

NOTES AND DISCUSSION

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THE RESURGENCE OF PRE-INDO- EUROPEAN ELEMENTS IN THE WESTERN MEDIEVAL CULT OF THE DEAD¹

Most of Europe's indigenous myths are divided into two large traditional currents, one common to all of the conquering peoples who came down from the North during the two millenniums which preceded our era, the other inherited from more or less confused Alpine and Mediterranean substrata. This proposed classification, debatable perhaps because it is too schematic, has become such a classic that we

Translated by Wells Chamberlin.

1. This essay, based on the analysis of a very large number of scattered and partly unpublished data, attempts only to show the relationships among various enigmatic questions and to indicate the perspectives which seem to emerge from these questions because they are so related.

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no longer need to show the abundant arguments on which it is based. But it does explain so many contrasts, contradictions, or anachronisms in the history of the West that it is always fitting to return to it.

Yet, within the political framework they had imposed everywhere, the wanderers and warriors—Hellenes, Italiots, Celts, and Germans—very quickly admitted to the ranks of their deified heroes, fathers, and city-protectors those cosmic entities from which the natives thought they received life and death, feast and famine, and which all led back to the Mother par excellence—Rhea, Gaia, Cybele, or Demeter, the nourishing Earth. The pleromatic divinity, thus reduced to sharing in national pantheons the official honors to which any legendary puppet could lay claim, became personalized, and its cult appeared set within the formalism of the public life of the cities. Even among the faithful followers of this divinity, it seems, the feeling of personal and immediate dependency upon the universal genetrix became dulled. At the same time the custom disappeared of building for the dead an individual megalithic abode or tumulus—that turgescence in the earth, symbolic perhaps of the Mother's reverse gestation as she took him back into her womb. From that time on, as society was imposing itself as the primary end for the living, so did it also appear as an essential condition for those about to face the netherworld. Thus prevailed the strange custom of collecting the ashes of the dead and arranging them side by side in urn fields or in rows of tombs.

At its advent, Christianity did not assume that it had any greater task than that of overthrowing the anthropomorphic idols. This concept held true as long as the order of the ancient City was maintained, since there the cult of the saints was easily substituted for that of the Olympians and the heroes. Moreover, the Germans took control of the Empire precisely at the moment when its social structure was disintegrating—but in its turn, the edifice of the Germanic city crumbled under the attacks of the Saracens, Vikings, and Hungarians. Then, left to themselves, the *pagani*, descendants of the megalith builders, again sought the protection of the Earth.

Quite understandably, the clergy of that time certainly took little pleasure in chronicling this return to chthonian traditions. The regression nevertheless troubled the secular authorities. We owe to them the description of certain practices which they intended to repress in the

name of Christian orthodoxy. And so the Capitulary of Charlemagne, dated 742, stigmatizes them:

omnes spurcitas gentilitatis . . . sive sacrificiis mortuorum . . . sive hostias immolatitias . . . quas stulti homines juxta ecclesias ritu pagano faciunt, sub nomine sanctorum martyrum vel confessorum.²

The year before the Council of Leptines had listed in its *Indiculus Superstitionum Paganiarum* thirty practices attributed to the Saxons, some of which, described under Celtic names, must have been quite general. In the order of the document, these are:

De sacrilegio a sepulchro mortuorum.
De sacrilegio super defunctos, id est dâdsisas.
De spurcalibus in februario, . . .³

These sibylline formulas are clarified by the Icelandic sagas, by several "Lives of the Saints," by the writings of Adam of Bremen and of Bede, and particularly by the evidence of Burkhard of Worms who describes, about the year 1000, the "*oblaciones quae in quibusdam locis ad sepulchra mortuorum fiunt.*"⁴ These consisted in holocausts of various animals—horses, cows, rams, pigs, and fowl—which had been cut up beside the tombs. While the parts reserved for the dead were being reduced to ashes in a huge fire area, the dead man's family gathered around to eat the rest. After the feast, which usually degenerated into an orgy, the revelers broke the dishes according to a ritual and carried home from the fireplace a portion of the ashes to which magical powers were attributed. Each year, on the eve of the last day of February, the month of the dead, the same ceremony was renewed under the auspices of Nature, a circumstance which invited the celebrants to complete their homage to the one who had disappeared—homage paid by sexual rites and by the "*spurcalia*" listed in the *Indiculus* immediately after the "*sacrilegium super defunctos.*"⁵ It seems that these orgies,

2. *Monumenta Germaniae SS.* IV, 701–2.

3. Mansi, XIII, 370–71.

4. *Monumenta Germaniae LL.* I, 24–28.

5. Among the other texts in which allusions to these practices can be found, we have particularly the correspondence of Pope Zachary (*Monumenta Germaniae, Hist., Epit., Vol. III*), recalling various times when Christian priests were not permitted to sacrifice bulls, goats, etc., during funeral ceremonies. It is even specified that "*Equi selvatici multo*

cleaned up or at least disguised, may have become our carnival which falls precisely at the same time of the year.⁶

It may be objected that the authors cited are all Germans and that their evidence is valid only for the northern marches of the Carolingian Empire, still more than half pagan. But simply because we know of no similar text referring to Aquitaine, Burgundy, or the Spanish March,⁷ it does not follow that the practices in question were foreign to them. On the contrary, the archeological evidence indicates that the practices were customary there. Indeed, it is most often in Limousin, Poitou, Guyenne, and Languedoc that cylindrical or ovoid trenches filled with votive deposits have been observed in cemeteries located beside Romanesque or pre-Romanesque churches.⁸ Since these have al-

amplius evitandi sunt" in one of these letters, all written during the middle of the eighth century and consequently contemporaneous with the Council of Leptines. A hundred and fifty years earlier, Gregory the Great recalled, in a letter to Brunhild, the anathema pronounced against ceremonies held around an animal's head. And in the monuments described later in this article, the importance of horse or ram heads will be seen clearly.

6. This evidence is corroborated by the often reported presence of votive fireplaces in the Frankish cemeteries of the Rhineland (Meckenheim, Andernach, Gohr), of Lorraine (Bouzonville), and of Belgium (Franchimont). But it must be remembered that these cemeteries are always rather late (eighth century). It is difficult to conceive, however, that such practices, so consonant with the protohistoric mentality, were born spontaneously at the end of the Merovingian era. Consequently they probably experienced only a recrudescence at the time, whose beginnings are hinted at in the acts of the last council of Toledo. Indeed, from 589 to 653, the Spanish councils scarcely allude to anything except the survival of magic. On the other hand, they show, during the reign of Receswinthe (653–72), an appreciable deterioration of the Catholic organization. The immediate consequence of this was the rise of paganism witnessed by Father Valerius in the years 680–90 (*Span-Forschungen der Görresgesellschaft*, 1st ser., III, 439–49). The mass influx of lay *paganis* into the monasteries had the unexpected result of paganizing the monks (Migne, *P.L.*, LXXXVII, 439, 444, 447).

7. For the earlier period there is no lack of evidence concerning Spain. Canon 69 of the Capitulary of St. Martin of Braga states: "Non liceat Christianis prandia ad defunctorum sepulchra deferre et sacrificia reddere mortuorum Deo." The custom to which this interdiction referred has left its mark in Spain on many Christian cemeteries of the fourth and fifth centuries. For example, semicircular banquet tables were found at Tarragona, set around tombs provided with a vertical chimney which allowed food to be brought into the sepulchral cavity. It should be noted that one of these tombs, although sealed, was empty. It was a cenotaph (*Span-Forschungen der Görresgesellschaft*, V, 74–88).

8. Cemeteries are rarely cleared for archeological reasons, but when they are we find in most cases the offering silos to which we call attention here. Moreover, they are well known to the local people who often refer to them by a regional word such as *ponnes*, *ouilles*, etc.

ways been chance discoveries, rarely could all the observations be made of them which methodical excavating would necessarily entail. It always appeared, however, that they were associated with certain sepulchers and that they had been systematically filled, in alternating layers, with ashes, scoriae, pig, sheep or fowl bones, shards of heavy pottery, and more or less carbonized organic matter. Moreover, they generally open, along with the tomb which corresponds to them, onto a flat piece of ground covered with ashes and charcoal—the residue, probably, of the huge fires described by Burkhard of Worms. Thus the ditches dug in the form of silos probably had no function other than that of holding the dead man's share during the anniversary feasts held on the site.⁹

Neither Durand de Mende, Jean Beleth, nor any other liturgist of the Middle Ages made the slightest allusion to these resurgent elements of paganism. Since their disapproval was ineffectual, no doubt they preferred to ignore such practices. The practices were, however, so common and so generalized that traces of them are found even in church interiors.¹⁰ They must have belonged, moreover, to an extremely complex system of superstitions and taboos. We would doubtless find many other concrete ramifications of the system if we knew better how to read into these artificial shapings of the ground.

There is no over-all study of them. They have always become incidentally the subject of some description in the regional monographs or in articles on other subjects. Among these rather numerous publications, we should cite at least:

Mouret, *Sulpice-Sévère à Primuliac* ("Bulletin Société Archéologique Scientifique et Littéraire de Béziers," Vol. XXXVI [1906]).

Coutil and Baudoin (*Actes du Congrès Préhistorique de France*, 1912, p. 798).

Martellière (*Bulletin Société Archéologique et Historique de l'Orléanais*, XI, 382).

E. Socley (*Bulletin Société Préhistorique de France*, 1912, pp. 308 and 745).

Dusan et Lacaze, "Mottes du Sud-Ouest recouvrant des constructions" (*Revue Archéologique du Midi de la France*, 1866-67).

Grellet-Balguerie, "Le Souterrain-refuge de Mazères-Fiac" (*Revue Archéologique du Midi de la France*, 1866-67).

9. One must take care not to confuse these offering silos with the real or so-called funeral wells which have been reported in various areas of the ancient Roman world.

10. Ledain, "L'église des Jacobins à Thouars" (*Bulletin de la Société des Antiquités de l'Ouest*, 1889, p. 496).

Mariano Ribas Beltrán, *Las excavaciones de Mataró* ("Reunion de la Comisaria Provincial de Excavaciones Arqueológicas de Barcelona," 1957).

M. Broëns, "L'église et le site antique de Saint-Cizi" (unpublished), and *L'église de Saint-Pré de Lestelle* (St.-Gaudens, 1946); cf. above Dusan et Lacaze, *Mottes du Sud-Ouest*.

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And so a very well defined type of terraced construction was adapted to these funeral rites. This was, in any case, the most evident theater of such rites which has come down to us, hundreds, if not thousands, of these earthen monuments having been reported between the Loire and the Pyrenees. Each time that one of them has been excavated, nothing has come to light, under the materials which had been removed from its sides and carried back to the base to give it greater height, but silos filled with votive deposits and opening into the remains of vast fire-places.

To obviate misunderstanding we must point out that except in the case of later utilization for different purposes, these lumps of earth which look like truncated cones, round or oval in shape, show no evidence of construction work, either in mud or wood. Furthermore, they are not usually surrounded by a ditch or inclosed within a *vallum*. They are cut into a hill, generally below the crest line; in addition, they usually have one, two, or three tierlike steps around their base. Consequently, we do not classify them with works, given the same name, that were used as dungeon sites in the earliest feudal period. Furthermore, the mounds do not show any of the defensive characteristics of dungeons. On the other hand, the profile of the mounds has often preserved very clearly defined ridge lines and could not be confused with the tumulus profile, which is always much rounded off.¹¹ Apparently unknown in many provinces, mounds absolutely identical in form and structure are found in countries far distant from each other and between which there appears never to have been any historical link—for example, Aquitaine and the middle Danube basin.¹²

As we have found nowhere a text going back to the origin of the mounds, their age can be determined only through excavations done

11. Protohistoric tumuli were often selected as cemetery sites, both in ancient times and in the Middle Ages, but even in such cases it is immediately clear on first inspection that we are dealing with works which are different from mounds.

12. The fullest documentation that can be had in France on the mounds discussed here has been collected by the Commission pour l'Étude des Camps et Enceintes, established at the beginning of the century within the Société Préhistorique de France. Unfortunately this repertory, published by departments, gathers together terraced works of all kinds and of all periods, usually without any order. In addition to this source a large number of monographic notices, more or less detailed, are scattered in the periodical publications of the various national or regional French learned societies. It seems clear, nevertheless, that

with particular attention paid to the formless debris taken from the silos and the hearth areas hidden in the mass of the mounds.

This debris consists principally of fragments of ollae or jugs belonging to well-defined types, as much because of their form as because of the technique of their manufacture. These ollae appear to be nothing more, with regional differences, than the *Kügeltopf* so common in most tenth-century layers from Friesland to the middle Danube that was destined to become the tripod kettle of the fourteenth century.¹³ Moreover, in the north of France, the common furniture of the mounds and the hypogea also included jars and jugs of the Pingsdorf and Badorf types.¹⁴ The chronology of the ollae, according to Rhine archeologists, is about the same as that of the *Kügeltopf* and is also confirmed by the occasional coins found in the mounds. We might add

a multitude of mounds, still extant today, may never have been reported. Thus we have been able to locate in Bas Quercy over thirty mounds not listed in the various repertories in which about 140 others are included. Since almost all of the mounds are hidden in wooded areas, this shows that we might find many more by undertaking systematic prospecting.

For Central Europe we have the numerous studies published by M. Much, I. Spöttl, von Reviczsky, Riehl, Wiedermann, Hoernes, Woldrich, Graf Würmbrand, Trapp, Kondelka, Demitrijkiewicz, etc., in the *Mittheilungen des Anthrop-Gesellschaft in Wien*, during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

During the same period, the *Beiträge zur Anthropologie und Urgeschichte Bayerns* published articles on Bavarian mounds by J. Ranke, A. Thiersch, S. Hartmann, Würdinger, Ohlenschlager, and Sepp. Most of these studies also deal with the hypogea, underground works which we shall discuss later and with which the mounds we are studying are closely connected.

The observations noted above were made during the excavations (still unpublished) of the mound of Esmes (Commune of Montesquieu, in Tarn-et-Garonne), of that at Pélauze (L'Honor de Cos, Tarn-et-Garonne), and of the one at Couchines (Beauville, Lot-et-Garonne). They have been corroborated by test borings made in many similar works.

13. These ollae are always well fired, despite the rough appearance given them by the quartz drier added to the earth from which they are made. They were formed in two parts, joined near the top of the belly in a flattened fillet, decorated with gadroons made with the thumb. The lower part, with a round bottom and no base, was hand-molded, while the neck and lip were usually turned. The pitchers, less perfectly fired, are made of an extremely fine and porous pâte. The ornamentation, often not present, consists of nipples stuck onto the belly, or of stamped solar emblems; the latter are found in pottery of the mounds of Central Europe, but are on the bottom. In the north of France, the corresponding pottery is related to the so-called Pingsdorf type, characterized by several streaks of reddish slip on an ochre or white pâte.

14. See Fig. 6 [6].

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that on all these varieties of pottery, except on the Pingsdorf jars, the most frequent ornamentation consists, in Aquitaine just as in Friesland or in Moravia, of a solar emblem, a circle, or a rosette; but in western Europe the design is impressed on the belly of the bases, in Central Europe on their bottom (see Fig. 6 [9]).¹⁵

The sepulchers to which the silos owe their *raison d'être* are sometimes found on the mound itself (Fig. 1), but most often they are at a

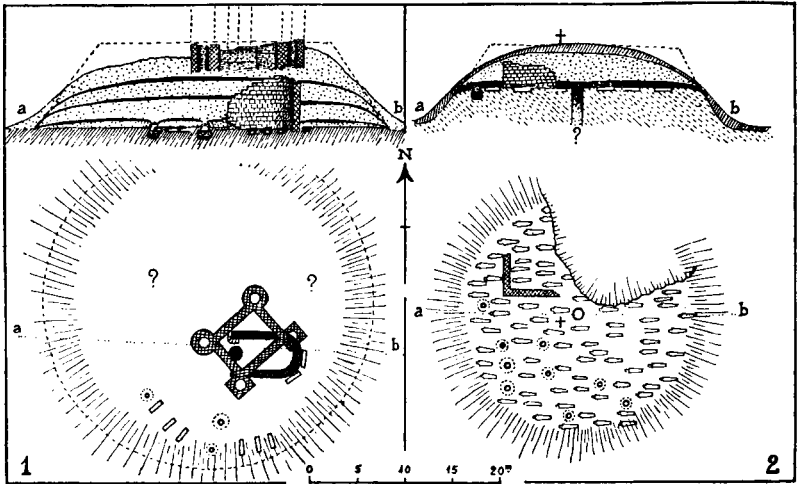


FIG. 1.—1, Mound of Frégouville (Gers) (from Dusan and Lacaze, *loc. cit.*). A brick dungeon built in the fourteenth century above the ruins of the oratory constructed in courses of small stones; 2, Mound of Saint-Bauzile-d'Esclatien (Vendres, Hérault) (from Mouret, *loc. cit.*).

distance of one or two hundred paces from it, in an authentic Christian cemetery surrounding a church of Romanesque origin, although perhaps not Romanesque in its present state. The dangers of burning the funeral pyre right beside the sanctuary walls may alone explain the choice and special installation of a well-isolated place, where it was no doubt easier to avoid the eventual disapproval of the parish clergy.

15. In the fill-in soil to which these mounds owe the upper part of their profile, it sometimes happens that Roman coins, fragments of *tegulae*, or even fragments of chipped flints are found, and the finder has concluded in favor of an ancient or prehistoric origin for the monument, instead of confining himself to the admission that the site had been occupied long before it was modified by the building of the mound.

In any case, wherever we find them, fireplaces and silos bear witness to the frequency of the practice. Its modalities must have varied from one century to the next, according to local circumstances difficult for us to imagine today. There are nevertheless numerous observations on which we might rely, if they had not been vitiated by the prejudice which still held less than a century ago that everything which appeared to be of any antiquity at all was to be considered Celtic or "Gaulois" when nothing classically Roman was found in it.

Methodical excavating of medieval cemeteries, chosen for the known date of some of their sepulchers, should, however, allow us to circumscribe the hypothetical area more and more and to come finally to some certainty about the conditions in which the pre-Christian rites mentioned in the texts we have cited could have been maintained, or reborn, almost to the end of the early Middle Age.

At this point, it is important to consider one of the essential data of the problem, very puzzling in itself, which will probably require more development than the preceding material. This is the very frequent, if not indispensable, presence of a hypogeum dug beneath or in the immediate vicinity of the offering silos we have just discussed.

The subterranean work we describe under this generally accepted archeological term nearly always appears, in its most elementary (which is no doubt its oldest) form, as a circular cell of such small dimensions that a man could neither stand nor lie down in it. Nevertheless, it usually has a circular bench built at the foot of the wall but interrupted on the east by the opening (an oblique well shaft, stairway, or short tunnel) which leads to it. Even when the little cell has been dug in the form of a large, cylindrical well shaft, to be covered with a vault or roof, then recovered with earth up to ground level, the center of the bench faces east (Fig. 3 [1 and 2]).¹⁶

As a general rule the hypogeum contains only a few handfuls of charcoal, occasionally an earthenware kettle or jug, and sometimes, set out on the bench, the head of a horse or a ram.¹⁷

16. As at Le Verdier (Commune of Montauban, Tarn-et-Garonne).

17. At Bétricourt, for example (Commune of Rouvroy, Somme) (Terninck, *Congrès Archéologique de France, Session d'Arras*, 1880, p. 158); at Verteillac-Coutures (Dordogne) (Hardy, *Bulletin Société Archéologique du Périgord*, XIII [1886], 447). Apparently we have here examples of the custom to which the letter of Gregory the Great to Brunhild, mentioned in n. 5, refers.

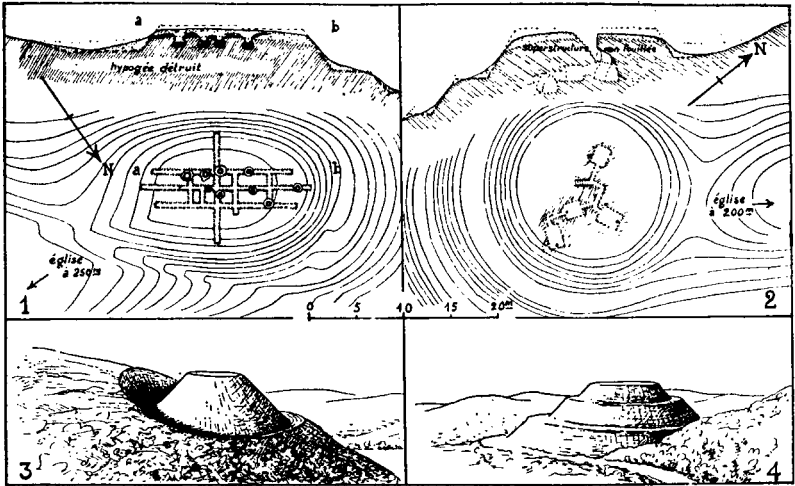


FIG. 2.—1, Mound of Esmes (Montesquieu, Tarn-et-Garonne) with plan of the excavation borings made there; 2, Mound of Notre-Dame des Misères (Mirabel, Tarn-et-Garonne); 3, Mound of Schnelzen (Diersbach, Basse-Autriche) (from M. Much, *loc. cit.*); 4, Mound of Ober-Gänsersdorf (Basse-Autriche) (from M. Much).

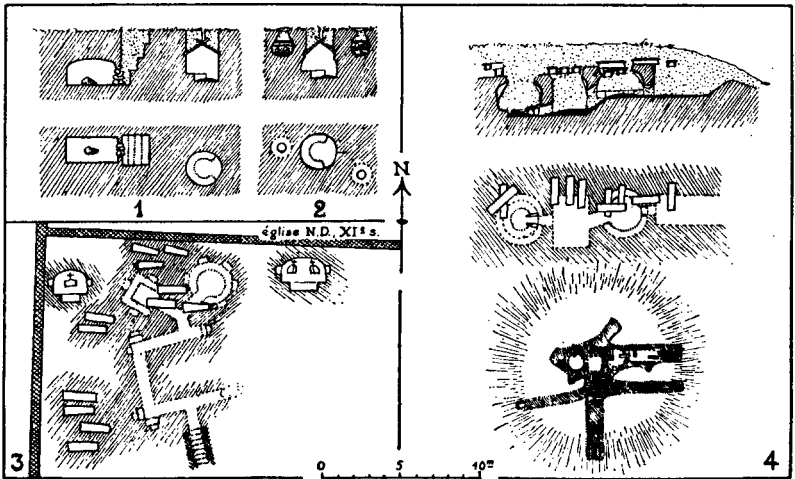


FIG. 3.—1, Bétricourt (Rouvrey, Pas-de-Calais) (from Terninck, *L'Artois Souterrain*, II, pl. XVIII); 2, Le Verdier (Montauban, Tarn-et-Garonne); 3, Matarò (Pce de Barcelona); 4, Morthomiers (Cher) (from Méloizes, *loc. cit.*).

Unfortunately, we know these hypogea only through sporadic finds. On the other hand, as their plan became complicated, they became more common.

At the end of a first evolutive phase, we find a vestibule in front of the cells, communicating with the cell only by a manhole, a low, narrow, circular opening through which one may pass only by crawling. This passageway is very similar to the one which was let into the middle of the flat stone walling off the sepulchral chamber in some of the *allées couvertes*.¹⁸ The combination was then repeated, the second one in an extension of the first one, as we find it in the clear, complete example found at Morthomiers (Cher) about 1800 (Fig. 3[4]).¹⁹ A terraced, circular butte or mound, covered with two layers of inhumation sepulchers, the uppermost regularly facing east, the deepest lying in a north-south direction, revealed a hypogeum under its east-west diameter. The vaults of the hypogeum had fallen in, and the oldest tombs had collapsed into it. The walls, cut into the chalky subsoil, had been hardened by a very hot fire. A thick layer of ashes and charcoal from the fire was preserved in the earth floor of the chambers.

The ground plan consisted of a long vestibule open to the sky, giving access through a manhole to a circular cell surrounded by a wide step that formed a bench. From here one passed to a somewhat lower level, where a rectangular cell served as vestibule for another circular cell, surrounded like the first by a bench, and into which one could not go without crawling through a manhole.

M. des Méloizes, who discovered this archeological complex, discussed its age with Cartailhac, but they reached no formal agreement because of the lack of sufficiently characteristic furnishings. In fact, insofar as we can judge from the published diagrams, the sepulchers might spread over a hundred-year period, about the eighth century, and the hypogeum could hardly be older. Since only two exploratory trenches were cut into the mound, we cannot base any argument on the fact that no silos were discovered here. On the other hand, the huge fires which had scarred the hypogeum, and the presence of the hypogeum itself in the very center of a structure which clearly seems never

18. For example, l'Allée de la Justice, at Presles (Seine-et-Oise).

19. *Mémoires de la Société des Antiquités du Centre*, 1882, p. 2; report by Cartailhac in *Matériaux*, 1885, p. 228.

to have been anything but a funeral mound, leave no doubt concerning its nature. Considering as well the simplicity with which its component parts are put together, we maintain that the hypogeum of Morthomiers is the archetype of the genre.

In the arrangement of its four last chambers, the Combe-Nègre hypogeum (Fig. 4[1])²⁰ reproduces the general plan of Morthomiers. We find here a duplication, end to end, of the same basic combination—vestibule, manhole, and cell with little benches. But here, in many details, an idea appears which had already attained a certain degree of complexity—a zigzagging corridor, several meters long and of normal height, lies in front of each vestibule. The vestibule differs from the cell, which is also rectangular, only in that it has no benches. Moreover, this ensemble branches off from a long gallery into which three small, square chambers open; these chambers are irregularly arranged, with no systematic integration, and yet they are necessarily contemporaneous with, if not earlier than, the terminal part of the cave.²¹

Here, then, the corridors still lacking at Morthomiers assume an importance which, in certain regional types such as those in Périgord, Catalonia, Limousin, and even in Bavaria, tends to become dominant. In the first two regions, for example, the corridor, after forming several regular elbows, usually ends in a single cell, and its hypogeum may even be arranged like that of Verteillac-Coutures (Dordogne) (Fig.

20. Cf. M. Broëns, *Le souterrain-refuge de la Combe-Nègre* ("Bulletin Archéologique du Comité des Travaux Scientifiques," 1938). The incorrect term *souterrain-refuge* ("cave used as refuge") had at that time been forced on the writer, who now formally rejects it. See also the writer's *Un enigma arqueologico: los hypogeos de Cataluña y sus semejantes en el conjunto de Europa Occidental* (Ampurias, 1960).

21. *Souterrains-refuges*—a better term would be *refuges souterrains*—with which these hypogea have generally been confused in France, are, however, distinguished from hypogea by nearly all their features. The best known are those of Artois, generally designated locally by the terms *boves* or *muches*. They are veritable underground villages or towns, made up of rows of rather spacious cells, set side by side along rectilinear corridors wide enough to permit several people to pass abreast or even for cattle to go through. They always have several exits and never show any of the enigmatic features, such as manholes, that we find in hypogea. Everything in them is logical and functional.

We know, also, that the ground under most medieval cities was crisscrossed in all directions by long galleries. Rather than serving as refuges, these galleries were probably used to evacuate the population in case of fire.

In the Lérida plain, which is absolutely barren and where all the population is widely scattered, most of the feudal centers were equipped in the twelfth century with subterranean passageways having secret exits in the middle of the countryside (Al Himyari, *Kitab*

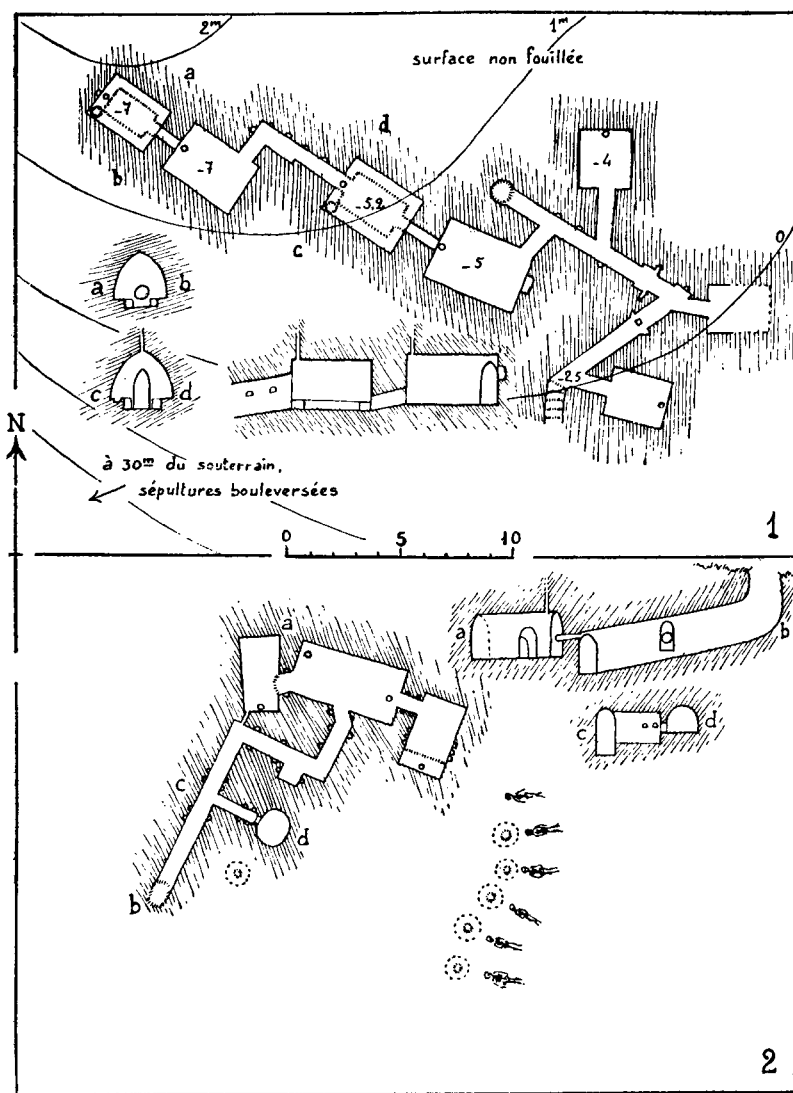


FIG. 4.—1, La Combe-Nègre (L'Honor-de-Cos, Tarn-et-Garonne); 2, Mazères-Fiac (Tarn) (from Grellet-Balgueris, *loc. cit.*).

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5[1]),²² where the gently descending access stairway, after making three alternate ninety-degree turns to the left and the right, ends in a blind alley, across the width of which is a bench on which the first visitors found a ram's head. The regular cutting of this blind alley does not allow us to assess it as work left unfinished. Moreover, the presence of a silo on the outside, almost over the corridor, assures us that the latter sufficed to fulfil the office for which the most elaborate hypogea were intended.²³

In Bavaria, galleries thirty or forty meters long end in a tiny cell after having been narrowed at several points to an elbowed manhole which is first horizontal, then vertical.²⁴ Moreover, the gallery bifurcates at some distance from the entrance, and its two branches rejoin after each has described what is more or less a semicircle and has led to no chamber. This type, which is very common in Limousin and in Bourbonnais,²⁵ is also found in Central Europe as a component of very

Ar-Rawd, published by Lévi-Provençal, *La Péninsule Ibérique au Moyen Âge*, p. 202 and n. 3). These galleries, thus clearly different from the hypogea, were also very numerous in Catalonia and served to evacuate personnel in case of surprise attack.

As for troglodytic dwellings, their chambers are often quite like those of hypogea, with side benches, niches, and the same careful execution of the work—but their arrangement is different. They are not built in depth but are placed at the level of a slope or cliff, in order to let in as much light as possible through their doors and windows.

The non-utilitarian character of hypogea was immediately apparent to the archeologists of Central Europe who dealt with these monuments in the last century. How did it escape most of the regional researchers or amateurs in France who explored some of them? No doubt because these archeologists had to limit their study to the fortuitous discoveries made in each one's own province. Moreover, since the publication of A. Blanchet's *Southern-refuges de France* (Paris, 1920), the edge of their curiosity seems to have become quite dulled. The learned numismatist stripped the question of all its mystery and, in a kind of official way, ratified the confusion between the underground works we are describing here and the refuges (cf. n. 42).

22. *Bulletin Société Archéologique du Périgord*, XIII (1886), 447.

23. Most of the hypogea of Périgord, like the one at Verteillac-Coutures, have a stairway bent several times at a right angle. But one, two, or three circular cells open onto this stairway, as at La Brugère (St. Michel de Villadeix, Dordogne), at Chalais, and at St. Pierre de Frugie (in the same department).

24. Most of these hypogea are under mounds, at Kissing, Lulling, Almering, Rockenstein, Mergentau, Julbach, Rottbach, Albersdorf, Nussberg, etc.

25. For example, at Dalhué (Gracay, Cher), at St Sulpice-le-Donzeil (Creuse), and at Hautefaye (Issoudun, Creuse).

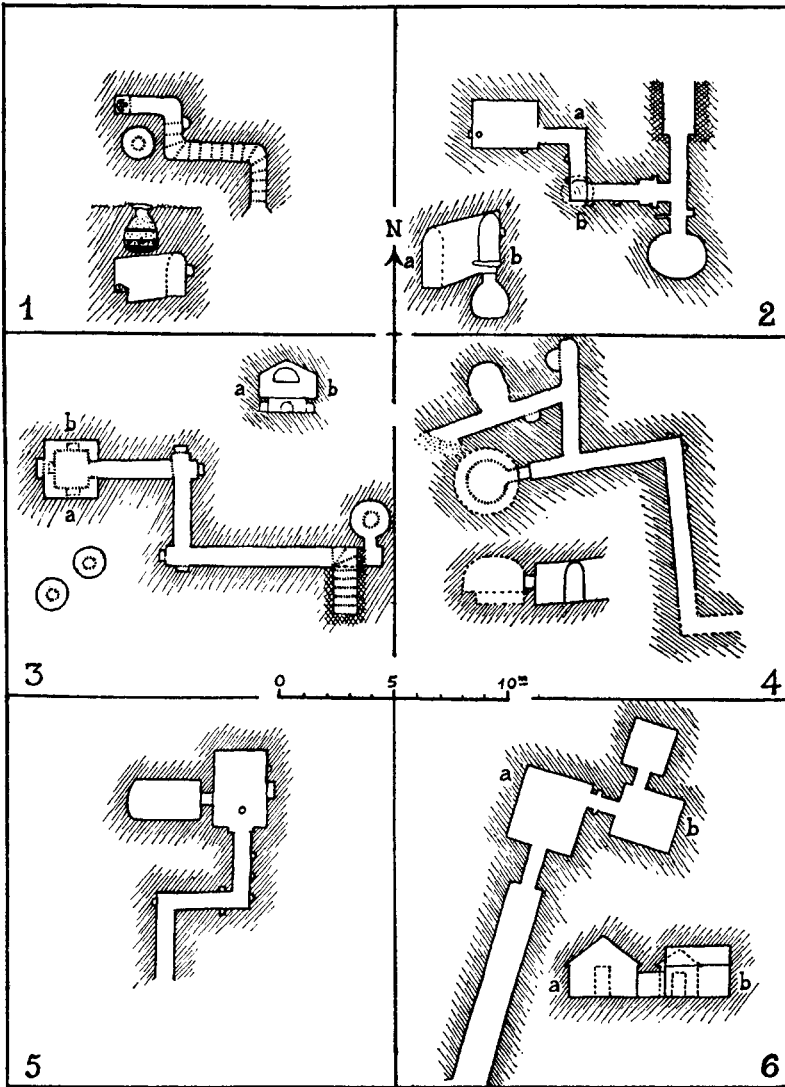


FIG. 5.—1, Verteillac-Coutures (Dordogne) (from Hardy, *loc. cit.*); 2, La Bénèche (Causade, Tarn-et-Garonne); 3, Can Ros (La Sagrera, Barcelona); 4, San Agustin (Barcelona); 5, Koth (Rupprechtshofen, Basse-Autriche) (from Karner, *loc. cit.*); 6, Spata (Mésogée, Greece) (from J. M., *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*, II, p. 185).

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large and complex hypogea.²⁶ Despite its simplicity, it is consequently contemporaneous with works which seem to us to belong to the last phase of the genre's evolution (Fig. 6 [1, 2, and 3]). Indeed, the two opposite tendencies developed simultaneously. While, in certain hypogea only the corridor develops, in others the plan is infinitely varied, becoming more and more figurative. The chamber vaults, after having taken on the ogive shape of the straw hut or thatched-roof house, assume the form of a ridge roof extending beyond the side walls and imitating the eaves of a house.²⁷ Hemispherical ovens, but without chimneys;²⁸ closet-like niches; stairs winding to reach a chamber suspended at random in the homogenous and endless mass of the rock, where none of the reasons which justify the superposing of stories in buildings is acceptable (Fig. 7[3]);²⁹ empty or flooded silos opening into the floor of the chambers or the corridors (Fig. 5[2]) at the same perhaps irrational, but secret places where they might still be found today under the tile flooring of very old houses; corridors winding capriciously like old pathways and bifurcating toward distinct groups of chambers as if toward the different houses of a village—that is the aspect of the hypogea which, in the Danube basin just as in Aquitaine, seem to correspond to the final subtleties of an idea which at first could be satisfied by a small round crypt. As it lost its conventional structure, this work lost the orientation of its terminal cell, which had been so rigorously observed in the oldest types. Manholes and peripheral benches, the latter no doubt already replaced in the homes of the living by movable wooden seats, disappeared next.³⁰ And the day finally came

26. For example, at Roschitz I, II, III, V, VIII, at Watzendorf, at Dobersberg, and at Ober-Grünbach (Lower Austria). These circular galleries are strangely reminiscent of the cavity of the same form and dimensions of some of the Balearic megaliths called talayotes, like that of El Hostal.

27. This profile is particularly remarkable in the Department of Tarn-et-Garonne, at Espinas (Puygailard), at Bosc-Grand (St. Bauzel), at Les Proats-Hauts (Montauban), and at St. Sernin-d'Ordalilles (St. Nauphary).

28. Observed particularly at Laversines (Oise), La Croux and Lestiol (Puycornet, Tarn-et-Garonne), and La Bénèche (Caussade, Tarn-et-Garonne).

29. The "gratuitous" nature of the stairway is evident at Barraves (Caussade, Tarn-et-Garonne).

30. The morphological differences between hypogea of neighboring areas are sometimes such that one would not hesitate in seeing in them works of the same nature. In

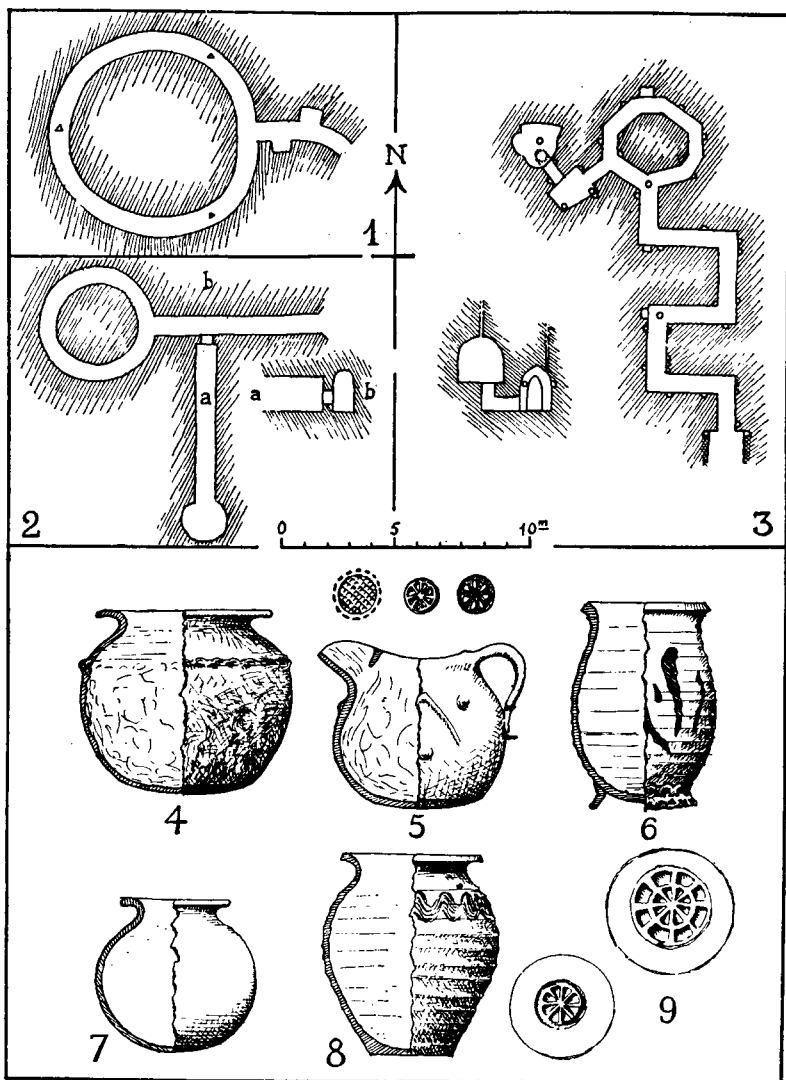


FIG. 6.—1, Dalhué (Graçay, Cher) (from Buhot de Kersers, *Memoires Société des Antiquités du Centre*, XVI, p. xi); p. xi); 2, Saint-Sulpice-le-Donzeil (Creuse) (from *Le Moniteur archéologique*, 1866-67); 3, Dobeberg (Basse-Autriche) (from Karner, *loc. cit.*); 4, Olla from the mounds and hypogea of Aquitaine; 5, Small jug from the mounds and hypogea of Aquitaine, with fillets (reduced to one-third of their diameter) which constitute one of the usual motifs of their ornamentation; 6, Vase said to be from "Pingsdorf," observed in certain hypogea in the north of France; 7 and 8, *Kügeltopf* and another vase common in the mounds of Central Europe; 9, Fillets stamped on the bottom of vases of type 8 and one the same scale.

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when the need to which this construction corresponded no longer made itself felt, or when it was suppressed. This enigmatic tradition, with its history summarily sketched out by subterranean archeology, fell out of use.

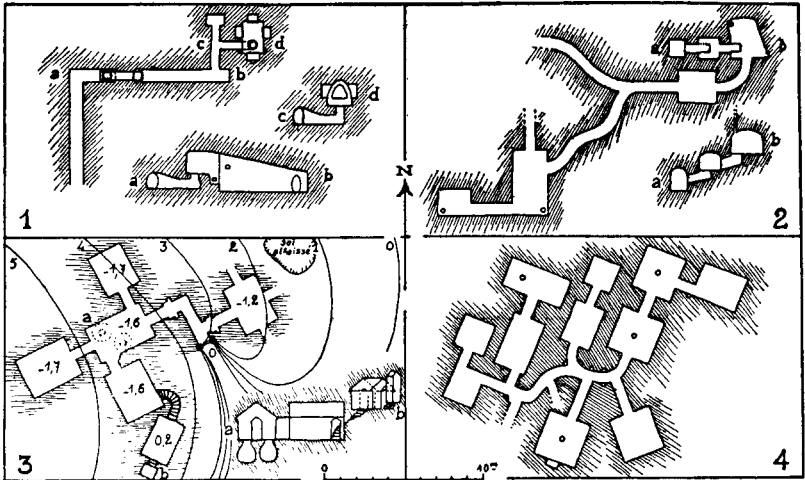


FIG. 7.—1, Schwartzach (Bavaria) (from Ranke, *Beiträge für Anthropologie und Urgeschichte Bayerns*, 1878, p. 166); 2, Csejte (Slovakia) (from Karner, *loc. cit.*); 3, Barraves (Caussade, Tarn-et-Garonne); 4, Gaubitsch (Basse-Autriche) (from Karner, *loc. cit.*).

How and when? Various clues lead us to believe that it came to a violent end. In certain areas, if not everywhere, one out of every two mounds studied, because we can be sure that their mass incloses a hypo-

fact, from one type to another, the relationship is quite continuous, as is proved by the existence of hypogea which include, collectively, all the characteristics of each type. Consequently we could not consider the most complex underground works as refuges, if the others are not. And moreover the history of the provinces confirms what the ethnologists have been able to declare in our own times, that the refuge on which dispersed populations most willingly rely during troubled times is the forest. In order to meet the danger of surprise, all that was needed was a dry, ventilated cave, well lined with masonry, with a secret entrance inside the house itself and an exit hidden in a ravine or in the woods. In any event, a person in flight who might have hidden in one of the hypogea we are discussing would have realized that he was in danger of being smoked out or simply walled in, however disconcerting the zigzags, corridors, manholes, and the quantity of chambers may have been. No aggressor, a priori, would have had the pointless imprudence to get involved in them.

geum, reveal that this human-scale molehill was systematically destroyed, filled in even to its remotest corners, with a meticulous concern explainable only by passion.³¹ It must then have been near the end of the Middle Ages, if we base our hypothesis on the debris of furniture which the mounds often yield. The unknown hypogea, apparently those which remained sealed and which had no features to mark them on the outside, naturally escaped this destructive fury. Others, spared then or discovered later, were opened and, if their arrangement lent itself, were used for some secular purpose. This caused them to be taken in our day for underground refuges, for food-storage pits, for the abodes of cave-dwellers, or for catacombs. Nevertheless, anyone who succeeds in finding an intact hypogeum must confess his perplexity before this ensemble of details which, although they leave no basis for any of these easy suppositions, also suggest no comparison with any known cultural fact, nor with any sort of better interpreted monuments, unless it is with the funeral constructions left by prehistoric Mediterranean man or by antiquity.

We need here only recapitulate the most salient of these features:

1. The presence of hearth areas and offering silos in the immediate vicinity of every hypogeum.

2. In 40 per cent of the cases, these silos are found in a cemetery of the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries, below or near which the hypogeum was dug. In 30 per cent, nothing in particular calls our attention to the site of the silos and the hypogeum, but if we carry out methodical researches in these places, we never fail to find one or more sepulchers which, since they are shallow and unprotected, could have been destroyed.³² Finally, in the remaining 30 per cent of the cases, silos and hypogea are found inside the mass of the mound, and not far from it there is, or once was, a church (Fig. 2 [1 and 2]). In some regions, however, such as Catalonia, the mound is not found. The hypogeum, independent of any cemetery, appears there as dependent upon a house, and the house is always proved to be very old. The hypogeum

31. Observations made at Esmes (Montesquieu) in particular, and at Pélauze (L'Honor de Cos, Tarn-et-Garonne).

32. Among the numerous published examples, the most convincing is the one observed by Grellet-Balguerie at Mazères-Fiac (Tarn) (*Revue Archéologique du Midi de la France*, 1867, p. 183).

comes out of a vestibule and extends into a yard or garden where the silos are found.

It is evident that these percentages vary more or less from one region to another. Moreover, no particular type of hypogeum corresponds to any one of the varying exterior characteristics which the figures indicate.

3. As a general rule the hypogeum is almost empty when discovered. Its scant furniture consists of ollae and jugs, intentionally broken, as is sometimes proved by the arrangement, in the floor or on the benches, of their fragments in hollows³³ specially fitted to the characteristically rounded bottom of the jugs (Fig. 4[1]). These always belong to the types we have indicated above in listing the furnishings of the silos. In the mounds they necessarily indicate the *terminus post quem*, whereas in the hypogea their age furnishes the *terminus ante quem*. The chronological margin of each ensemble of mound and hypogeum is thus limited to the period during which the furniture found there was in use.³⁴

It should be mentioned here that rather frequently we find among these shards or in niches flint stones, *pierres de foudre*, and rough stones showing traces of use as crushing implements or as hammers for flattening scythes. The magic powers which have always been attributed to flint stones explain their presence here; they are often placed under the roof of a barn or stable, where they are supposed to keep lightning and epizootic disease away. As for the latter, they also used to be brought into funeral customs in certain French provinces.³⁵

33. At Combe-Nègre, the cavity prepared in this manner for the olla was in the left rear corner of each cell bench.

34. The age we have ascribed to this furniture corresponds rather closely to that which Caravan-Cachin in the Albi area and Pagès-Allary in Cantal gave it according to the stratigraphy of sumps, certain levels of which were well dated. Moreover, the chronology obtained in this manner is confirmed in a hundred ways, sometimes by structural relationships between hypogea and Romanesque churches, as in SS. Justo and Pastor (Barcelona City) and in San Cristo (Villasar, Barcelona Province); sometimes by ornamental details, as in the case of St. Sernin d'Ordalilles (St. Nauphary, Tarn-et-Garonne) where, in the corner of one chamber, a pillar of rectangular section was worked in the rock, with a base and crude capital. In addition, hypogea are particularly numerous in certain forest terrains, the toponymy of which clearly shows that the clearing of the land around monastery barns was not begun before the tenth century, as the documents prove. This observation is particularly apparent in Bas Quercy, in the old forests of Eysartens and of Moissac.

35. La Chesnaye (*Revue des Traditions Populaires*, XXX [1906], 170).

4. When we open a hitherto unknown hypogeum, we notice the absolute cleanliness of the floor and the almost intact appearance of the walls. But within a few months, no doubt through the action of the outside atmosphere, the rock, which is generally quite soft in the spot where the excavation was made (softish sandstone, loess, clay, or decomposed granite), falls apart, the ceilings lose, along with their original profile, the marks made by the tools used to cut them, and the hypogeum soon becomes impassable. In certain terrains, it very often happens that hygronomic variations can provoke landslides within a few days. If the construction has nevertheless been able to go through the centuries without changing, that was because it was intended to be sealed as soon as completed and to remain sealed. Moreover, the water which remains permanently in many hypogea, even during the driest summers,³⁶ must not have been considered as an obstacle to the purposes of the work, for, however empirical may have been their ideas of geology, the excavators who reached an underground water level could not fail to notice it immediately.

5. In the simplest hypogea, and generally the most archaic, the terminal chamber clearly faces west, despite the often numerous detours of the corridor leading to it. If one has his back to the back wall of the cell, he is consequently facing east, or southeast, as the faithful in the Romanesque churches and the dead in their graves were doing. This rule, while not generally followed in the hypogea of Central Europe, is more consistently observed in France, and knows almost no exceptions in Catalonia.

6. If we make an exception of the runic inscriptions found in some hypogea of the Baden and Mannharstsberg areas,³⁷ we may say that hypogea are completely without epigraphy. On the other hand it is not unusual, especially in Catalonia, for the cross to be displayed in them—not at random, but quite prominently either above the niches or at the back or in the middle of the terminal chamber vault. Furthermore, corridor and niche openings are often framed with rabbeting, coves, ha-chures, or dots. This very crude ornamentation observes the canons of no definite style.

36. For example, in the hypogea of Barraves and of La Bénèche (Commune of Caussade, Tarn-et-Garonne).

37. After the introduction of Christianity into Germany, ruins there retained only a cryptographic and magic character.

7. Unless it has undergone remodeling, the hypogeum never has more than one entrance: by an inclined plane, a stairway, a shaft, or a silo. But, except in certain regional types, it also communicates with the outside through narrow vertical chimneys of the diameter of a bottle, which, arranged along the axis of the rooms, remind one of the *fenestelles* and *confessiones* of the paleo-Christian era.³⁸ These vents, with a diameter as small as two or three centimeters in examples found in Catalonia, could not have been provided for ventilation; the change of air which they allow, when nothing blocks them over their frequently attained length of six or seven meters, is much too slow to suffice. Where the vault could not be pierced, these chimneys were sometimes replaced with horizontal conduits of the same diameter, which linked one of the cells to the first section of the entrance corridor.

Yet of all the gratuitous difficulties which the excavators imposed on themselves, the most disconcerting is the manhole. Sometimes, to narrow down one of these passages, when the requirements of their work had not allowed them to make it narrow enough, they extended it into the room which was its outlet by a kind of funnel end made of trapezoidal tiles (Fig. 3[4]).³⁹ In the hypogea of Central Europe, the manhole often looks like a blind alley, but at its end is the end of a vertical shaft of the same diameter that permits access to a gallery or room located on a higher level. These zigzags can be found several times in the same work, along the same gallery (Figs 7[1]; 6[3]).⁴⁰ In France, the most unusual example of a manhole we know is found in the hypogeum of Espinas.⁴¹ Here, four rooms are cut with minute precision and are linked with each other and with the access corridor by a series of tubes 45 centimeters wide and 50 centimeters high, joining each

38. These chimneys are also found in ancient third- and fourth-century tombs, both in Spain (see n. 7) and in Gaul, where the cemetery of Les Dunes, near Poitiers, has furnished a number of examples (*Mémoires de la Société des Antiquités de l'Ouest*, 3d ser., XI). This whole question has been treated by W. Habery (*Festschrift für August Oxé*, 1938).

39. This was the case at the entrance to the last cell of Morthomiers.

40. Among the most curious in this respect are those of Almering bei Mühlendorf, of Dünzelbach, and of Schwartzach (Bavaria), of Münzkirchen II and Mayrhof (Upper Austria), and of Csejte (Slovakia).

41. Commune of Puygaillard (Tarn-et-Garonne).

other only at right angles, and having a total length of 21 meters. They have a 35 per cent gradient in certain sections. Now the 52 cubic meters of excavated earth which represent the capacity of the whole could not have been removed to the outside except through these conduits through which no one could succeed in crawling unless he was both young and thin.⁴²

In sum, the web of enigmas which envelops the hypogea shows, at present, only two definite facts:

1. These works are figurative and not functional. Not having been dug for utilitarian purposes, they could stem only from a pure, cultural, perhaps magical idea, but an idea which was above all a funereal idea.

2. Whatever may have been the origins and the successive transformations of this idea, they attest to its vitality in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries, to which time most of the works belong.

Truthfully, these two assertions give the historian only reference marks, while the point toward which the indicated perspectives tend remains very uncertain.

Toponymy and folklore, from which we might logically expect some help, bring only sibylline data to the problem. In Central Europe, the mounds are most commonly called *Hausberge*, *Burgstätte*, *Scheibenberge*, *Glockenberge*, *Leeberge*, *Wasenberge*, *Tansberge*, *Hollerberge*, *Kirchberge*, and the hypogea are *Loesshölen*, *Erdstätte*, *Heidenlöcher*, *Hellenlöcher*. In Aquitaine, we scarcely ever run across anything other than the generic name *motte*, or a name with a strictly topographical meaning such as *tuque*, *tucol*, *tap*, *pech*, generally rather undetermined. The determinant *Sarrasine* which is sometimes found is not frequent enough for us to be able to infer anything from it. As for the hypogea,

42. For Danubian Europe, the bibliography on hypogea is the same one we listed in summary form in n. 12, in reference to mounds. It is necessary, however, to insist on the importance of the excellent book by P. Karner, *Künstliche Höhlen aus Alter Zeit* (Vienna, 1904), the only work which takes into account nothing but direct observations, which are all the more objective because the author refused to grant himself any competence in archaeology.

In France, the only work which has attempted to constitute a complete treatise is that of Adrien Blanchet, entitled *Les Souterrains-refuges de France* (Paris, 1920). As a simple compilation of all monographs previously published in France on caves of all kinds, this work is still useful because of the list it furnishes.

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they are never designated by anything except the names *cross*, *cruzel*, *cluseau*.⁴³

The most interesting of the folkloric glosses to which certain of these designations can give rise concerns the determinant *Holler*, in a number of names for Danubian mounds and hypogea. Indeed, according to fables which have come down to us in a form manifestly censored by the Church, the *Holler* were tutelary gods to which, in the Middle Ages, young marriageable girls intrusted themselves. According to custom, these girls gathered in subterranean places, on certain winter nights, to "spin." The very rigorous taboos which they had to observe, under pain of the worst mishaps, and which had to do with both the choice of the night and the choice of the foods to be prepared for the subterranean divinities, lead one to think that the occupation reported as the purpose of these gatherings was not the essential one. Was it in our hypogea that the practices hinted at were carried on? Were the hypogea the consecrated site of these practices, or quite simply their accidental theater? The well-known relationship between the cult of the dead and the cult of generation gives a certain congruence to these questions, whatever prudence may be required in studying them.

In any case, it is worthy of note that the mounds are still, in France as in Central Europe, the sites where more or less Christianized pagan traditions have remained most tenaciously rooted. Here we still find the St. John's Day bonfires and, in Austria, the dances by which the great dates of the cycle of the seasons are celebrated. Many of these mounds are surmounted today by a calvary or by a church. In the Danube area of Europe this seems to have been the rule, even when the topography offered near the mound some natural peak from the top of which the cross would have dominated a wider horizon.

If we had before us the whole geographic picture of the problem of which we know little more today than the Aquitanian, Danubian, and Catalonian aspects—and those incompletely—it might perhaps appear to us as something which could be superimposed on some well-known ethnic or religious pattern. But, outside North Germany, the Netherlands, and Scandinavia, where it appears established that there exists no work to be classified among those we have studied, half of Europe—

43. It is significant that "feudal" mounds have almost always retained the name of a lord, and that we almost always find them mentioned in medieval documents, whereas hypogea mounds are nameless today and apparently always have been.

Belgium, Great Britain, Ireland, Switzerland, Italy, the Balkans, and the greater part of Spain—remains to be prospected.

According to still unverified information, mounds of the Byzantine era, with a funeral but not a sepulchral hypogeum, may have existed in Macedonia⁴⁴ and in Roumania. Likewise in Tunisia, and in the Constantine area, hypogea have been found in relationship with cemeteries of undetermined age.

The fact that silos for *oblaciones* and hypogea, unknown in Spain before 1957, are now being discovered near most of the oldest churches and houses in Catalonia, allows us to predict similar and no less unexpected discoveries elsewhere (Figs. 3[3]; 5 [3 and 4]).

For the moment, about two thousand hypogea, under various names, have been written up in France and in other places, or have at least been reported; over six hundred of them were found under a mound. Three hundred other mounds probably also conceal hypogea, perhaps destroyed long ago in some but in others intact to this day. In addition, we have been able to verify that the total of documented monuments is still far behind the count of all mounds, and even behind that of all known hypogea.

It seems, therefore, as prospecting in depth of certain rural communes of Bas Quercy has led us to think, that the cemetery of every church or parish annex of the twelfth century possessed its collective hypogeum, immediately subjacent or built under a mound located in the neighborhood, when the nature of the soil lent itself to this.⁴⁵ Groups of sepulchers, today located at a distance from any church and which we cannot relate to any center of parish life revealed by excavations, also had their hypogeum. In other sections of France, perhaps as in Périgord, and as in Catalonia, there probably existed, in addition to collective hypogea, a great number of private ones, each connected with

44. P. Traeger, *Verhandlung des Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie Ethnographie und Urgeschichte*, p. 52; see also the description of a hypogeum at Spata (Mesogea, Greece) in *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*, I (1877), 261, and II (1878), 185.

45. The summary figuration of a house on the discoid steles which are found in certain Catalonian cemeteries of the eleventh century (at Tosa de Mombuy, particularly, and at Figuercla, Igualada district, Barcelona Province) perhaps took the place of the hypogeum which could not be dug in the hard rock substratum. The possibility is not ruled out that this expedient was resorted to in other cases, and even on a general scale, in certain regions where it seems to be clear that there never have been any hypogea.

a house. But our observations perhaps lack an absolute significance; they need to be confirmed by the exhaustive prospecting of several communes where we might undertake observations around the hypogea, observations which the explorers of the so-called underground refuges unfortunately never thought of making.

In any case, offering silos and hypogea indicate preoccupations foreign to the Church, in a form which must finally have snuffed out their spirit. These preoccupations were so general that they could not be imputed to any particular sect. And moreover, if, after the tenth century, the clergy and the political powers definitively abstained, as it appears, from alluding to them in any way in chronicles and other writings, this no doubt occurred because it may have appeared pointless to them to try to train whole populations against universally accepted practices. Things might have been different if the practice had been only the particular action of some ethnic or religious minority. Noted over an extremely extensive geographic area, this observance would be inexplicable unless it had very deep roots. And this brings us back to our introduction.

However cautiously we must use the process of comparison as it applies to our hypogea, we cannot refrain from noting that the idea of reproducing below ground the interior image of the abode of the living, with a naïve intensity in showing certain details, goes back at least to megalithic civilization. All the protohistoric peoples of the Mediterranean world have thus given to their dead, for the chthonian life to which they were supposedly called, huts or houses dug in the bowels of the Earth Mother. The Etruscan tombs of Vulci, for example, include many rooms of a royal residence, some provided with peripheral benches, others with couches, and very faithful likenesses of buildings, which include ceiling beams cut into the rock itself.

Peoples practicing incineration have been content to give the exterior form of their dwellings to the cinerary urn or to the coffer intended to contain it. There has been discussion of the origin of the *Hausurnen* of the Germanic necropolises of the first iron age, as well as the hut urns of Etruria and Latium, but we are not concerned with debating these points here. On the other hand, no accidental phenomenon is to be seen in the custom which spread in the third century all over the Roman world of lodging the urns in stone arches, cut to resemble the straw

thatch or the hut covered with a ridge roof. Among the Mediomatics⁴⁶ and the Celtiberians of the region of Burgos, these coffers correspond with a surprising faithfulness in proportion and details to the various types of chambers in the hypogea of Bas Quercy or Catalonia. Their opening, almost always surrounded by moldings, has the shape and relative dimensions of the manhole, which was also often surrounded, as we have seen, by some furrow intended as decoration.

The idea which dominated this meticulous imitation of the abode of the living was consequently imposed in addition to the need to give the corpse a safe and decent resting place. This is proved also by the existence of tombs which are not sepulchral, but which are cenotaphs, intended only to receive the shades of the traveler lost at sea or the warrior left on some battlefield. It was to be feared that, for lack of a shelter corresponding closely enough to the habits contracted during their mortal life, these shades might return under the roof which the living found it repugnant to share with the dead.

But there also exist, in certain protohistoric sites, or sites marked by some provincial aspect of the Roman imprint, caverns of a well-defined type, in which sepulchers are never found. At Burriach, for example, an Iberian *opidum* occupied up to the Roman seizure of the area, and then called *Ilduro*,⁴⁷ we note among the ruins of the houses built of dry stones a rather large number of galleries descending two or three meters underground to a circular cell, which has an average diameter of 1.4 meters and with the same maximum height at the center. A peripheral bench is cut into the rock. Sometimes there is a vestibule in front of the cell. Like our hypogea—and if they faced east they would be completely identified with these—the cells are generally empty when they are found sealed and have remained unknown. Are these cenotaphs?

In any event, they are necessarily contemporaneous with the little huts and the incineration necropolis located *extra muros*. All the coins found in the latter correspond to the third and fourth centuries B.C.

46. E. Linckenheld, *Les stèles funéraires en forme de maison chez les Médiomatiques et en Gaule* ("Publication of the Faculté des Lettres de Strasbourg," Fasc. 38 [1927]).

47. Suburb of Mataró, Barcelona Province (M. Ribas Beltrán, *El poblat iberic de Burriac i la seva necrópolis* [Mataró, 1931]).

In Galicia and in the north of Portugal, there are empty vaults too, of the same dimensions or smaller, but these are constructed and are sometimes even lined with masonry. The entrance is closed by a sealed tile, decorated with motifs of a very barbarous art which attempts to show all the elements of the façade of an old house, with a little semi-circular opening, no more than a manhole, reduced to the scale on which the edifice is built. The *Pedra Formosa* of Briteiros, described by Cartailhac,⁴⁸ served to close one of these monuments, which, as all archeologists agree today, dates from the last days of the Roman domination in Spain.

Whatever may have been the purpose—perhaps a different one—of the Burriach and Briteiros vaults, it is clear that belief in a definite form of physical after-life was maintained after antiquity, and since in our times we still find, in many regions of France and elsewhere, practices implicitly related to it, we must grant that it remained strong during the whole Middle Ages. Gregory of Tours alludes to it in many passages of his work,⁴⁹ and one would probably find other evidence by concentrating on this point in later writings.

Moreover, when the Church prescribed the inhumation of the dead side by side, directly in holy ground which weighed down upon all their limbs, and into which, from the eighth century on, they were not permitted to carry anything with them—jewelry, weapons, or even the personal drinking cup—what circumvention could be found to procure for them, despite the rules, the means of satisfying the elementary needs of another, semimaterial existence? Did society not resort to the antique solution of the cenotaph?

A subterranean abode, dug either below the cemetery or under a mound which recalled the imposing sepulchers of ancient times, or even near the house to which the dead might be tempted to return, and made to look like the dwellings they had known and in particular the one that had been theirs—was this not what could best assure their well-being beyond the grave and thus guarantee the tranquillity of the living? It is possible that other notions which we shall never completely understand contributed to the meaning of these superstitious precautions. Neither Roman discipline, with its cult of the State and of

48. Cartailhac, *Les âges préhistoriques de l'Espagne et du Portugal*.

49. Gregory of Tours, *In gloria confessorum*, pars. 16 and 64.

great leaders, nor the discipline of Christianity, with its scorn for the earth, gave any hint of the return to these chthonian traditions. It took anarchy, spreading over the Carolingian ruins, followed by depopulation and the forgetting of ancient techniques, to lay bare the pre-Indo-European substratum which had been able to remain alive under the least exposed layers of the Earth Mother. Then, after an awakening that lasted several centuries, this atavistic type of mentality again fell asleep under a network of conventions where it could escape from the clergy's inquisitions. If it is written that one day all our works must be annihilated, who can say whether this mentality will not survive, ready to assume a new spiritual flight, in the last escapee from our Western world?