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Thoughts on the Provenance of Some Merovingian-Era Buckles at the University of Missouri



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A Gift of Twenty Early Medieval Buckles from the Oise

Among the thousands of objects in the collection of the Museum of Art and Archaeology at the University of Missouri is a little-known group of early medieval artifacts from France. Given by the artist Evelyn Borchard Metzger in 1962, the European objects include a silver gilt bronze brooch (62.64.8, not illustrated), twenty bronze and iron buckles (62.64.10–29), and a decorated bronze buckle (62.64.30) (Figs. 1–3). They represented part of a larger gift of pieces from Mrs. Metzger to the museum, which included art from ancient Egypt and pre-Columbian Peru.¹ Among the early medieval artifacts, the group of twenty buckles is notable because of the preservation of valuable information about their original provenance in northern France from early twentieth-century excavations of three Merovingian-era cemeteries at Dury-Saint-Claude, Bury, and La Neuville-leroy (*département* Oise, France) (Fig. 4).² Previously unpublished,³ the buckles constitute one of the largest collections in the United States of early medieval artifacts with known find spots, and thus they merit further attention.⁴

Unfortunately, no information survives as to how, where, or why Evelyn Borchard Metzger originally acquired these modest examples of early medieval buckles. Regarding the two former issues, it is possible, owing to their place of origin and the fact that their provenance was still known at the time they entered her possession, that she purchased them from an antiquities dealer on one of her frequent visits to Paris. Indeed, she traveled to France frequently following her marriage to Herman Metzger, a Cornell-trained engineer at the Tropical Oil Company, a subsidiary of Jersey Standard (later Standard Oil).⁵ Another possibility, and one related to Metzger's decision to give these artifacts



Fig. 1. Late sixth-century buckles from the cemetery of Dury-Saint-Claude (Oise). Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri, gift of Evelyn Borchard Metzger (62.64.10, 14–16, 23, 24). Photo: Jeffrey Wilcox.

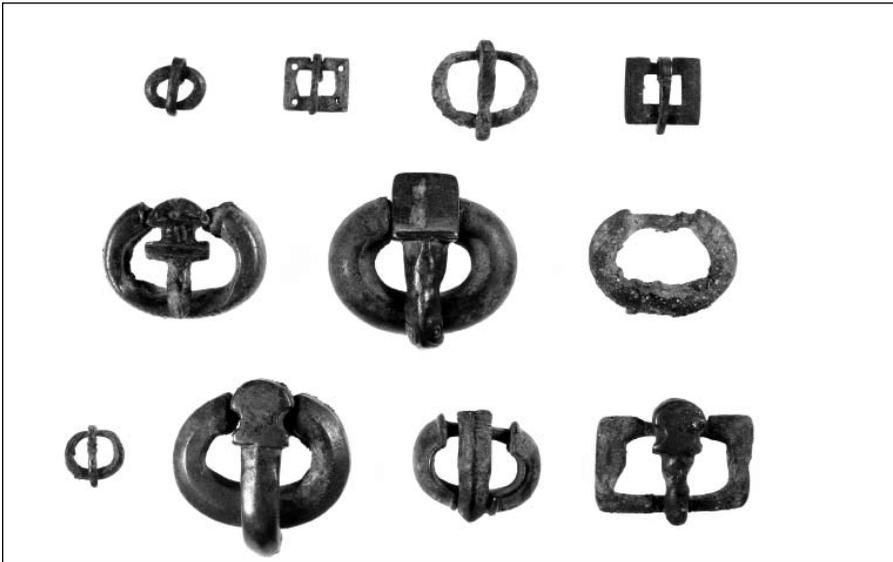


Fig. 2. Late sixth-century buckles from the cemetery of Bury (Oise). Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri, gift of Evelyn Borchard Metzger (62.64.11–13, 17–22, 26, 27). Photo: Jeffrey Wilcox.

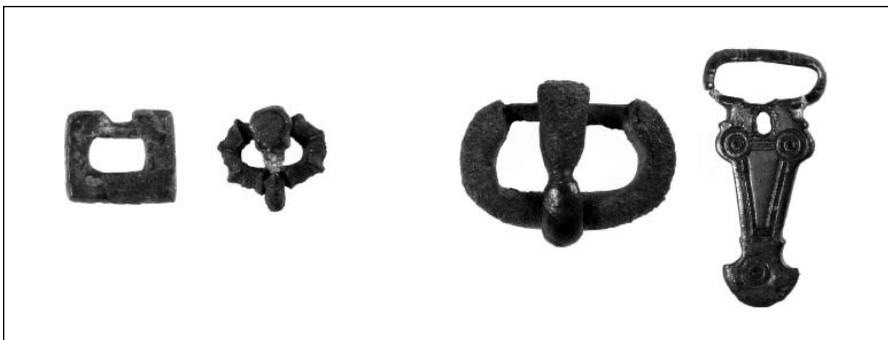


Fig. 3. Left: two late sixth-century buckles from the cemetery of La Neuvilleeroy (Oise) (62.64.28, 29); right: two late sixth-century buckles without provenance (62.64.25, 30). Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri, gift of Evelyn Borchard Metzger. Photo: Jeffrey Wilcox.

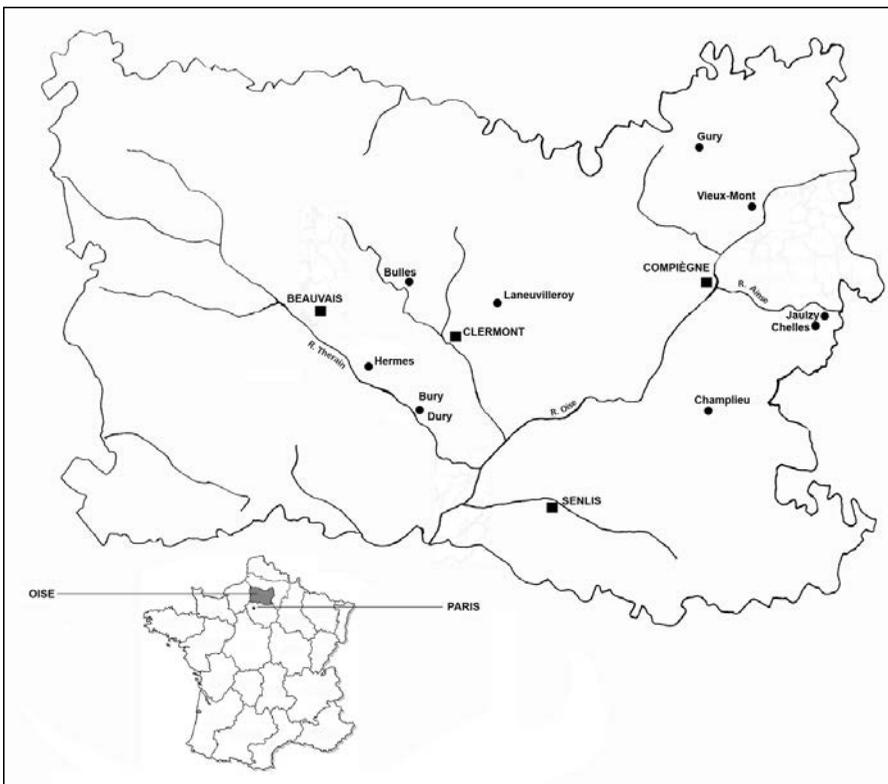


Fig. 4. Map of Oise, France, showing sites mentioned. Map by Kenyon Reed. Adapted from Georges-Pierre Woimant, *L'Oise* (60), *Carte archéologique de la Gaule* 60 (Paris, 1995).

to the museum, is that she bought some or all of the early medieval artifacts in her possession from the New York art dealer Julius Carlebach, who was a firm supporter of the museum from the time of its inception in 1957.⁶ Carlebach not only appraised Metzger's pieces before their arrival at the University of Missouri, but he is also known to have sold objects of this genre and period at his gallery in the 1950s and 1960s.⁷ A third possibility is that Mrs. Metzger acquired the pieces in question elsewhere in New York, possibly as early as the 1930s, through a prominent dealer like Joseph Brummer.⁸ If she did, however, she neglected to mention any such transaction in correspondence with the curator at the time of her gift in 1962 or afterward.⁹

Why Evelyn Borchard Metzger cultivated an interest in a relatively unknown field of early medieval antiquities is somewhat easier to surmise. Born in New York in 1911, she was exposed to European art from an early age. Her family also cultivated impressive connections in the art world. At the age of ten, for instance, while her family resided in Germany, she met Wilhelm von Bode, founding director of the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum (now the Bode-Museum) in Berlin. Upon her family's return to New York in the 1930s, when Evelyn attended Vassar College to study art, the Borchards regularly invited prominent figures in the antiquities world to dine at their home. Guests included the dealer Joseph Duveen and William Valentiner, the first curator of decorative arts at the Metropolitan Museum of Art from 1908.¹⁰ The latter, a German immigrant, was a student of von Bode. Following his appointment at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, he moved in 1921 to the Detroit Institute of Art, where he was appointed director in 1924.¹¹

In the early twentieth century, with impetus provided by J. Pierpont Morgan, institutions like the Metropolitan Museum of Art first exhibited "Germanic" burial goods. In the 1920s, these came to be seen as an expected (if somewhat exotic and marginal) component of their medieval collections.¹² By the early 1960s, several Midwestern museums—including the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Saint Louis Art Museum, and the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology at the University of Michigan—had acquired, like many East Coast art and archaeology museums of the era, a small number of representative pieces from what was known as the migration (*Völkerwanderung*) or early medieval period.¹³ The most extraordinary example of the acquisition of this genre of artifacts from France occurred in 1924, when curator Neil Brooks purchased a significant collection of prehistoric and early medieval artifacts for what was then known

as the Museum of European Culture at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. The objects, accessioned as a group from the Parisian bookseller J. Gamber, previously belonged to the French amateurs Auguste and Théodore Baudon, the former of whom published on excavations conducted in the Oise.¹⁴ Hundreds of the early medieval artifacts in the large assemblage, now held by the Spurlock Museum of World Cultures at the University of Illinois, have recently been re-identified as having been excavated by the amateur archaeologist Auguste Moutié at both the cemetery of Butte des Gargans, north of Houdan (Yvelines), where he worked between roughly 1830 and 1840, and the Merovingian-period cemetery of St. Martin de Bréthencourt (Yvelines).¹⁵ These attributes make the Spurlock Museum's collection the most comprehensive assemblage of early medieval grave artifacts with provenance known to exist in North America. The identification of these objects' original find spots will enable scholars to access contextual documentation from these excavations and learn more about the pieces and the communities who used them to commemorate their dead.¹⁶

Amateur Archaeology in Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Picardy

Despite the obstacles that prevent a more accurate understanding of how the early medieval buckles acquired by Mrs. Metzger made their way to the United States some time before 1962 when she gave these artifacts to the Museum of Art and Archaeology, one can use surviving information about their provenance to learn more about their history and significance. All three of the cemeteries that produced the objects in question, Bury, Dury-Saint-Claude, and La Neuville-leroy, are located in the French département of the Oise in the northern French region of Picardy (Fig. 4). From the mid-nineteenth century until the period of World War I, this area, like many parts of France and Belgium in the throes of industrialization, saw a flurry of amateur archaeological activity on private lands.¹⁷ One can measure the veritable explosion of enthusiasm for local history and archaeology through the foundation of multiple antiquarian societies in the region. These include the Société d'archéologie de la Somme (later the Société des antiquaires de Picardie) in 1837, the Société académique de l'Oise in 1847, the Société archéologique, historique, et scientifique de Soissons in the same year, the Société historique, archéologique, et scientifique de Noyon in 1856,

and the Société historique de Compiègne in 1868.¹⁸ These organizations, supported by the largely self-sponsored activities of a host of amateur archaeologists, helped publicize, in turn, news of their excavation and collection of, and research on, the Gallic, Gallo-Roman, and Merovingian (or Frankish) past.

Many of the archaeological finds generated by these amateur undertakings went, naturally, into the private collections of the men who owned the land on which the sites were located or who directed their excavation. The most famous of such collections in the late nineteenth century were no doubt the private museums with artifacts from more than 15,000 graves owned by the retired censor of the Bank of France, Frédéric Moreau, at his homes in La-Fère-en-Tardenois (Aisne) and Paris.¹⁹ Similar artifacts, albeit in smaller quantities, were acquired by museums of learned societies like that of Laon (1851) and the Musée de Picardie in Amiens (1855), which had an interest in highlighting local history and archaeology. While serving first as curator at the museum of Laon and subsequently at that of St.-Quentin, the self-taught archaeologist and former agent-voyeur, Jules Pilloy, for instance, made a second career of analyzing and publishing the results of excavations of thousands of graves from cemeteries in the French département of the Aisne. Unfortunately, neither the Laon nor the Amiens collections survived the devastation of World War I.²⁰

Not just local archaeological amateurs had their eyes on the rich finds from Picardy, located a short distance to the north of Paris. Most visible of outside interventions in the region during the 1850s and 1860s was Emperor Napoleon III's sponsorship of multiple excavations in the département of the Oise at sites like Chelles, Champlieu, Vieux-Mont, Gury, and Jaulzy (Fig. 4). He initially displayed the fruits of these explorations in his private museum in the orangerie of his palace at Compiègne. In the two decades following his fall from power, however, the objects were transferred to the Musée des antiquités nationales (now the Musée d'archéologie nationale), which he founded in 1862 at his renovated château of Saint-Germain-en-Laye.²¹

In addition to being the subject of extensive excavation and collecting, Picardy and surrounding regions also suffered the depredation of a thriving antiquities market in the last three decades of the nineteenth century. As long as the owner of the land in question had given appropriate permissions, no French law in this period prohibited the excavation and sale of artifacts from private property, yet the scale of speculation in Picardy by excavators with commercial ambitions was unheard of in France before this time.²² Some amateurs, like

Léon Cotel, worked on behalf of German noble patrons, in his case the Baron von Diergardt, who desired artifacts from the départements of the Aube and Marne. Cotel invested very little time in documenting the antiquities he uncovered in haste.²³ Even more notorious was the predatory ransacking of more than 22,000 graves in the region by the amateur archaeologist Jean-Baptiste Lelaurain, who used the proceeds to support himself financially during a forty-year career.²⁴ A small number of the pieces he excavated were purchased by Sir John Evans in the 1880s and 1890s and were later given by his son Arthur to the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, which he directed.²⁵ Indeed, it was not rare that artifacts uncovered in the region departed from France for distant locations. In the early decades of the twentieth century, with incentive provided by the exhibition of such artifacts at the Expositions universelles in Paris in 1889 and 1900,²⁶ many parts of northern France saw the large-scale exportation of locally found early medieval artifacts to museums in Berlin, London, and New York.²⁷

Of the three cemeteries from which the buckles in the collection of the Museum of Art and Archaeology derive, there is no doubt that the best-known site is that of Bury (Oise), which was the location of numerous excavations in the nineteenth century.²⁸ Nearby explorations included an early medieval cemetery on the route from Angy to Clermont, studied by the above-mentioned physician and amateur archaeologist Auguste Baudon in 1868–1869. During his excavations, Baudon uncovered roughly 150 skeletons and grave goods from the early medieval cemetery that he identified with the Frankish population of the region.²⁹ Four years later, digging at the nearby site of Hermes, on the river Thérain, Baudon found what he believed to be a Frankish cemetery filled with impressive grave artifacts.³⁰ Another figure associated with Bury was the amateur archaeologist and curé, abbé J.-B. Hamard, who had worked in the region from the 1870s.³¹ In addition to digging at the nearby cemeteries of Hermes and Bulles in the Oise (Figs. 5 and 6), Hamard uncovered a Gallo-Roman cemetery near the station of Mouy-Bury in 1896.³² By 1900, seeking to profit from his impressive finds, Hamard printed an announcement of the sale of Gallo-Roman objects and sent it to a variety of recipients, including the curators of the Musée des antiquités nationales in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, to whom he offered the entire collection for 5,000 francs (Fig. 7).³³ It appears that the majority of objects excavated by Hamard at these cemeteries were dispersed, sometimes in mixed collections, to a variety of buyers.³⁴

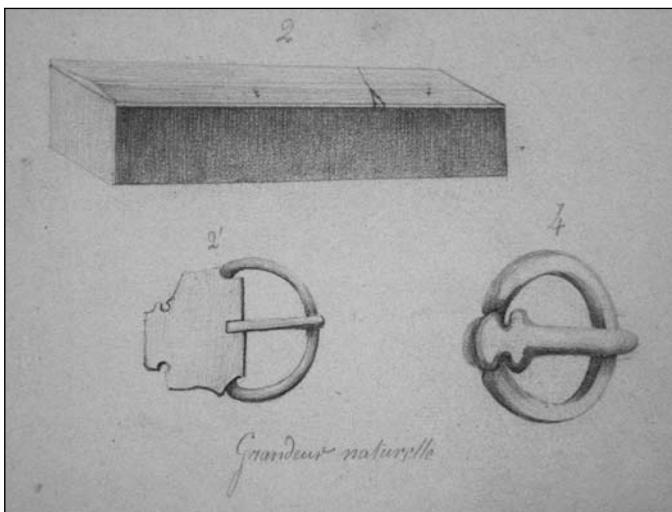


Fig. 5. Buckles and stone sarcophagus from the cemetery at the site of Bulles (Oise). Drawing by abbé J. Hamard, 1877, in an unpublished Album-Journal. Abbé J. Hamard, “Fouilles de Hermes. Album-Journal.” Archives du Musée d’archéologie nationale de Saint-Germain-en-Laye. Reproduced with permission of the Musée d’archéologie nationale de Saint-Germain-en-Laye.



Fig. 6. Buckles, tweezers, ceramics, glass beads, and iron weaponry from the cemetery at the site of Bulles (Oise). Drawing by abbé J. Hamard, 1877, in an unpublished Album-Journal. Abbé J. Hamard, “Fouilles de Hermes. Album-Journal.” Archives du Musée d’archéologie nationale de Saint-Germain-en-Laye. Reproduced with permission of the Musée d’archéologie nationale de Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

*Antiquités
vendues
5000 fr.*

A VENDRE
Hamard
UNE
COLLECTION

D'ANTIQUITÉS GALLO-ROMAINES

DU IV^e SIÈCLE

Récemment découvertes à MOUY-BURY (Oise)

Cette intéressante collection comprend :

- 1^o. **80 vases en terre cuite**, bien conservés, de toutes formes et de toutes couleurs, dont quelques-uns sont ornés de dessins, soit en relief, soit en peinture.
- 2^o. **30 vases en verre**, forme de coupes, barillets, biberons, huîtres ; à parois plissées, à reflets irisés.
- 3^o. **Des plaques de ceinturon**, avec boucles en bronze et or.
- 4^o. **Des bagues, des bracelets, des colliers, des médaillons**, les uns en verre, les autres en bronze ou ivoire.
- 5^o. **Un diadème ou couronne**, ornée de dessins à jour et grosses épingles en verre, en bronze, en ivoire.
- 6^o. **Des monnaies romaines**, en nombre, de l'époque des Constantin, etc., etc.

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*S'adresser à M. l'Abbé HAMARD, curé de Hermes, ou à M. SIVI, Fabricant de Chaussures à Mouy, chez qui se trouve la collection d'antiquités.*

Prière de prévenir M. l'Abbé HAMARD, HERMES (Oise), un jour ou deux avant la visite.

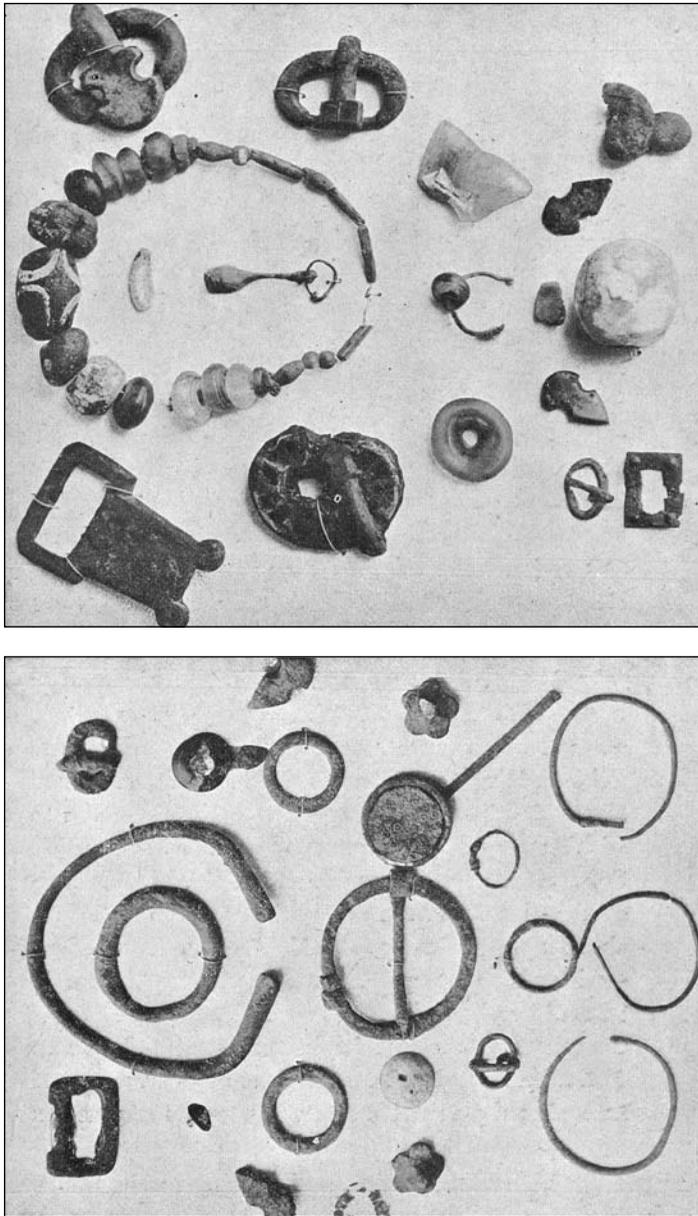
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Imp. Eug. BOUCHER, 49, rue Saül-Carnot, Desruvais

**Fig. 7.** Advertisement of Gallo-Roman artifacts for sale by the abbé Hamard in 1900. Archives du Musée d'archéologie nationale de Saint-Germain-en-Laye. Reproduced with permission of the Musée d'archéologie nationale de Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

The specific site at Bury related to the buckles in the collection of the Museum of Art and Archaeology at the University of Missouri is, however, no doubt the cemetery excavated in the first decade of the twentieth century by Albert Houlé, an amateur archaeologist and member of the Société académique de l'Oise.<sup>35</sup> Interested in the Frankish past of the region, Houlé called the valley of Thérain between Beauvais and Creil “an inexhaustible mine, where the exploration of graves, which was undertaken with [archaeological] methodology, has produced important discoveries and furnished archaeological science with precious information.”<sup>36</sup> In particular, in December 1903, Houlé learned of a promising location behind the church of Bury from a local woodcutter, who had found some ancient weapons buried there. During his subsequent excavations of 1904, the amateur archaeologist found more than 200 graves with artifacts that he identified as dating from the Merovingian epoch, some as early as the period of the invasions and others from the sixth and seventh century. In the presentation he made about this site before the Congrès archéologique de la France in 1905, Houlé observed that this cemetery, like others in the region, showed the importance of the Frankish presence in the Oise (Fig. 8).<sup>37</sup> Salomon Reinach, director of the national antiquities museum at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, who reviewed Houlé’s report on early cemeteries of the region, nonetheless criticized its author for failing to keep abreast of current archaeological methods: he complained that the amateur Houlé provided readers with neither a full grave inventory nor sufficient information for future scholars to study the chronology of the graves in question.<sup>38</sup>

In addition to excavating at Bury, Houlé subsequently turned his attention to other archaeological sites in the region. These investigations included the other two cemeteries identified as the source of Evelyn Metzger’s early medieval buckles. Namely, in 1907, Houlé initiated exploration of a site at the hamlet of Dury-Saint-Claude, where he found a small Frankish cemetery at the site where a local farmer’s plow had uncovered stone sarcophagi. In work presented to the Société académique de l'Oise, he described the eighteen graves he found at the site as unimportant due to the small quantity of burial artifacts they contained. Nonetheless, it was significant enough for him to note that he found knives, buckles, iron rings, iron nails, and some ceramic remains that he dated to the sixth and seventh centuries.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, in February 1909, with information provided to him by Dr. Delalande in Saint-Just-en-Chaussée, Houlé obtained authorization from the local sugar producers in La Neuwilleroy to excavate a



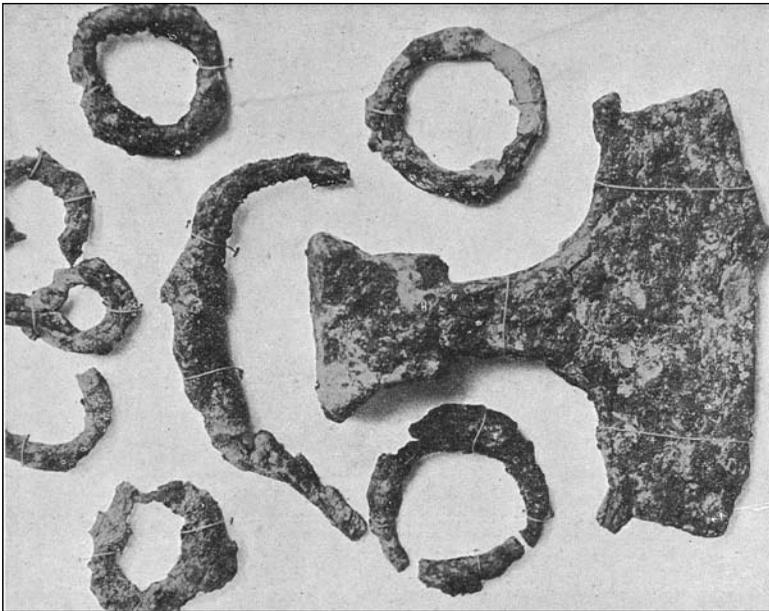
**Fig. 8.** Some of the jewelry and buckles excavated at the cemetery of Bury (Oise) by Albert Houlé. Houlé, *Étude sur les cimetières francs*. Reproduced with permission of Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Merovingian-period cemetery near the station of Montiers. There, he uncovered four graves, which were all that remained of the early medieval cemetery. In addition to skeletal remains, the graves contained knives, iron nails, and iron and bronze belt buckles.<sup>40</sup>

As is the case for many nineteenth- and early twentieth-century excavations, the fate of the artifacts unearthed in the course of Houlé's excavations during the first decade of the twentieth century is largely unknown. It appears that at least a few of the burial goods unearthed from the early medieval graves at Bury, in addition to those of the late Roman and early medieval period excavated by others at Hermes and Mouy, entered into the collection of the Musée des antiquités nationales at Saint-Germain-en-Laye.<sup>41</sup> Other pieces stayed closer to home and went to the Musée de Beauvais, which was destroyed along with most of its collection during German bombing of the site in World War II,<sup>42</sup> and it is now possible with considerable certainty to add to this short list the twenty buckles donated by Evelyn Metzger in 1962 to the collection of the Museum of Art and Archaeology at the University of Missouri.

### **Making Sense of the Early Medieval Buckles from Cemeteries at Bury, Dury-Saint-Claude, and La Neuville-roy (Oise)**

Although Albert Houlé's excavation techniques were not of the highest standard of his day, we can nonetheless benefit from what he reported about the cemetery of Bury to members of the Société académique de l'Oise in 1905. His writings provide some important details about the larger burial context of the buckles now at the Museum of Art and Archaeology. Indeed, the necropolis of Bury, at which he uncovered 200 burials, contained approximately 80 stone sarcophagi; the rest of the dead were buried in plain earth or possibly wooden coffins. According to Houlé, the graves contained a variety of weaponry, including swords, scramasaxes (daggers), franciscas (throwing axes), and lances. Other artifacts found at the site included belt buckles, some large with damascene decoration or inset stones, and others much plainer and more modest, made of bronze, tin, and iron. Many of these were accompanied by their related belt plaques (Fig. 9). Graves in the cemetery also contained a variety of jewelry, including rings, lavishly decorated and more simple brooches, bead necklaces, and earrings; other items found at the site included a fair quantity of locally produced ceramics (typically placed at the foot of the graves, possibly with food



**Fig. 9.** Examples of weaponry, keys, and iron rings from the cemetery of Bury (Oise). Houlié, *Étude sur les cimetières francs*. Reproduced with permission of Bibliothèque nationale de France.

offerings), along with Houlé's discovery of a single bone comb.<sup>43</sup> Houlé also devoted significant attention to a more unusual grave find—a miniature bronze scale, which he posited had been used for weighing small quantities of spices, medications, or possibly coins.<sup>44</sup>

It appears that Houlé dated his finds at Bury on the basis of nearby sites at which similar artifacts had been observed by fellow members of the *Société académique de l'Oise*, including Auguste Baudon and abbé Renet. He thus attributed the cemetery and its contents to the latter part of the sixth century and did not attempt to refine this chronology any further as his contemporary Jules Pilloy two decades earlier had suggested might be possible.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, in Houlé's day, there were significant inconsistencies in the methods used by archaeologists to establish absolute dates of their finds since some believed that differences in grave material were owed not to chronological differences but to the populations who used them.<sup>46</sup> Houlé's contemporary Clodomir-Tancred Boulanger, for instance, pushed the date of such finds, using nearly identical buckles found in Picardy, roughly fifty years earlier to the second half of the fifth and the whole of the sixth century.<sup>47</sup>

In fact, the dates attached to particular artifacts depended in large part upon when their excavators believed that Frankish invaders had entered Picardy and established themselves as settlers in the region. Houlé, for instance, assumed because of the prevalence and variety of weaponry that the occupation of the early medieval cemetery should be attributed to Frankish invaders of the territory from the sixth and seventh century. His vision of this era, which was quite typical of archaeologists working in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,<sup>48</sup> was highly romanticized. As he noted, "The savage existence of the Franks was divided between war and the hunt; the weapons gathered, the proof of violent death furnished by the large quantity of broken skulls, indicate here a period of migration and of war. The Franks wore their garments of cloth fastened to their body by a large belt upon which were suspended their weapons."<sup>49</sup> Although two decades earlier in 1888 the Belgian historian Godefroid Kurth at the *Congrès de Charleroi* had briefly contested linkage between weapon graves and Germanic peoples such as the Franks, few embraced his proposition in this period.<sup>50</sup> It remained commonplace until the late twentieth century to assume that such graves belonged to Germanic warriors.

While archaeologists today largely agree with Houlé's approximate dating of the cemetery of Bury and the artifacts as belonging to the latter part of the sixth

century,<sup>51</sup> more recent work has undermined his implicit historical assumptions about the ethnic ascriptions of these objects and their attribution to the Franks. Scholars have criticized the alleged Germanic characteristics of particular artifacts and assemblages, reached via typological methods that largely deny the possibility of assimilation and personal agency in funerary customs.<sup>52</sup> Although the heated debate that surrounds this question in France has not yet reached anything resembling general consensus, we should at least observe that it cannot be assumed that the graves at Bury, Dury-Saint-Claude, and La Neuville, and the items they contained, belonged to Frankish pagan warriors who had invaded the region. Instead, individuals who originated from Gallo-Roman, Frankish, or possibly other ethnic groups and had become local inhabitants after settling in the region could have worn the artifacts in question. In general, we may surmise that the objects deposited with the dead reflected some of the rituals chosen by families and other associates in accord with customs developed in or inherited by their communities. Through the inclusion of personal belongings, many of which were associated with dress, and of other items that were accorded to the dead out of sentiment or as signs of respect, inhabitants of the region buried their dead in a manner that had symbolic meaning and value to their contemporaries.<sup>53</sup>

With regard to the twenty late sixth-century buckles now at the Museum of Art and Archaeology, it is possible to add a few final observations about their likely significance. It is normally thought that in the early Middle Ages, modest buckles of this nature had a utilitarian function in graves related to the clothing in which the deceased were laid to rest. Although the organic matter of such apparel has now disappeared, the buckles provide some hints as to what the dead were wearing at the time they were buried in their graves at Bury, Dury-Saint-Claude, and La Neuville (Figs. 1–3). Indeed, it is important to keep in mind that these artifacts were only part of a larger assemblage of grave artifacts deposited with the dead, and just one genre of goods that survived the test of time in these three early medieval cemeteries in the département of the Oise. Unfortunately, however, because of the meager nature of the documentation recorded by Houlié and the manner in which his collection was dispersed, we cannot ascertain where, how, and with which bodies the buckles in question were employed (such as to close a garment, secure a strap holding weaponry, or hold footwear in place).<sup>54</sup> For the same reason, we are ignorant of what other kinds of artifacts were found in the same graves as these pieces or with whom they were buried.

This information might have shed additional light on whether, for example, they were more typically employed in graves of men, women, or children.

Despite the many gaps in our understanding of the early medieval cemeteries from which they came, these modest buckles serve as a tangible reminder of the everyday life and death concerns of the anonymous inhabitants of the sixth-century Oise. Indeed, they are also testament to the high price of an antiquities trade that prioritized the quality and quantity of finds over their analysis, documentation, and preservation.

## NOTES

\* I thank Jeffrey B. Wilcox, curator of collections and registrar of the Museum of Art and Archaeology, for introducing me to these objects and for his patience in many communications to me regarding the circumstances of Mrs. Metzger's donation. I am grateful to Jane Biers for her support in preparing this piece for publication and to Bruce Cox for his help in securing related photographs. Patrick Périn kindly provided permissions for the images reproduced from the archives of the Musée d'archéologie nationale de Saint-Germain-en-Laye. Research for this project was made possible by the Rothman Endowment at the Center for the Humanities and the Public Sphere at the University of Florida. All quotations, unless otherwise noted, have been translated by the author.

1. Correspondence dated 10 January 1963 from Saul Weinberg, director of the museum, to Evelyn Metzger thanking her for her donation. Correspondence dated 17 May 1967 to Elsebet Rowlett, the museum's curator of collections, from Evelyn Metzger. She indicated that she had no further information about the buckles.
2. From the cemetery at Dury-Saint-Claude: 62.64.10 (bronze and iron, L. 2.9 cm), 14 and 15 (bronze, L. 3.8 cm, 3.1 cm), 16 (bronze and iron, L. 3.9 cm), 23 and 24 (bronze, L. 3.9 cm, 3.4 cm); from the cemetery at Bury: 62.64.11–13 (bronze, L. 1.4 cm, 1.6 cm, 2.6 cm), 17 (bronze, L. 1.8 cm), 18 and 19 (bronze and iron, L. 3.6 cm, 4.5 cm), 20–22, 26, 27 (bronze, L. 3.6 cm, 1.5 cm, 4.3 cm, 3.1cm, 3.9 cm); from the cemetery at La Neuville: 62.64.28, 29 (bronze, L. 1.9 cm, 1.9 cm); no provenance recorded: 62.64.25, 30 (bronze, L. 4.3 cm, 4.7 cm).
3. These objects are chronologically and geographically peripheral to the museum's larger classical collection. Some artifacts of roughly the same epoch, with a provenance somewhere in the eastern Mediterranean, were exhibited and published in 2004 as part of an exhibition entitled "Testament of Time." Jane Biers and James Terry, eds., *Testament of Time: Selected Objects from the Collection of Palestinian Antiquities in the Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri–Columbia*, Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri–Columbia (Madison, 2004) esp. nos. 156–161, pp.181–187. On the collection in general, see Osmund Overby, ed., *Illustrated Museum Handbook: A Guide to the Collections in the Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri–Columbia*, Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri–Columbia (Columbia, 1982).

4. I was unfortunately unaware of these buckles when I published a survey of early medieval artifacts in North American collections: Bonnie Effros, "Art of the 'Dark Ages': Showing Merovingian Artefacts in North American Public and Private Collections," *Journal of the History of Collections* 17.1 (2005) pp. 85–113.
5. Brett Topping and Nancy G. Heller, *The Age of Grandeur and a Woman Who Lived It: Artist Evelyn Metzger* (Washington, D.C., 1995) pp. 51, 72, 100–103.
6. Saul S. Weinberg, "The Inaugural Exhibition: A Photographic Tour. Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri–Columbia," *Muse* 10 (1976) p. 3.
7. Julius Carlebach sold a number of antiquities from late antique or early medieval Gaul through his New York gallery, which he owned from 1939 until his death in 1964. These include a copper alloy inlaid disk brooch with milleflore enamel with no provenance. The brooch was lent to the Metropolitan Museum of Art by Robin B. Martin (L.55.57) following its purchase by Alastair Martin. My sincere thanks go to Christine Brennan in the Department of Medieval Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art for supplying this reference. Sometime before 1965, Dominique and Jean de Menil purchased from Carlebach an early medieval bronze buckle and plate said to be from the Somme (France), CA 6506. This subsequently became part of the Menil Collection in Houston, Texas. *La rime et la raison: les collections Ménil (Houston – New York): Galeries nationales du Grand Palais, Paris, 17 avril–30 juillet 1984*, Galeries nationales du Grand Palais (Paris, 1984) no. 99, p. 322. Object files, Menil Collection. In 1959, Carlebach also sold five objects to the Walters Art Gallery (now Museum): a hairpin, two bow fibulae, a digitated fibula, and a disk brooch (54: 2443–2445; 57: 1883–1884). Richard H. Randall, "Migration Jewelry," in *Jewelry: Ancient to Modern*, Walters Art Gallery (New York, 1979) nos. 377, 379–381, pp. 135–137.
8. On the latter, who was deeply involved in the sale of medieval antiquities in New York during this period, see Parke-Bernet, Inc., *The Notable Art Collection Belonging to the Estate of the Late Joseph Brummer Part I. Public Auction Sale April 20, 21, 22 and 23 at 2 p.m.*, Parke Bernet, Inc. (New York, 1949).
9. Evelyn Metzger never formally acknowledged Julius Carlebach as the source of the artifacts in her possession. Although he dealt for a brief period with this genre of objects, the buckles with provenance under discussion here were more modest than those he is known to have sold in the 1950s and 1960s. They were also distinguished by having specific cemeterial provenances, which is not the case for any of the seven pieces identified in note 7. Unfortunately, it is difficult to identify Carlebach's source for early medieval artifacts. He did not advertise early medieval artifacts in any extant Carlebach Gallery catalogues, and the papers and invoices of the business do not seem to have survived. They were possibly in the hands of his widow, Josefa, until her death in August 2000.
10. Topping and Heller, *Age of Grandeur*, pp. 16, 22, 28.
11. On Valentiner's memories of his early years at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, see *William R. Valentiner (1880–1958) Memorial Exhibition: Masterpieces of Art*, North Carolina Museum of Art (Raleigh, 1959) pp. 10–18. On his work at the Detroit Institute of Art, see Peter Bernet, "'The Greatest Epoch': Medieval Art in Detroit from Valentiner to 'The Big Idea,'" in Christina Nelson, ed., *To Inspire and Instruct: A History of Medieval Art in Midwestern Museums* (Newcastle, 2008) pp. 39–53.

12. Valentiner highlighted the artistic importance of Morgan's purchases. Wilhelm R. Valentiner, "A Collection of Germanic Antiquities," *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* 6 (1911) pp. 7–9 and "More Merovingian Antiquities," *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* 7 (1912) pp. 71–72. Following J. P. Morgan's death in 1913, his son Jack gave this loan collection, along with numerous other pieces, to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1917. On this collection, see most recently Françoise Vallet, "The Golden Age of Merovingian Archaeology," and Elke Nieveler, "The Niederbreisig Collection," in Katherine R. Brown, Dafydd Kidd, and Charles Little, eds., *From Attila to Charlemagne: Arts of the Early Medieval Period in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, 2000) pp. 12–27, 28–41.
13. Effros, "Art of the 'Dark Ages,'" pp. 93–101. For broader context, see also Melanie Holcomb, "Medieval Art in Midwestern University Art Museums: A History," in *To Inspire and Instruct*, pp. 149–158.
14. Auguste Baudon, *Notice sur un cimetière franc découvert à Angy (Oise), en 1868* (Beauvais, 1868) pp. 3–7.
15. Barbara Oehlschlaeger-Garvey, "Reconstructing the Merovingian cemetery of Butte des Gargans, Houdan, France: The Documents of Auguste Moutié and Paul Guégan Considered with the Collections of the Spurlock Museum of World Cultures and the Musée d'art et d'histoire de Dreux," Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, 2000, pp. 1–2, 6–15, 28–32, Appendix 4. Barbara Oehlschlaeger-Garvey and Bailey K. Young, "Auguste Moutié, Pioneer of Merovingian Archaeology and the Spurlock Merovingian Collection at the University of Illinois," in Ralph Mathisen and Danuta Shanzer, eds., *Romans, Barbarians and the Transformation of the Roman World: Cultural Interaction and the Creation of Identity in Late Antiquity* (Society for Late Antiquity 4, Farnham, Surrey, 2011) pp. 343–358.
16. A better-known success story is the re-identification of some large early medieval plaque-buckles now in the collections of the Walters Art Museum, the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, and the Worcester Museum of Art, all purchased in the early twentieth century from the Brummer Gallery, with their original excavation site in Tabariane (Ariège). Marvin C. Ross, *Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Medieval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection*, The Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies (Washington, D.C., 1965) no. 176, p. 129. Robert Roger, "Cimetière barbare de Tabariane, commune de Teilhet (Ariège)," *Bulletin archéologique du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques* (1908) pp. 313–327. Françoise Vallet, "Plaque-boucles de Tabariane (Ariège) au Musée des antiquités nationales," *Antiquités nationales* 10 (1978) pp. 65–73.
17. For general background on this phenomenon, see Bonnie Effros, *Uncovering the Germanic Past: Merovingian Archaeology in France, 1830–1914* (Oxford, 2012).
18. A search engine documenting these organizations may be found at Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques, "Sociétés savantes de France," <http://cths.fr/an/index.php> (accessed December 2011).
19. Frédéric Moreau, *Exposition universelle de 1889: Palais des arts libéraux. Objets antiques sortis de la Collection Caranda. Description sommaire* (Paris, 1889). His will left the collection as a bequest, valued at 50,000 francs, to the national antiquities museum in Saint-Germain-en-Laye in 1899. A draft of a letter dated 3 January 1899 from the museum's director Alexandre Bertrand and curator Salomon Reinach to the Institut de

- France survives. In it, the two administrators asked for assistance in meeting the conditions of Frédéric Moreau's final testament. Archives du Musée d'archéologie nationale de Saint-Germain-en-Laye.
20. Françoise Vallet, "La Picardie avant 1914 à l'avant-garde de la recherche archéologique mérovingienne," in Didier Bayard, Hugues Hairy, Corinne Robinson, and Françoise Vallet, eds., *La Picardie, berceau de la France. Clovis et les derniers romains. 1500<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la bataille de Soissons 486–1986* (Amiens, 1986) pp. 9–15.
  21. Françoise Vallet, *Collections mérovingiennes de Napoléon III provenant de la région de Compiègne* (Paris, 2008) pp. 7–12. On Napoleon III's general interest in founding museums dedicated to national antiquities, see Bonnie Effros, "'Elle pensait comme un homme et sentait comme une femme': Hortense Lacroix Cornu (1809–1875) and the Musée des antiquités nationales de Saint-Germain-en-Laye," *Journal of the History of Collections* 24.1 (2012) pp. 25–43.
  22. Claude Seillier, "L'époque des migrations en Gaule du Nord dans les collections publiques et privées," in *Trésors archéologiques du Nord de la France*, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Valenciennes (Valenciennes, 1997) pp. 108–114.
  23. The Baron von Diergardt's collection later became part of the Cologne museum's collection. Bernd Päffgen, "Die Sammlung Diergardt und ihr Schicksal in den Jahren 1934 bis 1939," in Sebastian Brather, Dieter Geuenich, and Christoph Huth, eds., *Historia archaeologica. Festschrift für Heiko Steuer zum 70 Geburtstag, Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde, Ergänzungsbände 70* (Berlin, 2009) pp. 661–685.
  24. François Lefevre, "A Reims, hommes de terrain et érudits au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle," in *Les archéologues et l'archéologie. Colloque de Bourg-en-Bresse (Archives). 25, 26 et 27 septembre 1992*, Université de Tours, Caesarodunum 27 (Tours, 1993) pp. 98–99. Vallet, "Golden Age of Merovingian Archaeology," pp. 13–15.
  25. Arthur MacGregor, *Ashmolean Museum Oxford: Summary Catalogue of the Continental Archaeological Collections (Roman Iron Age, Migration Period, Early Medieval)*, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, *BAR International Series* 674 (Oxford, 1997) pp. 1–6.
  26. Bonnie Effros, "Selling Archaeology and Anthropology: Early Medieval Artifacts at the *Expositions universelles* and the *Wiener Weltausstellung, 1867–1900*," *Early Medieval Europe* 16.1 (2008) pp. 23–48.
  27. On the collection of Clodomir-Tancrede Boulanger in the Somme, which went to Berlin, see Heino Neumayer, *Die merowingerzeitlichen Funde aus Frankreich*, Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte Bestandskataloge vol. 8 (Berlin, 2002) pp. 78–81. The British Museum purchased part of the champenois amateur Léon Morel's collection for £2,500. Dafydd Kidd, Cathy Haith, and Barry Ager, "Barbarian Europe in the Early Middle Ages. A Summary Catalogue of Continental Antiquities in the British Museum," unpublished database at the British Museum. I am grateful to Barry Ager for his assistance with this material. On J. P. Morgan's collection, which went to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, see n. 12 above.
  28. For general reference, see Georges-Pierre Woimant, *L'Oise (60), Carte archéologique de la Gaule* 60 (Paris, 1995) no. 116, pp. 185–187.
  29. Baudon, *Notice sur un cimetière franc.*
  30. Letter from Auguste Baudon to curators at the Musée des antiquités nationales on 19 May 1873. Unpublished correspondence preserved in the Archives du Musée d'archéologie nationale de Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

31. Hamard's excavations at Hermes, where he excavated more than 2,000 late Roman and Merovingian-period graves, are unfortunately very poorly documented. Vallet, "La Picardie avant 1914," p. 12.
32. Abbé J. Hamard, "Découverte d'une nécropole romaine à Bury (Oise)," *Bulletin archéologique du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques* (1896) pp. 330–331. In 1877, Hamard preserved some of his impressions of the artifacts found in the roughly 9,000 graves he uncovered at this site (Figs. 5 and 6).
33. Letter from the abbé Hamard including the *avertissement*, dated 20 June 1900. Archives du Musée d'archéologie nationale de Saint-Germain-en-Laye.
34. One piece, a seventh-century filigree bossed disk brooch found at Hermes in 1897, may have been sold to Albert Jumel. It was then purchased by the antiquities dealer Jacques Seligmann, who in turn sold it to J. Pierpont Morgan in 1910–1911. This piece, Acc. No. 17.191.21, was given to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1917. For an image of the brooch and the label on its reverse, see Bonnie Effros, *Merovingian Mortuary Archaeology and the Making of the Early Middle Ages* (Berkeley, 2003) figs. 12–13, pp. 134–135.
35. Unpublished letter dated 21 December 1904 from Albert Houlé to the curators of the national antiquities museum. Archives du Musée d'archéologie nationale de Saint-Germain-en-Laye.
36. Albert Houlé, *Étude sur les cimetières francs des vallées du Thérain, de la Brèche, et du Petit Thérain* (Caen, 1906) p. 9.
37. *Ibid.*, pp. 12–13.
38. Salomon Reinach, "Compte-rendu de A. Houlé, *Étude sur les cimetières francs des vallées du Thérain, de la Brèche, et du Petit Thérain* (Caen, Delesques, 1906)," *Revue archéologique* 94 (1907) p. 185.
39. Albert Houlé, *Notice-Étude sur des recherches et découvertes archéologiques dans le département de l'Oise. Époques romaine et franque* (Beauvais, 1907) pp. 7–8. Woimant, *L'Oise* (60) no. 116, p. 187.
40. Houlé, *Notice-Étude sur des recherches*, pp. 10–11. Woimant, *L'Oise* (60), no. 456, p. 335.
41. Object files at the Musée d'archéologie nationale Saint-Germain-en-Laye.
42. Woimant, *L'Oise* (60), pp. 85–86.
43. Albert Houlé, *Les fouilles de Bury: cimetière franc* (Beauvais, 1905) pp. 5–21.
44. Albert Houlé, *Notice-Étude sur une statère découverte dans une sépulture du cimetière franc de Bury* (Beauvais, 1905) pp. 3–11.
45. Houlé, *Les fouilles de Bury*, p. 5. Jules Pilloy, "Essai sur la classification des sépultures dites franco-mérovingiennes dans le département de l'Aisne," in his *Études sur d'anciens lieux de sépultures dans l'Aisne* 1 (Saint-Quentin, 1886) pp. 5–18.
46. Patrick Périn, *La datation des tombes mérovingiennes. Historique – méthodes – applications*, (*Centre de recherches d'histoire et de philologie de la IV<sup>e</sup> section de l'École pratique des hautes études* 5, *Hautes études médiévales et modernes* 39, Geneva, 1980) pp. 28–38.
47. Clodomir-Tancred Boulanger, *Le cimetière franco-mérovingien et carolingien de Marchélepot (Somme)* (Paris, 1909) pp. 93–97.
48. *Ibid.*, pp. 24–27.
49. Houlé, *Les fouilles de Bury*, p. 7. It should be noted that the broken skulls were more likely a result of damage caused by subsequent digging or by the tree roots that later

- covered the site. Houlié acknowledged elsewhere in this piece that this was the reason that so many of the ceramic vessels found in the cemetery were damaged. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
50. Joseph de Baye, *Les francs saliens et les francs ripuaires au Congrès du Charleroi* (Angers, 1888) pp. 12–13.
  51. See, for instance, recent dating of similar buckles at the cemetery of Jaulzy (Oise), which Françoise Vallet dates to the mid to late sixth century. Vallet, *Collections mérovingiennes*, pp. 266–267.
  52. The bibliography on this contentious debate is enormous. With respect to Frankish graves, a starting point for this perspective is Edward James, “Cemeteries and the Problem of Frankish Settlement in Gaul,” in P. H. Sawyer, ed., *Names, Words, and Graves: Early Medieval Settlement* (Leeds, 1979) pp. 55–89. Guy Halsall, “Archaeology and the Late Roman Frontier: The So-Called ‘Föderatengräber’ Reconsidered,” in Walter Pohl and Helmut Reimitz, eds., *Grenze und Differenz im frühen Mittelalter (Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 1, Vienna, 2000)* pp. 167–180. More generally on the question of ethnic ascriptions of early medieval artifacts, see Sebastian Brather, “Ethnische Identitäten als Konstrukte der frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie,” *Germania 78* (2000) pp. 139–177.
  53. I have written on this subject at greater length in Bonnie Effros, “Death and Burial,” in Daniel E. Bornstein, ed., *Medieval Christianity, A People’s History of Christianity 4* (Minneapolis, 2008) pp. 53–74. Effros, *Merovingian Mortuary Archaeology*, pp. 110–118.
  54. For examples of each of these in a recently excavated cemetery in the Aisne, see Alain Nice, *La nécropole mérovingienne de Goudelancourt-lès-Pierrepont (Aisne)* (*Revue archéologique de Picardie*, special number 25, Lille, 2008) pp. 179–180, 359, 372, 397, 403.

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