpe Shield
(Stead *et al.*, 1968)

Figure 7.23: Iron Age insular shield forms

Within Britain, there also appears to have been some regionalism to the distribution of shield forms, and Stead (1991b: fig.22) plotted their distribution. The hide-shaped examples noted from Bryher, Isles of Scilly, Deal, Kent and the ‘Salisbury’ miniature shields, are all southern examples. Bindings of similar shields have been found at Hayling Island, Bredon Hill, Worcestershire (where Hencken identified them as sword chapes, discussed in Chapter 6), and Spettisbury, Dorset (Hencken, 1939: 54-58, Stead, 1991b: 20). No shields of this form have been noted from sites in Northern Britain. Brunaux and Rapin (1988: 21-25) did not observe any hide-shaped shields in their assessment of Celtic shield forms dateable to the second half of the first millennium BC. It is likely, therefore that the hide-shaped shield form was a southern British development with a limited distribution.

The shield bosses from Owslebury and Kelvedon warrant particular mention as they do not correspond with other insular examples. The bosses fit well with Brunaux and Rapin’s Type V (‘Umbos à ailettes trapézoïdales’– subtypes c and a respectively), which they date from La Tène III to the Roman conquest of Gaul (Collis, 1973: fig.4, Brunaux & Rapin, 1988: 81, Sealy, 2007: 11-12). The Kelvedon boss is even more unusual being constructed of iron rather than copper alloy like most other insular shield bosses. A circular boss from Coleford (High Nash), Gloucestershire is perhaps the only other iron boss in Britain (Stead, 2006: 180-181, Sealy, 2007: *ibid.*).

Shields range in length from 570mm for an undated shield from Clonoura to the Witham shield’s 1130mm (Stead, 1991a: 63). The shields were complex, composite constructions (Figure 7.24) usually made of wood covered in leather, hide or copper

alloy often with a longitudinal central spine, which was sometimes strengthened by the addition of metal fixtures (Stead *et al.*, 1968: 175-176). The shields featured a single interior handle, located at the centre. Stead noted that the wood used to construct the shields at Rudston came from multiple species including maple, birch and possibly, oak (Stead, 1991a: 61-63). A notable exception to wooden construction is the Chertsey Shield, which was fashioned entirely of copper alloy (Stead, 1991b: 1-10).

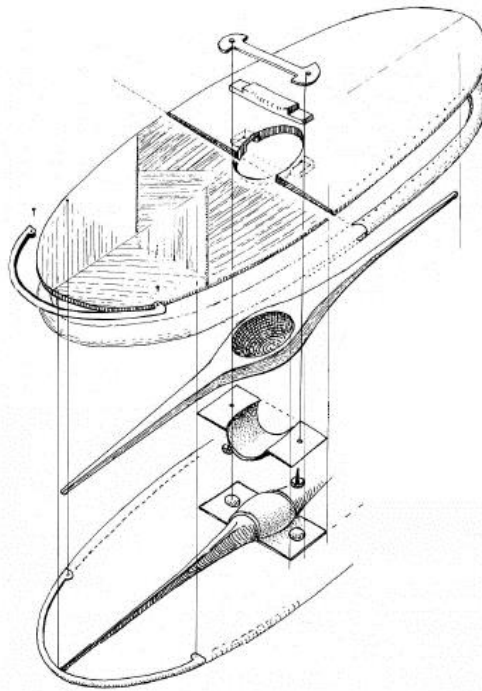


Figure 7.24: Shield construction, exploded view, Brunaux and Rapin (1988: fig.1)

Shields would have been striking objects, those with metal laminate or bosses were likely highly polished and would have reflected light in a manner certain to dazzle and impress. The metal fixtures, of either iron or copper alloy, could be highly ornate, such as those recovered at North Bersted, West Sussex (Taylor, 2014). The Battersea Shield and the Witham Shield are renowned today for their elaborate decoration (Figure 7.25), which features red enamel, similar to that used to decorate the Kirkburn sword, Grimthorpe sword scabbard, and fittings of the two-wheeled vehicles recovered from Arras Culture burials (Stead *et al.*, 1968: 170, James & Rigby, 1997: 42-43, Halkon, 2013: 81-82). Those examples which did not feature metal fixtures may still have been impressive objects, perhaps ornately carved or brightly painted. The shield would have been a very personal item of equipment and decoration could have served as a means of communicating individual identity or martial prowess (discussed in Chapter 8).

Evidence that the Grimthorpe shield underwent repair during its use-life underscores the value these objects held for those who possessed them (Stead *et al.*, 1968: 168).

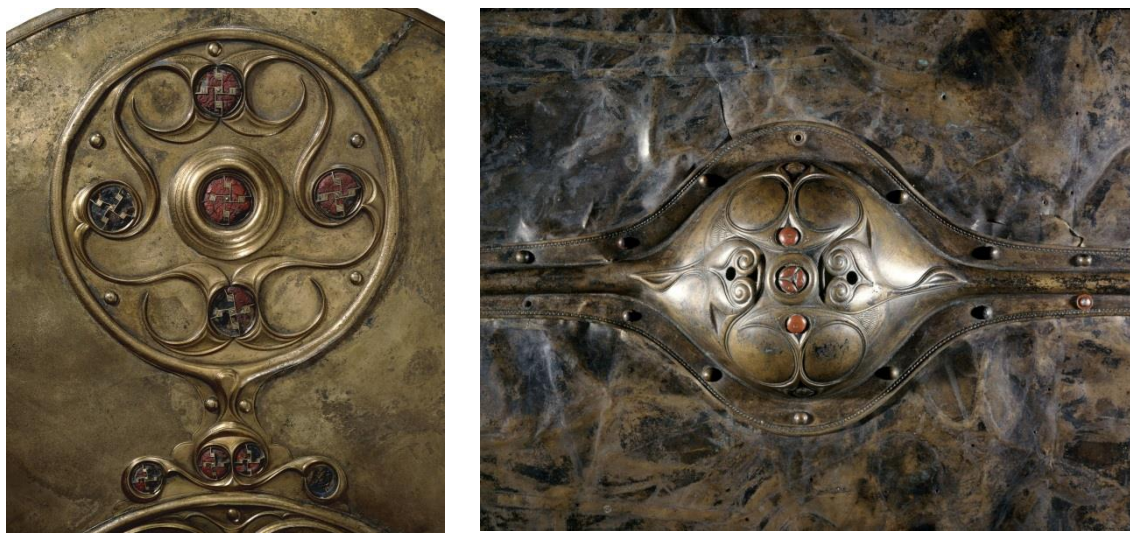


Figure 7.25: Detail of the decoration on the Battersea (left) and Witham (right) shields, © British Museum.

7.8 *Armour and helmets*

Surprisingly, armour and helmets have not been found in association with offensive weapons in British Iron Age burials. Body armour and helmets have been objects which allow for personal displays of power and status, and in other Iron Age cultures they have appeared with weapons, often interpreted as flamboyant display pieces. Very few finds of armour or helmets have been recorded thus far for the British Iron Age. The Kirkburn vehicle burial K5 includes the earliest complete find of mail armour in Britain. Other fragmentary examples are recorded from cremation burials at Lexden, Essex and Baldock and St. Albans, Hertfordshire (Niblett, 1999: 159-167). Two helmets have been noted from a cremation burial at Canterbury and an inhumation burial from North Bersted, West Sussex. Two inhumation burials from St Brides Major, Mid Glamorgan containing helmets are perhaps more likely to be Anglo-Saxon than Iron Age, and so have been excluded from the catalogue of martial burials discussed in this chapter. The extent to which armour may have been used in Britain, and the possible role of this class of object in identity construction are discussed in Chapter 8.

The Canterbury helmet comes from an isolated cremation burial discovered by a metal detectorist in September 2012 (recorded in the Portable Antiquities Scheme database: KENT-FA8E56). The location of the burial was approximately 3.7km from a Late Iron Age settlement site (Farley *et al.*, 2014). The cremated human remains had been placed

in a bag of perishable material, secured with a Late Iron Age brooch (thought to be an insular form), before being placed inside the upturned copper alloy helmet. The helmet was buried in a circular to ovoid pit approximately 0.35m in diameter (Richardson, 2013). The helmet has been typed as a Coolus 'A' by the British Museum, a form dated to the first century BC, with the associated La Tène D2 brooch also datable to the mid-first century BC (Farley, 2013: 1-2). While, Farley (2013: 3-4) has acknowledged that other cremation burials may remain undiscovered in the area, the burial appears to be an isolated example. The burial may be considered a variant on the Aylesford-type cremation, with West Sussex possibly forming part of the Aylesford-Swarling cultural sphere, or perhaps representative of an incomer to the region who was commemorated in the style of his home region.

Similarly, the helmet from the North Bersted inhumation burial was a Coolus Mannheim form. Coolus helmets were worn by both Gallic and Roman warriors during the first century BC, although it is probable the form was a Gallic invention, taken up by Roman soldiers during Caesar's Gallic Wars. The nearest comparable helmets to Canterbury and North Bersted are Gallic examples (Farley, 2013: 5). These burials may represent the remains of locals who had travelled to the Continent and acquired their helmets during mercenary service, however, the possibility that they were acquired locally via exotic gift exchange or trade must also be considered (Farley, 2013: 7, Richardson, 2013).

7.9 Ritual destruction and inverted placement of martial objects

The sections above have outlined the normative placement of weapons and other martial objects in Iron Age burials in Britain. These included the placement of swords along the back or close to the right arm, shields placed over the torso and spears placed by the left foot or by the head. Several burials, however, were notable for their deviation from such placements. These include rare instances of ritual destruction and inverted placement of objects. These variations in mortuary practice will be discussed, below.

7.9.1 Ritual destruction

A distinct difference between British and Continental practices is the almost total absence of any kind of ritual destruction of weapons included in Iron Age burials in Britain. The practice, often referred to as the 'killing' of weapons was common on the Continent during the Iron Age period, both in structured depositions, as noted at

Gournay-sur-Aronde, Picardy, France, and Hjortspring, Denmark and in funerary contexts such as Iron Age cemeteries at Monte Tamburino, Bologna and Aiud, Transylvania (Rapin, 1993, Măndescu, 2012). By contrast weapons were generally interred, whole and undamaged in British Iron Age burials. However, rare instances of ritual destruction did occur. The Kelvedon Warrior's sword and spearhead had both been deliberately bent out of shape prior to deposition, as had the swords from Acklam and Coleford (Stead, 2006: 180-181, Sealy, 2007: 32). At Brisley Farm burial 19 the spearhead was subjected to a similar act of destruction as occurred at Kelvedon.

Pearce (2013) has argued that some swords and spearheads may have had their own individual identities during the Iron Age. Such identity constructions may have been independent of the martial identity of the weapon's owner or bearer. In such instances the inclusion of these weapons in burials may have been seen as requiring funerary rites for the weapons themselves, possibly as a form of sacrifice. The destruction of these objects would appear to conform with Continental practice, where weapons were more frequently ritually 'killed' prior to deposition in votive or funerary contexts.

7.9.2 Alternative placement of martial objects: rites of reversal

Several burials which include martial objects show unusual placements within the grave, which warrant consideration. These burials seem to express what Parker Pearson (1999a: 26) has termed "rites of reversal," which appear to form a subset of burial practices in the British Iron Age.

Within the Arras Culture there was a diversity of body positions and orientations. As noted in Chapter 6, Stead (1991a: 179-184) and Dent (2010: 64) identified four distinct funerary practices, including: crouched burial with the head oriented north or south under a square-ditched barrow (Type A); extended or flexed burial under square-ditched barrow oriented east or west (Type B); flexed burials under square-ditched barrow oriented to the north or south (Type C); and, secondary burial either in a previously used barrow, or in a flat grave (Type D). However, within these classifications Stead also observed a practice of prone, or partially prone, burials. Fifteen individuals from Rudston/Burton Fleming and Kirkburn, representing members of his burials Type A, B and C had been placed either wholly or partly on their chests (Table 7.4). Stead did not single this practice out as something unique or deviant from normative practice. Neither Dent (1984), nor Brewster (1980) make mention of prone burial in their discussions of

body position and orientation following their excavations at Wetwang and Garton Slack. Nor were such observations made by Mortimer (1905) or Greenwell (1906), for either their own excavations, or other excavations on which they reported. Therefore, it is entirely possible that placing individuals in a prone position only occurred at Rudston/Burton Fleming and Kirkburn. Five of the 15 burials (marked * in Table 7.4 below) were reported as having been placed partially on the chest, thus it should be considered that perhaps their final position in the grave may have been the result of taphonomic processes, rather than deliberate placement in a prone position (Duday, 2006). This cannot be said for the remaining 10 burials, which were clearly placed face-down in the grave. Three of these burials – R144, R148 and R182 – included martial objects.

Table 7.4: Prone burials observed at Rudston/Burton Fleming, Garton Station and Kirkburn after (Stead, 1991a) – * indicates partially prone body position

Stead 1991 Prone Burials	Sex	Age	Body position	Burial Type	Grave goods	Grave good positions
R17	M	25-35	Crouched	A	none	
R102	M	25-35	Crouched	A	iron brooch	over neck
R138	?	35-45	Not stated	B	none	
R141	?	17-25	Flexed*	B	iron awl, iron file, iron knife, antler tine, pig bones	tools to right of body pig bones over hips and lower torso
R144	M	25-35	Extended	B	iron sword, iron spearhead	sword over torso, hilt over right shoulder spearhead by left foot
R148	?	17-25	Extended	B	iron shield boss, sherds	south of waist, binding by knee and scattered about grave boss face-up
R182	?	25-35	Extended	B	iron sword, sherds	sword to north of back, tang at shoulder sherds in the grave
R187	M	25-35	Contracted	A	pot, sheep bones	pot broken over knees, sheep bone in broken sherds
R190	M?	17-25	Tightly crouched*	A	iron brooch	by right elbow
BF11	F?	25-35	Crouched	A	iron brooch, copper alloy bracelet, pot	brooch by right shoulder bracelet on right forearm pot in ditch
BF18	F?	35-45	Tightly crouched*	A	Pot, iron brooch, sheep bones	pot north of right shoulder brooch at right shoulder sheep bone to east of right shoulder
BF42	M	17-25	Crouched*	A	none	
BF49	F	17-25	Crouched	A	none	
BF59	?	25-35	Flexed*	C	none	
K7	F	17-25	Contracted	A	none	

Rudston burial R148 – an extended Type B burial of a 17-25 year-old of indeterminate sex – included an iron shield boss and fragments of the shield binding, which were also constructed of iron, scattered about the grave “for reasons unknown” (Stead, 1991a: 61). The burial was also said to have included sherds of pottery, although Stead has elsewhere stated that no pottery was found in Type B burials (Stead, 1991a: 179-184 & 204). The scattered nature of the shield bindings may be an indication that the shield had been subjected to some form of ritual destruction, and had not been interred whole. Traces of wood (*Acer* sp.) and leather were identified suggesting that the shield had

been made of maple and covered with leather and strengthened with the addition of an iron boss, spine-cover and rim. The original dimensions of the shield could not be determined, however Stead assumed an oval form, similar to the shields identified in burials R163 and GS4 (Stead, 1991a: 61-63).

Burial R182 – an extended Type B burial of a 25-35 year-old of indeterminate sex – included an iron sword and this burial also contained some pottery sherds. The sword had been placed behind the back of the deceased with the hilt by the shoulder and the tip pointed towards the foot of the grave (Stead, 1991a: 208). As discussed, above, placement of swords in burials was generally by the right side of the body, over the torso, or along the back. Thus, the placement of the sword in R182 is in keeping with the normative burial tradition. Indeed, the only unusual element to the burial is the prone body position. All other aspects indicate that this individual was accorded burial rites in line with the broader Arras Culture burial tradition.

Rudston burial R144, mentioned above (Figure 7.16), was a prone burial of a 25-35 year-old male, placed in an extended position, identified by Stead as a Type B burial. The grave goods included an iron sword, placed between the right arm and torso, partially overlaying the ribs, and a Type 1.1.a.1 diamond-bladed iron spearhead. The spearhead was not placed in strict accordance with the normative position, which as mentioned above, could be considered as by the left foot, with the tip pointed to the foot of the grave. In R144 the spearhead was placed by the left foot but in an inverted position, so that the tip pointed towards the body. Stead (1991a: 33) tentatively included this burial among his enumeration of ‘speared corpse’ burials. However, an alternative interpretation should be considered. It would rather seem that care was taken to ensure that placement was by the left foot, as would be expected. However, it appears a decision was taken to place the spearhead so that the tip pointed toward the body, and thus, along with the prone body placement, forms a clear inversion of the natural order. There is no indication that the individual in R144 had been placed in a coffin so it is unlikely that the spearhead had shifted significantly as a result of post-depositional subsidence (Stead, 1991a: 36, Duday, 2006: 40-41).

At Brisley Farm, burial 19 shows a much more distinct expression of altered placement of the grave goods. In this burial each of the martial objects does not conform to normative placement. The sword was placed by the left foot, which would normally be

the position in which the spearhead should be placed. Further, the orientation of the sword was inverted. The hilt was at the foot of the grave with the tip pointed towards the head of the grave. The spearhead, which had been subjected to a clear act of ritual destruction was placed over the right shoulder, in approximately the position the sword would usually have been placed. The shield boss recovered from the grave was also slightly out of the normative position, recorded as placed over the knees rather than covering the torso. The position of the body itself was also slightly unusual. The head was oriented to the south, while the slightly earlier Brisley Farm burial 20 was oriented with the head to the north. While it remains within the usual spectrum of Iron Age burial orientations to see burials with the head to the south, the combination of this less common orientation and the inverted position of the martial grave goods may be significant.

Another clear example of inverted placement is observed at Kirkburn burial 5. This burial yielded the earliest example of chain mail found in Britain, along with a two-wheeled vehicle. The mail shirt was placed in the grave so that the sleeves were positioned close to hips and what would have been the base of the shirt close to the shoulders, as if ready to put on (Stead, 1991a: 54-55). The placement of the shirt in this manner is highly unusual, although there are ethnographic parallels for the turning inside out of clothing as part of funerary rituals. Among the Lodaaga of Ghana the dead were dressed in a smock that had been turned inside out (Goody, 1962: 72-73). A similar practice was observed in British Traveller-Gypsies, where the deceased were dressed for the funeral with their clothes inside out and living persons travelling at night may turn their clothes inside out to camouflage themselves from ghosts (Okely, 1983: 217-218).

In Kirkburn burial 3, the Kirkburn Sword was placed with the finely decorated scabbard face-downward into the grave and the hilt oriented towards the foot of the grave. This facedown sword placement was also observed in the Owslebury Warrior burial. By contrast, sword placement in other burials prominently displayed the decorated scabbard faces. As discussed, above, the way in which the spearhead at Owslebury had been hurled or thrust into the grave wall demonstrates distinct performative aspects to the funerary rites, and it should be considered significant that the decision was taken not to display the sword in this manner. As with the ritual destruction of weapons, discussed

above, the decision to place weapons particularly in inverted positions may represent separate funerary or sacrificial rites accorded to the weapons themselves.

The copper alloy helmet found at Bridge, near Canterbury may also echo this inverted placement of martial objects. Certainly, the placement of the helmet in an inverted position may have been dictated by the simple practicality that it was the receptacle intended to hold the cremated bone (Farley *et al.*, 2014). However, the use of a face-down shield as a cinerary vessel at Stanway, suggests the practice may have held greater significance (Crummy *et al.*, 2007: 171). Wetwang Cart Burials 1 and 3 also included shields, placed boss-downwards into the grave (Dent, 1985).

The examples outlined in this section reveal that sometimes subtle examples of rites of reversal were more widely practiced than has previously been acknowledged. There seems to be a clear association between rites of reversal and burials of martial character. Whether such rites are observable in non-martial burials of the British Iron Age lies beyond the scope of this thesis, however, this would be an area of research worthy of pursuit. Parker Pearson (1999a: 26) has suggested that rites of reversal can be read as the expression of a belief that the afterlife exists in a place that is in opposition to the living world, and that, by reversing objects in the burial, they will be in the 'right' orientation in the realm of the ancestors. Similarly, Ucko (1969: 273) noted an ethnographic example from the Ashanti, who buried their dead oriented in the opposite direction to that which was considered appropriate. This was done in the belief that the dead turned themselves around in the grave. Ultimately, we cannot know the reasons why such rites may have been performed but the frequency with which they have been recorded suggests that rites of reversal held significance and were common to many of the funerary traditions practiced during the British Iron Age.

7.10 Conclusions

Martial burials are far greater in number and diversity than has previously been acknowledged for the Iron Age in Britain. The more inclusive assessment presented in this chapter, examining all classes of martial objects included in burials, allows for patterns to emerge. While the number of 'warrior' burials including the full panoply of shield, spear and sword remain extremely rare, there are now at least 73, and perhaps as many as 100 burials of martial character identified for the Iron Age in Britain. The inclusion of individual martial elements such as a shield, single spearhead, armour, or

sling-stones demonstrate the broad range of martial associations which formed an important part of the constructed funerary identity of select individuals within the Iron Age communities of Britain.

Martial burials also reflect the broad exchange networks operating in the Middle and Late Iron Age. Strong contacts with the Continent are indicated through the inclusion of Continental shield forms observed at Kelvedon and Owslebury, and the helmets recovered from Canterbury and North Bersted, highlighting the exchange of ideas and equipment. The inclusion of exotic decorative elements such as Mediterranean coral highlights the breadth of exchange networks, and may be representative of elite gift exchange. The performance of acts of ritual destruction in a small number of martial burials, also suggests Continental influences in the funerary rites accorded to some individuals.

Performative aspects of burials including spearheads indicate that funerals could be dramatic spectacles, which sometimes, as at Brisley Farm and Owslebury, became foci for ongoing acts of veneration, such as feasting and later burial activity.

The enactment of rights of reversal also appears to have been a much more prevalent part of martial burial rites than previously recognised. The placement of objects seemingly in opposition to normative practice may have expressed complex cosmological understandings or have addressed concerns about the circumstances in which certain individuals died. Alternatively, such practices may have underscored an individual's membership of particular social groups, or perceived as distinct from other members of the community.

The typological assessment of spearheads included in martial burials again underscores the significance of throwing spearhead forms in the construction of martial identities in Britain. However, for certain individuals, the inclusion of heavy thrusting spearhead forms, which predominate outside of the Arras Culture, may have made specific statements about the social and martial roles of individuals within the community. The martial function and broader social significance of spearheads will be explored in the next chapter, which turns to focus specifically on warfare in the British Iron Age.

8 Warfare and Violence in the British Iron Age

8.1 Introduction

The focus of this thesis, on weapons, and spearheads in particular, requires an exploration of their use as martial objects. As Chapters 5, 6 and 7 have outlined, the contexts in which spearheads have been found are not random. These objects were selected, presumably with care, and deposited in burials or votive contexts as expressions of particular cosmological beliefs or identity constructs. Given these articulations, it should be anticipated that the archaeological record is biased.

Differences in the geographical and chronological distribution of spearhead types also suggest that certain forms may have been appropriate for deposition in some contexts but inappropriate in others. These variations in expression raise the prospect that the weapons which have survived in the archaeological record may not be representative of the range of forms available, and in circulation, during the Iron Age of Britain.

This chapter will explore the extent to which the weapons recovered may have been effective (i.e. capable of inflicting serious injury), and to what martial purposes they were best suited. To identify which weapons are a best 'fit for purpose' also requires a consideration of the frequency and nature of warfare in the British Iron Age. This will be achieved through an examination of the archaeological evidence for intergroup conflict, including settlement and landscape evidence; osteological evidence of physical trauma, indicative of interpersonal violence; and, an exploration of the social organisation and structuration of Iron Age communities in Britain. These analyses will assess whether warfare was widely practiced in Iron Age Britain, and determine whether the spearhead types found in the archaeological record could have been used, i.e. were effective, and fit for purpose.

8.2 A history of war and archaeology

The archaeology of warfare has evolved significantly over the past two decades. Keeley's (1996) *War Before Civilization* sparked a re-awakened interest in the archaeology of warfare, and exposed the veil of silence and deep-seated sense of aversion which had fallen over the subject in the latter half of the twentieth century (Vankilde, 2003: 132, Guilaine & Zammit, 2005: 8-9). During the 1960s-1990s archaeological scholarship tended to downplay the frequency and extent of interpersonal

violence in societies of the deep past (Sharples, 1991b, Keeley, 1996: 3-24, Vankilde, 2003, Armit *et al.*, 2006, James, 2007). Many objects and features associated with warfare or violence, such as weapons and defensive structures were ‘pacified’ – reinterpreted as ritual or parade items signalling social status or other markers of societal organisation (Vankilde, 2003: 135, Guilaine & Zammit, 2005: 10, James, 2007). In this ‘pacified past’ interpersonal violence was seen as a rare and rather extraordinary occurrence, although there were some notable exceptions to this trend, such as a 1986 special issue of *World Archaeology* (Vol.18 No.2) which focussed on weaponry and warfare. When warfare or conflict did enter the narrative, the use of euphemistic terminology obfuscated the violent aspects of such encounters (Vankilde, 2003: 131, James, 2007). Much of the debate fell into either Hobbesian or Rousseauian schools of thought (Haas, 2001: 332, James, 2007: 168).

Bradley’s (1998) influential analysis of votive deposits of weaponry focussed in detail on the process of deposition, and the role such objects may have played in the cosmological understanding of those who deposited them, but offered little discussion of their martial function. Since Keeley’s (1996) seminal work the past has been repopulated with perpetrators and victims of interpersonal violence (Gilchrist, 2003, James, 2007). Scholarship has confronted the evidence for physical trauma, such as the sharp-force trauma noted in the skeletal remains of the individuals buried at the so-called ‘War Cemetery’ at Maiden Castle, and the fragmentary human remains recorded at Broxmouth (Cunliffe, 2005: 541, Redfern & Chamberlain, 2011, Armit *et al.*, 2013). Armit (2007), for example, charts the trajectory of changing trends regarding the interpretation of hillforts in Britain from fortified bases to central places with limited defensive capacity, through to a more nuanced picture of places with complex functions, which include the provision of defence.

Weapons and other martial objects have been recovered from Iron Age votive and burial contexts across Britain (discussed in Chapters 5, 6 and 7). Projectile weapons such as throwing spears may have been effectively used for hunting. Swords and shields are not well-suited to hunting and, while the use of swords in boar-hunting is attested in Apulian vase-painting (Trendall & Cambitoglou, 1978: No.01-118-4), there is no indication that such practices occurred in Iron Age Britain. Further, studies of faunal assemblages and isotopic analyses demonstrate that hunted species formed only a small

part of the diets of Iron Age peoples (Hill, 1995a, Haselgrove, 1999, Cunliffe, 2005: 418, Jay & Richards, 2006, Arabella, 2007, Redfern *et al.*, 2010, Stevens *et al.*, 2010). Consequently, it can be inferred that weapons were not frequently used in such endeavours, and that their primary function was for the performance of activities other than hunting.

‘Warfare’ is a tricky concept to define, and a surprising number of scholarly works on the subject offer no explicit definition. At what point does interpersonal violence shift to affray, to *melee*, to warfare? Within non-state societies, with small populations, limited group size, and potentially loose or weak social structures, the line between brawling and warfare may be imperceptible. Mercer (2006: 122) defines warfare as “deliberate and organised violence on a communal scale.” The presence of group organisation distinguishes warfare from brawling and other forms of disorganised group violence (Ember & Ember, 1992: 248). Some definitions of warfare emphasise a need for the violence to be mutually agreed between the parties involved (Carman, 1999: 44). This emphasis on mutual agreement distinguishes warfare from other related acts of organised violence, which have not been mutually agreed, such as raiding. However, the requirement for mutual agreement opens up significant grey areas in the theoretical discussion.

Ambuscade forms a component of warfare in many conflicts, yet the very nature of ambush ensures that, while both parties may recognise each other as martial enemies, the moment and theatre of engagement have *not* been agreed by all parties. Ferguson (1984: 5) rightly acknowledges that organised violent action may be directed against a group which is *not similarly* organised. This allows for the practice of guerrilla warfare, ambush and other acts of martial violence such as raiding, massacre, and organised destruction of property in scorched earth policies. These kinds of strategies may not be interpreted as formal battles, but have often played a role in martial campaigns, and the perpetration of such acts would likely have been perceived as part of warfare, enacted by individuals recognised as ‘warriors’.

Ferguson (1984: 3-4) argues that warfare entails a “continuum of conflict” which can be broadened to include the mobilisation of resources as well as ‘cold wars’ which may have no physical casualties. This continuum may also include shifts from smaller group conflicts, like personal or family feuds, to draw in larger groups, communities or states.

Godelier (1986: 104), Keeley (1996: 113-126), Thorpe (2003: 146, 160), Armit *et al.* (2006: 6) and James (2007: 168) have also observed the fuzzy boundaries, and close relationship between homicide, feuding and war, with murder potentially transitioning through blood feud en-route to open warfare. For the context of this thesis, warfare can be defined as violent action between two or more community groups with the aim of causing physical harm to persons or property with the goal of compelling the losing party/parties to bow to the will of the victor/s.

8.3 Cultures of violence

8.3.1 Violence and warfare as cross-cultural phenomena

Warfare, may be viewed as a cultural phenomenon which embraces the darker side of the agonistic spectrum (Nystrom, 2005, Clastres, 2010). Keeley (1996: 28, 186) observed that war is not universal in human societies, and that pacifistic cultures do occur in approximately 11.5 percent of non-state tribes or chiefdoms, and in approximately 13 percent of all the societies covered by his study. There does appear to be a correlation between social structures and the use of violence as adaptive behaviour. Given the variability of violent behaviours exhibited in Ferguson's (1984: 4) "continuum of conflict" across a range of human cultures, the prospect of unpicking *genetic predisposition* for violence from *cultural disposition* is exceedingly difficult (Haas, 1999: 13). For Wood (2004: 99), attempts to "[frame] the issue as a choice between biology *or* culture, between nature *or* nurture, is pointless" (original emphasis). Pinker (2011: 692-714) explores the relationship between empathy and violence and finds that the empathetic understanding which engenders human compassion is the same driver that allows torturers to comprehend which acts will cause the greatest physical or psychological harm. Thus, while the *capacity* for violence is certainly deeply encoded within the human psyche, the *perpetration* of violence is not inevitable.

The human mind is not a 'blank slate', a concept which Pinker (2002) has powerfully deconstructed. While, the underlying emotions and drivers which facilitate violent action do appear to be deeply encoded, the level of aggression or violence exhibited is subject to cultural norms, which may vary from one community to another, and within communities over time (Thorpe, 2003: 147). Eisner (2009: 43), in attempting to advance a general theory of human violence, was able to categorise a range of violent acts noted in pre-state societies:

- Ritualized fights
- Revenge killings, feuds
- Violent self-help
- Raids
- Battles
- Massacres
- Rape
- Assassination of visitors
- Infanticide, senilicide
- Torture
- Human Sacrifice

Each of these forms of violence may have been subject to proscriptions or varying levels of social acceptability or endorsement. Within each culture there are “narratives of violence” (Wood, 2004: 104), each informed by its own understanding of violence; its purposes and modes of employment. Aijmer and Abbink (2000) have argued that violence is a form of communication with an idiom, which has cultural saliency. The application of violence is also “contingent and context-dependent” (Aijmer & Abbink, 2000: xii), and seldom “senseless” (Blok, 2000: 24). The role of weapons may also be variable for these different modes of violence, (this will be discussed in Section 8.4, below). Across cultures and timescales there appear to be some universalities. Violence is most often perpetrated by males aged between 18-35 years, with repeated objectives including: the acquisition of resources, sex and power; to save face; avenge a perceived wrong; or demonstrate prowess (Campbell & Muncer, 1994, Wood, 2004: 104, Eisner, 2009: 47). The demographics of violence are important and, within some cultures, including Iron Age Britain, may be central to the identity constructs of certain groups and individuals (discussed, below).

Knauff (1991: 397) argued that the use of violence is closely connected to “male status differentiation” and that, among nomadic hunter-gatherers, operating in areas of low population density, little evolutionary or societal advantage attaches to violent behaviour. It is only when societies become more sedentary or territorial, and intra-group male to male relationships become more hierarchical, that the use of violence lends advantage. Ethnographic studies of hunter-gatherers and simple agricultural

societies suggest that, while they may not frequently engage in warfare, they exhibit rates of homicide which are many times greater than modern, industrialised societies (Keeley, 1996: 29-31). Thorpe (2003: 155), in his assessment of the origins of human warfare, suggests that warfare can be traced back to the Mesolithic in Northern Europe. There are examples of projectile weapon injuries recorded from Epipalaeolithic sites in the Dnieper Rapids region of Ukraine, and Mesolithic sites including Vedbæk, Zealand, Tévéc, Brittany, and Grotte de Géménos ou de Saint Claire, Bouches du Rhône; seemingly the result of inter-group violence (Cordier, 1990, Thorpe, 2003, Lillie, 2004). Guilaine and Zammit (2005: 61-77) also see the advent of warfare coinciding with the invention of the bow during the Mesolithic, citing numerous examples of human remains retaining embedded projectile points, and artistic representations of human figures riddled with arrows, from across Europe and North Africa. Mallory's (2006) linguistic analysis also suggests that interpersonal violence and intercommunal conflicts formed part of the shared cultural development of Proto-Indo-European speaking peoples. Haas (2001: 335) argues that while there is evidence for interpersonal violence, and possibly warfare, from the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic, it is not until the Neolithic period that the archaeological evidence supports the existence of recurrent warfare. Moving beyond Knauf's position on violence and competition for social status, Haas (2001) sees the advent of warfare as linked to the rise of sedentary agricultural communities and increasing social complexity, and suggests that it is not until the advent of chiefdom level societies, such as we see in the British Iron Age, that warfare becomes influential in the expression of hierarchical power structures.

8.3.2 *Fear and loathing in the Iron Age*

Ember and Ember (1992) have suggested that some of the most powerful cultural influences on the prevalence and severity of warfare, cross-culturally, are the emotions of fear and mistrust. McCartney (2006) has demonstrated that this theory can be applied to the Iron Age site of Entremont in Aix-en-Provence, southern France, where changes in settlement patterns, correlated with endemic warfare, appear to be indicative of high levels of fear and mistrust within the community. Similarly, James (2007: 169) has suggested that within the Iron Age communities of Britain we should consider a state of "endemic insecurity" in which the risk of violence was ever present. For Ember and Ember (1992), the driving forces behind fearful communities, and high levels of warfare, were unpredictable natural disasters impacting on access to resources. Changes

in average temperature recorded at different periods during the Iron Age could have had a significant negative impact on crop yields in some parts of Britain, rendering food security a serious issue (Cunliffe, 2005: 27-34). Halkon (2008: 29-30) has argued that marine transgressions, which took place in the Humber region during the Bronze Age to Iron Age transition, coupled with significant climate instability during the period from c.800-400 BC, could have had a significant impact on the communities living in the region. Giles (2012: 217-220) has also highlighted the impact that severe flooding, and the unpredictability of such events, could have on communities located in East Yorkshire. However, Armit *et al.* (2014) underscore the complexities of disentangling climatic and socioeconomic factors in understanding societal change.

For McCartney (2006), this unpredictability seems to be largely associated with raiding, and martial pressure applied by Roman incursions into Gallic territory. Dent (1983a) has also argued for increasing social instability in the period immediately preceding, and during, the Roman conquest. Certainly, throughout the first millennium BC there was an intensification of land use and growth of population, which may have led to increased competition for access and control of resources (Hill, 1995a, Cunliffe, 2005: 593). Further research into the relationship between climate, settlement patterns, and indicators for political instability are needed to ascertain how influential such factors may have been for the advent and prevalence of warfare in the British Iron Age. Such research, while potentially illuminating, lies beyond the scope of this thesis.

8.3.3 *War and social organisation*

The societies of Iron Age Britain were settled communities practicing a mixture of agricultural and pastoral activities (Marshall, 1978, Ferrell, 1997: 235-236, Fitzpatrick, 1997, Copley *et al.*, 2003, Cunliffe, 2005: 407-445, Bradley & Yates, 2007). Keeley (1996: 31) observed that agrarian communities were rarely pacifistic due to the simple need to stay and defend their crops when confronted by attackers. Fleeing imminent danger may save lives in the short-term only to see them lost to starvation later (Haas, 2001). The level of social organisation within these communities both inter-regionally, and across time, was variable throughout the course of the British Iron Age. Some communities were more hierarchical, while others may have had heterarchical power structures (Sharples, 1991b, Hill, 1995a, Bradley & Yates, 2007). The burial evidence, outlined in Chapters 6 and 7, demonstrates that in some regions, and in East Yorkshire

in particular, there are strong indicators of social stratification, with the emergence of social elites. These could be broadly described as chiefdom level societies. Haas (2001: 341-342) observed that warfare and social organisation incorporating warriors are pervasive in chiefdoms. Keeley (1996: 46) has also argued that societal structures of this kind are more likely to include champions and one on one duelling activities. Abbink (2000: 78, 98) suggests that within stratified communities violence has a role to play in the creation of cohesive social structures and the formulation of group identities.

Bevan (1997: 186) suggests that “social relations and group identities were signified” through landscape and settlement boundaries, constructing inclusive and exclusive communities. The Iron Age in Britain was a period in which the landscape was becoming increasingly bounded, particularly during the Late Iron Age (Cunliffe, 2005: 420, Giles, 2007a, Moore, 2007, Halkon, 2008: 164-177). The level and nature of connections between settlements during the Iron Age of Britain appear to have been variable. Ferrell’s (1997) statistical assessment of settlement sites in the north-east of Britain suggests that the level of site interdependence and centralisation was heterogeneous. In the upland zones of the north-east there appeared to be no real centralisation of settlement, and Ferrell (1997: 233) argues for a non-hierarchical system, while in eastern Durham there is clear evidence of a more centralised, hierarchical system, likely controlled from Stanwick. In the Severn-Cotswolds, small settlements appear to have clustered, forming “loci of social groups larger than the household” indicative of broader social networks based on kinship or exchange systems (Moore, 2007: 91). In the hillfort dominated zone there appears to have been a strong sense of territorial control emerging by the Middle Iron Age (Cunliffe, 2005: 590-591). Sharples (1991b) highlights the changing roles of southern hillforts between the Middle and Late Iron Ages as indicative of increasing territorial control, and a shift in the balance of power from communities to hierarchies dominated by powerful individuals.

The level of interdependence and social hierarchy would potentially have impacted on the level and nature of warfare. In the non-hierarchical system, Ferrell (1997: *ibid.*) suggests a likelihood of small-scale raiding, which resulted in no real shifts in the balance of power. The ferocity of battle could also be influenced by the perceived cultural or ethnic proximity of the enemy. Keeley (1996: 65) observed, in ethnographic examples from Papua New Guinea, that fighting was more restrained between groups

which formed part of the same tribe, or who shared a common language, than war against outsiders. “When the adversary was truly “foreign,” warfare was more relentless, ruthless, and uncontrolled” (Keeley, 1996: *ibid.*). Given the variability in social organisation it is difficult to generalise about the role and significance of warrior status and identity in the British Iron Age.

8.4 *The rattling of spears: weapons, warriors and identity*

8.4.1 *Boys to men: socialisation for violent action*

The construction of male identity in the Iron Age would have begun in boyhood. Later Irish epic poetry such as *The Táin* and descriptions of fosterage in Early Irish Laws suggest that boys banded together in aggressive play, and that father figures had a formal responsibility to instruct their biological and foster sons on how they should behave as men (Kinsella, 1970: 77, Karl, 2005). The processes by which young people learn violent attitudes and behaviours is largely imitative of behaviours they observe in the adults of their community (Brothwell, 1999: 26).

Young males would undergo rites of passage, which tested their fortitude and permitted them to formalise their warrior identities (van Gennep, 1960: 88). Such rites may also have encouraged them to overcome inclinations to avoid violent acts and bloodshed, as observed in ethnographic parallels such as the Suri of Southern Ethiopia, among whom boys are taught to surmount such inhibitions (Abbink, 2000: 83). The ancient sources including Strabo (3.3.6) describe rites of this nature, outlined in Almagro-Gorbea and Lorrio (2004: 78-80), which appear to have been common to the Celtiberians, Gauls, Etruscans and Italic peoples, and have also been recorded amongst the Irish. Rites of passage appear to have involved young, prospective male warriors participating in raiding activities and in ceremonies involving fire, the successful completion of which secured their acceptance into “brotherhoods of warriors” (Sopeña, 2005: 369). Similar rites of passage may have been enacted in Iron Age Britain, although it is difficult to ascertain what proportion of young men may have been eligible, or expected to become warriors.

Duelling activities, discussed below, may also have formed part of rites of passage (*c.f.* van Gennep, 1960) where young warriors could demonstrate their prowess in one on one combat, a practice which may be preserved in martial dances still performed in parts of Spain (Abbink, 2000: 85, Sopeña, 2005: 362-363). In times of crisis, the

initiation of young men may have been accelerated. Polybius (II.20) describes the Boii as arming those who “had only just reached manhood” for battle against the Romans in the north of Italy in the early third century BC.

Karl’s (2005) assessment of Early Irish Laws indicates that the education of boys included passing on specific skills, including martial skills, to sons and foster sons. In *The Táin Cú Chulainn* travels to Scotland, where he and his foster brothers are educated in martial practice by Scathach (Kinsella, 1970: 29). The Ulster tales may also preserve some indications of the types of skills which were taught, and how these were learned and practiced by young warriors. Sayers (1983) conducted a close reading of descriptions of martial feats in the Ulster Cycle and argues that learning to perform feats with weapons and shields allowed warriors to develop their strength, agility and dexterity, and learn how to handle weapons with precision. Further, he argues that successful performance of the most difficult and dazzling feats provided opportunities for courageous display, which could serve to intimidate enemies on the field of battle. Many of the feats outlined in *The Táin* involve spears including: “the feats of the javelin and rope”; “stepping on a lance in flight and straightening erect on its point”; and, “the trussing of a warrior on the points of spears” – these motives are repeatedly articulated in the epic (Kinsella, 1970: 25, 29, 77, 122-124, 128). While many of the feats attributed to Cú Chulainn are fantastically exaggerated, it is possible that they are reflective of more achievable exploits, preserving a kernel of actual martial training.

8.4.2 *War as ‘men’s business’*

As mentioned above, psychological studies of human aggression suggest that the greatest proportion of violent acts is performed by males aged between 18 and 35 years of age. As discussed in Chapter 7, Iron Age burials which included martial objects, where age and biological sex have been confidently determined, also predominately contain males belonging to this age group. Very few martial burials were those of men over the age of 35; the Owslebury Warrior representing the sole definite example. No burials with martial objects datable to the British Iron Age have been conclusively identified as female. Thus it appears that the construction of martial identity in Iron Age Britain was strongly associated with males (Karl, 2013: 42-43). Further, the lack of child burials including martial objects implies that martial identity and status were accrued rather than heritable. This presents a marked difference from later Anglo-Saxon

burials, in which weapons have been recorded for males ranging from infancy to old age (Härke, 1990: 85, Halkon, 2013). The low number of older men buried with martial objects infers there may have been some age-related social structures which saw most men retire from martial roles within the community around the age of 35. The prospect of differential social roles for older men is also supported by the isotopic evidence from Wetwang, East Yorkshire, indicating that men over the age of 35 may have consumed a slightly different diet from the rest of the population, which Jay and Richards (2006) suggest could be attributable to age status.

Whether *all* men could become warriors is unclear. The idea of *becoming* a warrior traverses numerous concepts of identity, which warrant consideration. Rites of passage have been mentioned in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, as they relate to the deposition of objects and the construction of funerary identities. However, rites of passage also likely applied to the transition into warriorhood, as discussed above. Yet, even once an individual achieved ‘warrior status’, it is unclear how complete or permanent this change in identity was. As we have seen, older men may have given up martial roles, although the Owslebury Warrior, who was aged between 40-50 years of age, appears to have defied this convention (Collis, 1968). The possibility should be considered that ‘warriorhood’ was a temporary identity state which could be taken up, emphasised/de-emphasised, discarded, or stripped away in certain social contexts or circumstances. The concept of identity in the Iron Age of Britain may have been significantly different from our modern perceptions of identity, and the martial aspects of one’s personhood could have been ‘dividual’, ‘partible’, or context dependent (Fowler, 2004: 27-30).

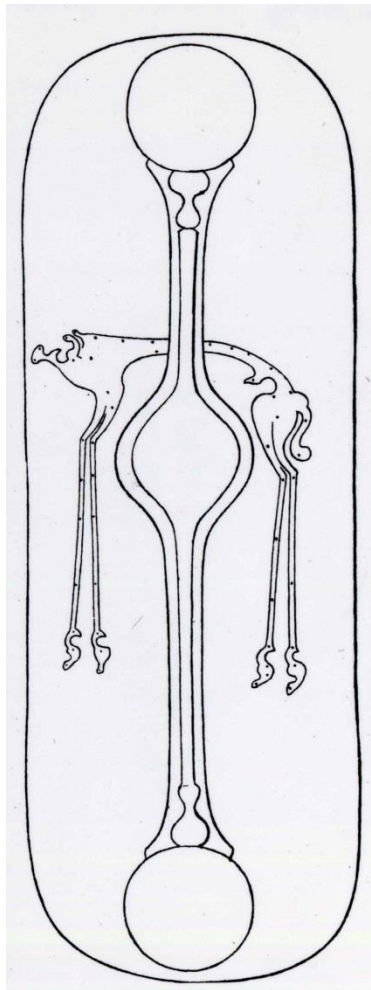
This has particular relevance for the study of weapons, especially the bone points, which appear to have served as spearheads at many sites across Iron Age Britain, and have been recovered from both votive deposits and martial burials (as discussed in Chapters 5 and 7). These weapons would have been quick and easy to manufacture, and were constructed from inexpensive materials which would have been available whenever livestock were being slaughtered, perhaps as a seasonal activity (Cunliffe, 2005: 415-419). Bone points may have served as single-event weapons, constructed and used for a single episode of conflict; raising the possibility that they were borne by ‘temporary’ non-elite warriors, who donned the role to perform their martial activity

before discarding this aspect of their identity, perhaps returning to pre-conflict identity constructs.

8.4.3 *Boars of men: hunting, game and identity*

While it is clear from faunal assemblages that hunted species formed only a small percentage of the diet, hunting and certain hunted species retained a focus within the construction of martial identity and prowess. The boar is the animal most frequently depicted on sword scabbards, shields and, on the Continent, in figured art (Kruta, 2004: 152-158). Cunliffe (2005: 535) has also suggested that boar figurines found in Britain may have served as helmet fittings. A close association between hunting and warfare, and the role of both practices in the construction of male identities, has been noted in many cultures. For the ancient Mediterranean, a great deal of attention has been paid to Xenophon's discourse *On Hunting* (XII.1-4) in which he explicitly states that hunting prepares men for the hardships of war.

The wild boar in particular was identified in antiquity as being an especially dangerous beast to hunt (Xenophon: *On Hunting*: X). Boars are highly aggressive and territorial, and their tusks can cause fatal injury (Mercer, 2006: 131). The perilous nature of boar hunting also meant that it was an activity usually engaged in by groups rather than individuals, a natural analogy to the raiding party or war band (Xenophon: *ibid.*). An additional layer of correlation with martial activity was the level of organisation and planning required for the boar-hunt. This often required an investment of time and resources that restricted the activity to the social elite (Polybius: VIII.28). The belligerent streak in boar-behaviour was an aspect which males may have sought to project as part of their own martial identity: a warning to their opponents that they were faced with a dangerous individual, capable of inflicting material harm. The multi-faceted layers of association between the boar itself, the boar-hunt, martial activity and martial objects, and the entanglement of these ideas within the construction of concepts of warriorhood, would have been obvious to anyone viewing a representation of a boar on an object like the Witham Shield, for example (Figure 8.1) (Megaw & Megaw, 2005: 29, DeMarrais, 2014: 158).



**Figure 8.1: Depiction of a boar on the Witham Shield
(© British Museum, accession No. 1872,1213.1.).**

8.4.4 To bear arms: weapons, status and identity

As discussed in Chapter 7, we know very little about how men acquired their weapons in the British Iron Age. The evidence from funerary and votive contexts indicates that spears and swords were the most common classes of weapon borne by warriors during this period. Swords in particular appear to have been weapons which were possessed by the highest-ranked male members of society. The spear seems to have been a more ubiquitous class of weapon, which most, if not all, fighters would have carried. Mercer (2006: 135) has described the spear as a “team weapon that rendered warfare possible at any level because it invited further organisation and coordination”. This renders the spear an important class of weapon, and possibly the standard weapon for the construction of individual and group martial identities.

The possession of weapons may have been central to the individual and collective identities of certain male members of Iron Age communities. Such importance was recorded for the Celtiberians, who opted to resume war against the Romans, and in some cases commit suicide, rather than surrender their weapons (Diodorus Siculus: XXXIII.16, Livy: XXXIV.17). The form of spear carried may have communicated identity constructs to other members of the group, as well as to outsiders. It is clear from Diodorus Siculus (V.30) that the spearheads Gallic warriors carried were visibly distinct from those carried by the Romans, and an examination of the geographic distribution of spearhead types in Iron Age Britain suggests that certain spear forms were more common at some sites and less common, or wholly absent, at others. For example, Stead (1991a: 75) observed that members of his Type A spearhead (which correlates with Type 1.2 small leaf-bladed in the current study) were prevalent at Rudston/Burton Fleming, and Type B (Type 1.1 diamond-bladed) was concentrated at Garton Station and Kirkburn. Both cemeteries can be broadly dated to the Middle Iron Age, although Stead was not able to tighten the chronology within this period. The possibility that the subtle differences in spearhead form may reflect cultural affiliations was considered by Stead, and remains a plausible interpretation of the evidence. Among the Loikop of Kenya, spear forms are used to communicate membership of ethnic groups, and variations in form between groups highlight community differentiation (Larick, 1986: 276-278).

The class of weapon used would potentially also have held connotations about status and bravery. Again, ethnographic parallels with the Loikop of Kenya demonstrate that the possession of particular types of spear can signify an individual's membership of age grades and social groupings. Those deemed to be in the prime age and social group associated with warrior status communicate their standing through the carriage of the largest and most powerful spears (Larick, 1986). Such markers can be directly related to spear function, and the role each class of spear played in combat. Light, throwing spears of the Type 1 functional grouping outlined in Chapter 4, for example, could be deployed from a distance and the risk of injury to oneself would have been low. The accuracy of the deployment of throwing spears has often been questioned and ethnographic parallels from Papua New Guinea suggest that fatal injuries were rarely inflicted by thrown spears. The accuracy of British Iron Age throwing spears is untested, and experimental archaeology, using replicas of the throwing spearhead forms (Types 1.1 to 1.8), would

provide an opportunity to explore this question in future research. Future osteological analysis of British Iron Age burials may also reveal tighter patterns of association between particular spear types and age.

Anthropological observation of intergroup warfare in Papua New Guinea recorded the practice of warriors maintaining position at the extreme outer range for the deployment of missile weapons (Godelier, 1986: 105, van Wees, 2004: 153-158). At such distances, accuracy and efficacy were significantly reduced, as was the level of risk attendant in participation. Combatants could sustain their involvement in this kind of conflict over extended periods, with the bravest making brief sallies into danger to deploy their spears with greater accuracy before retreating again to safety. By contrast, the use of thrusting spears or swords – which Keeley (1996: 49-52) describes as “shock weapons” – required a fighter to get much closer to one’s intended target. To do so often necessitated passing through the effective field or ‘killing-zone’ for the deployment of missile weapons, like throwing spears or sling-shot. Consequently, the risk to self was far greater than for throwing a spear from the extreme edge of the weapon’s range. The use of chariots in battle, as described by Caesar (*De Bello Gallico*: IV.33), would have limited the duration of this exposure, while offering an alternative opportunity to make courageous display. Diodorus Siculus (V.29), in his description of chariot warfare among the Gauls, explains that warriors threw spears from the moving chariot before dismounting to engage in close-quarter sword combat.

Once through the ‘killing zone’, engaging in close-quarter fighting with sword or thrusting spears of the Type 2 function group further increased the risk of injury or death. The Vindolanda tablets (Tab. Vindol. II 164) give an indication of practice, stating that the Britons did not use their swords from on horseback, inferring that sword combat was conducted on foot, at close-quarters. This is supported by the archaeological evidence, discussed in Chapter 7, with most swords recovered from Iron Age contexts in northern Britain being medium-length weapons, unsuited to cavalry action. Having possession of shock weapons, and the courage to use them, may have greatly increased the martial status of an individual fighter. Taking the risk of engaging an enemy at close-quarters could have presented warriors with an opportunity to demonstrate their martial prowess. Surviving highly risky close-quarter fighting, and

proving one's skill could have increased a warrior's reputation as a man not only to be feared, but also to be included as a member of raiding parties or war-bands.

Among the Baruya of Papua New Guinea special status was attached to those with the strength and courage to engage in close-quarter combat (Godelier, 1986: 105-106). Similarly, the practice of 'counting coup' among Native American tribes was a way of accruing status as a warrior who was without fear by making direct physical contact with an enemy (Grinnell, 1910). The desire to accrue such prowess, and be accepted into such groups, could have been strong, offering a way to increase one's fortune through the capture of booty, which could include livestock, crops, and women (Webster, 1996, Sánchez-Moreno, 2005: 110). Captured weapons, armour, slaves and luxury items could have become the focus of elite gift exchange. Such gifts may be represented in the exotic shield form in the Owslebury Warrior burial, or the matching scabbard and shield set from Stanway, discussed in Chapter 7. The ability to offer such gifts would have enabled individuals to cement relationships, both within their own community and with prominent members of other communities with whom relationships were being developed or maintained (Thurston, 2009: 361).

8.4.5 *A meeting of champions: duels and ritualized fighting*

Descriptions of duelling activities, principally conducted with the sword, have also been recorded in the ancient texts. Diodorus Siculus (V.29) describes duelling as part of battle for Gallic warriors:

It is...their custom, when they are formed for battle, to step out in front of the line and to challenge the most valiant men from among their opponents to single combat, brandishing their weapons in front of them to terrify their adversaries.

Vankilde (2003) has highlighted that elites engaged in ritualized martial display, and differentiated themselves from their perceived 'social inferiors' on the field of battle. Ritualized martial encounters could have communicated political legitimacy, reflected or highlighted skills, and emphasised the investment of resources seen as the sole purview of the elites, whilst also reinforcing ideas of social hierarchy to the 'audience' viewing such confrontations (DeMarrais, 2014: 156). Cunliffe (2005: 541) has also suggested that use of the chariot may have played a role in bombastic contests of

champions before battle. The impact of such performative conflicts should not be underestimated, despite their elusory nature (Blok, 2000). Among the Baruya of Papua New Guinea, the most revered and elite warriors, known as *aoulatta*, were expected to seek out enemy “heroes” in battle and engage with them in single combat (Godelier, 1986: 106). The performance of these duels appears to have been heavily codified, with an entourage of lesser warriors looking on (prepared to offer cover should their hero fall), and the actions of the victor were dictated by conventions which included partial dismemberment of the corpse, and trophy-taking, sometimes associated with acts of cannibalism. Diodorus Siculus (*loc. cit.*) reports that the victor in the heroic duels he describes, would take the head of their enemy as a trophy to be displayed in their homes.

Diodorus Siculus (V.28) also describes duelling activities among the Gauls, outside of organised warfare, in what appear to be means of settling disputes through contests of honour. Ethnographic parallels with the Suri of Southern Ethiopia support the prospect that, within communities, duelling activities may have taken place as a means of settling disputes, training in martial skills, or as a rite of passage, as outlined above for young Celtiberian warriors (Abbink, 2000: 85).

8.4.6 *Tools of a bloody trade*

As mentioned above, the spear appears to have been the most ubiquitous class of weapon in use during the British Iron Age. The spearhead typology developed in this thesis (Chapter 4) demonstrates that a broad range of spear types appear to have been in circulation during the Middle and Late Iron Ages in Britain. The assessment of complete spearheads, outlined in Chapter 4, shows that the majority of spearheads deposited in burial or votive contexts measured between 50mm-200mm in total length. This suggests an optimal length for functional spearheads within this range, and that longer spearheads, which move significantly beyond this range, may be representative of specialisms, or were created to serve non-martial functions.

The majority of spearheads, with small, sharp points (Types 1.1. to 1.8) would have been particularly well-suited to being thrown. During Caesar’s British Campaign the only weapons he explicitly describes in the hands of his enemies are *tela*, a spear form which is thrown (*De Bello Gallico*: IV.26-35). The actions he describes, combining *tela* and forms of the verb *conicio* reinforce the suggestion that these weapons were thrown

(Lewis, 1890). The account also records that at least some combatants were throwing these weapons from horseback or from moving chariots, which would have added to the velocity and force of their impact. While Caesar is describing the actions observed in a single campaign, limited to the south of Britain, another description, from the Vindolanda tablets supports his account. Vindolanda tablet II.164 includes the terms “*mittant iaculos*” in relation to the weapons of the Britons, again terms specifically related to throwing (Lewis, 1890). The archaeological evidence certainly supports these descriptions, and the throwing of spears appears to have formed a core component in indigenous combat.

One class of spearhead which is extraordinarily rare in Iron Age Britain is the Type 1.6 ‘Celtic *pilum*’ (illustrated in Chapter 4). Examples of this spear form have only been recovered from two sites: Four Crosses, Powys, and the South Cave Weapons Cache, East Yorkshire, both deposited in ditches. Possible related, shorter spear forms (Type 1.7, hybrid of diamond and ‘Celtic *pilum*’, illustrated in Chapter 4) have also been recovered from the South Cave Weapons Cache, from the so-called ‘massacre’ deposit at the south-western gate complex at South Cadbury Castle, Somerset, from an unknown context at Hunsbury Camp, Northamptonshire and from Danebury hillfort. The long shanks and small blades of these spearheads suggest that they were also designed to be thrown. However, their very limited distribution, and almost exclusive placement in votive deposits, suggests that these weapons may have been in highly restricted circulation, and may not have been used in martial combat. That the Type 1.6 examples from the South Cave Weapons Cache, in particular, with their delicate shanks, show no signs of use, supports the interpretation of this class of weapon as a specifically votive object, with strong martial connotations.

An interesting coda to this discussion is an object which formed part of an iron hoard at Madmarston Camp, Oxfordshire, described by Fowler (1960) as a currency bar (illustrated and discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5). This object measured 847mm in length and was described as featuring a socket and point which were not completely preserved. The form of the currency bar reflects the form of ‘Celtic *pila*’ and may have acted as a proxy, in the same way that many currency bars were formed to approximate sword forms (Hingley, 2006).

Type 2.1 long, angular spearheads fit with descriptions of Gallic warriors in the ancient sources carrying, and fighting with, spearheads as long as swords (Diodorus Siculus: V.30). Discoveries of such spearheads in the archaeological record in Britain come from Middle Iron Age votive contexts at Llyn Cerrig Bach, Late Iron Age Fiskerton and the South Cave Weapons Cache (each described in greater detail in Chapter 5). The provision of such spearheads in burials is exclusive to some of the most elite burials of the Late Iron Age period, e.g. those located at Stanway, Essex and Kelvedon, and Brisley Farm in Kent, and a presumed funerary deposit of five spearheads from the Playgolf Colchester excavations, in Lexden. All of these elite burials can be said to have close connections with the Continent (each of these burials has been described in greater detail in Chapter 7). As with finds of armour and ornately decorated sword scabbards and shields, it may be suggested that the inclusion of such weapons in the burial record was an allusion to the Continental connections, and possibly reflective of mercenary service performed by the deceased. It is entirely feasible that these individuals used these weapons in life, although the possibility that they are the result of elite gift-exchange should also be considered.

The mode of close combat described in Diodorus Siculus (XXXIII.16) which featured the use of heavy spears consistent with the long, angular spear form (Type 2.1) has implications for the social status of warriors in the Late Iron Age of Britain. Spears of this form fit into Keeley's (1996) classification of shock weapons, which (as discussed above) offered opportunities for warriors to demonstrate bravery and skill. Further, such weapons would have been significantly more costly to produce than the shorter throwing spearheads, particularly the prevalent bone spearhead forms. The inclusion of Type 2.1 long, angular spearheads in the most prestigious burials further underscores their elite connotations. These spearheads played an important role in the construction of warrior identities for the higher social strata, demonstrative of martial prowess.

Swords were the close-combat weapon par excellence, and within the Iron Age of Britain; they appear to have been the preserve of the social elite. The forms of swords in circulation in Britain (discussed at length in Chapter 7) indicate that longswords were preferred in the south, while medium length swords were more common in the north. Evidence of physical trauma demonstrate that swords were used to inflict fatal injuries, such as the individual excavated at Acklam Wold in 1980, who had suffered

perimortem sword injuries to the skull (Dent, 1983b, Dent, 1995: 50, Redfern, 2011). This sometimes exhibited a level of overkill seen, for example at Maiden Castle. These injuries, examined in Section 8.6 (below), demonstrate that swords were effective weapons.

While the shield is often considered an item of defensive equipment the potential function of shields as offensive weapons must not be overlooked. Brunaux and Rapin (1988: 17 and 21-27) accompanied their substantive Iron Age shield typology with a meaningful exploration of their martial function, interpreting the shield as providing “une défense essentiellement dynamique”. Likewise, Warry (2006: 148) has argued for an offensive dimension for the function of the *umbo* (boss) of the early Roman *scutum* (from which Celtic shield forms evolved). Similarly, the offensive action termed *othismos* in hoplite warfare relied heavily on the shield for its performance (Matthew, 2009b). The Irish epics also suggest an offensive role for the shield, with Cú Chulainn described as arming himself with a shield featuring a rim that could “slice as keenly as with sword or spear” (Carson, 2007: 108). As noted, Iron Age shields were made of perishable materials such as hide/leather or wood – which would have had shock absorbing properties – and some surviving examples featured metal rims of either copper alloy or iron, which could have been sharpened as described in *The Táin*, or used to add weight to the delivery of broad blows.

Another class of weapon, which is well-attested for the British Iron Age, is the sling. Slingers may have been perceived as specialists. It is a difficult weapon to master, and wildly inaccurate without prolonged training and experience (Avery, 1986: 223, Finney, 2006: 30-31, Brown Vega & Craig, 2009). Those who were able to develop this skill could have dealt fatal blows from distances in excess of 150m (Keeley, 1996: 51), and evidence of cranial trauma suggests that the sling was used to deadly effect in Iron Age conflicts (Redfern, 2009). Evidence of physical trauma will be discussed, below. The possibility that slingers were regarded in some way as specialists may be reflected in the rare but notable practice of including sling-stones in the burials of some Durotrigian inhumations, discussed in Chapter 6. Finney (2006) offered a comprehensive assessment of the martial role of sling-shot in the southern hillfort dominated zone during the Middle Iron Age. Excavations at Danebury revealed caches of sling-stones in proximity to site entrances from contexts dated to the Middle Iron Age and Late Iron

Age (Cunliffe, 2003: 171). At Bredon Hill, Hencken (1939: 47) noted a number of sling-stones embedded in the roadway running through the inner entrance. It is thus possible that this represents an expression of martial identity which was particular to the region and further examples may come to be identified in the future. Finds of sling-stones are much rarer in the north; recovered only from the hillfort at Grimthorpe, Yorkshire, where two sling-stones had been placed together in the fill of the ditch close to the southern entrance to the fort (Stead *et al.*, 1968: 165-166).

Avery (1986: 225) has suggested that the caches of stones recovered from the entrance-ways of southern hillforts may not have been intended to be used by slingers but, rather, thrown by hand in rapid succession by a large number of individuals defending the gateway from 'fire parties'. Avery's interpretation does not preclude the use of specialist slingers in either the defence of, or attack on, hillforts and he envisages the sling as having a decisive role in battles over access and control of hillforts. His description of "successive suicide squads" of slingers is perhaps hyperbolic and anachronistic, but it serves to underscore the potentially devastating role slingers could play in martial engagements (Avery, 1986: 225).

In addition to natural stone, sling-shot of baked clay has also been recorded from within the southern hillfort dominated zone at sites including South Cadbury Castle (discussed in Chapter 5), Danebury, Hampshire, West Stow, Suffolk, and Budbury Camp, Wiltshire, although no examples have been found at northern sites (Finney, 2006: 6-7, 91-97). Yet, despite the high level of skill necessary to effectively use the sling, the social standing of slingers may not have been elite. Finney (2006: 30) on close reading of Irish epic poetry interprets the sling:

"...as a liminal weapon and as a metaphor for the condition of the individuals using it. The sling is both a tool and therefore below the contempt of the elite, and also a deadly weapon, the sole preserve of the elite."

Such ambiguities make this a difficult class of weapon to incorporate into constructions of martial identity.

8.5 *Theatres of war*

8.5.1 *War as bodily performance*

Ancient sources such as Polybius (*Histories* 2.29) and Diodorus Siculus (V.29-31), along with ethnographic parallels, suggest that when chieftains and their allies entered into mutually agreed battles, the process of declaring war was formal and often highly ritualised (Keeley, 1996: 60, Blok, 2000: 29-32, James, 2007: 168). Performative aspects could also lend political legitimacy to violent action (DeMarrais, 2014: 156). Battles would have formed an important part of the continuum of conflict in Iron Age warfare, and flamboyant display and aggressive performance may have accompanied the moment of initial confrontation (Diodorus Siculus: V.29-31). It is perhaps in this vein that we should interpret some of the more ostentatious but seemingly impractical items of equipment, which have been recovered from archaeological contexts, and which are consistent with Diodorus Siculus' description. In this arena the line between parade equipment and functional equipment blurs. Irish epic poetry gives a sense of the importance of appearance in martial contexts. In *The Táin* when the Ulstermen assemble before the final engagement the epic goes into minute detail describing the bright costume, fine adornment and dazzling weaponry of each troop of warriors, with a particular emphasis placed upon their leaders:

“‘A great company came to the hill at Slane in Meath’ said Mac Roth [reporting the advance of the Ulstermen to Ailill and Medb], ‘proud and powerful and battle-hungry. I’d put their numbers at about three thousand. Without further ado they stripped down and dug a mound of sods as a throne for their leader. He was a most impressive, regal figure as he led that company, slim tall and handsome, with finely cut blonde hair falling down in waves and curls between his shoulder blades. He wore a pleated shirt of royal purple and a red-embroidered white hooded tunic. A dazzling brooch of red gold was pinned to the breast of his mantle. His grey eyes had a calm gaze. His face was ruddy-cheeked, with a broad brow and a fine jaw. He had a forked beard of golden curls. Slung across his shoulders was a sword with a gold pommel and a bright shield inlaid with animal designs. He held a slender-shafted spear with a blued steel head. His retinue was the finest of any prince on earth, a fearsome and formidable body of men,

magnificently equipped, whose bearing spoke of triumph, rage, implacable resolve and dignity” (Carson, 2007: 185-193).

First impressions count, and Iron Age warriors may have sought to make a fearsome spectacle of themselves. The mechanisms which could have been employed might have included ostentatious equipment, body-paint, bodily gestures or sounds such as war-cries or the use of instruments like drums, pipes, horns and trumpets, as discussed below (Sopeña, 2005). As outlined in Chapter 7, helmets and body armour have only rarely been recovered from Iron Age contexts in Britain. This suggests that body armour may not have formed part of the normative display of warrior status. This is supported by a fragment from the Vindolanda Tablets (Tab. Vindol. II.164) which states that the Britons did not wear armour. Tacitus (*Annals*: 12.35) also describes the British as without helmets or armour (*apud quos nulla loricarum galearumve tegmina*). Consequently, when such items of equipment were on display, they would have been highly visible and made potent statements about the individuals who wore them. Such displays may have been more common on the Continent where we have finds such as the Tintignac hoard, which included a highly ornate copper alloy helmet in the shape of a swan (Armbruster, 2014). The association between the best equipped martial burials and the Continent (discussed in Chapter 7, and above) may suggest that individuals bearing such accoutrements in parade or battle contexts in Britain were broadcasting their Continental connections through their costume.

That individuals from Britain travelled to the Continent during the Late Iron Age with intent to engage in warfare is certain from Caesar's *De Bello Gallico*. In *De Bello Gallico* (IV.20) Caesar states that the motivation for his British campaign was to familiarise himself with the territory and people who had been lending succour to Rome's Gallic enemies: "*quod omnibus fere Gallicis bellis hostibus nostris inde subministrata auxilia intellegebat.*" Livy (XXV.33) refers to Celtiberian mercenaries in the service of Rome, under the leadership of their own chieftain. That the motivation for this particular group of mercenaries was economic is suggested by Livy's report that they accepted a payment from Hasdrubal to retire from the campaign, which Livy says they did without any sense of shame or dishonour. During the Gallic Wars of the third century BC, the Boii and Insubres sent messengers to other Gallic tribes offering payment for mercenaries to come to their aid (Polybius: II.22).

The Táin also suggests that Irish warriors travelled to the Continent to serve as mercenaries, and, while this may reflect practices of a later period, it might be interpreted as part of a longer-term pattern of movement. Finds like the Coolus type helmets from North Bersted and Canterbury (discussed in Chapter 7), datable to the period from the first century BC to the first century AD, have been interpreted as representative of this kind of mercenary service (Farley *et al.*, 2014: 386). The display of exotic equipment acquired in such campaigns would have served to underscore the reputation and prowess of the individuals who wore them. Weapons assemblages from Kelvedon, Owslebury and Stanway also appear to underscore Continental connections, and they too may have been acquired during service abroad.

Another mode of martial display which warrants consideration is the decoration of swords. As discussed in Chapter 7, many of the swords recovered from British burials and votive contexts had highly ornate scabbards, featuring decorative elements in which red was a favoured colour. Giles (2008) highlighted the association between the colour red, the idea of drawing blood and the connotations of using red-colouring to decorate weapons. Such display may well have been designed to warn enemies of the lethality of these weapons. However, if swords were worn on the back in some regions, as Stead (1988) and Anthoons (2011) have argued, these objects would not have been readily observable across a battlefield. By contrast, shields would be easily identifiable from a distance and could be decorated with motifs which boldly communicated prowess. Shields covered with copper alloy or iron laminates would have shone brightly and may literally have had a dazzling effect on the enemy.

Auditory performance could also have been highly effective and the find of a carnyx head in Deskford, Banffshire, Scotland (NMS Q.L.1947.1) indicates that such war trumpets were known in Britain (Piggot, 1959). Another possible, more complete, example was recorded at Tattershall Ferry on the River Witham, Lincolnshire, (Piggot, 1959: 19 and Plate VI). A fragment of a copper alloy trumpet was also recovered from Llyn Cerrig Bach, Anglesey, where it was found in association with numerous weapons and a slave chain, all datable to the Middle Iron Age (Steele, 2012: 58-59). All three examples were incomplete, and come from votive deposits. The rare and extraordinary nature of these finds raises the prospect that they never served any martial role in Britain, and may have been possessed and deposited as non-functioning trophy items.

The function of the Llyn Cerrig Bach trumpet may not have been military, with recent suggestions that its primary function may have been as a musical instrument, rather than a war-trumpet, and its contextual association with weapons may be coincidental (Catling, 2012: 31). The Llyn Cerrig Bach trumpet, dated to the second or first centuries BC, has comparanda from Ireland as well as a possible example from France, and it perhaps falls into a longer tradition of Irish horns or trumpets deposited in bogs and watery locations dating back to the Bronze Age (MacWhite, 1945). While it is possible that the *carynxes* had not been used for auditory performance in British martial contexts, it is highly likely that the auditory and martial functions of these objects were known and understood. Similar trumpets to the Deskford and Tattershall Ferry examples have been found on the Continent with over 70 examples recorded in Spain, from the Titignac Hoard, France, and representations have been noted on coins and on the Gundestrup cauldron (Sopeña, 2005: 371-372, Armbruster, 2014).

Other forms of auditory performance such as war cries, or drumming weapons against shields could have formed part of the display and ambiance of battle. Caesar (*De Bello Gallico*, V.37) makes mention that Ambiorix and his men signalled a sudden attack against Roman soldiers with a war-cry. In the *Agricola* (33) Tacitus describes the reception of the speech of Calgacus to a confederacy of Britons as with “shouts and discordant cries” (*fremitu cantuque et clamoribus dissonis*). While such descriptions are fleeting, and may serve the political purposes of their authors, they need not be wholly apocryphal. Polybius also describes the shocking impact of auditory performance prior to engaging in combat:

‘For there were among them such innumerable horns and trumpets, which were being blown simultaneously in all parts of their army, and their cries were so loud and piercing, that the noise seemed not to come merely from trumpets and human voices, but from the whole country-side at once.’ (Polybius: 2.29)

Diodorus Siculus (V.29) also describes Gallic warriors engaging in loud taunting matches in the moments before engaging in battle, boasting of their own past exploits, and those of their ancestors. Thus the role of auditory performance forms part of the broader construction of martial identities and could serve to communicate status and prowess on the field of battle.

8.5.2 *Contested ground and bloody fields*

Battlefield archaeology has broadened archaeological understanding of human conflict across a range of cultures and timescales. The archaeology of battles is a sub-field still in development and many archaeologists lack the vocabulary and skills to recognise, appropriately record, and interpret the residues and remains of battle (Bleed & Scott, 2011: 48). For the British Iron Age, the ephemeral nature of such remains and the prospect of discerning acts of violence attributable to warfare from aspects of ritual practice are particularly challenging.

Not all violent conflict would have taken place on agreed fields of battle, remote from settlements. Armit (2007) has assessed the extent to which hillforts functioned as defensible sites, but also highlighted that their functions were more complex than simple ‘forts’. Hillforts also functioned as central places and were layered with cultural meanings (Sharples, 1991b, James, 2007: 164). The destruction of sites of cultural importance has long been recognised as one of the most devastating aspects of warfare (Snead, 2008). Evidence of physical destruction at sites like South Cadbury Castle, Somerset, and Maiden Castle, Dorset may represent attempts to destroy cultural monuments as well as settlement sites. Numerous hillforts throughout Britain show signs of conflagration. While non-martial interpretations for such events are possible, attacks on the physical dwelling places of one’s enemy would have struck at the core of their communal or shared identity constructs, which Snead (2008: 139) views as “eliminating not only the present but also the past of a targeted community.” A clear example of such an attack may be signified at Fin Cop, Derbyshire where, following an episode of violent destruction (including possible human sacrifice, discussed in Chapter 6) the site was abandoned and not re-inhabited until the Medieval period (Waddington, 2012). However, the possibility that Fin Cop represents a ritual act closing the site (also suggested in Chapter 6) cannot be dismissed, and Cunliffe (2005: 540-541) has suggested that the evidence of burning at Danebury may be representative of such a closing ritual. Such events may represent continua of closing activities including acts like the deposition of the South Cave Weapons Cache (discussed in Chapter 5), in which martial identity constructs formed part of the ritual expression or performance.

Certain attributes and conditions of hillforts highlight cultural aspects of warfare relating to such sites. The lack of good, secure, water-sources at many hillforts suggests

that forts were either not expected to endure siege conditions, as James (2007: 165) has argued, or that convention would have facilitated access to water even when besieged. Cultural rules may well have applied in such situations. A Continental example can be found in Caesar's encampment around the *oppidum* of Alesia, France. Vercingetorix, the leader of the Gallic forces, sent women, children and livestock down from the defended plateau with the expectation that they would be allowed safe passage through the Roman lines (*De Bello Gallico*: VII.78). The Roman refusal to permit their departure left them languishing in a no-man's land for days without supplies.

This example suggests that, in Gallic culture at least, there was an expectation that certain groups would be vouchsafed in siege situations and that there must have been some level of agreement, tacit or otherwise, between communities on this issue. Whether such a cultural convention ever existed in Britain is unclear. The so-called 'War Cemetery' at Maiden Castle may suggest it did not. While commonly interpreted as a cemetery for indigenous individuals killed by Romans as part of their conquest of Britain, the evidence for Roman perpetrators is not conclusive. The osteological evidence suggests that many of the individuals suffered sword injuries to their crania (Sharples, 1991a, Redfern & Chamberlain, 2011: 70). Roman use of the *gladius* is well-attested but swords certainly played a significant role in indigenous warfare and the blades which dealt the fatal blows at Maiden Castle may not necessarily have been wielded by Roman hands. Further, while the iron point recovered from the thoracic cavity of one individual has been repeatedly interpreted as a Roman 'ballista bolt' (Wheeler, 1943, Sharples, 1991a, Wilkins, 2003, Redfern & Chamberlain, 2011), it may not have been a Roman weapon at all.

The spearhead typology presented in Chapter 4 includes small Type 1.3 triangular-bladed spearheads similar to the example from Maiden Castle (Figure 8.2) recovered from indigenous contexts, including an example from Garton Station, East Yorkshire and the pre-conquest deposits at Uley Gloucestershire (Figure 8.3). However, examples have also been noted from Hod Hill, Dorset and Dragonby, Lincolnshire – sites with clear Roman associations (Figure 8.4). The interpretation of example from Maiden Castle as a Roman 'ballista bolt' rather than a spearhead is predicated entirely upon Wheeler's (1943) interpretation of the cemetery as directly related to the Roman conquest. This object should be reinterpreted as a spearhead of local manufacture.

Consequently, the possibility that the War Cemetery at Maiden Castle is representative of indigenous inter-community violence should be considered. The demographics of the cemetery include women who appear to have suffered perimortem sword injuries. This suggests that, for this event at least, women were not permitted safe-passage out of danger. Of course, another possibility which should be considered is that the cemetery is not the result of *open warfare* but of *raiding*. As discussed, below, raids tended to be far deadlier events than mutually agreed battles, and the demography of victims was also broader, including women. Thus, it could be suggested that the cemetery may more appropriately be termed a '*raid-cemetery*.'

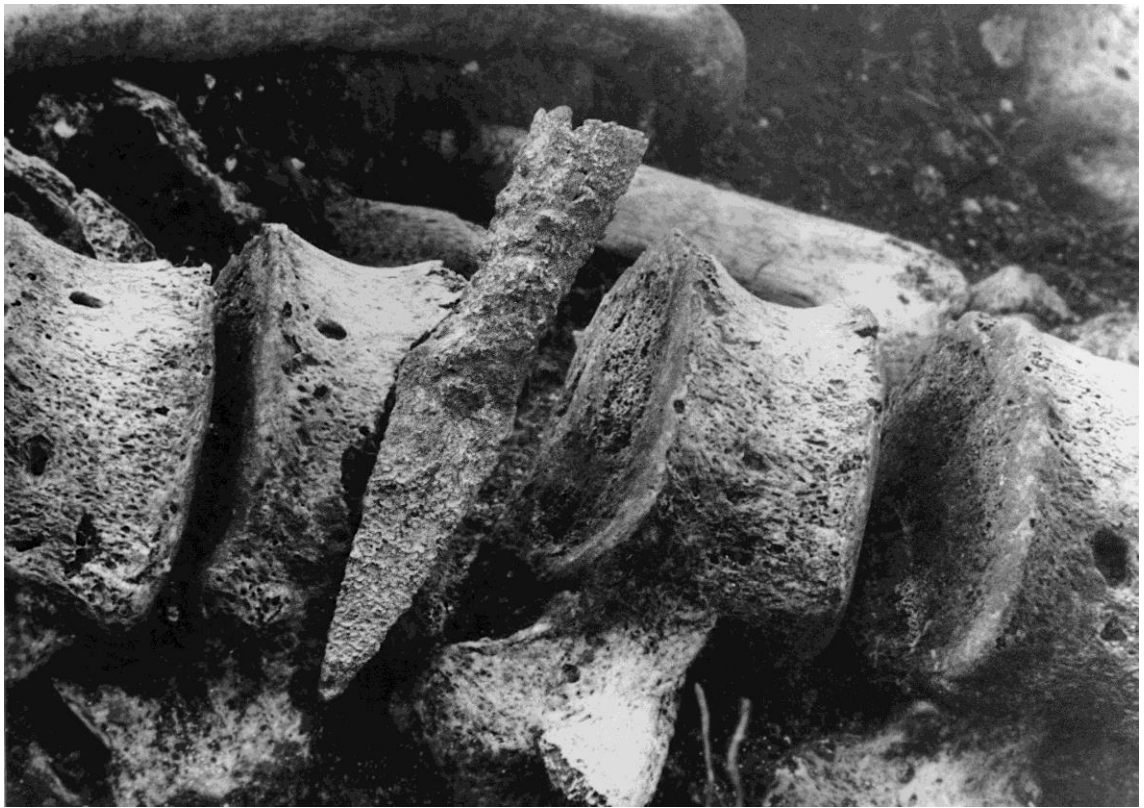


Figure 8.2: Detail of the Roman 'ballista bolt' lodged in the thoracic vertebra (© Dorset County Museums).



Figure 8.3: Type 1.3 spearheads from Garton (left, ID 61) and Uley (right, ID 387).



Figure 8.4: Type 1.3 spearheads from Hod Hill (left, ID 359) and Dragonby (right, ID 153).

8.5.3 *Taken by surprise: raiding, ambushade and massacres*

Not all violent action would have taken the form of sanctioned and mutually agreed warfare. One of the most feared forms of inter-community violence must surely have been the raiding party. The arrival of a group of armed men intent on the capture of booty at an unprepared settlement would have been deeply shocking and devastating. Ethnographic parallels suggest that raiding activities often took place in the dawn hours as the inhabitants of the settlement slept, or were just beginning to wake (Keeley, 1996: 66). The number of individuals killed in raids was far greater than in mutually agreed battles, and the demography of victims was broad, including men, women and children (Keeley, 1996: 74, 86, Larsen, 1999: 122). The objectives of raiding parties have generally been the acquisition of resources including livestock, slaves, and women of child-bearing age: sometimes reflected in an under-representation of young adult female remains (Larsen, 1999: 124-125). Cunliffe (2005: 542) has argued that there may have been an increase in raiding activities during the late pre-Roman period in Britain to supply the Roman slave trade. The risk of reprisals could be lessened through the destruction of consumables (Keeley, 1996: 178). The motivations for undertaking raiding actions may not always have been the acquisition of resources, however. Amongst the Suri of Southern Ethiopia, raids are sometimes enacted as a theatre in which the participants can demonstrate prowess and personal fortitude, particularly for young members of the raiding party, undergoing rites of passage (Abbink, 2000: 88).

Whilst raiding has often been distinguished as something separate from warfare, the separation is somewhat arbitrary. As discussed, above, raiding clearly formed part of the continuum of conflict and could form part of longer campaigns of intercommunal violence and warfare. Cunliffe (2005: 541) sees raiding as a core component of British Iron Age warfare. The members of the raiding parties would have likely prepared themselves in similar, perhaps even identical, fashion as they did before a battle which had been mutually agreed with their adversaries. Raiders would likely have seen their actions as those of the warrior and may not have perceived any sense of dishonour in their conduct; as supported by ethnographic parallels such as the Kuria cattle raiders in Kenya (Heald, 2000).

Ambush could give advantage to an outnumbered group of fighters, or offer an opportunity to overwhelm a small, unsupported contingent. Caesar describes the effectiveness of such tactics against his men during his British campaign:

'For as all the corn was reaped in every part with the exception of one, the enemy, suspecting that our men would repair to that, had concealed themselves in the woods during the night. Then attacking them suddenly, scattered as they were, and when they had laid aside their arms, and were engaged in reaping, they killed a small number, threw the rest into confusion, and surrounded them with their cavalry and chariots.' (Caesar: *De Bello Gallico*: IV.32)

Massacres likewise claim a broader number and range of victims than open warfare and could have the longer-term devastating effect of reducing the survivors to disbanding their community (Keeley, 1996, James, 2007). Certainly the deposits of human remains and weapons recovered from sites like South Cadbury Castle, Somerset and Spettisbury, Dorset (discussed in Chapter 6) have been interpreted as the result of massacres, often associated with the Roman conquest of Britain (Gresham, 1939, Alcock, 1972). There can be little doubt that the conquest, described in Suetonius (Ves.4.1) involved the decimation of many settlements and finds like South Cadbury may actually represent such activities, followed by periods of ritual enshrinement (Fogelin & Schiffer, 2015). However, even with such supporting documentary sources, it is difficult to conclusively connect the archaeological evidence with specific historical events (Barrett *et al.*, 2000: 106).

8.6 A bloody business: evidence of physical trauma

The discussion presented in this chapter thus far has offered a range of examples from archaeological evidence of burials, votive deposits and settlements, supplemented with accounts from ancient sources and modern, ethnographic parallels. These sources suggest that violent conflict may also have formed part of the culture and life experience of Iron Age communities in Britain and Continental Europe. However, to ascertain the impact of warfare on an individual level requires an exploration of injuries and violent death. This necessitates an examination of human remains showing evidence of physical trauma associated with acts of violence. Over the past two decades there has been a growing literature focussed on the osteological evidence of trauma, primarily focussed

on individual sites (Redfern, 2008, 2009, 2011, Tracey, 2012, Waddington, 2012, Armit *et al.*, 2013). Knüsel (2005) has offered an excellent synthesis of research to date, demonstrating that, while much remains to be done, there is good evidence for frequent interpersonal conflict and warfare for the prehistoric period, including the British Iron Age. While a comprehensive analysis of all evidence of such trauma lies beyond the scope of this thesis, the following section offers a brief overview of the kinds of evidence coming to light through recent studies, which is indicative of warfare in the British Iron Age.

8.6.1 Kinds of physical trauma associated with weapons and warfare

Traumatic injuries associated with weapons can be broadly categorised into two classes: blunt-force and sharp-force trauma. Blunt-force trauma, as the name suggests, results from hard contact with blunt objects, wielded with force. Sharp-force trauma results when injuries are inflicted with sharp-edged objects and bladed weapons. A third category of traumatic injury can be considered in the form of penetrating injury. Penetrating wounds are generally sharp-force in nature but show evidence that blows were delivered by objects travelling at velocity. Injuries from each of these kinds of trauma can include internal bleeding (*haematoma*) and an array of fractures including compression, tension, rotation, sheer and bending fractures (King, 2010: 53). In interpersonal violence defensive ‘parry’ fractures to the forearm are also common (Larsen, 1999: 110-112).

When an individual suffers a traumatic soft tissue injury as a result of interpersonal violence there is a low likelihood that the wound will be archaeologically detectable (Knüsel, 2005: 51). With the exception of bog-bodies, Iron Age remains are skeletonised, or cremated. Unless the injury has directly impacted on the skeleton all evidence of injury may be lost (Redfern, 2011: 131). When engaged in combat, blows may be directed at the head or the body. Soft-tissue injuries can certainly be fatal, and a stabbing wound which punctures the femoral artery would see an individual die of blood-loss within minutes. Individuals who suffer minor injuries and later succumb to infection also may not necessarily be identifiable in the archaeological record.

8.6.2 *Blunt-force trauma*

Blunt-force trauma could be caused through the use of sling-shot or other rocks, clubs or sticks (including spear-shafts), shields, and sword-hilts. When the skull in particular is struck with a blunt object, even a minor blow can cause serious injury or death. Perimortem compression fractures to the cranium have been observed at Maiden Castle, and Redfern (2009) has suggested that such injuries are indicative of the use of the sling. This evidence suggests that the sling was used to deadly effect. Her findings lend weight to the evidence from excavations at Maiden Castle hillfort, and its surrounding cemeteries, that the sling was used in interpersonal violence and likely as a weapon of war (Finney, 2006). Two individuals from Suddern Farm, Hampshire had healed depressed cranial fractures which may also have been the result of sling-shot (King, 2010: 127). Sling-shot to the head would have been particularly lethal, although, as outlined above, the sling was a difficult weapon to master. Most blows were likely to the body, perhaps deflected by a shield, and the examples recorded by Redfern and King must present an incalculably small proportion of all individuals injured by sling-shot in Iron Age warfare.

The use of other blunt weapons is not well-recorded. Staves and sharpened, fire-hardened sticks may well have been employed in defence or attack, although such weapons are unlikely to survive in the archaeological record (Thorpe, 2003: 150). A reference to weapons of this kind is offered in *The Táin*, when Nadcranntail seeks out Cú Chulainn armed with nine spears fashioned from holly, which had been sharpened and hardened by fire (Kinsella, 1970: 122-124). One of the most common weapons failures on the battlefield would have been breakage of spear-shafts, particularly for thrusting spears. The compressive force behind a spear-thrust when striking a shield, or an individual, could have broken many spears, as Anderson (2011) recorded during experimental archaeology testing the function of replica Bronze Age British spearheads. Once the shaft was broken, and if a fighter possessed no other offensive weapon, it is reasonable to assume that the broken shaft may have been used in self-defence, or to finish off an attacking move. Blows of this nature may be archaeologically detectable, but difficult to differentiate from other forms of blunt-force trauma.

8.6.3 *Sharp-force trauma*

Bladed weapons leave distinctive marks on bone, although a skilled warrior may have targeted the soft abdominal region with thrusting blows in an attempt to avoid bone, which can blunt or capture blade edges. Lewis' (2008: 2006) experiments with a range of sword forms demonstrated that it was possible not only to identify slashing blows, but to determine with some measure of confidence the class of sword which was used. Investigations around sharp-force trauma have tended to focus on sword injuries, and slashing blows in particular. In the case of stabbing injuries there has been limited exploration of the nature of the weapon used. Knife injuries can be clearly determined, usually due to the narrowness of their blades, and different kerf patterns compared to swords and other heavier weapons (Lewis, 2008: 2004). However, thrusting spears and swords present similar blade sections and edges to each other. Further, stabbing blows delivered by either of these weapon classes would have had similar force behind them. Diodorus Siculus (V.30) also describes the use of long spears as slashing weapons in a manner similar to swords. Anderson (2011) has demonstrated through experimental archaeology that copper alloy spearheads were effective weapons for the delivery of slashing blows, which created similar injury patterns to copper alloy swords. Future experimental research may reveal similar results for iron spearheads. Thus the differentiation between slashing and particularly stabbing injuries inflicted by a sword or thrusting spear seems unclear and may not be easily identifiable in the archaeological record.

Examples of sharp-force trauma, likely the result of weapons injuries, have been recorded from Iron Age sites in Britain. Perhaps the most notable examples come from Maiden Castle. A reassessment of the skeletal remains conducted by Redfern (2011) revealed that a much higher proportion of individuals showed indicators of trauma than previously recognised. Indeed, 74.2 percent, or 46 out of 62 individuals examined, had either sharp or blunt-force trauma injuries. The proportion of males with evidence of trauma was significantly higher than the number of females. Both male and female skeletons had injuries consistent with weaponry, but only males showed evidence of ante-mortem sharp-force trauma with signs of healing (Redfern, 2011: 121-123). Several males from the so-called 'War Cemetery' had evidence of penetrating injuries to their thoracic or lumbar vertebrae, which Redfern interpreted as evidence of stabbing injuries, possibly caused by spears, based on modern spear injuries reported in an

African medical journal (Redfern, 2011: 123). One individual had a deep stab wound, which had penetrated the left ilium and another showed damage to the ribs also consistent with stabbing injuries (Redfern, 2011: 124-126). Redfern (2011) does not attempt to identify whether these stab wounds had been inflicted by sword or spear. Another individual also showed evidence of multiple fractures and a cut-mark to the mandible. One male, designated P12, had no fewer than five perimortem cranial injuries caused by a bladed weapon or weapons on the front, back and both sides of the skull (Sharples, 1991a: 122-123, Redfern, 2011: 130).

Redfern (2011) observes that the data from Maiden Castle, is unusual and other sites in the region have not yielded sharp-force injuries, or indeed other signs of trauma associated with violence, on such a high scale. However, evidence from other sites does indicate that violence with bladed weapons was not unknown. As discussed in Chapter 6, there is evidence for a significant level of violence at South Cadbury Castle, Somerset, including decapitation (Tucker, 2013). At Broxmouth, Armit *et al.* (2013: 84) observed two skull fragments which showed evidence of sharp-force trauma which they suggested could possibly have been sword cuts. At Suddern Farm, Hampshire King (2010: 136-140) noted two individuals with sharp-force trauma. One of these individuals was a male (P28), aged 18-25 years, who had suffered a stabbing injury to the abdomen, which had penetrated the left ilium, which she suggested had been inflicted by either a sword or a spear. The injury was thought by King (2010: 137) to have been a mortal wound. However, this was not the only wound inflicted on this individual, with evidence of another sharp-force injury above the left orbital bone. Tooth marks on other parts of the skeleton indicate that this individual was exposed for some period before burial. The second individual from Suddern Farm (P113) also suffered a perimortem sharp-force injury above the left orbit (King, 2010: 140). The location of these injuries, on the left side of the body, are suggestive of right-handed assailants (Mays, 1998: 178), adding some support to the suggestion that placement of swords by the right side of the body in Iron Age burial practices (discussed in Chapter 7), may be associated with right-handed use of swords in Iron Age warfare.

Sharp-force injuries to the crania were also observed at Wetwang Slack, East Yorkshire, with three individuals showing evidence for healed cranial injuries and a fourth, a male aged 18-25, with perimortem sharp-force injuries to the right occipital and one of his

left ribs, possibly caused by a sword or dagger (King, 2010: 120-122). Two of the healed injuries (one on a male aged 36-45 the other a female aged 18-25) were also to the right orbit and were identified by King (2010: 121) as slashing injuries caused by a “thin bladed instrument”, the thinness of the blade possibly suggestive that these were weapons other than swords. The individual buried in Wetwang Cart Burial 1 had also suffered a sharp-force injury to the skull, accompanied by a blunt-force depression indicative of a heavy, bladed weapon, which had healed. King suggests the blow may have been caused by an axe (King, 2010: 122). A fifth individual, a male aged 36-45, had a partially healed sharp-force injury to the right mandible.

An inhumation burial from Acklam Wold was that of a male, approximately 30 years of age, whose skull exhibited clear signs of multiple sharp-force injuries, thought to have been caused by a sword (Dent, 1983b). The grave goods included an iron sword, mentioned in Chapter 7, one of the few Iron Age weapons which had been subjected to deliberate damage.

Throwing spears would have hit their targets at high-speed and with the added force of gravity. Blows of this nature would have caused serious trauma to any body part struck. Penetrating injuries caused by projectiles are consistent with other sharp-force injuries, but may also create perforations or depressions to bone, especially crania, resulting from their higher velocity impact compared to slashing or thrusting blows (Knüsel, 2005: 55).

Direct evidence of throwing spear wounds in the Iron Age is rare. Bronze Age examples are known, such as the Middle Bronze Age finds from West Middleton Down, Tormarton, Gloucestershire, in which two individuals had bronze spear-tips lodged in the back and pelvis (Osgood, 2005). Although in this example both injuries are thought to be blows delivered to these men when they were already incapacitated, and possibly immediately post-mortem (Mercer, 2006: 135-136). Analysis of the skeletal material from Rudston/Burton Fleming indicates that a small number of individuals suffered sharp-force trauma, which impacted on bone. Two individuals may have been killed by spear injuries. The adult males in R94 and R152 suffered perimortem spear injuries from behind (Stead, 1991c: 137). Both burials have been identified as ‘speared corpse’ burials. The perimortem nature of these posterior injuries means that it was not possible to ascertain whether these individuals had died before or after they were struck with the spear blows. Nonetheless, it is certain that these injuries from behind must have been

dealt prior to deposition in the grave. The spearhead found lodged in the pelvic bone of the individual from Rudston grave R140 (Figure 8.5) may also be evidence of the ‘speared corpse’ rite. However, Stead (1991c: 136) has argued that the angle of entry suggests that this blow had also been delivered before the deceased was placed in the grave. Stead (1991c) takes into account the likely post-depositional shifting of the pelvic bone, noting that the downward angle of the spearhead would have been much greater than it appeared at the time of excavation.



Figure 8.5: Type 1.1 diamond-bladed iron spearhead lodged in human pelvis. From Rudston burial R140. British Museum accession number: 1976,0504.3.

Sharp-force projectile injuries were also noted at Maiden Castle, where four males and one female showed signs of perimortem sharp projectile cranial injuries (Redfern, 2011: 122). At Wetwang Slack, the male (aged over 45) recovered from burial 152 showed evidence of a healed projectile wound to the right frontal cranium, which King (2010: 124-125) suggested could have been caused by an arrow or spear “striking the cranium at an oblique angle.”

8.6.4 *An unnumbered host*

While there are examples of sharp and blunt-force trauma recorded for the British Iron Age, there is a real likelihood that the actual prevalence of violence is underrepresented in the archaeological record. As outlined in Chapter 6, formal burial practices were uncommon for much of the British Iron Age, and, the funerary treatments for many individuals are archaeologically invisible. The possibility that human remains were subjected to excarnation, and that those who died in conflict may have been predominately treated in this way, as appears to have been the case in Celtiberia, must be considered (Sopeña, 2005: 379-380, James, 2007: 162). Further, without knowledge of the range of punishments meted out for social or criminal transgressions, we cannot overlook the possibility that some individuals were denied access to normative funerary treatments, creating another form of violence which is archaeologically undetectable (Blok, 2000: 28).

Ethnographic parallels of arrow injuries suggest that projectiles left marks on bone in only one third of cases (Milner, 2005). A far greater number of injuries were to the soft tissues: the highest percentage of injuries were to the thorax or abdomen (Milner, 2005: 146). Penetrating wounds to the abdomen, for example, would stand a reasonable prospect of being fatal, and Milner's research suggests that between 1.8 percent and 2.2 percent of abdominal injuries impacted on bone (Milner, 2005: 147).

The presence of shields in as many as 27 Iron Age burials, and additional examples from votive contexts, demonstrates that the shield formed part of the equipment of many Iron Age warriors in Britain. Hunter's (2005) well-reasoned assertion that the shield is under-represented in the archaeological record raises the prospect that the shield may have been considered part of the standard matériel. The shape and size of shields (outlined in Chapter 7) would have served to protect an individual from blows to the torso, whether delivered by projectile or shock weapons. The use of such equipment may have limited the distribution of injuries within British Iron Age warfare. Milner's (2005: 146) comparative analysis of Native American and Papua New Guinean warfare, suggests that the use of large shields in Papua New Guinea was a contributory factor in the distribution of projectile injuries. However, his data indicate that, despite the use of shields, 36.4 percent of projectile injuries were to the torso and 9.1 percent impacted the abdominal area, many of these injuries failing to impact on bone (Milner, 2005: *ibid.*).

These factors combine to limit the prospect that any individual act of violence will be observable archaeologically.

8.7 Conclusions

This chapter has explored archaeological evidence for warfare and violence in the British Iron Age, supplemented by a range of ancient sources and modern ethnographic parallels. It is clear that interpersonal violence occurred in Iron Age Britain, and it is likely that some of this violence should be attributed to acts of war. The landscape and settlement evidence signify that some communities delineated between insider and outsider status, and that some communities showed clear indicators for social stratification including the emergence of local elites during the Middle and Late Iron Age. Environmental factors, which were impacting on the availability of resources, and some cultural aspects, suggest there may have been variable levels of fear and mistrust leading to increased competition and possibly acts of aggression to secure control of territory. Young males in particular may have constructed martial identities within their communities, which were communicated through the martial burial practices outlined in Chapter 7. Some aspects of votive deposition, discussed in Chapter 5, also appear to communicate martial associations suggestive of aggressive display and elite warrior status in ritual practice.

The use of throwing spearheads, consistent with Types 1.1-1.8, appears to have been a core component of martial practice in most regions of Britain and this is supported by the archaeological evidence, as well as descriptions of British warriors in the ancient sources. Type 2.1 to 2.6 thrusting spearheads, recovered in the archaeological record appear to be indicative of elite warriors who may have played a leading, possibly even heroic role on the field of battle. This is represented most explicitly through Type 2.1 long, angular spearheads, which appear in some of the most ostentatious burials and significant votive deposits.

Evidence of physical trauma demonstrates that a range of weapons were used to deadly effect in acts of interpersonal violence. Wounds, both healed and perimortem, were inflicted on a number of individuals, and some of these are visible in the archaeological record. The nature of injuries demonstrates that the sling was used to deadly effect in the hillfort dominated zone, and that across Britain, bladed weapons were used in the delivery of slashing and penetrating injuries, which were sometimes fatal. It is difficult

to distinguish sword and spear injuries in many cases, as experimental archaeology has shown that both weapons can leave similar evidence of physical trauma. Finds of spearheads and swords in the archaeological record demonstrate that both classes of weapon were important in the construction of martial identities. The spear, as the most widely distributed class of weapon, likely formed a base component in the construction of these identities, with particular classes of spearhead, and swords being seen as the sole purview of social elites.

9 Conclusions

The research conducted in this thesis presents a significant advance in our understanding of the role of the spear in Iron Age communities in Britain. The typological approach has provided a useful tool for the exploration of deeper questions around the range of functions spearheads performed during the British Iron Age including martial, social and cosmological roles, and fulfils the aims and objectives outlined in Chapter 1.

The main findings of the thesis are presented in this chapter.

9.1 The typology

In approaching the task of creating a new spearhead typology for Britain it was necessary to consider the underlying theory of type construction. If the typology was to prove useful, in accordance with the objectives of the thesis, it was necessary to consider the purposes which the typology could reasonably be called upon to serve. Chapter 2 presented an analysis of typological theory and demonstrated that a morphological taxonomic approach offered the greatest scope for the exploration of martial function, geographic and chronological distribution. Few typological studies offer such reflective explorations of the theory and mechanics of type construction.

Chapter 2 also offered a detailed critique of existing spearhead typologies for Britain and the near Continent, which have been applied to Iron Age material. These analyses revealed that purely metric typologies, like those created by Manning (1985) and Anderson (2012), were poor tools for the exploration of questions about function and distribution. Thus it was determined that the new typology should not be a metrically-based statistical typology. The morphological typologies produced by Swanton (1974), Brunaux and Rapin (1988) and Stead (1991a) offered greater utility but had certain shortcomings. The type definitions for these typologies, were often loose, and did not facilitate easy allocation of spearheads to the sub-types which were observed by their creators. These analyses highlighted the need for type-definitions to be tightly defined, and supported with illustrations of key examples of 'type ideals' to fulfil the stated objective of providing a 'user-friendly' tool for the study of Iron Age spearheads.

Once data collection got underway it became clear that the existing spearhead typologies did not account for the variety of forms which appeared in the Iron Age

material. The case was made for the creation of a new typology which would draw on a much larger dataset than any previous study. It was necessary that the typology not only take account of this variety, but that it would be an open type system, which could facilitate the addition of new types, should they come to be identified in future research. To ensure that the dataset would be large enough to develop an adequate typology, the decision was taken to focus on larger, easily accessible collections. Thus, there are some limitations to the data due to the selective nature of the collection process, which need to be borne in mind. It is possible that some of the geographical and chronological findings presented in this research will come under revision should new or previously unknown finds expand the corpus of material here presented.

The only typology, which included adequately tight type-definitions, and a range of forms consistent with the forms observed in the British Iron Age material, was Schatte's (2013) typology of bone points. Consequently, a decision was taken to employ Schatte's typology to the bone points which formed a part of this research. The analysis of bone points from Fiskerton and South Cadbury Castle, presented in Chapters 4 and 5, demonstrated that Schatte's (2013) preliminary findings, that his Type II bone points were the predominant form in the British Iron Age, were borne out.

As one of the core objectives of the thesis, Chapter 4 presented a new typology of spearheads for the British Iron Age, formulated from a data collection process which comprised of over 440 spearheads from more than 40 sites across Britain. This is the most ambitious record and study of spearheads that has ever been undertaken for the British Iron Age. The typology is a hierarchical morphological taxonomy which divides material into three functional groupings, based on overall profile. Small-bladed spearheads, which were clearly constructed to serve throwing functions were designated Function Group 1. Within this functional grouping eight spearhead types were identified:

- 1.1 Diamond-bladed
- 1.2 Small, leaf-bladed
- 1.3 Small, triangular-bladed
- 1.4 Narrow-necked, leaf-shaped
- 1.5 Triangle-bladed
- 1.6 'Celtic *pilum*'

1.7 Hybrid of diamond and *pilum* forms

1.8 Bone points

The analysis demonstrated that throwing spearhead forms were the most widely distributed forms, throughout the Iron Age of Britain. Members of throwing spearhead forms appeared in structured deposits, in both wet and dry-land contexts. The most common throwing spearhead form was Type 1.1 diamond-bladed spearheads represented by 88 examples from 19 sites in the database, ranging from Spettisbury, Dorset to Traprain Law, East Lothian. Similar Type 1.2 small, leaf-bladed spearheads were recovered from many of the same sites, represented by 50 examples. These would appear to be the definitive indigenous spearhead forms.

Type 1.8 bone points were noted from 10 sites in the database, and have been recorded from over 40 Iron Age sites across Britain. These points, which have been variously interpreted, clearly served as spearheads at Fiskerton, where they were ritually deposited with a number of iron spearheads in a location which was a focal point for the deposition of weapons and other martial objects from the Neolithic through to the Romano-British period. The possibility that bone points functioned as spearheads at other sites must be considered. These were predominately manufactured from sheep tibiae, a readily accessible and affordable material, for the construction of weapons and may have been widely used by non-elite warriors.

The second functional grouping observed in the construction of the typology was an assemblage of heavier spearheads, with long blades, which appear to have been constructed for the delivery of thrusting or slashing blows. Midribs were common among spearheads in this group, designed to withstand the force of impact associated with such functions. Function Group 2 can be divided into six distinct types:

2.1 Long Angular

2.2 A form possibly related to Long Angular or Bayonet

2.3 Bayonet

2.4 Spike-pointed

2.5 Narrow-bladed

2.6 Broad convex

Members of these types were fewest in number. However, they were represented in some of the most elite burials datable to the British Iron Age, as well as some of the wealthiest votive deposits. Two of the types: Type 2.3 bayonet, and Type 2.6 broad, convex correlate directly with Continental types observed by Brunaux and Rapin (1988). Each of these types was represented by a sole example. The Type 2.3 bayonet example forms an outlier in Brunaux and Rapin's (1988) typology and was found in a deposit dated to a much later period than the examples in Brunaux and Rapin's sample. It is possible that this example, from the South Cave Weapons Cache, forms an insular variation of this Continental form.

The long, angular Type 2.1 spearheads, represented at eight sites in the database correlate with Swanton's Type E3, demonstrating that his postulated sixth century AD development for this form is erroneous. The research highlights the need for the identification of many similar spearheads as Anglo Saxon to be reviewed.

Some spearheads appeared to be designed to be functionally versatile, facilitating the delivery of thrusting blows, while maintaining the capacity to be easily thrown. There was significant overlap with the throwing and thrusting groups in the dimensions of versatile spearheads. A metric approach to typology construction would not have readily revealed this functional grouping. Function Group 3, versatile spearhead forms, can be divided into five types:

- 3.1 Convex
- 3.2 Broad-based leaf-shaped
- 3.3 Tapered
- 3.4 Classic
- 3.5 Curved bladed

The classic form, Type 3.4, was the most widely distributed versatile form, recovered from sites as far south as Spettisbury, Dorset and as far north as Camelon, Falkirk. The type was revealed to be a widely distributed, pan-European form, observed in burials and votive deposits both in Britain and on the Continent. Other versatile spearhead forms appeared to have a limited geographic and chronological distribution. However, finds of Type 3.1 convex spearheads from Kells Crannog in Ireland, suggest that this limited distribution may be an artefact of the data collection process and raises the prospect that a much broader distribution will be revealed through future research.

The typology was supplemented with a comparative table highlighting correlations between the newly created types and existing typological offerings (Appendix 10.1). This offers a new resource for the field archaeologist; as such comparative work has not been conducted for any of the existing spearhead typologies. The typology was also accompanied by guidelines for practical application encouraging the user to apply the typology in a drill-down approach, allocating spearheads first to one of the three functional groupings. Attempts should not be made to assign spearheads to the more refined sub-types when confidence is lacking. The application of the typology should not be forced, and it is designed to accommodate new forms through the addition of new types to each of the three functional groupings.

The typology is shown to have utility and makes a positive contribution to the current state of research into spearheads of Iron Age date. The typology can serve as an effective tool to facilitate contextual research; which was conducted in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8.

9.2 *Ritual deposition*

It is recognised that spearheads enter the archaeological record in several ways. Rarely are finds of spearheads the result of chance loss. More often, decisions were taken to remove spearheads from circulation and place them in specific contexts, where they remained to be found by archaeologists. One of the modes in which spearheads appear to have most frequently entered the archaeological record is through structured deposition. One of the stated objectives of this thesis was to reach a greater understanding of ritual activity through an examination of deposits of this nature. When interpreting structured deposits, the application of rigid dichotomies such as ‘ritual’ or ‘utilitarian’ and ‘permanent’ and ‘impermanent’ are often unhelpful and a more open approach, allowing for multiple motivations and meanings should be considered.

Chapter 5 presented an overview of a number of wet and dry-land contexts in which spearheads had been deposited during the Iron Age in Britain. There were some motifs which appeared to be repeated across a number of ritual deposits, which may be revealing of some of the performative acts associated with deposition. These included the wrapping of martial objects (and other deposited artefacts) in straw or other organic material, a possible association with extreme heat or fire represented by the presence of stones which had been subjected to burning, or charcoal residues. Frequently, structured

deposits appear to have been sealed by a layer of stones, or, in the case of the South Cave Weapons Cache, carefully chosen pottery sherds. These practices are ephemeral, and the identification of their association with the act of structured deposition is speculative at this stage. However, Chapter 5 highlights the need for residues and stratigraphic associations of this nature to be noted during excavation, due to their potential to reveal the performative acts, which formed part of the deposition process.

Throwing spearhead forms dominated the assemblages of all structured depositions with the notable exception of Llyn Cerrig Bach, where thrusting and versatile forms were the only spearhead types represented. The typological approach underscores the importance which was placed on throwing spearhead forms in the expression of most ritual practices associated with structured deposition. The absence of throwing forms at Llyn Cerrig Bach, which included some of the largest examples of thrusting and versatile spearhead forms, highlights the significance of the site. The decision to include explicitly, large thrusting and versatile spearheads of Function Groups 2 and 3 is likely associated with martial prowess and social elites. Conversely, the absence of spearheads from sites which were foci for depositional practices, such as Flag Fen, Peterborough, demonstrate there were clear regional differences in the classes of object considered appropriate for inclusion in votive deposits.

Deposits which included spearheads were frequently placed in liminal locations such as rivers, fenland and settlement boundaries. Deposits close to the entranceways of settlements may have been intended to make the settlements safe for inhabitants of the site. Conversely, the placement of spearheads and other martial objects in structured deposits could also serve as a closing deposit, ending the use-life of a site. Such deposits can be interpreted as forming parts of rites of separation in accordance with van Genneep (1960).

9.3 Mortuary and burial practices

Spearheads were a recurrent feature in a number of mortuary and burial practices during the British Iron Age. Chapter 6 offered a review of the current state of research on Iron Age mortuary practices with a particular focus on those which featured an association with weapons or violence, in accordance with the objective of gaining a greater understanding of Iron Age ritual activity. It is clear that mortuary practices were not always of a funerary nature. Human sacrifice appears to have had a place in the

cosmology of some Iron Age communities, represented in the practice of pit burials and bog bodies. Violence formed a part of the rites associated with these practices, and for bog bodies in particular, overkill appears to have been a requisite part of the proceedings. The presence of wooden stakes in these contexts may represent spears, or spear-like weapons, which may have been used against them.

Structured deposits which included fragmentary human remains may have formed a secondary burial practice for some members of the community. Conversely, these remains could be representative of trophy taking practices, supported by indicators of sharp-force trauma consistent with injuries caused by bladed weapons including swords and possibly spears. Larger deposits of incomplete or disarticulated human remains at sites like South Cadbury Castle, Somerset or Spettisbury, Dorset may represent processes of enshrinement following significant loss of life in traumatic events, possibly associated with Iron Age warfare.

9.4 Martial burials

During the British Iron Age the decision to bury an individual at all was uncommon. For those individuals, for whom burial was considered appropriate, approximately half were not accompanied by grave goods. A very small sub-set of funerary practice included formal burial with martial objects. Previous studies of martial, or ‘warrior’, burials have suggested that there were perhaps fewer than 30 martial burials for the entirety of the British Iron Age. More recent studies by Hunter (2005) and Giles (in preparation) suggest the number is much greater. The review of Iron Age burial practices conducted as part of this study, corresponding with the objective outlined in Chapter 1, has shown that there are eighty burials of martial character, which can be definitively dated to the Iron Age and, that, in total, perhaps more than 100 martial burials exist for Iron Age Britain.

The most frequently represented class of martial object in these burials is the spearhead. Spearheads have been recorded as the sole martial object in at least 18 burials, and associated with other martial objects in at least 26 other burials, most of which can be confidently dated to the Iron Age. The spearhead types represented in burials have important implications for the construction of martial identities in Iron Age funerary practices. In the Arras Culture burials of East Yorkshire, the prevalence of throwing spearheads, particularly in the ‘speared corpse’ burials underscore the importance of

throwing spears in the performance of the ‘speared corpse’ rite and the construction of martial identities in funerary contexts in the region.

The wealthiest martial burials of the Late Iron Age, such as the two burials at Brisley Farm and the Kelvedon Warrior burial in Kent, demonstrate that concepts of martial prowess, associated with close-quarter fighting were important in the construction of funerary identities. The presence of martial objects demonstrative of Continental connections also played a significant role in many of these burials.

The more holistic analysis of martial burials presented in this thesis revealed a broader range of, sometimes subtle, practices, the extent of which had previously gone unnoticed. The sheer diversity of martial burials was revealed to encompass the inclusion of sling-shot in burials, a practice which appears to be exclusive to the southern hillfort dominated zone. The practice of a range of so-called rites of reversal also appears to have been enacted with greater frequency than has previously been recognised. The placement of martial objects in inverted or face-down positions, sometimes associated with prone burial, is observed from Owslebury, Hampshire in the south to the Arras Culture burials of East Yorkshire. The reasons underlying the performance of such rites remain elusive, but future research may lend insight to these practices.

9.5 Martial burial versus structured/ritual deposition

The appropriateness of different classes of object to be included in burial assemblages was often in opposition to those object classes appropriate for votive deposition. From the Neolithic into the Bronze Age the distinction between grave goods and votive deposits was stronger in Britain than in Continental Europe (Bradley, 1998: 74, 78). This thesis has considered the make-up and positioning of objects in mortuary and burial assemblages alongside contemporary depositional assemblages for the British Iron Age.

Bradley (1998: 138) has suggested that some votive depositions may have served as proxy funerary deposits. Chapter 6 highlighted that, for much of the Iron Age, funerary practices in Britain were archaeologically invisible. Funerary rites such as excarnation or the scattering of cremated remains may have been complimented by depositional practices, in which objects associated with, or honouring the deceased, were removed from circulation and placed in wet places or other liminal places in the landscape.

During the Late Iron Age Type 2.1 long, angular spearheads appear in both structured deposits and burials, although in different parts of Britain. During the Middle Iron Age they appear in the wetland deposit at Llyn Cerrig Bach. Two spearheads of this form appear amongst the Late Iron Age deposit of spearheads at Fiskerton, which also included a large number of iron and bone throwing spearhead forms. We have no martial burials from Angelsey dateable to the Middle Iron Age. All of the Middle Iron Age burials which included spearheads were associated with the Arras Culture, and these include the 'speared corpse' burials.

Type 2.1 long, angular spearheads are also represented in the Late Iron Age martial burials at Brisley Farm and Kelvedon, Kent and Stanway, Essex. An additional example was also included amongst the five iron spearheads from Playgolf, Colchester, thought to be associated with a cremation burial. Spearheads of this type were also represented in the dry-land South Cave Weapons Cache, East Yorkshire, and Four Crosses, Powys, which were broadly contemporary with these later burials.

At Playgolf, and in the South Cave Weapons Cache, the multiple spearheads appear to have been bound together prior to deposition (Evans, 2003: 10, Shimmin, 2014: 7-9). If the Playgolf deposit is indeed of a funerary nature (as argued in Chapter 7), we have a similar practice being observed in votive and funerary rituals, both dated to the first century AD, in geographically distinct regions. At the time the South Cave Weapons Cache was deposited in East Yorkshire the Arras Culture barrow burials were no longer being constructed, and funerary rites had once again become largely archaeologically undetectable. It is unlikely that the Cache had a funerary context and it is more plausible that it formed a deposit which ritually closed the associated settlement. This is consistent with a broader practice of grouping iron objects and depositing them in settlement ditches, discussed in Chapter 5.

The deposition of two spearheads at Four Crosses, Powys also shares evidence of a performative aspect observed in burial practices elsewhere in Britain. Barford *et al.* (1986: 103) observed that the spearheads appear to have been thrust into the ditch, their tips penetrating a layer of gravel fill, the intact shafts perhaps protruding from the ditch. Such performative elements may also have formed part of wetland depositional practices, evidenced at Fiskerton, with the possibility that some spears were hurled into the water worthy of consideration.

Bone spearheads have been recovered from a range of contexts at over 40 sites in Britain. Their distribution ranges from the hillfort dominated zone in the south to as far north as Bac Mhic Connain, North Uist and Howe, Orkney (Hallén, 1994, Olsen, 2003: 102). Recorded contexts include settlement sites, burials, structured deposits and wet depositions such as Fiskerton and the Thames.

The relationship between funerary practices and structured/votive deposition is thus more complex than is generally considered. Spearhead and sword forms appear both in funerary and votive contexts, sometimes in contemporary periods. The deposition of long, angular spearheads at Llyn Cerrig Bach during the Middle Iron Age and in burials dateable to the Late Iron Age, clearly demonstrates that this form was more broadly distributed, both chronologically and geographically, than previously thought. Practices such as the binding together of spearheads, seen in the South Cave Weapons Cache and at Playgolf, Colchester, are broadly contemporary and demonstrate that similar practices were being observed in funerary offerings and structured deposits. Further, the performative act of throwing or thrusting spearheads into burials and structured deposits does not appear to be limited to the 'speared corpse' ritual, but appears to have formed elements of some burial rites performed in the south of Britain and in votive or structured deposits in both wet and dry-land contexts.

9.6 Warfare

Chapter 8 explored the evidence for interpersonal violence and warfare during the British Iron Age. Landscape, environmental and settlement evidence indicate that social organisation was heterogeneous during the Iron Age, and that this was potentially disrupted by social and climatic instability. During the Middle and Late Iron Age there would appear to have been increasing social stratification and the concentration of power and territorial control in the hands of emerging local elites. Strong warrior identities may have formed in such a setting.

Ancient sources and ethnographic parallels have demonstrated the capacity for warrior elites to formulate strong individual and collective identity constructs, and that these would have been expressed in various ways. The weapons and equipment played an important role in the construction and communication of martial identities. The spear form warriors chose, or were permitted/expected to carry, could reflect the social standing or martial role played by the individual within the community.

Close reading of ancient sources indicates that the throwing of spears formed a core part of indigenous warfare during the British Iron Age. The typological research presented in this thesis demonstrates that throwing spears also played an important role in the performance of ritual practices associated with votive deposition across much of Britain, and in the construction of funerary identities within the Arras Culture. The accounts of ancient authors thus appear to be reflective of the reality of Iron Age warfare, as practiced in Britain. The prevalence of Type 1.8 bone spearheads indicate this was the most ubiquitous weapon of the period, and appears to have formed the base standard for martial practice.

The description of heavy, sword-like spearheads in Diodorus Siculus (V.30), match the Type 2.1 long, angular spearheads recovered from some of the most elite burials and wealthiest votive contexts. Ethnographic parallels have demonstrated that heavy-thrusting spears have been used in the construction of martial identities for males in the prime of their fighting lives. Similar age patterns are observed in the archaeological evidence. Such ‘shock weapons’ can be associated with the demonstration of martial prowess, and possibly duelling activities, or contests between heroes, also supported by the ancient sources.

Evidence of physical trauma from burial and votive contexts shows that interpersonal violence did occur in Iron Age communities, and that some of this was likely attributable to warfare. Sharp-force perimortem trauma caused by sword blows was noted at many sites. A number of sharp-force injuries could have been the result of thrusting or slashing blows delivered by either sword or spear, the two weapon classes leaving similar marks on bone in many cases. However, it is clear from ethnographic studies, that the incidence of violence must have been much greater than can be observed in the archaeological record. Many injuries are unlikely to impact on bone, and ancient sources suggest that warriors who died in battle may have been subjected to excarnation practices, which are often archaeologically invisible.

The research presented in Chapter 8 fulfils the objective of exploring the nature of warfare in the Iron Age of Britain, assessing the efficacy of spearheads as potentially lethal weapons of war, as well as evaluating the role that they played in the construction of different martial identities.

9.7 Future directions for research

The research presented in this thesis has fulfilled the aims and objectives presented in the introduction. The work has demonstrated that the typological approach to the study of spearheads has the capacity to broaden our understanding of the role this class of weapon played in warfare and society during the Iron Age. The typology represents a significant step forward for the study of Iron Age warfare. Research in this area could be advanced meaningfully through experimental archaeology. The manufacture and testing of replica weapons, conducted by Ancient Arts Conwy, has demonstrated both the potential and shortcomings of experimental archaeology conducted to date. Future experiments could test the efficacy of each of the spearhead types observed in this thesis under a range of conditions.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 offered a survey of a range of votive and mortuary practices including spearheads and other martial objects. The research has highlighted the need for much greater research into these practices. Mortuary practices in Britain are sorely overdue for a comprehensive analysis. The examination of martial burials presented in Chapter 7 has demonstrated that subtle expressions, such as rites of reversal, have the capacity to inform our understanding of burial practices. Similarly, repeated motives associated with votive practices may reveal aspects of ritual practice which have heretofore gone unnoticed. There is tremendous capacity for advances to be made in the study of ritual performance and identity construction as communicated through acts of structured deposition.

10 Appendices

10.1 Appendix: Comparative table of spearhead typologies

Inall	Stead (1991a)	Anderson (2012)	Brunaux & Rapin (1988)	Schatte (2013)	Manning (1985)	Swanton (1974)
1.1	B	I			IA IB	
1.2	A				IA IIA IVA	
1.3					IA	
1.4					IIA IIIA	
1.5		II			IA IB IIA IIB IVB	
1.6		III				
1.7						D2
1.8				I II III IV		
2.1		IV				E3
2.2						
2.3			IV			
2.4						B2
2.5						
2.6			II			
3.1						
3.2			III			
3.3						
3.4			I			
3.5						
Misc.						A1 H1

As can be seen in the table above, there is good correlation between the typology presented here and Stead's (1991a) and Anderson's (2012) typologies, and some correlation with several of Brunaux and Rapin's (1988) and Swanton's (1974) typologies. However, there is no clear correlation between Manning's (1985) typology and that developed for this study. There was also no meaningful correlation with Manning's (1976) typology and so it has been excluded from the table.

10.2 Appendix: Data collection proforma

Artefact Location	Inventory Number	Site	GIS Ref	Context
Start Date	End Date	Overall Length	Blade Length	Socket/Tang Length
Blade Thickness	Blade Section	Max Blade Width	Distance from Point, max blade width	Socket min width
Distance from Socket base min width	Socket Diam Ext	Socket Diam Int	Mass (gm)	Type Group
				Sub-type
Object Description				
Photograph	Line Drawing	Published	Publication Reference	
Additional Notes				

10.3 Appendix: Database

10.4 Appendix: Burials of Martial Character

County	Site	Grave	Reference	Confident IA Burial?	Date	Burial Rite	Shield	Iron Spear	Bone Spear	Ferrule	Sword	Dagger	Knife	Arrow-head	Sling-Stones	Armour	Helmet	Other
Anglesey	Gelliniog Wen	Gelliniog Wen	(Piggot, 1950, Whimster, 1981: 353, Stead, 2006: No.142)	Yes	First C BC - First C AD	Extended Inhumation					1							
Berks.	Wooley Down	Barrow 2, Chaddleworth	(Whimster, 1981: 391)	No	Romano-British	Secondary Cremation burial in ring barrow						2						
Cambs.	Snailwell	Snailwell	(Lethbridge, 1953)	Yes	First C AD pre-conquest	Aylesford Cremation	1											
Cambs.	Soham	Soham	(Fox, 1923, Whimster, 1981: 229)	Possible	Poss Anglo-Saxon	inhumation		1										2 dogs
Cambs.	Wittlesford	Wittleford Burial Mound	(Fox, 1923: 77-79)	Possible	?	Barrow burial		1										iron nails
Cant.	Canterbury	Canterbury, Helmet	(Farley <i>et al.</i> , 2014)	Yes	75-25BC	Cremation burial											1	
Clacks.	Alloa	Marshall, Alloa	(Stead, 2006: No.A283)	Possible	90-130AD	Cist burial		1			1							suspension rings and ornaments
Cumbria	Haverbrack	Haverbrack, The Dog Hole	(Whimster, 1981: 408)	No	?	Cave Deposit												iron axe
Derbys.	Winster	Winster	(Whimster, 1981: 403)	Yes	First C BC	Double inhumation		2										rotary quern
Dorset	Maiden Castle	'Peace-time' burial No.18	(Wheeler, 1943, Whimster, 1981: 262)	Yes	Belgo-Roman	Rampart Burial								1				
Dorset	Maiden Castle	'War Cemetery' No.48	(Wheeler, 1943, Whimster, 1981: 262)	Yes	Belgo-Roman	Durotrigian Inhumation												2
Dorset	Maiden Castle	'Peace-time' burial No.7	(Wheeler, 1943, Whimster, 1981: 262)	Yes	Belgo-Roman	Durotrigian Inhumation												2

County	Site	Grave	Reference	Confident IA Burial?	Date	Burial Rite	Shield	Iron Spear	Bone Spear	Ferrule	Sword	Dagger	Knife	Arrow-head	Sling-Stones	Armour	Helmet	Other
Dorset	Portland, The Grove	Portland, The Grove	(Whimster, 1981: 258)	No	Romano-British	Durotrigian Inhumation		1										
Dorset	Quatre Bras	Bradford Peverell	(Piggot, 1950)	Possible	?	?					1							
Dorset	Whitcombe	Whitcombe, Skeleton 12	(Aitken & Aitken, 1991)	Yes	Romano-British	Durotrigian Inhumation		1			1							hammerhead
Durham	Bishop Middleman	Bishop Middleman	(Whimster, 1981: 408)	No	?	Cave Deposit			1									
East Yorks.	Arras	Arras Burial W15	(Whimster, 1981: 293)	No	MIA	Arras												1 Miniature Axe
East Yorks.	Bugthorpe	Bugthorpe	(Stead, 1979: 58-61)	Possible	MIA	Arras	1				1							
East Yorks.	Burton Fleming	BF63	(Stead, 1991a)	Yes	MIA	Arras		1					1					
East Yorks.	Clotherholme	Clotherholme	(Collis, 1973)	Possible	MIA	Arras					1							
East Yorks.	Eastburn	Kirkburn (Eastburn) G7	(Sheppard, 1939)	Yes	MIA	Arras		1										
East Yorks.	Eastburn	Kirkburn (Eastburn) G8	(Sheppard, 1939)	Yes	MIA	Arras					1							
East Yorks.	Eastburn	Kirkburn (Eastburn) G11	(Sheppard, 1939)	Yes	MIA	Arras	1											
East Yorks.	Eastburn	Kirkburn (Eastburn) G12	(Sheppard, 1939)	Yes	MIA	Arras	1											
East Yorks.	Garton Station	GS10	(Stead, 1991a)	Yes	MIA	Arras	1	14			1							
East Yorks.	Garton Station	GS7	(Stead, 1991a)	Yes	MIA	Arras		11										
East Yorks.	Garton Station	GS5	(Stead, 1991a)	Yes	MIA	Arras	1	4	3									
East Yorks.	Garton Station	GS4	(Stead, 1991a)	Yes	MIA	Arras	1	3										
East Yorks.	Garton Station	Garton Station 'Anglo-Saxon' Burial	(Mortimer, 1905: 237)	Possible	MIA	Arras		7										
East Yorks.	Grimthorpe	Grimthorpe	(Stead <i>et al.</i> , 1968)	Yes	MIA	Arras	1	1	16		1							
East Yorks.	Hunmanby	Hunmanby Chariot Burial	(Sheppard, 1907)	Yes	MIA	Arras	1											
East Yorks.	Kirkburn	K3	(Stead, 1991a)	Yes	MIA	Arras		3			1							

County	Site	Grave	Reference	Confident IA Burial?	Date	Burial Rite	Shield	Iron Spear	Bone Spear	Ferrule	Sword	Dagger	Knife	Arrow-head	Sling-Stones	Armour	Helmet	Other
East Yorks.	Kirkburn	K5	(Stead, 1991a)	Yes	MIA	Arras										1		
East Yorks.	North Grimston	Birdsall	(Mortimer, 1905: 150-152)	Yes	MIA	Arras					2							
East Yorks.	Pocklington	15741	Unpublished	Yes	MIA	Arras		1					1					
East Yorks.	Pocklington	16030	Unpublished	Yes	MIA	Arras		5	1									
East Yorks.	Pocklington	16370	Unpublished	Yes	MIA	Arras	1											
East Yorks.	Rudston	R174	(Stead, 1991a)	Yes	MIA	Arras	1	7	2		1							
East Yorks.	Rudston	R154	(Stead, 1991a)	Yes	MIA	Arras	1	2			1							
East Yorks.	Rudston	R146	(Stead, 1991a)	Yes	MIA	Arras		1	1		1							
East Yorks.	Rudston	R24	(Stead, 1991a)	Yes	MIA	Arras		1			1							
East Yorks.	Rudston	R50	(Stead, 1991a)	Yes	MIA	Arras		1					1					
East Yorks.	Rudston	R57	(Stead, 1991a)	Yes	MIA	Arras		1			1							
East Yorks.	Rudston	R94	(Stead, 1991a)	Yes	MIA	Arras		1										
East Yorks.	Rudston	R140	(Stead, 1991a)	Yes	MIA	Arras		1										
East Yorks.	Rudston	R144	(Stead, 1991a)	Yes	MIA	Arras		1			1							
East Yorks.	Rudston	R152	(Stead, 1991a)	Yes	MIA	Arras		1										
East Yorks.	Rudston	R170	(Stead, 1991a)	Yes	MIA	Arras		1										
East Yorks.	Rudston	R45	(Stead, 1991a)	Yes	MIA	Arras							1					
East Yorks.	Rudston	R87	(Stead, 1991a)	Yes	MIA	Arras						1						
East Yorks.	Rudston	R107	(Stead, 1991a)	Yes	MIA	Arras					1							
East Yorks.	Rudston	R139	(Stead, 1991a)	Yes	MIA	Arras					1							
East Yorks.	Rudston	R141	(Stead, 1991a)	Yes	MIA	Arras							1					

County	Site	Grave	Reference	Confident IA Burial?	Date	Burial Rite	Shield	Iron Spear	Bone Spear	Ferrule	Sword	Dagger	Knife	Arrow-head	Sling-Stones	Armour	Helmet	Other
East Yorks.	Rudston	R148	(Stead, 1991a)	Yes	MIA	Arras	1											
East Yorks.	Rudston	R153	(Stead, 1991a)	Yes	MIA	Arras						1						
East Yorks.	Rudston	R163	(Stead, 1991a)	Yes	MIA	Arras	1				1							
East Yorks.	Rudston	R182	(Stead, 1991a)	Yes	MIA	Arras					1							
East Yorks.	Rudston	Rudston Thorpe	(Greenwell, 1906)	Possible	MIA	Arras					1							
East Yorks.	Rudston	Thorpe Hall	(Greenwell, 1906)	Possible	MIA	Arras					1							
East Yorks.	South Cave	South Cave	(Stead, 2006: No.195)	Possible	?	?					1							
East Yorks.	Wetwang	Wetwang Cart Burial 1	(Dent, 1985)	Yes	MIA	Arras	1	7			1							
East Yorks.	Wetwang	Wetwang Burial 211	(Dent, 1984)	Yes	MIA	Arras		1										
East Yorks.	Wetwang	Wetwang Burial 346	(Dent, 1984)	Yes	MIA	Arras			7									
East Yorks.	Wetwang	Wetwang Burial 269	(Dent, 1984)	Yes	MIA	Arras			3									
East Yorks.	Wetwang	Wetwang Burial 101	(Dent, 1984)	Yes	MIA	Arras			1									
East Yorks.	Wetwang	Wetwang Burial 360	(Dent, 1984)	Yes	MIA	Arras			1									
East Yorks.	Wetwang	Wetwang Burial 98	(Dent, 1984)	Yes	La Tène II to La Tène III	Arras	1				1							
East Yorks.	Wetwang	Wetwang Burial 244	(Dent, 1984)	Yes	MIA	Arras				1								
East Yorks.	Wetwang	Wetwang Cart Burial 3	(Dent, 1985)	Yes	MIA	Arras	1				1							
Essex	Colchester	Playgolf Colchester	(Shimmin, 2014)	Yes	First C AD	Cremation burial		5										
Essex	Kelvedon	Kelvedon Warrior	(Sealy, 2007)	Yes	First C BC	?	1	1			1	1						
Essex	Lexden	Lexden	(Foster, 1986)	Yes	Late First C BC	Cremation burial										1		
Essex	Stanway	Stanway	(Crummy <i>et al.</i> , 2007)	Yes	Mid 1st C AD	Cremation burial	1	1										
Falkirk	Camelon	Camelon, Central (1922)	(Breeze <i>et al.</i> , 1976)	Yes	LIA	cist burial	1				1							

County	Site	Grave	Reference	Confident IA Burial?	Date	Burial Rite	Shield	Iron Spear	Bone Spear	Ferrule	Sword	Dagger	Knife	Arrow-head	Sling-Stones	Armour	Helmet	Other
Falkirk	Camelon	Camelon, Central (1975)	(Breeze <i>et al.</i> , 1976)	Possible	Romano-British	cist burial, double inhumation	1	2			1							
Fife	Mersford	Merlsford, Fife	(Hunter, 2005)	Possible	Romano-British	?		1										brooch of Roman type
Gloucs.	Birdlip	Birdlip, Gloucestershire	(Stead, 2006: No.231)	Yes	Mid 1st C AD	Cairn burial					1							
Gloucs.	Coleford	Coleford, (High Nash)	(Stead, 2006: No.128)	Yes	Second C BC - First C AD	?	1				1							
Hants.	Owlesbury	Owlesbury Skeleton 39	(Collis, 1973)	Yes	Late La Tène	Extended Inhumation	1	1		1	1							
Herts.	Baldock	Baldock	(Niblett, 1999)	Yes	20-35AD	Aylesford Cremation										1		vessel and pig
Herts.	Folly Lane	Folly Lane	(Niblett, 1999)	Yes	Mid 1st C AD	Cremation burial										1		Horse fittings, Cattle, sheep, pig and hare, Furniture, shoes poss bird figurine
Herts.	Little Amwell	Little Amwell, Hertford Heath	(Whimster, 1981: 375)	Possible	LIA	Aylesford Cremation	1											
Herts.	St Albans	St Albans	(Niblett, 1999)	Yes	Mid 1st C AD	Cremation burial										1		
Herts.	Welwyn Garden City	Welwyn Garden City	(Collis, 1973)	Possible	First C AD (post-conquest)	Aylesford Cremation	1											
Isle of Wight	St Lawrence	St Lawrence	(Collis, 1973)	Yes	Second C BC - First C AD	?	1				1							
Isles of Scilly	Bryher	Bryher, Isles of Scilly	(Johns, 2002)	Yes	410-350 Cal BC	Cist burial	1				1							mirror

County	Site	Grave	Reference	Confident IA Burial?	Date	Burial Rite	Shield	Iron Spear	Bone Spear	Ferrule	Sword	Dagger	Knife	Arrow-head	Sling-Stones	Armour	Helmet	Other
Kent	Brisley Farm	Brisley Farm Burial 19, Ashford Kent	(Johnson, 2002)	Yes	30-50ad	Extended Inhumation	1	1			1							
Kent	Brisley Farm	Brisley Farm Burial 20, Ashford Kent	(Johnson, 2002)	Yes	10-30AD	Extended Inhumation	1	1			1							
Kent	Deal (Mill Hill)	Grave 112	(Parfitt, 1995)	Yes	Late 3rd to first half 2nd C BC	Extended Inhumation	1				1							
Kent	Dumpton Gap	Dumpton Gap		Yes	La Tène III	inhumation		1										
Lancs.	Billington	Billington		Possible	?	Cist Burial, under a barrow		1										
Mid-Glamorgan	St Brides Major	St Brides Major, Ogmere Down	(Whimster, 1981: 418)	No	Poss Anglo-Saxon	inhumation						1						1
Mid-Glamorgan	St Brides Major	St Brides Major, Ogmere Down	(Whimster, 1981: 418)	No	Poss Anglo-Saxon	inhumation						1						1
Midlothian	Kirknewton	Kirknewton, East Langton	(Whimster, 1981: 414)	Possible	?	?						1						
Norfolk	Shouldham	Shouldham	(Collis, 1973)	Yes	?	Extended Inhumation					1							
North Yorks.	Acklam	Acklam	(Stead, 2006: No.189)	Yes	Second C BC	?					1							
North Yorks.	Airton	Airton	(Whimster, 1981: 405)	Yes	MIA	Barrow burial		1										
North Yorks.	Birdsall	Aldro Group burial 108	(Mortimer, 1905: 56)	Yes	EIA	Cremation burial				1								
North Yorks.	Malham	Malham, North Yorkshire	(Whimster, 1981: 406)	Possible	?	Cairn burial		1										
North Yorks.	Malham	Malham, North Yorkshire	(Whimster, 1981: 460)	Possible	?	Cairn burial		1										
Northants.	Stanfordbury	Stanfordbury	(Hunter, 2005)	Yes	First C AD (post-conquest)	Aylesford Cremation	1											
Oxon.	Sutton Courtenay	Sutton Courtenay	(Hunter, 2005)	Possible	?	Cist Burial	1	1			1							

County	Site	Grave	Reference	Confident IA Burial?	Date	Burial Rite	Shield	Iron Spear	Bone Spear	Ferrule	Sword	Dagger	Knife	Arrow-head	Sling-Stones	Armour	Helmet	Other
Somerset	Wookey Hole	St Cuthbert Out	(Whimster, 1981: 399)	Possible	?	Cave Deposit						1	1					1 iron billhook
South Somerset	Ham Hill	Ham Hill	(Walter, 1923)	Yes	First C AD	Aylesford Cremation						1		1				
Stirling	Goshen	Goshen	(Hunter, 2005)	Possible	Romano-British	Cist Burial		1										ornament
Suffolk	Mildenhall	Mildenhall	(Hunter, 2005)	Yes	La Tène II	Extended Inhumation					1							Ornament, 2 horses Tool
Suffolk	Risby	Risby, Barrow Bottom	(Fox, 1923: 76-77)	Possible	?	Barrow burial		2										
West Sussex	Bersted	North Bersted	(Taylor, 2014)	Yes	50BC	inhumation	1										1	3 iron rods, ceramics
Dorset	Jordan Hill	Weymouth - Multiple Graves	(Whimster, 1981: 260)	Possible	Third to Fourth C AD	Durotrigian Inhumation			1	1	1			2	2			

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