CHAPTER 11

FUNERARY RITES AT *BROCAVUM* IN THE THIRD CENTURY AND AFTER

Here sleeps the body of the little maid, Erotion,
Ere her sixth winter fate had called her shade to hasten on.
Whoe'er thou art who after me shall own this tiny plot,
Lay year by year the dues upon her stone; forget her not.
So shall thy house endure nor suffering know, and this remain
The only sign and monument of woe on thy domain.

Martial, Book 10, lxi

INTRODUCTION

Cemeteries are not just places to dispose of the dead. They are one of the arenas where the living play out their relationships both with the dead and each other. They are places to mourn. They are places to celebrate the lives of the dead and to remember them. They are also one of the places where the status and standing of the family can be made visible. Funerals generally reflect beliefs and agendas of the bereaved rather than the deceased. By studying funerals, much can be learnt about the living.

This chapter explores the funerary rituals that the evidence detailed in Chapters 3 to 10 suggests. Despite the difficult circumstances under which the site was excavated and the chequered post-excavation history of the archive, it will be clear that the site provides a wealth of detail about the people buried in the cemetery, their funerals and the ceremonies that may have taken place after the funerals. Many of the considerations of individual types of pyre and grave good have shown quite unexpected age and sex associations and it is appropriate to examine the basis of these before proceeding further.

The integrity of the pyre good associations clearly has to rest on the assumption that the places where the body was cremated were not reused. If the same sites were reused and the debris not cleared away, then the remains from any later cremation could well be contaminated by the pyre debris of earlier ones. This would be the situation if *ustrina* or permanent crematoria such as that suggested at Trentholme Drive, York, were used. There, a considerable spread of pyre debris consisting of cremated human and animal bone, coal and coal ash, and pyre goods was found (Wenham 1968, 21–5), and it was suggested that this was the debris cleared from a masonry *ustrina* similar to that from Carnuntum. As far as can be gathered from the records, nothing comparable to that deposit was recovered from Brougham. Most of the suggested pyre debris deposits were recovered in discrete cut features. Even where the written records suggest a spread such as in the case of **87** and **249**, these seem to be slight and not comparable to the Trentholme Drive deposit. Outside of York, the north has not produced evidence of permanent crematoria and it seems likely that the dead at sites like Brougham were cremated on open-air pyres.

Contamination could still arise if the pyre sites were regularly reused with debris remaining on them between cremations. As the evidence stands at Brougham there seems to be very little evidence of this. In only one case (**268**) was it suggested that duplication in the human bone suggested contamination. Two joining fragments of bone veneer were found in the urned cremation burial **123** and the pyre debris deposit **154**. Given the nature of the deposits, such a link need only imply that both came from the same cremation and does not necessarily imply contamination. Fragments from the same samian vessels have been found in four deposits (**9** and **12**; **82**, **105** and **106**; **82** and **282**; **277** and **291**). It is also suggested that the fragments from the same hunt jar were found in **243** and **284.** In no case do these pottery fragments show any sign of burning, and it is not thought they were pyre goods. Most of them came from the fills of the graves, and again they do not provide good evidence of the contamination of pyre sites. As far as can be judged, it seems reasonable to assume that the pyre goods found with human bone were present on the pyre of that individual, and in what follows this assumption will be made.

In this chapter the discussion will be structured according to the different stages of the funerary rites – preparing the body, the act of cremation, the act of deposition and commemorating the dead. Following this the evidence of other ritual activity on the site and the differing attitudes to the burial of different parts of the community will be considered. Finally the later history of the site as a place of burial will be reviewed.

PREPARING THE BODY

Judged by the personal ornaments amongst the pyre goods it seems very likely that many of the dead may have gone to their pyres dressed as in life rather than wearing shrouds. McKinley (p. 302) has pointed out that the deposits of glass and copper alloy found fused to the bone indicates that objects of these materials lay close to the body. Though some of these items may have been vessels, with which the pyres were amply stocked, in the case of **257** it is clear that the deceased, probably an adolescent girl, was wearing a bead necklace as fragments of it have been found both in the pyre goods from the deposit and fused to the temporal lobe.

The personal ornaments that have been recognised amongst the pyre goods include bead necklaces, gold earrings, lengths of gold chains possibly from necklaces, copper-alloy and silver brooches, iron bucket pendants, a gold pendant and a silver finger ring. It is possible that these could have been placed on the pyre rather than have been worn, but the latter seems more likely. The associations seen between the items and the sex of the deceased further suggest that the corpse was dressed in the way the individual might have been expected to appear in life. The numbers of glass beads and their associations (see p. 389 and TABLE 9.2) indicates that many of the females wore necklaces. This is likely to have included very young girls as the children with beads in **181** and **253** were only three to four years old. The gold earrings were also associated with females and an interesting gender difference is hinted at by the brooches, with the males wearing crossbow brooches and the females those of other types. As noted on p. 383, by the fourth century, crossbow brooches were definitely an ornament appropriate to males and this evidence may suggest that the distinction had started to occur in the third century.

The number of hobnails recovered indicates that shoes were regularly present on the pyre and the possibility exists that these too were worn, though the habit of frequently placing shoes *by* the body in inhumations (see for example Crummy *et al.* 1993, 41, 145) might indicate they were placed unworn on the bier. Had they been worn, it could have resulted in less efficient cremation of the foot bones as there would have been poor oxidation. Unfortunately, small bones such as phalanges from the foot were scarce in the cremated material (p. 300) and so it is not possible to ascertain the likelihood of them being worn from this source. Mould (p. 392) has pointed out that a variety of shoe styles existed in Roman Britain and that hobnails merely indicate the presence of nailed shoes. The absence of hobnails cannot be equated with the absence of shoes. In the light of this, the pattern seen in TABLE 9.4 which shows the age

TABLE 11.1: PRESENCE AND ABSENCE OF HOBNAILS IN DEPOSITS WITH THE REMAINS OF ADULTS AND CHILDREN

	Hobnails present	**Hobnails absent**	**Total**
Adult	39	85	124
Infant/immature	3	35	38
Total	42	120	162

and sex breakdown of the deposits with hobnails is interesting. In TABLE 11.1 the presence and absence of deposits with hobnails in those burials with the remains of single individuals of known age are summarised.

As can be seen from the table, nailed shoes seem associated with adults and a Chi-squared test shows the association to be significant at the 1% level. It is possible that young people were sent to their pyres without shoes, but equally it might hint at an age-related difference in shoe fashion with young people wearing stitched or single-piece shoes whilst the adults favoured nailed shoes. Nailed shoes do occur in shoe sizes appropriate for children, but the majority tend to be of a size suitable for adults (Quita Mould pers. comm.)

One interesting omission from the pyre goods is the complete absence of any hairpins. From the later first century onwards, most Romanised sites produce hairpins in large quantities as it is clear that many women wore their hair in the Romanised styles which required such accoutrements (Allason-Jones 1989b, 133–9). These pins could be made in metal, jet or glass, but most frequently were made in bone. Given the large quantities of burnt bone artefacts recovered from the cemetery, the absence of any fragments of bone pins is remarkable. The implication has to be that at Brougham, either women were prepared for the pyre with their hair loose or that they habitually wore it in a style that did not require pins, such as plaits. If the latter, then as a group they would undoubtedly have had an appearance that marked them out as an unusual group in the third century.

There are slight hints that the bodies might have been anointed or perfumed. In the Roman world, olive oil was used not only as a culinary ingredient, but was also central to the bathing regime and was the basis for many perfumes (Mattingly 1990, 81–2). All of the amphora fragments on the site are from Dressel 20s which contained olive oil, and the remains of a glass bath-flask which would also have held oil was found in **227**. It is also suggested that the small copper-alloy handle from **235** came from a metal bath-flask. Though oil in the quantities found in an amphora may have been used as an accelerant on the pyre, the quantities in a bath-flask would scarcely have been sufficient to have been effective for this purpose and it seems more likely that their contents – which may well have been perfumed – would have been used on the body.

When the body of an adult was laid out, it seems very likely that it may often have been carried to the cemetery on a bier decorated with bone inlays. These could have been very colourful as, though colour was not noted on the Brougham veneers, it was on the very closely comparable group found with an urned cremation burial at Birdoswald (Wilmott *et al.* forthcoming). Traces of red, blue and black colouring were observed on those but only during the conservation process. The Brougham veneers have never undergone such detailed treatment and so there is a distinct possibility that they too were originally polychrome. The controlled excavation of the Birdoswald urn under laboratory conditions allowed conclusions to be drawn about the position of the veneers on the pyre which resulted in the suggestion that they had decorated a large item such as a bier, rather than a small box. A similar function seems very likely at Brougham. The association observed between the veneers and charcoal from ash wood (TABLE 5.1) suggests the biers may often have been made of ash but the variable collection of charcoal makes it difficult to be certain of this. The biers may have been upholstered, as the small nails frequently found would have been suitable for such a purpose, and an upholstered bier appears to have been observed at Beckfoot (Bellhouse 1955, 51–2).

TABLE 11.2: PRESENCE AND ABSENCE OF BONE VENEERS IN DEPOSITS WITH THE REMAINS OF ADULTS AND CHILDREN

	Veneers present	**Veneers absent**	**Total**
Adult	67	57	124
Infant/immature	3	35	38
Total	70	92	162

Such biers would have involved an appreciable expense. A glance at the many veneers illustrated in Chapter 4 gives an insight into the amount of time that would be required to produce the decoration, even before the work of constructing, upholstering and decorating the bier. Fragments from the veneer type E2.1, for example, are very common, but these would have required much expertise and time to produce. Most now appear as simple chequerboards, but examples such as that illustrated in FIG. 4.199, no. 4a show that prior to burning each longitudinal groove was inlaid with a narrow bone strip whose upper edge was crenellated. The crenellations of the large blocks and the strips were offset to produce a more complex chequer pattern.

How infants and young people were conveyed to the cemetery is unclear. TABLE 11.2 shows the occurrence of veneers in deposits with adult and immature bone. There is a very strong association of veneers with adults (significant at less than the 1% level). Their virtual absence in deposits with the remains of young people, strongly suggests that the funeral processions of those individuals would have been visually very different. It is possible they were transported in closed coffins. The presence of minerally preserved traces of oak and ash on the larger iron nails possibly indicates that coffins as well as biers could have been used. Alternatively children and young people could have been transported on biers that were decorated in some other way or perhaps left plain. A modern analogy might be the white coffins favoured for the burial of young children.

THE ACT OF CREMATION

As already noted there is no evidence at Brougham for a permanent crematorium and so it may be assumed that a pyre would be built for each individual other than in the few instance where a dual cremation (**76**, **219** and **243**) took place. Where these pyre sites were located is unknown. The only possible locations appear to be **F38** and **221**, but neither of these are particularly convincing. What does seem likely, given the quantity of redeposited pyre debris present, is that the pyres were in the vicinity of the area excavated.

At Corbridge it was suggested that, in the area of the bypass, the cremation sites may have lain to the west of Dere Street while the interments were made to the east (Casey and Hoffman 1995, 22). The paucity of deposits south of the presumed road at Brougham has been noted (see p. 22) and a similar division might be suggested here, with the pyre sites to the south and the interments in the more preferred higher ground to the north. McKinley (2000a, 39) has shown that pyre sites may leave very ephemeral traces with burning only penetrating the ground surface for a depth of 2 to 5cms. Such traces could well have been overlooked or destroyed given the concentration on locating cut features. The southern area of the site was investigated in 1966 and the first of the 1967 seasons. Only the most minimal records survive for the 1966 excavation, and the stripping of the area by the road engineers had already started prior to the first 1967 season. Neither circumstance was conducive to the recognition of ephemeral details, at the time or in the post-excavation process. The mention of 'dark sooty earth' overlying the cobbles in **F24** is reminiscent of the burning noted in the vicinity of the cobbled platforms at Corbridge (Casey and Hoffman 1995, 17) but there is no suggestion that any burning was observed. Alternatively, as approximately two-thirds of the hilltop has not been excavated, the pyre sites may lie to the north leaving the road frontage for formal burials.

The main fuel used for the pyres was birch and alder, and Campbell (p. 270) has advanced the tentative hypothosis that the former may have been more closely associated with females and juveniles and the latter with males. There may have been reasons for this, relating to the burning properties of the wood and the different sizes of the bodies. However, given the many age and sex differences that can be observed in the Brougham pyre and grave goods, it is possible that fuel differentiation may have arisen from symbolic as well as pragmatic considerations. The erratic collection of charcoal at Brougham means that the associations cannot be tested in the same way that the artefact associations can, but it does indicate that in future cemetery excavations this aspect of pyre ritual might be a fruitful line of enquiry.

Some woods may have been chosen because they give off a pleasant smell when burning. Campbell suggests that the *Prunus* species may have been a case in point. It is unfortunate that most of the deposits in which it has been recognised are of pyre debris (**151**, **164**, **207** and **270**), as the one case where it occurs in a formal burial (**102**), it seems likely to have been of a male of high status judged from some of his other pyre goods (a horse and an object of ivory) and the elaboration of the grave goods. In the previous section, the probable presence of perfumed oils has been noted which could have been used either to anoint the body or to pour on the pyre. Aromatics were very important in the ancient world and expensive spices are known to have been burnt on the pyres of the rich (Dalby 2000, 197). Herodian (IV.2.8), describing the pyre on which the effigy of Severus was to be burnt as part of his deification, notes that it was filled by '... every incense on earth and all the fruits and herbs and juices that are collected for their aroma'. They were also appropriate for more humble cremations. Pliny the Younger (V.16) recounts how, on the death of the daughter of one of his friends, the father ordered the money he had intended for the purchase of cloths, pearls and jewels for her wedding to be spent on incense, ointment and spices for her funeral. The use of *Prunus* at Brougham may belong to this tradition, and other sweet-smelling materials might also have been included in the construction of the pyres. It is possible, for example, that the blue/green glass flasks and bottles placed on the pyre and now known only from melted fragments, originally contained perfumes or what Herodian describes as 'juices collected for their aroma'.

The corpse and its bier were placed on the pyre together with a wide range of pyre goods. It has to be stressed that a great deal of wealth literally went up in smoke during the act of cremation. It has already been noted that the corpse could be wearing jewellery of precious metals and that the biers themselves would have involved noticeable expense. Other luxury pyre goods include items made of ivory (p. 404 endnote 3), probably at least one silver vessel (**303.1**) and copper-alloy buckets inlaid with silver (**106.1** and **235.1**). The number of different metal vessel types that can be identified is remarkable within a Romano-British context. Fragments from vessel metals are rare as site finds. For example, fragments from them make up less than half of one percent of the large *corpus* of finds published from Colchester (Crummy 1983). They were not items that were casually lost or thrown away, but seem instead to have been carefully curated. At Brougham, however, they appear to have regularly been placed on the pyre.

Another expensive offering included animals. The sacrifice of a chicken or a joint of meat might not have been a great expense but the evidence suggests that at times whole carcasses of horses and cattle were placed on the pyre (e.g. **102**, **194** and **298**) and that it was not unusual for there to be a variety of animal offerings on a single pyre (TABLE 7.1). It is also interesting to note that the horses, for example, were not elderly beasts but young ones that it might have been expected would have a useful life in front of them, including large animals that in modern parlance would be horses rather than ponies (see p. 317). Again this indicates real monetary sacrifice.

The role of pottery as a pyre good is a vexed one as the picture is complicated by the practice of placing the urns by the side of the pyre so that they show burning or scorching on one side (see p. 358), and by the fragmentation of the vessels. The incidence of burnt fragments that could well be pyre goods following the definition on p. 41 is shown in TABLE 11.3. Given the volume of pottery found at the site, the incidence of material that might have been placed

TABLE 11.3: OCCURRENCE OF POSSIBLE POTTERY VESSELS USED AS PYRE GOODS (MINIMUM NOS)

	Samian	BB1 Jar	Other BB1	FO3 beaker	Other	Total
Adult	3	14	1	2	1	21
Adult female	–	–	3	–	–	3
Adult male	–	3	2	–	1	6
Double	–	1	1	2	–	4
Infant	1	3	–	–	–	4
Immature	–	3	–	–	1	4
Uncertain	7	11	1	–	1	20
Total	11	35	8	4	4	62

TABLE 11.4: PRESENCE AND ABSENCE OF ANIMAL BONE DEPOSITS WITH THE REMAINS OF ADULTS AND CHILDREN

	Bone present	Bone absent	Total
Adult	42	82	124
Infant/immature	3	35	38
Total	45	117	162

on the pyre seems rather low, and it is possible that pottery was rarely used as a pyre good. Alternatively it may just not have been selected for deposition. It has been noted that the incidence of burnt samian in the unstratified material is higher than in the funerary features (see p. 352) which might perhaps hint that burnt pottery was disposed of in some other way. Given the problems in identifying pottery that has been on the pyre, it is probably best to conclude that we do not know to what extent pottery was used as a pyre good.

The differences noted in the preparation of adults and young people for cremation, also extend into the area of the pyre goods placed with the body. Whilst it is not surprising that military equipment is found with adults (see p. 400), the association of a range of other offerings was not expected. Statistically significant associations exist between particular pyre goods and adults. On p. 378 this has already been shown for the association of metal vessels with adults. The same is true of the animal bone which is summarised in TABLE 11.4. A Chi-squared test shows the association to be significant at the 5% level.

The difference in treatment on the pyre therefore seems a real one. Adults had offerings of complete or partial animal carcasses and metal vessels; younger people virtually never had these items. Ivory items seem to have been associated with adults. The rarer items such as the figurines may also have tended to be placed more often on the pyres of adults. The possible fragment from a copper-alloy figurine (**71.1**) came from the urned cremation burial of an older adult. The pipeclay figurine **106.11** came from a deposit of pyre debris where the human bones could neither be aged nor sexed. However, the deposit also contained glass beads and the fragments of a Hemmoor bucket, strongly suggesting that this was an adult female.

The pyre goods point to richly furnished pyres for adults but are silent as to what went onto the pyres of children and young people. The difficulties of identifying pottery used as a pyre good have been discussed above, but *if* TABLE 11.3 can be taken as a fair reflection of the incidence of pottery pyre goods, there is no significant association between adults and pottery vessels, and so pottery vessels may well have been one of the items placed on the pyres of the younger people.

Just because we cannot identify the pyre goods children had, it does not mean that they did not have them, as they could well be of the variety that has left little trace in the Brougham archive. As already discussed on p. 9, the range of plant materials and foods that could be expected had the deposits been processed under modern conditions have been irretrievably lost here. A single hazelnut shell from **183** and a fragment of an oyster shell from the cremated

bone in **194** are all that remain of what could well have been a very abundant range of pyre goods and these may have been selected for younger people. That considerable wealth can easily be expended on the funeral of a child in such a way as to leave no archaeological trace is easily demonstrated by Pliny's description of a father spending money on incense, ointment and spices for his daughter as she was described as being 'not yet fourteen'.

There are hints amongst the pyre goods of the adults that there might have been some differentiation on gender lines but it is difficult to test this formally as the numbers are so small. It may be noted however that the only sexed association of pork being placed on the pyre was on that of an adult male (**102**). Pork may have been associated with males of a certain status as an unburnt joint of pork was placed in the elaborate cist **227** as a grave good, and here too the person being buried was an adult male. There are also slight hints that Hemmoor buckets might have been an appropriate pyre good for adult females. The presence of these vessels was noted in deposits **141** and **237**, in both of which the bone is suggested to be that of a female. The bone in the other two deposits (**106** and **235**) is unsexed but **106** also has the remains of glass beads amongst the pyre goods which strongly suggest the person being cremated was female.

An interesting observation about the pyre goods is that insofar as it is possible to tell, they appear to be of third-century date. These could therefore have been new or relatively little used items. As will be noted in the next section, this is in contrast to some of the items selected as grave goods.

THE ACT OF DEPOSITION

After the body had been cremated, the cremated bone, remains of pyre goods and other cremation debris were collected for deposition. What is clear from all categories of evidence is that only a proportion of this material was formally deposited within the cemetery. The evidence of the human bone suggests that this is true for all ages and sexes (see p. 295), and this seems to be one of the few ways in which people of different ages were treated similarly. Where the rest of the cremated remains went is a mystery. Was it left on the pyre sites, was it collected to be taken elsewhere? We do not know.

The selection of elements of the skeleton does not appear to show any particular bias, though McKinley comments on **170** where no element of the skull is present and on **20**, **236** and **283** where it is unusually low (see p. 301). All of these deposits are urned cremation burials where it might be hypothesised that any under-representation could be the result of deliberate choice. Burial **170** was of a female aged 21–40 years, **236** of an adult of 30–45 years, **20** of an adult male of 40–50 years and **283** of an adult male aged over 45. In McKinley's classification (see TABLE 6.1) **236** would be an older mature/older adult and **20** and **283** older adults.

The head was often an object of special veneration (Philpott 1991, 84). Skulls and skull fragments are found within both cult settings and in more puzzling deposits. An example of the former is the deliberately defleshed skull found in a deep shaft at Folly Lane, Verulamium (Mays and Steele 1999, 319; Niblett 1999, 415), and of the latter a pit at Doncaster which also contained the remains of hundreds of apples (Buckland and Magilton 1986, 198, 200). It may be significant that in the burials where the low quantities of skull fragments were noted, one of the individuals was amongst the small number of older adults noted, and the other two could also have been mature adults. The individual in **236** was also marked out by having ivory and a copper-alloy vessel amongst their pyre goods, and the grave pit may have been the subject of some special elaborations. Perhaps these were special individuals in their community and pieces of the skull were deliberately collected as mementos. The removal of skull fragments from the pyre and their curation for subsequent religious or magical acts might provide an explanation for where some of the 'missing' cremated debris went, but still leaves a considerable amount unaccounted for.

The deposits that can be recognised fall into three main categories:

formal urned burials,
'unurned' burials that might have been contained in some other container,
deposits of pyre debris.

Given the problems with the structural narrative at Brougham and the small amounts of cremated bone contained within some of the urns, the borders between some of the categories are fluid, and it has to be admitted that in some cases, the decision to place a deposit in one category rather than another has to be based on a best guess. The descriptions in the inventory in Chapter 4 should make it possible for readers to judge for themselves whether the allocation is a reasonable one.

URNED CREMATION BURIALS

In total 123 of the deposits are considered here to be urned cremation burials.[1] In addition **349** found in 1958 was also an urned cremation burial but nothing is known of its deposition circumstances and it will not be included in the tables.

One feature of the urns themselves that is worthy of note here is the one-sided burning that can often be observed on them (see p. 358). It seems very likely that the urns were regularly placed close to the side of the pyre. Was this some form of purification rite? Many of the vessels had clearly been in use domestically prior to being deposited in the grave given the sooting and limescale observed in them. Perhaps the heating symbolically moved them from the domain of the living to that of the dead. The deliberate 'holing' of some of the vessels might have served a similar purpose (see FIG. 8.16)

TABLE 11.5 shows the breakdown of the urned burials by age, sex and phase. Given that the cemetery lies just outside an auxiliary fort that can be assumed to have been in occupation during its life, adult males are curiously rare in the earliest phase becoming more visible as time progresses. Given the number of urned burials of adults which it is not possible to sex, however, it would be unwise to draw any conclusions from this.

TABLE 11.5: URNED BURIALS BY AGE, SEX AND PHASE

Age and sex	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phases 3–3b	Unphased	Total
Adult	7	16	9	–	32
Female	3	7	7	–	17
Male	1	4	8	1	14
Double	3	2	3	–	8
Infant	3	10	–	–	13
Immature	3	7	9	1	20
Uncertain	3	4	3	2	12
No bone remaining	1	2	2	2	7
Total	24	52	41	6	123

In Phases 1 and 2 a cross-section of the population is present, but in Phases 3 and 3b infants, in the sense used in this report (i.e. 6 months to 5 years), are missing. McKinley has suggested (p. 290) that this age profile might be indicative of a change from younger to older families with time. The explanation for it may, however, be a spatial one. FIGURES 11.1–11.3 show the distribution of the urned burials in each phase labelled by age and sex. As far as the adults and immature individuals are concerned, there is no clustering according to these criteria in any phase. For infants the pattern is different. In Phase 1 they are spread throughout the cemetery but in Phase 2 there is a distinct concentration of infant burials around the Monument **F40**. Such a pattern might be consistent with a patterning of immature individuals and adults being placed in family plots throughout the life of the cemetery. Infants could have been buried with their families in Phase 1, but in Phase 2 it seems to have been thought most appropriate to bury them together around the circular tower monument which would have

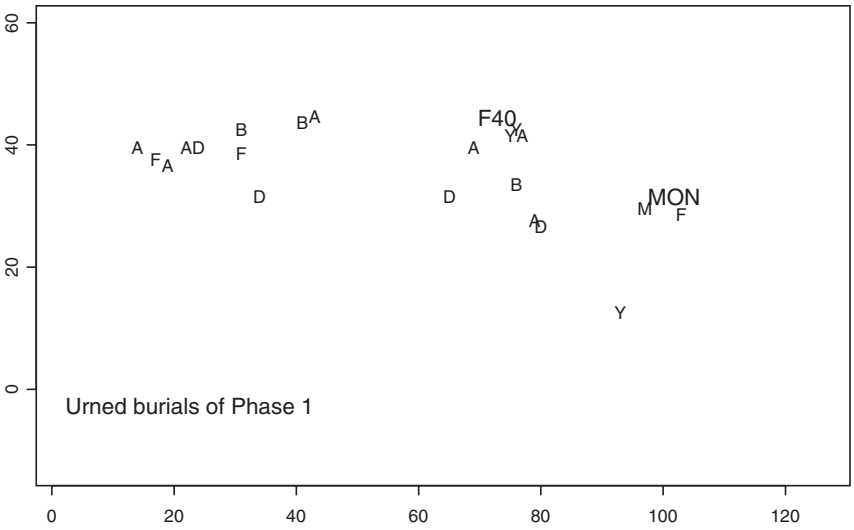

FIG. 11.1 Distribution of Phase 1 urned burials; A=adult, F=female adult, M=male adult, D=burial of two individuals together, Y=immature, U=unknown.

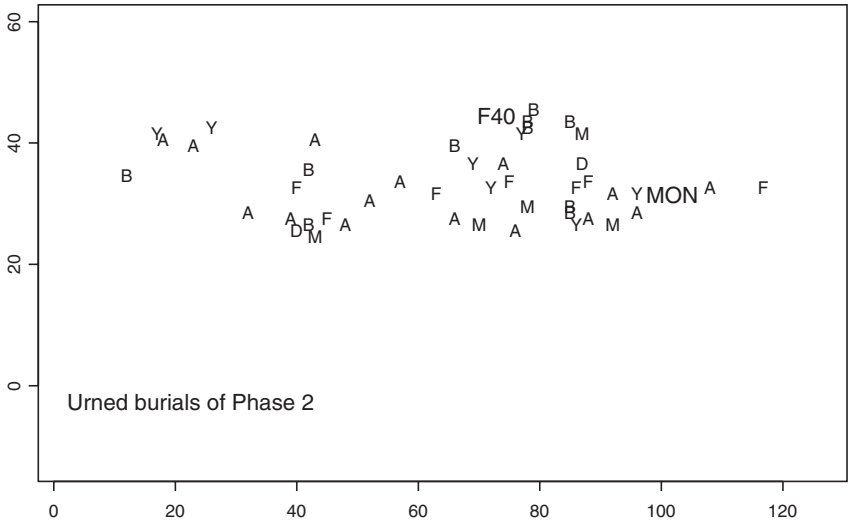

FIG. 11.2 Distribution of Phase 2 urned burials, key as for FIG. 11.1, 'unknown' omitted.

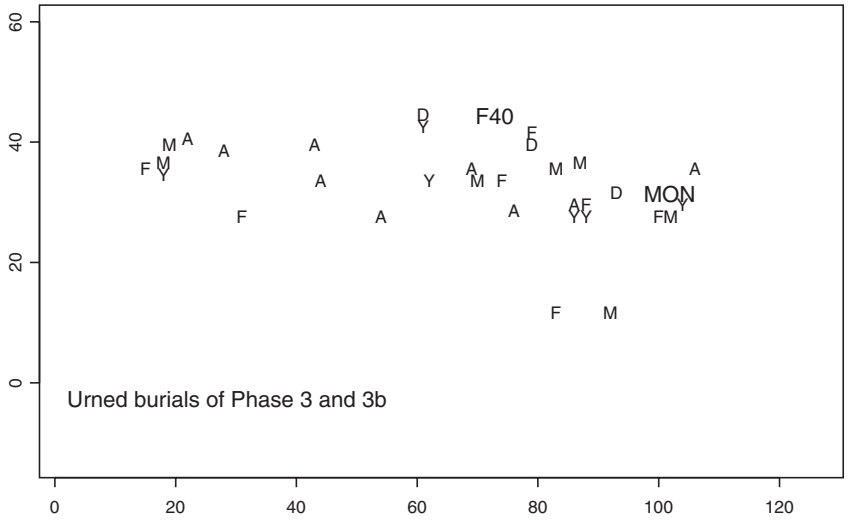

FIG. 11.3 Distribution of Phase 3 and 3b urned burials, key as for FIG. 11.1.

been a notable feature of the cemetery. As time progressed another focus may have been preferred outside the excavated area. As has already been noted (p. 25) there are grounds for thinking that the cemetery extended to the north, and the Phase 3 and 3b infants are, perhaps, to be found in that area.

TABLES 11.6 and 11.7 show the breakdown of the types of feature dug to receive the burials by phase and by age and sex where known. As can be seen pits are always in the majority in all phases, and people of all ages and sexes are buried in both cists and pits. If the feature types used for adult males and females are considered, cists seem to be more preferred for adult males, but it should be noted that the difference is not statistically significant.

TABLE 11.6: DEPOSIT TYPE OF URNED BURIAL BY PHASE

	Phase 1	**Phase 2**	**Phases 3–3b**	**Unphased**	**Total**
Cist	5	11	12	1	29
Pit	16	35	20	5	76
Unknown	3	6	9	0	18
All	24	52	41	6	123

TABLE 11.7: DEPOSIT TYPE OF URNED BURIAL BY AGE AND SEX

	Cist	**Pit**	**Unknown**	**Total**
Adult	7	20	5	32
Female	4	13	0	17
Male	5	7	2	14
Double	2	4	2	8
Infant	4	7	2	13
Immature	4	13	3	20
Total	26	64	14	104

In comparison to the range of goods that were placed on the pyre, the range of items placed in the grave is limited. Overwhelmingly they consist of pottery vessels. Of the 296 vessels that can now be recognised as grave goods (summarised in TABLE 11.8), one was made of metal (**107.10**) and 15 were made of glass (TABLE 8.36), all the rest were made of pottery. In all phases a single vessel acting as the urn is the commonest type of deposit, but in each phase just under half the burials are provided with one or two other vessels and a few have more.

TABLE 11.8: DISTRIBUTION OF NUMBERS OF VESSELS IN URNED BURIALS BY PHASE

Vessel nos	**Phase 1**	**Phase 2**	**Phases 3–3b**	**Unphased**	**Total**
1	8	19	14	4	47
2	7	9	7	1	24
3	4	13	12	–	29
4	1	4	7	–	12
5	1	4	–	–	5
6	1	1	–	–	2
7	1	2	–	–	3
8	–	1	–	–	1
Total	23	53	41	6	123

TABLE 11.9 shows the number of vessels in those graves where the age and sex of the individual can be identified. As can be seen, half of the deposits with six or more vessels contain the remains of two individuals, suggesting that it was thought appropriate to place vessels in the grave for each individual. This was clearly not always the case as the burial with two vessels (**76**) was the interment of an adult female and an infant/juvenile. Grave **135** with three vessels was also clearly the burial of two individuals (a child aged 3–8 and a young adult of 17–21). The other burials with three or fewer vessels, which have the remains of more than one individual, are more difficult to assess as they may not have been intended as the burial of two people. In **158**, for example, the remains of an infant are urned but the second individual is represented only by a very small amount of bone in the fill and contamination could be a possibility. In the case of **192** there are two adults, each with their own urn. The site records are inadequate so that it is impossible to decide whether these were two separate interments or one. The site records for **219** are also insufficient for any evaluation of the deposit to be made. By contrast **90** (six vessels), **36** (seven vessels) and **203** (eight vessels) are clearly the deliberate interments of two individuals. Here the assumption that a set of vessels for each individual was provided seems reasonable.

TABLE 11.9: NUMBERS OF VESSELS IN URNED BURIALS WHERE AGE AND SEX OF DECEASED CAN BE IDENTIFIED (ALL PHASES)

No. of vessels	**Adult**	**Female**	**Male**	**Double**	**Infant**	**Immature**	**Total**
1	11	6	2	1	5	9	34
2	4	6	3	1	4	4	22
3	8	3	4	3	1	7	26
4	4	1	3	–	3	–	11
5	4	1	–	–	–	–	5
6	–	–	1	1	–	–	2
7	1	–	1	1	–	–	3
8	–	–	–	1	–	–	1
Total	32	17	14	8	13	20	104

In the light of this the provision of seven vessels in **102,** which also contained remains indicative of a whole carcass cremation of a horse, is interesting and McKinley's suggestion that one set was intended for the horse might well be plausible. There are no obvious explanations for the provision of seven vessels in **291** as only one individual is present. In the case of **273** the provision of six vessels may be related to status as this adult male was cremated wearing a crossbow brooch, a probable indicator of officialdom.

Grave **273** included a glass beaker and, in the cases of the graves with five vessels or more, the numbers tend to include vessels of other materials as well as pottery. In **107** a glass drinking cup and an enamelled patera are included. Deposits **186**, **264** and **268** all have glass vessels in addition to the pottery ones. Problems with the records make it difficult to decide whether **186** is really a grave with five vessels. Originally four were noted but there are five marked in the archive as coming from it.

TABLES 11.10 to 11.12 summarise the combination of vessel types found in the graves with between two and four vessels. In each case the urn is assumed in the left-hand column. As has already been discussed in Chapter 8, certain vessel types have statistically significant associations with individuals of particular ages and sexes. The small samian cups of form 33, for example, are an attribute of infants and young children less than the age of eight years, whilst deep samian bowls, including decorated ones, are reserved for adults. Colour-coated beakers were also reserved for infants and immature people in Phase 1, and only began to be used in the graves of adults in Phase 2. It also appears that glass drinking vessels were only thought appropriate for male adults.

As can be seen from TABLES 11.10 to 11.12, the commonest combinations of vessels were the urn and a colour-coated beaker, followed by the urn and an accessory jar, and then by the urn, an accessory jar and a shallow samian dish. The dominance of the colour-coated beaker and urn combination is perhaps partially the result of its association with young people in Phase 1. One interesting feature of these tables is the rarity of colour-coated beakers in the graves of females buried on their own. In this category they only occur in **191** whereas for males buried on their own they occur in four graves, though of course in the case of **102** the beaker may have been accompanying the horse. With so many adult burials unsexed, it would be unwise to put too much stress on such small figures, but the pattern might add to the evidence of the association of such beakers with young people in Phase 1, and suggest that these beakers were the object of a special regard and not thought appropriate for all parts of the community. Evans has suggested (see p. 339) that the Trier colour-coat beakers were being regarded as a form of samian. If this is true, it is interesting to note that, at times, both they and the samian form 33 cups were seen as uniquely appropriate for young people.

It is noticeable from TABLE 11.11 that generally a range of different vessel types were placed in the grave where three vessels were present. In the light of this the two urns and colour-coated beaker in **192,** the possible double burial, stand out as unusual. As already noted the site records are inadequate to decide whether these were two discrete burials or a single one. The patterns seen in the vessel deposition might suggest that it was two, an urned male without any accessory vessels and an urned female with a colour-coated beaker. As already noted these would be the two commonest deposition patterns. It might also go some way to counterbalance the curious rarity of colour-coated beakers with adult females buried on their own which has already been commented on.

The tables also make explicit the earlier suggestion that glass vessels only generally occur in burials with a large number of vessels. There are none in the graves with three vessels though over half of those have a pottery beaker which, it might be thought, could have been functionally substituted by a glass drinking cup. This pattern of deposition, combined with the association of glass drinking cups with adult males, suggests that vessels made in this material might well have been regarded as special in some way, and that perhaps people buried with glass vessels were of higher status. As already noted that seems likely in the case of **273**. It is unfortunate that the only time where a glass vessel was deposited in a grave with only one other vessel, the infant burial **189**, this was clearly truncated so that very little is known of the deposit. The one burial with three glass vessels (**307**) was clearly unusual in many ways and will be further considered below.

The possibility that some of the accessory vessels held accessory burials has been discussed by McKinley (p. 304), but they also had a variety of other uses. Some of the dishes held joints of meat (**102**, **227**, **264** and **298**), and, as Bond and Worley have pointed out (p. 315), other dishes could have held filleted meat that would have left no trace. Certainly some of the accessory jars are likely to have held some item, presumably food, which it was felt necessary

TABLE 11.10: COMBINATIONS OF TWO VESSELS IN THE URNED BURIALS (IN THE FINAL DEPOSIT THE COLOUR-COATED (CC) BEAKER ACTED AS THE URN)

Vessels present	**Adult**	**Female**	**Male**	**Double**	**Infant**	**Immature**	**Uncertain**	**Total**
CC beaker	2	–	2	1	1	2	1	9
Jar	–	4	1	–	–	1	–	6
Shallow samian	1	1	–	–	1	1	–	4
Deep samian	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Beaker/cup	–	1	–	–	1	–	–	2
BB1 dish	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1
CC beaker and glass flask	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	1
Total	4	6	3	1	4	4	2	24

TABLE 11.11: COMBINATIONS OF THREE VESSELS IN THE URNED BURIALS (CC=COLOUR-COATED)

Vessels present	Adult	Female	Male	Double	Infant	Immature	Uncertain	Total
Shallow samian, jar	3	1	2	–	–	–	–	6
Shallow samian, CC	2	–	–	1	–	1	–	4
Jar, BB1 dish	1	–	–	–	–	2	–	3
Deep samian, CC	–	1	–	–	–	–	1	2
Shallow samian, beaker	–	–	–	–	1	1	–	2
Shallow samian, flagon	–	–	1	–	–	1	–	2
CC, jar	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	1
Other bowl, flagon	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Jar and deep samian	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
Other bowl, beaker	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	1
BB1 dish and beaker	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	1
Two urns, CC beaker	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	1
CC, BB1 dish	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	1
CC, Dr. 33	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	1
CC, flagon	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1
Shallow samian, BB1 dish	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1
Total	8	3	4	3	1	7	3	29

to protect. In four cases the records are good enough to show this quite clearly. The jar in **20** was covered by a sandstone slab and both the urn and the accessory jar in **28** were covered by a large dish that acted as a lid to both. In **61** a BB1 dish was inverted over whatever lay on the samian dish, while in **160** a samian dish acted as a lid to the accessory jar (FIG. 11.4)

In other cases there is no suggestion that the accessory vessels held anything. This can best be seen in **162** where the accessories are stacked inside each other (FIG. 11.5). Dishes were also sometimes used as lids for the urns (**27**, **28**, **95**, **171**, **209** and **285**) though sandstone slabs were used as well (**21**, **160**, **180**, **188** and **197**). In one case (**71**) it is known that a jar was inverted over a beaker that appears to have been used as an urn. Given that the accessory vessels were clearly serving a range of functions in the graves, and that we know there was a considerable amount of age and gender-specific activities in the funerary rites, the paucity of site records is a matter of considerable regret as fuller records would undoubtedly have produced the sort of associations that have been seen in the pyre goods and the choice of vessels used as grave good.

TABLE 11.12: COMBINATIONS OF FOUR VESSELS IN THE URNED BURIALS (CC=COLOUR-COATED)

Vessels present	Adult	Female	Male	Infant	Uncertain	Total
Jar, shallow samian dish, CC	–	–	–	–	1	1
Jar, shallow samian dish, glass cup	–	–	1	–	–	1
Jar, shallow samian dish, glass vessel	1	–	–	–	–	1
Jar, two deep samian bowls	1	–	–	–	–-	1
Jar, BB1 dish , deep samian bowl	1	–	–	–	–-	1
Deep samian bowl; shallow samian dish, CC	1	–	–	–	–	1
Jar, shallow samian, glass jar	–	1	–	–	–	1
Two jars, BB1 dish	–	–	1	–	–	1
Three glass drinking vessels	–	–	1	–	–	1
Two jars, shallow samian dish	–	–	–	1	–	1
Two dishes, flagon	–	–	–	1	–	1
BB1 dish, beaker, Dr. 33	–	–	–	1	–	1
Total	4	1	3	3	1	12

FIG. 11.4 Deposit **160** during excavation. Above showing urn and accessory jar covered by sandstone slab and samian dish respectively, below showing vessels fully exposed; scale in inches.

A final point that may be noted about the vessels is that they frequently show signs of having been used before in a domestic setting. In some cases they would have been quite old. The enamel patera (**107.10**) could be regarded as an antique and several of the glass vessels showed considerable wear. The wear and evidence of use on both the coarse pottery (p. 358) and samian (p. 345) vessels has also been commented on. It is clear, however, that considerable selection was being exercised and that various categories of vessels that would have been available within a domestic setting were not selected. Samian mortaria, for example, were appropriate for burial but coarse pottery ones were not. Glass tablewares were appropriate but the commoner glass containers were not. Some of this selection was clearly the result of what was deemed appropriate to people of particular ages and sexes.

FIG. 11.5 Urned cremation burial **162** showing accessory vessels stacked inside each other.

It is possible that one of the factors at work in the choices of what could and could not be buried with a particular individual was the age of the item. One of the curious features of the Brougham assemblage has always been the presence of later second-century Central Gaulish decorated samian bowls of types that ceased production decades prior to their deposition. The difference is not great in the case of **273.14** with a date range of A.D. 160–190 as it is in a Phase 1 grave (start date A.D. 200/220). The gap starts to lengthen in the cases of **102.16** and **107.7** assigned date ranges of A.D. 170 to 200 and A.D. 165–200 respectively as they are in Phase 2 graves (start date *c.* A.D. 240). In the case of **191.6** with a date range of A.D. 175–200 we are looking at an item that could have been seven or eight decades old by the time it was placed in this Phase 3 grave. As has already been shown all deep samian bowls appear to be the preserve of adults, but in the cases of these four graves it is possible to age the individuals more precisely. In McKinley's categories (TABLE 6.1), **107** contains a mature adult, **191** an older mature female and **102** and **273** older adult males.

The dating of other items tends not to be as precise as that for the samian, but an attempt can be made for some objects. It has been suggested that the patera **107.10** was between 100 and 150 years old when deposited in the grave (p. 128). It was also possible to suggest that at least three of the glass vessels had seen considerable wear prior to deposition (**186.8**, **298.10** and **310.8**). As already noted **107** contained a mature adult, while the individuals in **293** and **310** both fall into the older mature and older adult categories.

There are clear hints here that the age of an adult could also govern what was appropriate to place in the grave. Older people may have had older items but these should not be equated with worn-out items that could easily be discarded. Decorated samian bowls would have been a rarity by the time this cemetery was in its heyday. Enamelled patera were always rare and the glass jar **298.10** appears unique in Britain. A variety of explanations are sometimes advanced to explain old items in graves. They are 'heirlooms' if they appear to the modern eye to have some worth, or the result of opportunistic grave robbing if they appear more utilitarian (see, for example, Going 1993, 49; Barber and Bowsher 2000, 12). Heirlooms, however, tend to be unique to each household, and here the pattern seems to be more widespread. It may be more useful to consider them in the light of their cultural biography as advanced by Kopytoff (1986). He has described how things move in and out of the state of being economic commodities, and how in every society some things are precluded from being commodities and undergo a process of singularisation that sets them apart. Perhaps at Brougham the Central Gaulish decorated bowls and the other old items are reflecting this, and may be indicative of the way society as a whole there looked at these objects. Certainly the fact that the decorated samian bowl **102.16** has an unworn footring despite being half a century old or so when it was deposited, suggests it may have been removed from active use early in its life.

Grave goods other than vessels and food items are extremely rare and with the exception of **307**, only occur in two of the urned burials. Both of these include infants. In **138** there was a brooch and in **171** a bell. As already discussed (see p. 401) the bell may have been included for protective value. Some of the nails may have been included for the same reason. The records sometimes mention the recovery of nails specifically from the urns. Occasionally these can be identified and their condition makes it clear that they had been on the pyre. They seem most likely to have been a deliberate inclusion as it would have been obvious that they were nails rather than bone. Black (1986, 223) has drawn attention to the inclusion of nails in other cremation burials and suggested that they might have had magical connotations. Unfortunately the varied processing history of the cremated remains means that it is not possible to quantify with any certainty the original locations of the nails in the deposits.

Burial **307** has many features that mark it out as an exception to the general pattern of urned deposition at Brougham. It is a Phase 3b burial of an adult male placed in a complex two-part cist where one of the compartments seems to have been used for placing some of the pyre debris. The pyre debris suggests he had a richly decorated bier, that a complete carcass of a sheep or goat may have been burnt with him as well as a goose, and that a variety of other objects may have been placed on the pyre including tools or implements with bone handles. As well as an urn, three glass vessels were placed in the grave, two of which are rare forms. A set of jet beads from a bracelet (**307.36**) were found scattered in the fill together with some unburnt blue glass beads (**307.35**). The fill also included a range of pottery fragments of uncertain status. The beads do not appear to have been burnt, nor do they appear to have been put in as an articulated necklace and bracelet. The distribution as recorded would suggest rather that they were tossed in loose.

McKinley has identified the deceased as definitely male but, as already noted at Brougham, glass beads are a female attribute. Normally the jet bead bracelet would also be considered a female ornament but this particular variety has been found in two other male graves (see p. 391). In the case of the man at Catterick there can be no doubt that he would have appeared as a transvestite given the other jewellery he was buried with, and the suggestion was made that he might have been a priest of Cybele (Cool 2002, 41). The glass beads in **307** might also

FIG. 11.6 Urned cremation burial **102** showing meat bone placed on samian dish.

hint that though the person buried there was biologically male, in his social persona he adopted a more ambiguous gender. Certainly the presence of three glass vessels in his grave suggests he was of some special status.

Another burial that deserves special comment is **227** from Phase 2. Here a cist was built in one corner of a large pit that had an organic lining fixed to the sides by nailing. Some pyre debris had been placed into the pit prior to the cist being built. Into the cist, the urned remains of an adult male of 40 years or more was placed together with a Hadham redware flagon and a joint of pork placed on a shallow samian dish. The remains of a second individual were recovered from the fill and on the dish. There was a rich array of pyre goods including one of the iron bucket pendants (**227.4**) whose *comparanda* at this time lie in central Europe (see p. 384). This individual is marked out as being of special status not only because of the elaboration of the grave pit and the exotic pendant but also by having the joint of pork, a rare occurrence at Brougham (see p. 328) and by the Hadham ware flagon. This lies far outside the normal distribution of the type (see Tyers 1996, 168, fig. 209) and as Evans has noted (p. 353) flagons are rare both in the cemetery and in the North generally at the time.

The provision of a joint of meat on a platter (FIG. 11.6) seems at Brougham to have been an indicator of high status. In addition to that in **227**, it was recorded in **102**, **264**, **298** and **300**. Grave **298** was a pit capped by a sandstone slab, **300** appears to have been a pit but had been disturbed by the machine, the other two deposits were cists. Of the deposits where there does not appear to have been major disturbance, it can be suggested that all share traits pointing to high or special status. This has already been suggested in the case of **102** given the range of animal bone inclusions, including a whole carcass cremation of a horse, the number of vessels deposited, which included a glass vessel, and the presence of ivory pyre goods. Grave **264** had five vessels including one of glass and **298** had four vessels including a glass jar, and the individual had been cremated with a range of animal offerings including a whole carcass cremation of a sheep or goat. Again these were all mature individuals suggesting that at least some older members of the community were given special burial rites. Pit **300** would suggest the fashion started in Phase 1 but all of the other burials were of Phase 2.

The nature of the structural records makes it very difficult to study the cuts of the graves in any detail which, in turn, makes it very difficult to judge whether any burial pits or cists were

reused, but there are some indications that this may occasionally have happened. This can be suggested for **36** where two individuals, an older mature adult and an infant of three to four years, were buried in the same cist following separate cremations. The cist is small and some vessels had to be stacked on others (see FIG. 2.2), perhaps suggesting that originally it was only intended for one person. Alternatively, if both burials were made at the same time, the implication may be that the remains of one of them was curated elsewhere prior to deposition.

Capped cists could easily be reopened for a second interment, but if a grave was carefully marked this would also have been possible for burials in pits. As already discussed, **192** has all the hallmarks of being two separate interments judged by the combinations of vessels. The excavator was unable to decide whether the vessels represented one or two burials. This may be a candidate for a reopened grave, perhaps, given the sexes and ages of the deceased, reuniting a married couple in death.

THE UNURNED BURIALS

Although urned burials are by far the commonest of the formal deposit types, a small number of deposits are present where it can be suggested, on the ground of descriptions and the quantities of cremated bone, that some form of unurned cremation burial was taking place. The boundary between these and deposits of pyre debris is, admittedly, a porous one given the quality of the records and more may have been present that have not been recognised.

Here it is considered that nine deposits fall into this category.[2] At least one appears to have been very similar to the urned cremation burials, with only the fact that the cremated bone was not placed in an urn separating it out. Deposit **194** falls into the category of high-status burials with meat joints placed on a platter. It was the burial of an adult female of 20 to 40 years with three pottery vessels and one of glass, who had been cremated on a pyre with a variety of animal bone offerings including a whole carcass of a horse. Her pottery was unusual in that it included both a flagon, a rare form at Brougham, and the only motto beaker from the cemetery (FIG. 11.7). She is also remarkable for having had military accoutrements on her pyre as a bone scabbard slide has been recognised.

FIG. 11.7 Motto beaker from unurned cremation burial **194**. (Crown copyright).

The unurned burials, **7**, **42**, **49** and **157,** also had accessory vessels though it is noticeable that the types represented are not always typical of those used in the urned burials. Burial **157** for example had three vessels including an unusual glass flask, and glass vessels only occur once in the urned burials with three or fewer vessels. Burial **7** had two flagons including a face-necked one. Flagons are rare as grave goods and Evans has noted (p. 357) the possible religious connotations of the vessels with faces. There are also two deposits which appear to have had grave goods other than vessels, again a rare trait in the urned burials. Deposit **280** had a knife that was lain on the cremated remains. In **145** a bracelet was placed under a boulder in the grave pit which lay beneath the tumble of what may have been a cairn. This suggests these deposits were unusual not only in not having an urn but also in their associations.

In only one case was there a deposit that appeared to have consisted just of cremated bone deposited straight into a pit (**150**). It might be surmised that the other unurned cremations might have been contained in some way. Cremation **237** appears to have been placed in a box and where plans exist for the other deposits, the cremated remains tend to be shown as discrete entities rather than broad spreads. That containers other than pottery vessels might have been used in the cemetery is also indicated by the remains of a possible lead casket salvaged by Mr Nelson (Richardson 1998, 23).

The deposits were equally divided between cists and pits and occurred in all phases (see TABLE 11.13). As can be seen from the table only adults have been recognised in these deposits, but it would be unwise to conclude that only adults were buried in this way. Given the circumstances of the excavation and the nature of the records it seems unlikely that the slighter remains of younger people would have been recognised in the first place if they were not accompanied by grave goods.

TABLE 11.13: UNURNED CREMATION BURIALS BY PHASE

	Phase 1	**Phase 2**	**Phase 3**	**Phase 3b**	**Unphased**	**Total**
Adult	–	1	2	1	1	5
Female	1	–	–	–	1	2
Male	–	1	–	–	1	2
Total	1	2	2	1	3	9

REDEPOSITED PYRE DEBRIS

Deposits of pyre debris in discrete cut features could be recognised in 65 cases,[3] though it is clear that this material was also incorporated to a greater or lesser extent in the fills of urned burials and also occurred in small spreads such as **87** and **249**. The apparent concentration on cut features is entirely a product of the excavation strategy which concentrated on locating 'burials'. The fill of the linear feature **F47**, for example, was described as very black suggesting it had a high pyre debris component in its fill but virtually none of this material survives in the archive and it is clear that little of the feature was excavated. Other spreads are suggested by such descriptions as the 'black sooty earth' which is mentioned as overlying the cobbles **F24**. It is clear that pyre debris was disposed of in a variety of ways at Brougham, but only that in cut features is now visible.

As will be seen from TABLES 11.14 and 11.15 the debris was placed in both cists and pits throughout the life of the cemetery. They were also found across the whole cemetery (see FIG. 11.8). It is also noticeable that all of the aged bone belongs to adults. The uncertain category could include subadults (13 years or older) but younger children seem to be absent from these deposits. The picture is complicated by the fact that in some cases it is clear that once it was recognised that the feature could not be a burial, excavation clearly ceased and no material was collected. It is possible that children could have been present in these deposits, but an equally plausible hypothesis was that debris from their pyres was not disposed of in the same way as that from adults could be.

TABLE 11.14: PYRE DEBRIS DEPOSITS IN CUT FEATURES BY AGE, SEX AND DEPOSIT TYPE

Type	Adult	Female	Male	Uncertain	No bone	Total
Cist	5	1	2	6	2	16
Pit	14	3	3	17	6	43
None	1	1	–	4	–	6
Total	20	5	5	27	8	65

TABLE 11.15: PYRE DEBRIS DEPOSITS IN CUT FEATURES BY AGE, SEX AND PHASE

Phase	Adult	Female	Male	Uncertain	No bone	Total
1	–	2	–	9	–	11
2	5	–	–	6	2	13
3 and 3b	4	1	2	4	–	11
Unphased	11	2	3	8	6	30
Total	20	5	5	27	8	65

In some cases substantial parts of pottery vessels were found in these deposits. There is the possibility that the identification of the deposit type is incorrect, and that these were more formal burials with vessels, but in some cases the descriptions make this unlikely. In the case of **141** the fragments of a BB1 jar (**141.10**) and a constricted-necked jar (**141.11**) are explicitly noted as being high in the fill. The vessels seem most commonly to have been BB1 jars (**55.1**, **269.9** and **38.7**), but a BB1 dish (**38.8**), two samian dishes of form 36 (**91.7** and **232.6**) and one of form 31R (**154.5**) were also noted. These vessels are not complete but include sherds from rim, neck and base in all cases and do not, therefore, appear to be casual inclusions in the backfill. All the forms are ones that are regularly selected for inclusions as grave goods. It would seem possible that the vessels were connected with the ceremonies surrounding the deposition of the debris, and were deliberately smashed during them. This would imply that the deposition of pyre debris in such cut features was a ritual act and not one simply associated with tidying up the pyre sites.

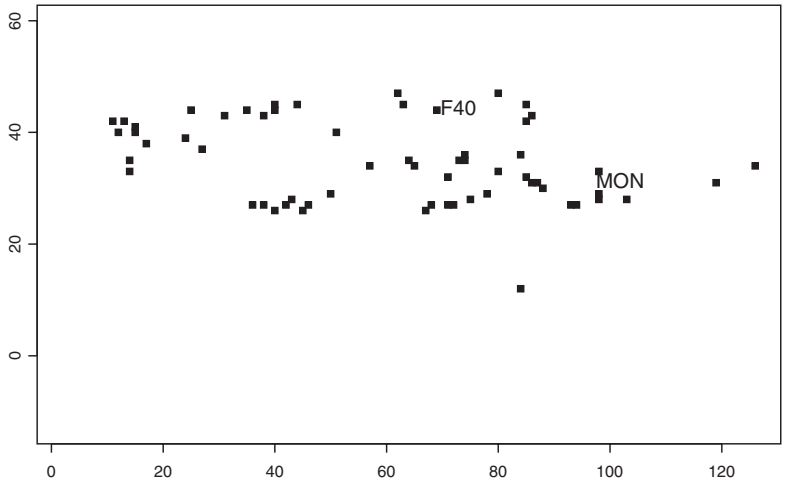

FIG. 11.8 Distribution of cut features with redeposited pyre debris.

In one case (**196.7**) a complete jar with countersunk handles was recovered. Pyre debris is certainly present in this deposit but whether it should be regarded as a pyre debris deposit rather than one of vessel deposits discussed below is open to question. What is interesting about this vessel is that it is unique in the cemetery and of a type rarely found in the wider area (see p. 343)

THE FILLS

As will be apparent from Chapter 4, both urned and unurned cremation burials and the deposits of pyre debris frequently contained pottery fragments which do not appear to have derived from either pyre or grave goods. Whilst these fragments often come from vessel types that were being selected for inclusion as grave goods, it is also noticeable that fragments of forms occur that are otherwise restricted to the unstratified material such as coarseware mortaria and amphora sherds. The fill material thus seems to be derived from the ceremonies that went on around the pyre and the grave.

COMMEMORATING THE DEAD

It is clear that the dead were not quickly forgotten at Brougham. As discussed in Chapter 10 a wide range of stone monuments are known from the vicinity, some definitely coming from the area of the cemetery. The site plan does not have the formal regularity of some of the fourth-century cemeteries such as Poundbury (Farwell and Molleson 1993), but there can be no doubt that it was managed and orderly given the lack of intercut features. This suggests that many of the graves and the pyre debris deposits must have been marked in some way. Carved gravestones would have been one option but other markers are also possible. The records often note that the pits and cists lie by large glacial erratics and their surface might have been exploited. Equally wooden markers may have been used such as the ones noted at Lanchester (Turner 1990, 76).

The masonry monuments and the carved gravestones must always have been the prerogative of the wealthy. Only adults are known, with certainty, to have been commemorated in stone at Brougham, but the extant stones may not be an accurate reflection of who was treated in this way. At other forts in the North-West children and young people do have tombstones. At Greta Bridge there is Salvia Donata aged eight years and one month (*RIB* I, no. 750) and at Maryport the twelve-year-old Julia Martina is known (*RIB* I, no. 866). At Brough-under-Stainmore the 16-year-old Hermes of Commagene is commemorated in a Greek inscription (*RIB* I, no. 758), while at Ribchester the despairing Julius Maximus lamented his wife, mother-in-law and six-year-old son (*RIB* I, no. 594). At Brougham it is possible that ***S21*** represents a child or young person.

Evans (p. 355) has noted that the unstratified pottery is of a different functional composition to that deposited as grave goods, with a focus on food preparation vessels. The unstratified glass also consists in the main of containers that could have been related to the transport of food. Given that this material is contemporary with the life of the cemetery it seems very likely that what it could be evidence for is both funeral feasts at the time of cremation and deposition and later, and possibly the transport of offerings to the cemetery on special days (see for example Toynbee 1971, 61–4).

MEMORIALS, CENOTAPHS OR OFFERINGS?

McKinley has drawn attention to four deposits (**22**, **42**, **69** and **184**) which she considers to be 'memorials', i.e. deposits with sets of vessels but with minimal amounts of human bone. Here **184** has been considered as an urned cremation burial of an infant. It lay in the concentration of other urned infant cremations in the vicinity of **F40** in Phase 2. The excavator did not recognise a pit and the possibility exists that not all of the bone was collected. Deposit **42** was disturbed and the spread of bone and charcoal marked on the plan suggests again that not all of the material may have been collected. The records are adequate for **22** and **69** to show that they had not been disturbed and there is no reason why the bone in the archive should not accurately reflect what was found.

Given the small quantities of bone recovered in **174** and **208** it seems reasonable to regard them in the same light. In addition to these deposits, five other groups of vessels, which the

records would suggest were found undisturbed and without any cremated bone, can also be recognised (**57**, **80**, **137**, **172** and **302**) and a sixth (**178**) might be included here, though the records are more ambiguous as to whether bone was present but not collected. Deposit **196**, already discussed as a pyre debris deposit, might also fall within this category and has been included again here. Finally **187**, excavated after the Ministry of Works excavations stopped, may be noted, as Mr Dagg explicitly stated that he observed no traces of cremated material. In total there are 13 deposits consisting of between one and three vessels with either no bone or minimal amounts.

The combination of vessel types is shown in TABLE 11.16. The phenomenon seems to start in Phase 2 and it is noticeable that there is a difference between the two phases. With one exception, all of the Phase 2 deposits contain a colour-coated beaker whereas only one of those belonging to Phases 3 and 3b does. This contrasts with the situation for the urned burials where colour-coated beakers continued to be deposited as accessory vessels in Phases 3 and 3b (see TABLE 8.34), suggesting that the rarity in Phases 3 and 3b is not merely a question of problems of supply. TABLE 11.16 can be summarised as TABLE 11.17. The difference between the depositional patterns is statistically significant and again there is the suggestion that at certain times colour-coated beakers were objects of a special regard.

TABLE 11.16: SPECIAL POT DEPOSITS (CC=COLOUR-COATED)

Vessels present	**Phase 1**	**Phase 2**	**Phases 3–3b**	**Total**
Jar	–	1	2	3
Two jars	–	–	1	1
Jar and CC beaker	–	1	1	2
Jar and BB1 dish	–	–	1	1
Two CC beaker	–	1	–	1
CC beaker and shallow samian dish	–	1	–	1
Crambeck bowl and beaker	–	–	1	1
Jar, CC beaker and shallow samian dish	–	2	–	2
Two jars and flask	–	–	1	1
Total	–	6	7	13

TABLE 11.17: PRESENCE AND ABSENCE OF COLOUR-COATED BEAKERS IN SPECIAL POT DEPOSITS

	Phase 2	**Phases 3–3b**	**Total**
Beaker present	5	1	6
Beaker absent	1	6	7
Total	6	7	13

The vessel combinations are the sort that occur in the urned burials and so McKinley's suggestion that these might be some form of a memorial for a person most of whose remains had been taken elsewhere would not be out of place. There is evidence that this did indeed happen in the north of Britain. The most obvious example is the cremation of Septimius Severus at York and the carriage of his ashes back to Rome where all the formal ceremonies appropriate to his deification were carried out (Herodian III.15.8). Another, possibly more pertinent to Brougham, is recorded on a fragmentary tombstone at Maryport (*RIB* I, no. 864). This describes a son who was born and died in Galatia (an area now part of Turkey) and when dying desired something in the tomb of his father. Unfortunately the part of the tombstone that would say what precisely he craved is missing, but it could be surmised that he wanted to be buried in his father's tomb implying that his family had brought the urn half-way across the empire with them when posted to Maryport.

The concept that the vessels deposits are cenotaphs when no bone was included in them is open to question, and other explanations can be proposed. Deposits of complete vessels do occur in Romano-British contexts where there is no funerary activity and where they are thought to be evidence of ritual activity often associated with the closure of a feature. Merrifield (1987, 188–9) has drawn attention to the practice noting that the vessels tended to be containers and it would have been what was inside the container that would have been important. Cemeteries, being places of the dead, may have been particular appropriate for semi-magical acts and for contacting the chthonic deities. In a cemetery area at Clare Street, London, for example, a pit contained the complete skeleton of a heron, more than 80 frogs or toads, and a number of shrews and voles, with two broken but complete flagons placed above (*ibid*, 36). One of the groups in the Baldock cemetery contained a lead curse tablet together with a jar, a jug and a samian form 36 (Westell 1931, 290, no. 308). As ever in the report on that cemetery, the assumption was that it was a formal urned burial. It would be most interesting to know whether indeed that was the case, or whether it was a vessel deposit of the sort under discussion here.

Written sources make it clear that the dead could expect to be remembered by ceremonies that took place at the tomb and people often made provision for such events in their wills (Toynbee 1971, 62–3 especially 295, n. 253–6). Sometimes the tomb was built with features which would allow the pouring of libations into it from the surface. In Britain well-known examples of this are an inhumation burial at Colchester and a cremation burial at Caerleon, both of which have lead pipes leading into the burial container from the surface (*ibid*, 52, pl. 14). Part of a lead cylinder was found at Brougham (see p. 402) but unfortunately unstratified. Whether this was part of a similar arrangement is unknown, but the possibility that some of the vessel deposits were associated with rituals that took place after the initial deposition should not be ruled out.

These deposits were found scattered throughout the cemetery (see FIG. 11.9). The circumstances of the excavations at Brougham make it unwise to infer too much meaning from the relationship of individual features with each other, especially in the area of the central carriageway of the new road (see p. 22). The apparent isolation of the vessel group **80** might merely be a feature of the destruction and total loss of features around it. If the isolation is real, this perhaps hints that the activities which lead to its deposition were ones that were different to those of the deposits that cluster with undoubted urned burials such as **137** and **302**. The hypothesis could be advanced that **80** may have been the outcome of magical or other ritual activities unconnected with another tomb, but that **137** and **302** were part of continuing rituals commemorating the dead. Cists **302** and **303** were described as adjoining, but unfortunately were found at the beginning of the first 1967 season and were destroyed prior to recording, so their precise relationship is unclear. There are distinct hints that the woman buried in **303** was of high status. She had been cremated with at least part of both a horse and sheep or goat on her pyre together with a bantam, a silver bowl and military equipment represented by a scabbard slide. She would therefore be a good candidate to be someone who could expect continuing rituals in the years following her funeral.

Deposit **137** is part of the **134–138** complex whose relationships are unclear because of the method of excavation. Deposits **135** and **138** are clearly part of the same deposit as the same individuals were buried in them. Deposit **137** lies on the outer margin of the group and could be a candidate for a secondary deposit. The vessels in it were contemporary with those in **138** (Phase 2) but apparently slightly earlier than those in **135** (Phase 3) though the jars in all of them could be accommodated in the A.D. 260–270 range.

That tombs did not necessarily remain undisturbed after deposition is clearly shown by **112**, **115** and **116**. These have unequivocal evidence of secondary pits being dug into them which could be interpreted as having been dug to remove something from them as the fill descriptions do not suggest these are post or marker holes. It is possible that **53** should be interpreted in the same way though in this case the evidence is not so clear. One interpretation of these could be that here there were urned cremation burials that were removed for burial

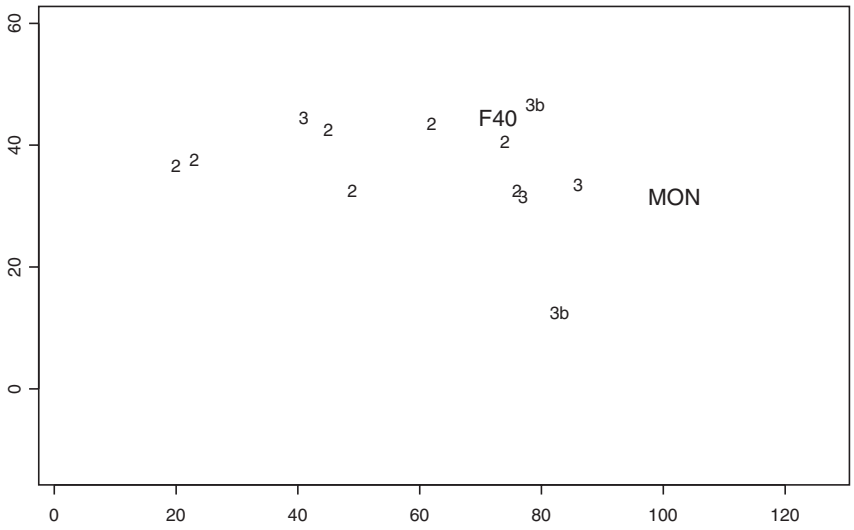

FIG. 11.9 Distribution of special pot deposits or 'memorials'.

elsewhere. The secondary pits are very neat and precise as if the position of the desired contents were known exactly. Though this could be 'robbing', it has much more the appearance of careful 'emptying'. Brougham was a military establishment whose personnel could expect to be transferred. Did some choose to take their loved ones with them? One wonders how the ashes of the individual at Maryport postulated above, were stored in Galatia prior to the transfer to Cumbria? Are **112**, **115** and **116** only the first resting place of individuals who were destined to go on a similar journey? More questions can be asked than solutions offered. The clustering of **115** and **116** together, however, could hint that these deposits were connected, buried apart from other people because it was always known that they would only be there temporarily. The only other deposit in the vicinity (**114**) is a cist with pyre debris. Whether **112** was similarly isolated is difficult to judge as it lies on the northern margin of the site.

MEN, WOMEN, CHILDREN AND OTHERS

If very young babies were buried in the cemetery there is no evidence of it, but this might be the result of taphonomic processes. Unburnt bone does not survive in the cemetery and there are grounds for believing that babies younger than six months would have been inhumed. The literary sources imply this was so for the Mediterranean world but there is also evidence from provincial cemeteries which would seem to support this (Pearce 2001, 136–7). Equally their absence might be the result of social criteria. The number of very young infants buried in domestic settings suggests that for many communities cemeteries were not considered an appropriate place for them, possibly because they were not perceived to be part of the wider world (Gowland 2001, 157). After the age of six months, however, children do become visible at Brougham and a cross-section of the population is present. The evidence clearly shows that the type of funeral a person received depended on many factors, one of the strongest of which was the age of the deceased. Others would seem to be status within the community and this extends not just to rank, which in the hierarchical world of an army post could be expected to be important, but also to other adopted personas.

The difference in the treatments of the young people (infant and immature) and adults can be traced through every stage of the process from the funeral procession to final interment both as a formal urned deposit and in the disposal of the rest of the pyre debris. Achieving a higher level of understanding of age and sex differences is hindered by two factors. One is the size of the sample. Even though the number of deposits is large, any narrow age category is likely to be represented by just a handful of individuals. There are also difficulties in ageing

the bone so that a plethora of overlapping categories emerge (see TABLE 6.1). Despite this there are hints that younger children were treated differently from teenagers, and younger adults differently from the older ones.

Differences dependent on sex are also apparent but this raises the question whether these are directly associated with a person's sex or more immediately with their status within the community. The reason for the association of particular personal ornaments with a particular sex is probably the former, but are glass drinking cups appropriate to all adult males or only those of a certain status? It has been noted that glass vessels tend only to occur in graves with, relatively speaking, large numbers of vessels and these often show other indications in their pyre or grave goods that the family was able to expend considerable resources on the funeral.

An interesting question arises as to whether females acquired the trapping of status from the males they were associated with or had them in their own right. Two burials (**194** and **303**) raise this question especially. Both belong to McKinley's 'most likely female' category and appear to have had rich pyre offerings. Both had at least parts of a horse on their pyre as well as other animal offering. Burial **194** contained the only motto beaker from the cemetery and was provided with a joint of meat on a samian dish. The individual in **303** had a silver bowl and an object of ivory on the pyre. In both cases the presence of at least scabbards if not weapons are indicated on the pyre. Both produced scabbard slides of standard military types for the period.

The only other formal burial with horse present amongst the pyre goods, in that case a whole carcass cremation, was of a male (**102**) who had also had an ivory object on the pyre and who was buried with a large number of vessels. The association of horses and military equipment also occurs in **215**, a deposit of uncertain status where the pyre goods unusually included the remains of a dog, and **217,** a pyre debris deposit with evidence of a whole carcass cremation of a horse. The former had the remains of an unsexed adult, the latter an adult male.

A natural reaction might be to question the sex identification of **194** and **303**, but if we take it as correct then it might suggest that the status of a family could cut across sex differences so that some of the trappings appropriate to the males of the household might be placed on the pyres of the females. Nothing we know of the Roman army would lead us to conclude that it was recruiting females, so the scabbard fittings presumably reflect a related male. The women in question were probably in their 20s or 30s and the signs of status visible amongst their pyre and grave goods may signal that they were the wives of senior officers. The age range (21–45 years) of the individual in **303**, however, would allow her to have been the mother or mother-in-law of one, perhaps valued like Campania Dubita described as 'the most steadfast mother-in-law' of Julius Maximus at Ribchester (*RIB* I, no. 594).

Though this seems the most likely explanation within the milieu of third-century Brougham, it should not be forgotten that though biological sex is given, gender identities are constructed. Perhaps we are indeed looking at female amazons, if so it would give an entirely new meaning to the term irregular formation which is often used to describe *numeri* (Webster 1979, 150). As has already been noted in the case of **307**, the funerals of people whose gender and biological sex was not necessarily the same could reflect this ambiguity.

THE SITE IN THE FOURTH CENTURY AND LATER

The life of the cremation cemetery seems to stop at the end of the third century. Thereafter there is very little activity on the hilltop with the likely exception of the interments in the long cists. As already discussed (p. 37), there is no concrete evidence either from the cists themselves or from *comparanda* as to whether they are late Roman, sub-Roman or even later. There was activity at the fort as late as the last third of the fourth century because pottery of that date was recovered from the south moat of the castle (Birley 1932, 138). There are also hints of continuing occupation into the fifth century (see p. 6). A sub-Roman context might, therefore, be appropriate for the long cists. There is no indication that the area ever came to

be a cemetery in the same way as it had been in the third century, and the evidence would suggest it was occasionally a place of burial, possibly over some time given the relationship of **24** and **26**.

Again the location on the hilltop may have been important here. There can be no doubt that it would still be marked out as a place of the dead in the sub-Roman period given that many of the tombstones still appear to have been in the vicinity of it in the eighteenth century (see p. 4). The monumental towers were probably still standing as there is some evidence that **F40**, for example, was not robbed until the medieval period (see p. 31). Perhaps this was a location appropriate for a special subset of the population. It has been suggested that the long cists placed close to Hadrian's Wall reflect post-Roman Welsh sources that describe burial close to the frontiers of the kingdom in order to ensure future safety (Dark and Dark 1996, 58). Possibly the intermittent use of the hilltop might reflect something similar.

ENDNOTES

[1] The urned cremation burials:

5 9 12 13 16 19 20 21 23 27 28 29 31 33 35 36
37 41 45 46 47 48 50 59 61 63 65 70 71 72 73 74
75 76 77 78 81 82 84 89 90 93 95 102 105 107 117 118
122 123 126 134 135 139 142 144 148 149 152 155 158 160 162 168
169 170 171 180 181 183 184 185 186 188 189 191 192 195 197 200
201 203 204 205 209 213 218 219 222 227 234 236 238 240 241 250
253 255 257 258 259 262 264 268 271 273 277 282 283 285 286 289
290 291 298 303 307 308 310 317 322 325 329.

[2] The unurned cremation burials:

7 42 49 145 150 157 194 237 280.

[3] The deposits with pyre debris:

2 3 4 6 8 14 17 18 30 38 40 51 52 54 55 56
58 64 66 86 88 91 94 100 106 109 114 121 124 130 133 141
153 154 164 165 167 175 177 196 198 199 202 207 215 216 217 225
226 230 232 235 239 261 269 270 272 276 278 281 284 295 299 304
326.