# Chapter 7

## The Early Medieval Period

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### 7.1 Introduction

The diverse documentary sources available that may have relevance to Jersey up to the 11th century provide limited information that assists with interpreting or predicting the archaeology of the island during this period. Most documents were written with no interest in Jersey, which is mentioned, at best, in passing. However, the documented broad historical context provides a backdrop to the archaeological materials found in Brittany, Normandy, and England, as well as the Channel Islands. They indicate military, political, and religious links and movements of people along which ideas, material culture and cultural practices as well as populations could move. They do not reflect, however, the more mundane small-distance connections between the islands and the coastal regions of France and England that were probably the bedrock of the social and economic interactions of the population of the Channel Islands throughout this period, irrespective of elite political manoeuvres.

The Germanic and the broader Celtic and Viking worlds have been structured and named as archaeological periods (with resulting specialisms) that may be helpful but, given the limited nature of the sources, these may over emphasise ethnicity or political elite affiliations that have at times framed archaeological questions and interpretations. Indeed, recent historiography has even challenged what terms such as Viking, Hiberno-Norse or Anglian might mean and that a direct ethnic, racial association may be a misplaced assumption. Whether this period should be better treated as primarily prehistoric, with any documentary implications only brought into discussion after the material evidence has been considered in its own merits first, is one which has attracted considerable support and for some the only historical allusions come in the terminology (Merovingian, Anglo-Saxon, Viking). Given the mixed nature of the population of an island closely connected by sea with many regions and cultures, the terminology here should be taken as representing material cultural associations only; research into the meanings and affiliations of the users of such material should be the subject of future research, not be the starting point from which questions could be framed.

### 7.2 The state of knowledge and research on Jersey and the Channel Islands

A survey of the early medieval archaeology of the Channel Islands, including such evidence as there is for Jersey, is offered by Sebire (2005), but can be updated by recent artefacts that have been reported to Jersey's HER and setting the older evidence (sadly some of the material not fully published) in the state of current knowledge.

The evidence for Anglo-Saxon England has been summaries by contributors to (Hammerow *et al.* 2011), though other studies that emphasise the links between the Anglo-Saxon and Merovingian worlds may be most relevant to Jersey (Welch 2006, 2012; Fleming 2020). Overviews of Merovingian archaeology (Effros 2002, 2003; Halsall 2008, 2010) provide a background to the archaeology of Normandy and possibly the Channel Islands, but the northern coastal areas do not figure strongly in these syntheses. The Carolingian period has received limited archaeological synthesis with less emphasis on western France and the Channel Islands, but there have been some archaeological and historical studies that are relevant (McKitterick 1983; Brett 2013; Loveluck 2013).

## 7.3 Major Themes

### *7.3.1 The Gallo-Roman/early medieval transition*

The Roman period is not well represented on Jersey and has specific characteristics on each of the other Channel Islands, but the extent to which any cultural preferences and practices continued after the collapse of the Roman Empire is not clear. Any deposits above the Roman-period levels are therefore crucial in evaluating continuity or discontinuity, but these issues, a major theme of post-Roman and sub-Roman archaeology elsewhere, have yet to be considered in detail on the Channel Islands as relevant sites and deposits have yet to be identified.

Several sites have produced both early medieval and Gallo-Roman evidence, but in no case is the nature of the relationship clear because the relevant stratigraphy has not survived. There may have been continuity of occupation, reuse of a site with building materials and structures after a discontinuity, or merely the reoccupation of a preferred location in the landscape.

The States Offices site at the junction of The Parade and Union Street has yielded finds from the later Iron Age, Gallo-Roman and Merovingian periods. This might imply some continuity of settlement or merely a preferred location which was repeatedly selected with periods of abandonment between, and more details from the Old Street excavations in 1979-1981 may enable interpretation of any stratigraphic sequence here. The Roman and then 9th-century phases at Île Agois definitely appear to indicate intermittent occupation of this isolated location (see below), but other sites with both periods represented such as St Brelade churchyard (Finlaison 1990, 156) may suggest some form of continuity of use, even if not evenly represented materially over time. The problems of understanding the relevance of Roman period evidence can be illustrated at Les Écréhous with a positive interpretation of Roman activity by the excavator (Rodwell 1996, 88) and an alternative suggestion by the ceramic specialist that the water-worn finds had been redeposited with beach gravel, implying that there may not have been a settlement there at all (Wood 1996, 233). The very deep foundations on the south side of Grouville church might suggest that it was constructed on a Roman building (Waterhouse 2017, 149) but whether this was taking advantage of an abandoned ruin or indicates some continuity of use is as yet uncertain.

A large row grave cemetery extensively excavated at Frénouville in Normandy recovered over 800 individuals from 650 graves. Its first phase was in the Roman period, aligned north-

south, but it extended to the north in the mid-5th century with east-west burials, with a higher proportion with grave goods, and these with a Merovingian cultural repertoire. There is debate regarding this site though it is agreed that there was significant population continuity (Effros 2003, 141-150). It may be assumed that a similar situation of continuity applied on the Channel Islands, though graves with Merovingian grave goods may not have been adopted.

Some element of continuity of a Roman system of administration is also suggested by McCormack (2010) who considers that the tripartite division of Jersey of the 12th century maintained a Roman administrative structure (McCormack 2010). The details of his original proposed spatial structure is different from that more recently proposed by Stevens (2021), but evaluating between these alternatives cannot be solved by archaeological evidence.

*7.3.2 Merovingian influences (6th – 8th century)*

The Channel Islands lie at the periphery of the Merovingian world, an area of control that was achieved the mainland by a series of conquests during the early 6th century, with most success under the leadership of Clovis (Costambeys *et al.* 2010, 35). After Clovis' death the kingdom was split between his sons into three main kingdoms, with Neustria including the area of Normandy, often in alliance with Burgundy. However, defeat in 687 at Tertry enabled Pippin I to gain control of Neustria though still several factions prevented total control. Under his successor Pippin II, the ancestor of the Carolingian line, it seems that royal control over Neustria was even weaker (Costambeys *et al.* 2010, 38-39). Other parts of France remained under king Childebert III, but with his death and that of Pippin II in the early 8th century the Neustrians appointed Ragamfred as their own mayor and, allied with the Frisians, were demonstrating their separation. Whilst returning to Neustria in 716, Ragamfred and the then Merovingian king Chilperic II were attacked and defeated by Charles Martel who then again defeated the Neustrians the following year, but it was only after another defeat in 718 that he effectively gained control. The start of Carolingian rule, as far as Neustria and possibly the Channel Islands were concerned started at this point.

The position of the Channel Islands is far from certain through this turbulent time, however. Given the fluid power structures in mainland Neustria, it is likely that any control of such politically peripheral lands were in the hands of administrators of whichever local aristocrat claimed them. Moreover, to the west an alternative political structure existed, as Brittany developed its distinctive culture and political elite. In the late Roman or immediately post-Roman period it appears that there was some form of migration from Wales and Cornwall into Brittany and their elites established control, particularly in the western portion of the peninsula, with their distinctive character documented from the 6th century (McKitterick 1983, 241). The eastern part of Brittany may have been under Frankish control, but most evidence for this is in the Carolingian period. Whilst the Breton king Judicaël submitted to Dagobert I in 635, Brittany appears to have been independent until Louis the Pious defeated them in 818 (McKitterick 1983, 18).

Few documentary sources provide information on Breton government and culture, but there is sufficient to indicate a strong Celtic influence in social and political structure and in the form and practice of Christianity (McKitterick 1983, 241-242), with distinctive liturgy and

forms of monasticism, the latter an aspect that appears to have influenced the Channel Islands (see Early Christianity).

A small amount of Merovingian ceramics has been found at a number of sites across the Channel Islands, including a few locations on Jersey. The terminology 'Merovingian' does seem to be broad, however, and includes ceramics thought to be well into the Carolingian period, though some appear to be early, such as a roller-stamped sherd from La Plaiderie, Guernsey (Wood 1996, 233). The two jugs (one complete) found in St Peter Port harbour may have been lost off a boat and their tar-like residues suggest that they may have held material to caulk the vessel to keep it watertight (Monaghan 1988). This would suggest that the jugs were not in themselves significant imports and may have been part of the equipment on a visiting vessel rather than indications of deliberate ceramic imports. Thus far, of the casual finds identified from Jersey that are early medieval, no coins or brooches are as early as this period, perhaps suggesting a limited amount of contact at this time.

Merovingian-style burials have not been found, but may exist, but Roman-period burial customs may have been those that persisted. Burial may follow a pattern that involves continued use of Roman burial grounds (see Roman/early medieval transition) but may then develop as in western Britain and Anglo-Saxon England with community burial grounds near to settlement, only some of which may then become the focus of church building and church-controlled burial (see below). Burials of this period need C14 to confirm their date. Analysis of bone chemistry on marginal and island populations elsewhere has ascertained some local but also immigrant individuals.

Burial in northwest Francia as well as in Anglo-Saxon England shifted in the later 6th century from larger cemeteries to smaller concentrations around each settlement for which there may or may not be a mortuary chapel component (Zadora-Rio 2003, 7; Loveluck 2013). The absence of a chapel may not indicate pagan burial as some Christian burials, indicated by sculpture, occur on what Thomas termed undeveloped cemeteries in Western Britain and Ireland. Recent research in Ireland and Wales has confirmed a long use of burial grounds without any religious structures until the development of a formal parish structure and increasing ecclesiastical control of burial; their relevance to the Channel Islands is discussed under Early Christianity.

Settlement evidence, should it be recovered, can be compared with settlement and building forms elsewhere. Economy can be considered through analysis of craft debris, coinage, and analysis of faunal and carbonised remains; they may be preserved, for example, in the ditch fills of the Old Street enclosure. It is possible that Jersey trade was facilitated through one or more beach markets, and distribution of metal detector finds may yet indicate such locations.

*7.3.3 Carolingian period (8th – 10th century)*

The Breton character is somewhat reduced following military defeat in 818 (McKitterick 1983, 18), which means that the intensive study of Breton village life, landscape and culture derived from documentary and archaeological survey may not be relevant to the Channel Islands as this is larger later in date, but as Breton influences may have continued, it is worth considering. The main focus of recent study, because of the survival of the *Cartulaire de*

*Redon*, and the completion of a deliberately complementary archaeological survey, is concentrated in south-east Brittany around Redon, midway between Rennes and Nantes (Davies 1988; Davies and Astill 2013). The documentary sources for western Britany are particularly sparse, but it is probable that Saloman was able to style himself as king of Brittany after his revolt against Charles the Bald in 866, but his control was limited because of the dispersed basis of power with numerous rulers, *machtierns*, of small territories (McKitterick 1983, 244; Davies 1988; Davies and Fouracre 2002). It is possible that the *machtiern* unit may have been one equivalent to Jersey (in which case there may be an aristocratic power centre to be located), or the island may have been under more Carolinian influence and was part of an estate of a significant aristocrat, probably based on the mainland, with only an administrator extracting taxes and administering justice.

Early medieval evidence from the later 8th century onwards has been found in a variety of forms, though amounts are still relatively small. However, they suggest a more complex social and economic structure and greater integration with surrounding regions. A copper alloy buckle plate (HER 0900467) from St. Ouen is probably 8th – 9th century date, and so is relevant here; its decoration is reminiscent of the Trewhiddle style but also sits within a Continental milieu. At present, which surrounding polity this item relates to remains uncertain.

The only secular settlement known on Jersey is at St. Helier with a concentration of ceramic finds at the States Offices site at the junction of The Parade and Union Street, near what had been Old Street. These were partly recovered from the largest excavation in the town (Finlaison 1976), but with other finds from small interventions (Finlaison 1976). It is notable, therefore, that the numerous other interventions have not located other early medieval finds of this period (though finds have been recovered for other periods). Sadly, the details of the earliest phases of the site have not been fully published but are only summarised in a paragraph (Finlaison 1986, 148). It is suggested that an enclosed settlement was occupied from the 10th to the 12th century, followed by a layer of wind-blown sand (for the later medieval occupation of this site see the Later Medieval Towns). Unfortunately, no features or details of the ditch that defined the enclosure have been published. This may imply a single farmstead, though others may have lain scattered in areas with either no interventions or where the earliest deposits have been destroyed. It is also possible that this enclosure may be in a similar tradition to the coastal ringforts in both the southern North Sea coasts but also in Brittany (Loveluck 2013).

Some early medieval structures excavated in France may provide some parallels to Channel Island structures at this time, including Pen-er-Malo, Morbihan where a hamlet is proposed and the early medieval buildings revealed at Le Yaudet-Ploulec'h, Côtes-d'Armor (Loveluck 2103; Cunliffe and Galliou 2007, 92-95). A range of both oval and rectangular houses with central hearths and with one or two opposing doors have been investigated in Brittany (Batt 1998); these indicate that there could be many structural forms in use at this time.

The most frequent and closely dated artefact category of this period found in Jersey is the silver denier. Both Charlemagne (768-814) and Charles the Bald (840-877) minted very similar coins, so closer dating is at present challenging; most scholars prefer the later

identification but some finds are considered earlier. Coupland (2015, 2018) has argued that for most coins of this type it is impossible to know whether the coin belongs to Charlemagne (768-814) or Charles the Bald (855-77) unless it was discovered in a hoard with other datable coins (Coupland 2015, 2018).

Five coins came from Île Agois, St Mary (see Early Christianity) but others have been recovered from the parishes of St. Ouen (Waterhouse 2014), Grouville (HER 0300401, HER 0300419) and from St. Lawrence (HER 1000330), so from different parts of the island. None have yet been recovered from St. Helier. These coins suggest that Jersey was to at least a limited extent connected through trading and taxation with the Carolingian world, and this presumably applied to both ecclesiastical and secular networks. A reference to St. Gervold, Abbot of Fontenelle, visiting Jersey in the first decade of the 9th century on behalf of the Emperor Charlemagne indicates that the island was under imperial control at this time.

The Île Agios coins were not found in the 1970s excavations, and so whether they were a small hoard or scattered finds is unknown, but they appear to have been recovered during the 1920-23 investigations. Other relevant finds came from the later excavations in Hut 1, with a socketed axe of probably 9th-century form was recovered from the make-up of the west wall (Finlaison and Holdsworth 1979, 329-332). From the same wall make-up came two opaque blue glass drum-shaped beads with fluted edges; no close parallels were known in 1979 but as they were not illustrated in the report reassessment is difficult. The early investigations also recovered a decorated early medieval jar (Finlaison and Holdsworth 1979, 342). Whether these finds are related to an early Christian site is discussed below.

*7.3.4 Early Christianity*

This section considers the early church across the whole early medieval period to the 11th century because much of the evidence cannot be closely dated, though there are clear changes through time. The ecclesiastical influences come from Normandy and the Carolingian world on the one hand, and the Celtic world – Wales, Ireland, and nearby Brittany – on the other. Whilst these parallel influences may have been partly related to secular political control of the Channel Isles, the activities of missionaries and any continuity form Roman-period Christianity were influences that could be outside the shifts in secular power.

The early church was the most literate and stable institution in the early medieval period, and through grants of lands and benefits could mobilise considerable resources. The church had immunities to royal taxes and received additional income through obligations that hereditary tribute payers contributed for expenses such as church lighting (Fouracre 2002). Moreover, a range of documentary sources were created in monastic scriptoria, and sufficient have survived to give some indications of activity on the Channel Islands. The study of local placenames and parish boundaries and dedications provides another source relevant to ecclesiastical organisation, though the reliability of saints' lives is uncertain as existing versions are later and have probably been framed round contemporary ecclesiastical politics at the time of their writing. There is material evidence of early sarcophagi at some excavated sites, indicating an early religious function, and a few isolated finds that probably have ecclesiastical associations. There are very few inscriptions, no more elaborate sculpture,

and little evidence of architecturally sophisticated churches. Overall, there is more evidence than for secular life, but much interpretation is provisional and requires conformation and expansion as more data becomes available.

Most of the islands each have at least one saint that has an early relationship to that place, though in no case does any significant amount of early structural or sculptural evidence contemporary with their presence survive. All have later structures dedicated to the relevant saint, or the ascription of placenames, to indicate their presence and long-term influence, but some do have some supporting archaeological evidence that relates to the early medieval period, albeit later than the saints themselves.

St. Marculf (also called Marcoul) may have been a 5th-century visitor to Jersey (Sebire 2005, 128), dying in 558 AD on the Îles Saint-Marcouf off the coast of the Cherbourg peninsula. Earlier he had resided at the Abbey of Nanteuil where he taught St Helier and in c. 545 AD sent his pupil to Jersey. St. Helier became a hermit living in a small cell apparently on the Hermitage Rock next to where Elizabeth Castle now stands in St. Aubin's Bay, but did not live as long as his mentor as he was murdered by pirates in 555 AD. The building now standing on the site of the cell is a later structure, but it may mark the site of the original eremitic residence, not unlike other island locations in Brittany, the Celtic west, Northumbria, and the Scottish Isles.

The location with the most convincing archaeological evidence for an early phase of Christian presence on Jersey is at St. Brelade churchyard. The excavations in the Fishermen's Chapel revealed an early phase below the present 13th-century building, though how much earlier is uncertain. The evidence comprised earth floors, possibly of both a chapel and a domestic building given the presence of both animal bone and shells (Rodwell 1990, 132). The lack of walling or other structural features, or of any burials, can be explained by the small areas of this date that were revealed. They are set, however, within a churchyard that was originally almost circular and 65m in diameter (Rodwell 1990,124), a common design for early Celtic church sites in Ireland and Wales. A large stone, interpreted by Rodwell (1990,129-130) as a prehistoric menhir, may have been set as a threshold into one of the buildings. The identified structures lie in the south-eastern portion of the enclosure, but probably represent only part of the complex within the site, as seen in better preserved Irish examples where a burial ground, shrine, and possibly prayer stations would comprise the ecclesiastical landscape, and where there could be more than one church.

The appropriation of prehistoric megaliths is one seen widely in the early church and occurs elsewhere in the Channel Islands at both Les Écréhous and on Guernsey. At Les Écréhous there is the best excavated evidence for an early church, again having some parallels with Celtic eremitic locations. A pit containing the disarticulated remains of a middle-aged woman was set adjacent to a line of post holes that may represent a fence if not a structure (Rodwell 1996, 88-94), and whilst both the pit and post hole line are parallel, aligned northeast-southwest, is notable how the pit is positioned very close to one of the posts. A presumably prehistoric menhir lay to the west, set in a pit that had been dug to receive it, indicating a deliberate removal, and as this is also on the same alignment as the other features described it is likely to be associated (Rodwell 1996, Fig. 57, 94-95). Slabs were placed over

the pit containing the human remains, possibly a base for a shrine structure on the top, as seen with Irish examples.

The longevity and continuity of the Christian significance of this part of Les Écréhous, no doubt considered the burial location of a local saint, is indicated by the construction of chapel over the burial pit. Only slight traces of foundation trenches survive (Rodwell 1996, 95-96), but they suggest a single-cell rectangular chapel orientated east-west but with the pit placed at the east end at the location for the altar, indicating a restructuring of the site but retaining the location of the relics. An early phase may be dated by three sherds, each found in later contexts, from the same jar with a band of roller-stamped decoration on the shoulder. The decoration is characteristic of 4th-6th century products from St-Marin d'Aubigny, though the Les Écréhous sherds are of a different fabric (Wood 1996, Fig. 160, 232, No. 7). This suggests a Merovingian initial phase, perhaps that of the burial and posthole feature, whilst Rodwell (1996, 98) proposes that the rectangular church and the subsequent phase with the small chancel may be 8th-10th century, only to be replaced with the longer chancel in the 12th century.

Guernsey megalith reuse has also been identified, with the parish churches of The Vale, Castel, (Trinity) Forest, St Martin's, and St Saviours all with material reused (McCormack 2010) (McCormack 2010, 738). A standing stone on Jehou Island has had a cross incised in the top surface of the monument (Walls and de Jersey 2007). Incised crosses on other stones, not necessarily megalithic, are also noted and many have been reused in Jersey (details in McCormack 1986, 60-66), with others recorded at St Saviour's, Vale and St Sampson's on Guernsey (McCormack 2020, 741-742).

St. Samson has a close association with Guernsey. Merdrignac has argued that the Saint's life is based on an earlier account written in the third quarter of the 6th century by a direct witness (Merdrignac 2008, 115-116) though McCormack (1986, 37) considers it early 7th century. He was born in south-east Wales and was educated at the famous monastery of Llantwit before going to Ireland. He later headed to Guernsey, then St. Malo and finally Dol-de-Bretagne where he founded a monastery that subsequently had significant regional influence. St. Samson's life reflects the geography of the early church, connected by sea. Many scholars of the early church now recognise that these documented figures would have travelled along trade routes as passengers on vessels with mainly secular business, indicating a thriving network between Brittany, south-west England, Ireland and western Scotland of which the Channels Islands would be the most south-easterly outlier.

St. Magloire's monastery on Sark may also represent a 6th-century Celtic phase of mission (McCormack 2010, 738-739), and on Herm there is a pre-12th-century chapel that may be that founded by St. Tugual. He was a nephew of the Cornish St. Brioc again emphasising the western British influences at this early phase of mission.

Île Agois (Finlaison and Holdsworth 1979, Holdsworth 1986) is one of the few sites where stratified early medieval material has been excavated on Jersey. The site was occupied several times through prehistory, meaning that most of the finds do not relate to the structures discussed here, though in early publications they were assumed to be associated.

However, following the careful excavation of early medieval finds (discussed above) in definitive stratigraphic relationship with the buildings, it is likely that all the structures identified by surface survey belong to a settlement of this period. Sadly, there is no complete plan of all the huts (for example hut 17) or the other earthworks such as the ridge wall on the summit of the north of hut 1 (Holdsworth 1986, 156), which impedes more confident interpretation. Holdsworth (1986, 165) suggests that 20-25 huts can be identified, but others would have been lost to erosion. It is also notable that the southern area had not been cleared of blackthorn when the survey was made, so more features may not have been identified.

The round houses on the Île Agois (Finlaison and Holdsworth 1979; Holdsworth 1986) may therefore be a manifestation of a western British eremitical monastic tradition, possibly linked to the known movements in the Irish Sea and English Channel through this period (Brett *et al.* 2021). There are, however, several elements that are missing from the site that would be expected, though these may yet be located if more excavation or a full survey is achieved. The missing elements include a potential oratory – an E-W oriented small rectangular building, inscribed stones – even if only cross-incised slabs, a leacht or shrine in the form of an above-ground slab box, and graves – possibly of a stone-lined graves as discussed below.

Stone-lined graves, also termed long-cist graves, occur widely, though on no site have large numbers been investigated. Excavations at Trinity Church revealed one certain and another possible grave that are at the base of the sequence, and these may be as early as the late 10th century (Waterhouse 2018). The cist-burials at of La Motte (Green Island) may not be late prehistoric but medieval, and given that they are not at a parochial site they may be early medieval (Patton 2002). The use of stone-lined graves continues into the first part of the later medieval period, as at St. Lawrence's Church (Finlaison 1998) and Grouville where a 12th to 13th century date is likely (Waterhouse 2017). Another was noted but not investigated at St Helier (Waterhouse 2018, 300), so many Jersey church sites appear to have such burials (Waterhouse 2018, 300). A long period of use for cist burials is now well demonstrated in Wales, both on early undeveloped burial grounds, those with small chapels, and parish church sites (Groom *et al.* 2011).

Chapels may have supported agricultural communities, with burials concentrated around the structure, and may have been as common on Jersey as they appear to have been in France. (Stevens 2021, 102) notes 65 known Jersey sites dedicated to Saints who were active in the period to the 6th century, but none have been identified archaeologically. However, (Waterhouse 2016, 646) has identified ceramics similar to St. Helier's Merovingian finds which might indicate a nearby manorial chapel, especially as fragments of early medieval sarcophagi made from shelly limestone were also recovered. Such sarcophagi were manufactured on the Continent c. 550-720, possibly came from Le Quiou, Rance Valley southwest of St Malo or southwest of Carentan. Most examples have been noted at various sites in eastern Jersey: St Clément, Grouville, St Lawrence, St Martin, St Saviour and Gorey. The distribution on Jersey represents an organised import system with widespread use across the island. Some sarcophagi fragments are from later parish church sites and may indicate continuity of burial, but some evidence, as at the later Priory of St. Clement and

Gorey, suggests that chapels or even undeveloped burial grounds may have been widely distributed which later went out of use. One such site has been investigated at Paule, Côtes-d'Armor, where the chapel, 11m by 7m, was surrounded by 14 burials, in this case dated to the 9th century but others elsewhere may have been earlier. An intentional votive deposit of three silver denier coins of Charles the Bald (840–77) were found in a small pit inside the Paule chapel, and an iron ploughshare was similarly deposited under the porch (Gall and Menez 2008, 20-21). This raises the intriguing possibility that the coins and axe head at Île Agois may have been structured deposits, the axe deliberately placed in the wall fill, and the coins possibly placed together even if slightly dispersed by the time that they were recovered. Ground clearance and preparation before construction of a church may have been a relatively common practice – a plough was also found near to Flixborough's mortuary chapel (Loveluck 2013), and the axe may have been the equivalent of the ploughshare in this location unsuitable for agriculture.

Whilst some Breton relics that were retained in English monasteries due to the exile of clerics over the period 913-939 when the Vikings from Nantes controlled Brittany, it also appears that earlier ecclesiastical links already existed between Brittany and Anglo-Saxon England. The Breton scriptoria produced a range of religious texts including Gospels and Psalters as well as grammars during the late 9th and early 10th centuries (McKitterick 1983, 247). Such products may also have been used by the ecclesiastical institutions in the Channel Islands, as the Breton style of Celtic church may also have had influence, and as Breton-trained clerics were sent abroad they perhaps provided the clergy for Channel Island churches. This may mean that some Anglo-Saxon influences could have reached the Channel Islands at this time, if only indirectly. One item from Jersey may indicate a Carolingian ecclesiastical contact as it features several Christian symbols, though these could also occur on secular items. A copper alloy strap fitting (HER 0401770) is decorated with champlevé enamel and although an exact parallel cannot be found it various technological and typological features suggest an early to mid-9th-century date. Another possibly ecclesiastical item is a copper alloy stylus (HER 1100381), as most writing at this time was undertaken by clerics; as it is undecorated, close dating is not possible.

There is only one early medieval inscription from Jersey, and this was found in 1891 beneath the 14th-century floor of St Lawrence church (Godfray 1894). This inscribed and decorated Roman column was given a modern assessment which considered that it was a priest's epitaph c. 600 AD, with a script that suggests Irish or Cornish connections, but not Welsh or Breton. Subsequently, possibly in the 8th or 9th century, the flat other side of the column was decorated with interlaced strapwork (Stevens *et al.* 1975). However, more recent reconsideration in the light of all inscriptions from Ireland, Wales, Cornwall, Brittany and the Channel Islands, it is thought that both elements were carved at the same time, creating a possible reading desk from a Roman column that may have been imported from the Continent as its geology is not local (Davies *et al.* 2000). The actual text is carved in three horizontal lines in Insular half-uncial script, and the recent reassessment suggests Breton or Cornish influence due to some of the letter forms. The inscription and interlace have now been redated to the 7th or 8th century, and the latter is comparable with Merovingian and Carolingian examples. The text reads:

USDI | LAU:SER | RIGOND but has various expansions and translations, though there is no certainty as to where Serrigond might have been, with three options (PN = personal name):
UIRGO SACRATA DEI LAULA . SERRIGOND
Laula(PN), virgin consecrated to God, (from) Serrigond
UIR SACRATUS DEI LAULUS . SERRIGOND
Laulus(PN) man consecrated to God, (from) Serrigond
UIR SACRATUS DEI LAURENTIUS L . SERRIGOND
Dilau(PN), a most holy man, (aged) 50, (from) Serrigond.

Only one inscribed text is also known from Guernsey. A standing stone, discovered lying near a hedge in the churchyard, has been placed near the west door of St Michel du Valle church. It displays a deeply incised Latin cross and four lines of text in shallowly-carved capital letters (Davies et al 2000). Some of the letter forms are reminiscent of some letters in 9th-century Breton manuscripts (Davies 2000, 311-312) but the arrangement of cross and text can be paralleled in 9th- and 10th-century alpha and omega series from Pembrokeshire (Nash-Williams 1950). The personal name [.]nsfrida has parallels in Frankish and English contexts but has no certain regional ascription, and rather than a previous suggestion of a 7th-century date it is now considered a grave marker from some point in the 8th to 10th century. The text reads:

W * | A || W | D~S~ | [--][.]NSF[R]IDA with two possible expansions and translations:
OMEGA * ALPHA ET OMEGA DEUS [--][.]NSF[R]IDA
Omega * alpha (and) omega, God [--][.]nsfrida(PN)
OMEGA * ALPHA ET OMEGA DOMINUS [--][.]NSF[R]IDA
Omega * alpha (and) omega, Lord [--][.]nsfrida(PN)

A cross-inscribed stone on Guernsey is mentioned by Sebire (2005, 133), reused as a gatepost in St Saviour's parish. Various other cross-inscribed sones have been listed and illustrated by (McCormack 1986, 46-47) including one Tau cross, but they cannot be closely dated, and all are not in their original contexts.

The size of the Viking raids, with numerous vessels arriving together, created greater challenges and disruption for the church than earlier sporadic pirate attacks. For example, in Normandy the church had no bishop at both Lisieux and Avranches in post from 862 until 990 – over a century – and Bayeux and Evreux were little better served (McKitterick 1983, 239). It is therefore likely that such dislocation and limited pastoral provision applied more widely, including across the Channel Islands. However, the assumption that the physical infrastructure, and possibly some of the pastoral support, was destroyed has probably been over-emphasised on the Channel Islands as this assumption based on inferences from annalistic entries elsewhere is belied by the architectural evidence which shows many stone structures remain from earlier periods, and that there is no archaeological evidence in sequences of long-term abandonment. Indeed, in Ireland there is strong evidence of continuity of monastic settlement and a tolerance of Christianity and relatively rapid conversion. The same is evidence through sculpture and some archaeology in Northern England where the Vikings took political control.

At present the limited archaeological evidence cannot discern in what ways the Jersey population was affected by the lack of ecclesiastical organisation and, over such a long period of time without bishops, with the inevitable limited replacement of clerics, but local ad hoc arrangements may have been made as French monasteries, if not dioceses, recovered during this time. The standing remains of parish churches has thus far only been dated to the 11th century, and what earlier buildings were like remains unknown. McCormack (1986, 67) suggests that a small number of grave slabs, possibly from the 10th or early 11th century, are reused in later rebuilding at St Mary and St Lawrence churches and at La Chasse, St Peter, all on Jersey. Most grave slabs are later in date and are discussed in the relevant section.

*7.3.5 Viking activity*

The Vikings raided Normandy in the mid-9th century, which may have led to considerable depopulation (McKitterick 1983, 240). It does appear, however, that the existing administrative structure based on Carolingian *pagi* and with Rouen as the main administrative centre, continued.

The early medieval church often suffered greatly from Viking raiding as they were concentrations of portable wealth and, in the case of monasteries, of population that could be carried off into slavery. Whilst the bias of documentary sources might emphasise ecclesiastical over secular dislocation, it is likely that the overall effect of raiding was significant dislocation across society. Given the limited evidence for the early church on Jersey, it is unsurprising that this is not easily recognised, and earlier pirates (such as those who supposedly killed St. Helier) indicates a level of long-term instability so this threat should be seen as merely an intensification of an intermittent but significant risk. A probable fragment of ecclesiastical metalwork (HER 0300389), possibly a side-handle mount from an Irish house-shrine, has been found, and may have been in use on the island, though it is possible it is a loss linked to booty gathered from a number of raids, for example at Breton sites.

In the 830s, the Vikings conducted a series of raids around the mouth of the Seine, including Rouen and the monastery of St-Wandrille in 841, north to Quentovic in 842, but then round the Breton peninsula to Nantes in 843 (Nelson 1997, 25-26). A Viking fortress has been identified and investigated on the north Breton coast at St-Brieuc (Price 2008, 459). At any point, the Channel Islands could have been targeted, though in comparative terms the returns would have been limited compared with these centres of population and wealth. People were often taken for ransom; in 841 26 lb of silver was paid for 68 people associated with St-Wandrille monastery, and only 6lb more for the monastery itself (Nelson 1997, 37).

Pagan Viking burials in the region are rare, the most notable being the ship burial on the Île de Grois off the Breton coast (Price 2008, 459-460). Another burial location is on the small Île Lavrec, one of a cluster of islands centred on Île de Bréhat off the north coast of Brittany and only c. 70km southwest from Jersey. Here, two warrior burials were found, though badly preserved. They were probably casualties of the raiding of these islands, and similar burials may have been made on the Channel Islands.

From 866, Charles the Bald managed to keep the mouth of the Seine secure but following his death and those of his immediate successors, there was a further upsurge in raids from 885, under the leadership of Rollo. He was partially defeated in 911 and agreed to be based in Rouen and provide defence for his erstwhile enemies against other Viking aggressors, and was converted to Christianity (Nelson 1997, 30-31). Rollo used this opportunity of peace to create a lordship, the origin of Normandy, and his followers settled, creating a Viking strand in the social weave of what had been Neustria.

In many respects the newcomers acculturated with the native culture, though McKitterick does note that a few Viking aspects of law do seem to have been incorporated into the legal codes, so there clearly was some lasting influence on government (1983, 240). Rouen became a major market centre and port and is listed as the site of a mint from 864 (McKitterick 1983, 240). It is notable that political links also reflect a Viking influence, with connections to the north and west rather than to the south or east making English and Danish associations most dominant by the 11th century, and this may be reflected in an increased communication between the Channel Islands and southern England, if not the North and Irish Sea peripheries, under Viking control.

A recent paper by Stevens (2021) proposes that because Jersey was still called Angia in 803 but gained its present name in the Viking period. Jersey and Guernsey both incorporate the Norse world for island, ‘ey’, with smaller islands ending in ‘hou’ derived from holmr, along with many other Norse names. The implication is that this suggests settlement, though it may be noted that the many equivalent coastal and island names in Pembrokeshire have not suggested major Viking settlement. However, other inland names on Jersey are also proposed as evidence of Viking settlement, particularly on the northern parts of the island. It may be that some of these foci may be confirmed by concentrations of metalwork finds yet to be made, though experience across much of Viking England is that rural settlement is hard to locate and identify. The argument that undoubted Viking settlement of the Cotentin would also have included the Channel Islands is, however, a strong one and there are sufficient strands of evidence, albeit some not convincing alone, that suggests that there may have been extensive settlement or at least some population movement to ensure political control.

There is limited direct artefactual evidence for Viking activity on Jersey, but they may have raided and, a fragment of an ingot of silver with low gold content (HER 0900423), could be a fragment of a Viking-period ingot. Unfortunately, it is not diagnostic enough to be certain of its date or cultural affiliation, but a Viking date is credible. Hack silver was used for payments, and its cut surfaces may indicate it was trimmed to be of a certain value. Once the Vikings were settling on the mainland, they may have had control over one or more of the Channel Islands which would have come within that socio-cultural ambit. The only probable excavated Viking finds are a gaming piece and an iron dagger from Guernsey (Platt 2009, 18). A copper alloy and iron stirrup-strap mount (HER 0300414) found in Grouville is decorated in Urnes style and is probably 11th century in date. It therefore relates to the post-raiding phase of Viking Norman period of control and is the type of object and artistic style one would expect to be fashionable in the Channel Islands at this time. (Waterhouse 2014) considered that it may have been made on the Continent or Scandinavia, rather than England, but given the movement of people and goods between all

these areas its main significance at the moment is that it is the first find to demonstrate that Jersey was part of that Scandinavian-influenced world.

Two lead-alloy disc brooches, (HER 0401594, 0401596), only datable to c. 900-1100, are other portable items that reflect Jersey's participation in the wider stylistic world, with such brooches found across western Europe. A slightly later copper alloy disc brooch with cloisonné enamel decoration (HER 1100416), made in in the Rhineland, shows that this international perspective continued into the 11th century, part of that trend represented in the centuries that follow through more plentiful artefactual evidence.

Brittany suffered raids from 912, and in 913 the monastery at Landénnevic was destroyed. The monks fled to the east with their relics, avoiding other attacks probably by the Vikings based in Nantes, in 914 and 1919 (McKitterick 1983, 245). When this centre of Viking power was lost in 937-939, Breton rule was re-established, with King Athelstan assisting Breton exiled secular and religious elites who had taken refuge in England (McKitterick 1983, 247). The shift from Viking settlement and lordship under Rollo to a Norman social and political structure and identity was relatively swift and was partly influenced by Frankish models but included elements that were distinctive, and under his descendants the distinctive medieval Duchy of Normandy was formed, with the Breton and Anglo-Saxon influences also present.

Place names may indicate areas of particular Viking settlement, and (Renaud 2008, 453) suggests that much of the coast and inland around Rouen was particularly densely settled, including the northern portion of the Cotentin peninsula; this had been settled by Norwegian Vikings before it was granted to the Rollo's son William Longsword in 933 (Renaud 2008, 454), when the Channel Islands were also taken under Norman control after a period under the Breton kingdom (Platt 2009, 21). The degree of Scandinavian influence in Cotentin is reflected in the establishment of a 'thing' assembly point for local government at Le Tingland (Renaud 2008, 455), and some words have been retained in local vocabulary through to today. Three Norse placenames have been discussed for Guernsey sarcophagi (Ridel 2010). This all suggests that the nearby Channel Islands could have been incorporated into this strong regional Viking political and even cultural orbit, particularly if actual settlement was part of this process.

*7.3.6 Capetian France, Brittany, and Normandy (late 10th and 11th centuries)*

Any centralised French power dissolved in the west during the 10th century with Brittany and Normandy moving out of the orbit of centralised control that centred on Neustria (Hallam 1980). In Normandy ducal control was high over both secular vassals and the church, and this may have been the case for the Channel Islands. With the Norman conquest of England, the links of England became more diverse and linked to elite estates both side of the English Channel as well as trade and politics. It is from this event and its subsequent socio-economic consequences that the long-term interest in the Channel Island by England is derived. This moulds the politics but also the archaeology of the period to follow, and in many respects, it is easier to discuss this transitional period, with establishment of the parochial system and increase in archaeologically visible material culture, with the later material.

*7.3.7 Development of island identities*

The islands which comprise the Channel Islands have distinct geological and topographic differences, and it may be that some of the differences more visible by the later Middle Ages developed at this time as their trajectories of internal development and interaction with other areas (Normandy, Brittany, Southern England and Cornwall and the Irish Sea region beyond) were not necessarily always the same. The natural strengths of the harbour at St Peter Port, Guernsey, may have created a specific dynamic on that island but the larger island of Jersey may have offered different attractions and advantages. Until more evidence from each island becomes available, the origins of distinctive traditions remain uncertain, but could well have developed as a more coherent political system was in place.

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