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# Indigenous Human Remains Database from Archaeological Sites in Québec: Preliminary Results

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**ABSTRACT.** This paper presents the preliminary results of a project initiated by the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke and the Groupe de recherche ArchéoSociale/ArchéoScience (Université de Montréal) to create a database of archaeological sites in Quebec that included Indigenous human remains. This document will be a useful tool for the repatriation/rematriation process. Using existing inventories, the database collated various data points for each site, such as the Borden code, location, date, minimal number of individuals (MNI), location of remains, reports, etc. Three site categories were identified: 1) those describing the discovery of human remains associated with Indigenous people (103 sites); 2) those without skeletal remains despite mentioning the presence of burial(s) (8 sites); and 3) those not reporting any information (81 sites). From these sites, information on more than 678 individuals have been collected so far. Site mapping has allowed the visualization of site distribution spatially and through time. Further research is needed to clarify the cultural affiliation and the storage location of these human remains.

**RÉSUMÉ.** Cet article présente les résultats préliminaires d'un projet initié par le Conseil Mohawk de Kahnawà:ke et le Groupe de recherche ArchéoSociale/ArchéoScience (AS<sup>2</sup>; Université de Montréal) pour créer un inventaire des sites archéologiques du Québec ayant livré des restes humains appartenant aux peuples autochtones, et ainsi développer un outil utile pour le processus de rapatriation/ramatriation. En utilisant

des inventaires existants, la banque de données a regroupé des informations variées pour chaque site, tels que le code Borden, la localisation, la date, le nombre minimum d'individus, le lieu de dépôt des restes, les rapports d'intervention, etc. Trois catégories de site ont été identifiées : 1) ceux qui décrivent la découverte de restes humains associés aux populations autochtones (103 sites); 2) ceux qui contiennent aucun reste humain malgré la mention de sépultures (8 sites); et 3) ceux qui ne rapportent aucune information (81 sites). Plus de 678 squelettes humains provenant de ces sites ont été répertoriés jusqu'à présent. La cartographie des sites a permis de visualiser leur distribution à travers le temps et l'espace. Les recherches futures nécessiteraient de clarifier certaines affiliations culturelles et le lieu de dépôt des restes humains.

**I**N 2018, CHRISTINE ZACHARY-DEOM and Gaetan Nolet, mandated by the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke, requested assistance from the research group ArchéoScience/ArchéoSociale

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(AS<sup>2</sup>) of the University of Montréal to create a detailed database listing all archaeological sites with Indigenous human remains found in Québec. The main objective was to collect as much information as possible on skeletal material and its present location to provide a practical tool for future reburial. Since 2018, AS<sup>2</sup> and Zachary-Deom and Nolet have been collaborating on a master database of Indigenous human remains to facilitate future repatriation of remains as there is no central or complete database regarding what archaeological sites resulted in the recovery of human remains or where those remains are currently housed.

### **Background**

Collection and skeletal inventories in bioarchaeology are an essential tool for both the ethical management of what museums, universities, and governmental agencies and repositories have collected in the past (e.g., human remains, artifacts), as well as the development of research projects based on what is accessible for study (DeWitte 2015; Morris 2008; Mosothwane 2013; Squires et al. 2019). Prior to the 1990s, human remains were unearthed by archaeologists for decades without the consent of the descendant communities, and have been forgotten in various institutions worldwide (Alfonso and Powell 2006; Steyn et al. 2013). However, for the last 20 years, efforts to generate complete institutional inventories of human remains and return these individuals to their descendant communities have been ongoing worldwide (Cryne 2009; Jones 2019; Pfeiffer and Lesage 2014; Steyn et al. 2013; Vos and Monnet 2020). In the United States the 1990 Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA),

accelerated both skeletal inventories and bioarchaeological studies (Adams 2001; Birkhold 2001; Colquhoun 2000; Kakaliouras 2012; Rose et al. 1996) and facilitated the return of archaeological human remains to their Indigenous descent communities. Nowadays, this is the standard outcome of research, as the current professional organizations (e.g., Society of American Archaeology, World Archaeological Congress, Canadian Archaeological Association) have ethical statements relating to Indigenous people. In Canada, although there is no similar legislation, strategies for the return of Indigenous human remains have been developed independently between Indigenous communities and institutions (Buikstra 2006). Various statutory vehicles such as land claim agreements (e.g., Nunavut Final Agreement 1993; Umbrella Final Agreement Between the Government of Canada, the Council for Yukon Indians, and the Government of the Yukon 1993; Nisga'a Final Agreement 1998) and laws (e.g., Sacred, First Nations, and Ceremonial Object Repatriation Act 2004) can also help in this process of the return of cultural properties. A recent Canadian example is the collaboration between the Huron-Wendat Nations and the University of Toronto (Pfeiffer and Lesage 2014) for the reburial of over 1,700 human skeletons in Kleinburg (Ontario) in 2013. This was the largest single reburial of its kind in North America, but not the first in Canada, as Canadian bioarchaeologists developed community partnerships even long before the NAGPRA, especially in British Columbia (Buikstra 2006; Cybulski 1976, 1978; Cybulski et al. 1979). Another reburial case in Manitoba in the early nineties illustrates how well a local Cree archaeologist (Kevin Brownlee) was

engaged in both community and academic work (Brownlee and Syms 1999). In Québec, small reburial projects for several sites have been also completed as part of a return of human remains to a few Nations such as the Algonquins (Pilon and Young 2009). Although there is still a lot to do (e.g., establishing more partnerships, facilitating more reburials), especially in Québec, the examples above illustrate the fact that partnerships between Indigenous people and archaeologists/bioarchaeologists in Canada accelerated the reburying of ancestral human remains over the last 20 years.

Collaborations between Indigenous communities and researchers have allowed for the exploration and reconstruction of past Indigenous population health, diet, economy (Katzenberg et al. 1995; Martin and Goodman 2008; Paine and Brenton 2006; Pfeiffer et al. 2017; Watts et al. 2011), and group mobility and migration patterns (Galland and Friess 2016; Pfeiffer et al. 2020; Scheib et al. 2018; Tsosie et al. 2020; von Cramon-Taubadel et al. 2017), utilizing the most up to date methods.

The key starting point of these studies was the “return process,” initiated by descendant communities, which allowed them to restore the dignity of their dead by reburying them on Indigenous land following Indigenous beliefs and rituals. Past and present traditions of Indigenous people in Québec extend the “respect of the deceased” not only to the spirit but also to the remains of the body, as bones and teeth preserve the memory of the individual (Bousquet 2018; Savard 1999; Viau 1997, 2000). Reinterment of the dead provides a healing process to all, after years of genocide and lack of consideration (Atalay 2019; Brave Heart et al. 2011; Newcomb 1995). As

cited by Atalay and colleagues (2017:22) in *Journeys to Complete the Work*, Shannon Martin (Director of the Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture and Lifeways in Michigan) said:

And with every repatriation, with every “Recommitment to the Earth” (reburial ceremony), great healing and reconciliation happens—not only within our community, but with all those institutions and people that may have handled our ancestors through study or research. There is joy that they have come home—that their work is complete.

Nevertheless, to encourage the process of reburial, practical tools such as skeletal inventories and sites database are essential in the first stages. In fact, in our collaborative project with Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke, the initial practical challenge was to identify where human remains were discovered, when and by whom they were excavated and where they are currently housed. These questions are essential for Indigenous communities to develop a repatriation/rematriation strategy (the term rematriation was added as recommended by the fourth and fifth authors of the present paper). Efforts to rebury remains are often accompanied by the desire to know more about these individuals before final reburial. Although large projects of repatriation and rematriation have yet to happen in Québec, smaller ones have been recently initiated by various institutions such as the Université de Montréal (Département d’anthropologie), the City of Montréal, and the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau. Such initiatives have been encouraged by the Commission of Truth

and Reconciliation of Canada *Calls to Action* (2015). Furthermore, within the context of decolonization, archaeology is slowly but surely adopting a more inclusive and ethical approach with descendant communities involved in their projects as well as those impacted by them (e.g., Burke 2018; Chalifoux and Gates St-Pierre 2017; Denton and Gaudreau 2018; Gates St-Pierre 2019; Treyvaud and Plourde 2017).

### Objectives

The objective of this collaborative project with the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke is therefore to generate a comprehensive database of all Indigenous human remains excavated in Québec. The first step included collating relevant information related to the archaeological sites and the skeletal material recovered.

The second step consisted of identifying the current location of the human remains by contacting different institutions (universities, museums, etc.) and levels of government (municipalities, ministries, and agencies, etc.). An additional component included sharing the data with the interested Indigenous communities.

This report presents the results of the first step of the process, the methodology used to build the database, the maps produced, and a summary of the data included in the database. Finally, recommendations are presented regarding how to proceed with the second stage of this project.

### Methodology

In order to establish a database on archaeological sites, a spreadsheet with relevant variables was created along with maps showing the geographic distribution of the archaeological sites (Paquette 2019).

### Variables

The variables were chosen to best fit the goals and expectations of the project, as identified by the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke. Twenty-nine variables were selected and grouped into five sections (Table 1): “Site Identification,” “Site Location,” “Site Date,” “Human Remains,” and “Various.”

“Site Identification” included two variables: “Borden Code” (alphanumeric code according to the Canadian system, see Borden and Duff 1952) and “Site Name.” “Site Location” was subdivided into eight variables: “Broad Locality,” “Detailed Locality,” “RCM or ET” (regional county municipalities or equivalent territories in Québec), “Latitude,” “Longitude,” and three coordinates according to the Universal Transverse Mercator system (“UTM north,” “UTM east,” and “UTM zone”).

“Site Date,” includes five variables: “Absolute Date,” “Date Source,” “Sample Number” (where and when the radiocarbon dating was done), “Original Chronological Information” (e.g., terms used in the written archives based on the archaeological context or relative dating), and “Chronological Period” (information extracted from the original report and updated according to current chronology for Québec. See *Le patrimoine archéologique de l’arctique québécois* 2006; Burke 2017).

Under the section “Human Remains,” seven variables were chosen: “Presence of Human Remains,” “Cemetery,” “MNI,” “State of Preservation of the Remains,” “Global Presence of Anatomical Elements,” “Presence of Human Bone Tools,” and “Traces of Violence or Manipulation on Human Remains.” The first variable includes sites where human remains were found and sites showing traces of cremation and/or burial

TABLE 1. Variables used to collect data regarding each site.

Variable Number	Variables Name	Detailed Description	Basic Information
1	Borden Code	Alphanumeric code assigned for each archaeological site in Canada	SITE ID
2	Site Name	Name of the archeological site according to the BNA <sup>a</sup> reports	
3	Broad Locality	Region or city of the archeological site	SITE LOCATION
4	Detailed Locality	Detailed description of where the archaeological site was found (e.g., address, distance, and direction from nearest river)	
5	RCM or ET	Regional county municipalities (RCM) and Equivalent Territories (ET) in the province of Québec	
6	Latitude	Latitude in decimal degrees (dd.ddddd)	
7	Longitude	Longitude in decimal degrees (dd.ddddd)	
8	UTM north	Coordinates of the archaeological site according to the UTM <sup>b</sup>	
9	UTM east	Coordinates of the archaeological site according to the UTM <sup>b</sup>	
10	UTM zone	Coordinates of the archaeological site according to the UTM <sup>b</sup>	
11	Absolute Date	Radiocarbon date(s) obtained from various samples associated with burial(s), if mentioned in BNA <sup>a</sup> reports	SITE DATE
12	Date Source	Material used for radiocarbon dating (e.g., human or faunal skeletal remains, charcoal)	
13	Sample Number	Reference number or laboratory code of the radiocarbon date	
14	Original Chronological Information	Information from the BNA <sup>a</sup> reports regarding the age or chronological period associated with the skeletal remains	
15	Chronological Period	Chronological period attributed to the original chronological information (If not specified or vague in the BNA <sup>a</sup> reports, the category “unknown” was attributed)	
16	Presence of Human Remains	Whether or not skeletal material was found according to the BNA <sup>a</sup> reports (if no skeletal remains were found when traces of cremation or empty burials were mentioned in the archives, the sites were still included in the database)	HUMAN REMAINS
17	Cemetery	Whether an archaeological site constitutes or contains a “cemetery”	
18	MNI	Minimal number of individuals at the site, or number of burials (with or without skeletal remains)	
19	State of Preservation	Degree of preservation of the skeletal remains, if reported in the BNA <sup>a</sup> reports	

TABLE 1 continued.

Variable Number	Variables Name	Detailed Description	Basic Information
20	Global Presence of Anatomical Elements	Types of skeletal remains found (e.g., cranial and/or post-cranial)	HUMAN REMAINS
21	Presence of Human Bone Tools	Whether tools made of human skeletal remains were found at the site, if reported in the archives	
22	Traces of Violence or Manipulation on Human Remains	Presence of cutmarks on the human skeletal remains and/or their disarticulation as possibly intentional	
23	Current Location of Human Remains	Last known locality where the skeletal remains were deposited (e.g., museum, university, etc.)	VARIOUS
24	Contact Person	Person to contact for more information on the last known place where the skeletal human remains were stored	
25	Excavation Report	Author and title of the excavation report (e.g., BNA <sup>a</sup> reports or other)	
26	Year of Excavation	Year of the excavation as reported in the archives	
27	ISAQ Number	Reference number of the report from an online site inventory (ISAQ) <sup>c</sup>	
28	Other Publications Associated	Other reports or publications related to the archaeological site	
29	Notes	Additional comments about the site, the skeletal remains, reports, etc.	

<sup>a</sup>BNA: Bibliothèque numérique en archéologie.

<sup>b</sup>UTM: Universal Transverse Mercator system.

<sup>c</sup>ISAQ: Inventaire des Sites Archéologiques du Québec (online site inventory).

despite the absence of human remains, but with elements suggesting a funerary event (e.g., presence of a pit, with or without red ochre). The second variable was used when the term cemetery was mentioned in the archives, although the definition of the latter varied according to the archaeological context (e.g., period) and number of burials discovered. The third variable “MNI” or Minimal Number of Individuals is a standard estimation in bioarchaeology (Mays 2010), which was reported from the compiled archives that included osteological descriptions. For example, the presence of a second individual was

suggested when one bone or tooth in particular (e.g., right humerus, left lower canine) was present in two copies as well as, when skeletal observations indicated the presence of additional individuals of different age and/or sex. However, when the archives reported the presence of a burial that did not contain any skeletal remains, it was still considered as one individual in the final estimation for the current database.

Next, the variables, “State of Preservation of the Remains” and “Global Presence of Anatomical Elements,” complemented the “MNI,” as they described the state of preservation in a broad



manner (e.g., percentage of the skeleton present) as well as which skeletal elements were present. The last two variables, “Presence of Human Bone Tools” and “Traces of Violence or Manipulation on Human Remains,” were added in order to identify possible cases of altered and/or modified remains suggesting various funerary practices (e.g., secondary burials) including violent death, traces of cannibalism, etc.

The last section “Various,” includes seven variables: “Current Location of the Human Remains,” “Contact Person,” “Excavation Report,” “Year of Excavation,” “ISAQ Number” (referring to the Inventaire des sites archéologiques du Québec document code), “Other Publications Associated,” and “Notes.” This last section is particularly important for the present project, as the information will help to determine where the human remains are currently located and whether they have been reburied.

Finally, the data was separated into two categories according to both cultural and/or biological affiliation:

1. the skeletal remains are most probably associated with Indigenous people; and
2. because of the lack of data in the report regarding material culture and osteological data, the affiliation of the skeletal remains is uncertain or unspecified. In the database, this category appears as lines highlighted in grey.

#### *Data Collection*

In order to populate information for each of these variables, data were extracted from online archaeological reports from the Bibliothèque numérique en archéologie (BNA), the Inventaires des sites archéologiques au

Québec (ISAQ), and Atrium (the search tool from the Université de Montréal’s library). Unpublished material from the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec or MCQ, the Université de Montréal, and Parks Canada (Table 2) was also consulted.

The starting point for the database was the inventory created previously by Claudine Giroux (MCCQ, personal communication 2018). This inventory included 49 archaeological sites with Indigenous human remains and held important but incomplete information for each of the variables identified above. Each site was added into the new database and missing information was retrieved from the BNA archives.

Various grey literature (e.g., reports of unknown authors from the Université de Montréal) were also consulted. They included useful data on archaeological sites with evidence of burials associated with both Indigenous and European people (Claire St-Germain, personal communication 2018). As the sites included were different from the vast majority of those mentioned in Ms. Giroux’s document, they were added to the new database (n=86 sites; 45 in northern Québec). As the ISAQ documents were not provided previously, they were added according to their Borden codes with any relevant information.

Moreover, as Parks Canada was contacted for this project, Martin Perron (personal communication 2018) provided additional information on the reports of a few sites (n=3) and the current location of some human remains, including those held at the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau and in Québec City (n=1 site).

While searching online reports in the BNA, 30 keywords were identified

TABLE 2. Sources of the information extracted from various archives.

Name of Source	Type of Source	Reference of Document (and Description)
Bibliothèque numérique en archéologie (BNA)	Online data	<a href="https://www.mcc.gouv.qc.ca/index.php?id=5289">https://www.mcc.gouv.qc.ca/index.php?id=5289</a>
Inventaires des sites archéologiques au Québec (ISAQ)	Online data	<a href="https://www.mcc.gouv.qc.ca/index.php?id=3355&amp;tx_lesecrits_pi1[ecrit]=683&amp;cHash=402531f81acda53805fb58ab08991b23">https://www.mcc.gouv.qc.ca/index.php?id=3355&amp;tx_lesecrits_pi1[ecrit]=683&amp;cHash=402531f81acda53805fb58ab08991b23</a>
Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec (MCQ)	Unpublished (Author: Claudine Giroux)	Excel file with 92 lines and 10 variables (listing archaeological human remains belonging to Indigenous people)
Archives of the Département d'anthropologie (Université de Montréal)	Unpublished and unknown authors (Contact person: Claire St-Germain)	List of sites with more than 162 lines (listing archaeological human remains belonging to both Indigenous and European people) and various written reports/notes.
Parks Canada	Unpublished (Author: Martin Perron)	Additional information on 4 sites (Côteau-du-Lac, Fort Témiscamingue, Fort Chambly and Parc Montmorency) and information on archaeological human remains from Côteau-du-Lac held at the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau and Quebec City

(Appendix I), as they were relevant to the project and were often cited in excavation reports where human remains were uncovered. The online search identified 215 documents relevant to the project regarding existing sites already in the database or new sites with human remains. Finally, a few documents (e.g., theses, monographs) were added to the database by searching Google, Google Scholar, or by using Atrium.

#### *Map Production*

Maps were produced using QGIS software (version 3.6.1, 2019). Every dot on the maps represents a site recorded in the database. Database variables were coded to illustrate site distribution based on “Presence of Human Remains” and “Time Period.”

The “Presence of Human Remains” variable was divided into three categories:

1. “yes” when human remains were found during excavation;
2. “no” when no remains were found despite traces of cremation, and/or an empty burial; and
3. “unspecified” when there was no information whether human remains were found or not, although the presence of a burial was mentioned.

Three “Chronological Periods” were established:

1. “12,000–3000 BP” includes the Archaic period (and its subcul-



- tures) as well as the Pre-Dorset culture in northern Quebec;
2. “3000–500 BP” includes the Woodland period and the Dorset and Thule cultures; and
  3. “500 BP–Present” represents the Historic period.

If the chronology of a site corresponded to two different periods, the oldest was selected. If the chronology corresponded to more than two periods, it was coded as unknown.

#### *Database Synthesis*

The database currently contains information on 239 archaeological sites. It is important to note that 15 sites did not have Borden codes, 13 sites had uncertain Borden codes, and 5 had no information regarding location (thus the latter could not be included in the maps). Fifty additional sites potentially have Indigenous human remains and were listed at the end of the database in order to confirm the information at a later date. The database consists of 248 lines with 29 variables and cites approximately 300 documents. Several

lines could represent the same site, as each line represents human skeleton(s) found at a site associated with a certain chronological period. Thus, if a site has multiple lines in the database, it means that the human remains are associated with more than one chronological period. The results presented here in percentages are therefore based on the entries (or lines of the database), in order to quantify more precisely the presence of human remains related to different chronological periods both, on the same site or at different sites.

#### **Results**

Out of the 248 lines of data, 198 (80%) correspond to archaeological sites associated with Indigenous people based on material culture and/or osteological data (Figure 1, left). These entries (20%) correspond to sites with human remains whose cultural affiliation was unclear. The 198 entries can be divided into three site categories (Figure 1, right):

1. One hundred and seven entries (54%;  $n = 103$  sites) include skeletal

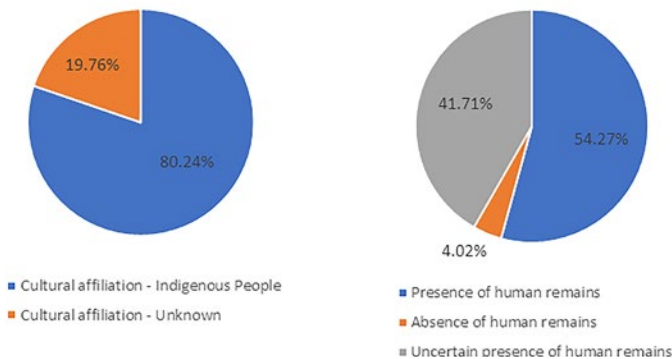


FIGURE 1. Pie charts showing the frequencies of entries in the database according to: the known/unknown affiliation based mainly on the material culture and/or osteological data (left); and the presence/absence of human remains at sites where cultural affiliation was associated with Indigenous people (right).

- remains that were found during excavation and are associated with Indigenous people;
2. Eight entries (4%; n=8 sites) did not include skeletal remains but suggest the presence of burials associated with Indigenous people; and
  3. Eighty-three entries (42%; n=81 sites) did not contain any information as to whether the skeletal remains were present or not.

Appendix II provides a synthesis of some of the key variables (e.g., 1, 2, 15, 18, 22, 23) for the 103 sites with Indigenous human remains. Of these, 40 are dated to “500 BP to present”; 36 to “3000 to 500 BP” (Late Woodland=14; Early Woodland=5; Middle Woodland=7; Dorset=5; Thule=6); 12 sites to the earlier period “12,000 to 3000 BP” (Archaic=5; Late Archaic=7); 9 sites to more than one period; and 21 sites remain undated.

The MNI (or variable 18) is estimated at 678 (corresponding to 103 sites) but may include up to 710 individuals. Of the 678,101 individuals (15%) correspond to 9 sites with known location of deposition for the skeletal remains. Information is available for another 196 (29%) corresponding to 51 sites, although their current place of deposit is unconfirmed.

No information was found for variable 21 (“Presence of Human Bone Tools”). Variable 22 (“Traces of Violence or Manipulation on Human Remains”) included seven sites with possible intentional modification. Particularly, regarding traces of cannibalism, our results show that no such practice has been found in the literature with the exception of an allusion from Pendergast and Trigger’s report (1972)

on the Dawson site. As the results of the database show the lack of evidence to support the referencing of this practice, the notion of cannibalism is no longer mentioned.

This synthesis shows that more work is needed to extend the number of sites with Indigenous human remains as well as to complement with additional information on the current sites in the database.

#### *Map Interpretation*

The geographic distribution of sites based on “Presence of Human Remains” (Figure 2), illustrates that there is a concentration of 57 sites in the Saint-Lawrence lowlands. It is noticeable that many are in Nunavik (near Ungava Bay), representing 91 sites. In fact, the sites where human remains were not specified in the reports were often located in Nunavik (62 out of 106 sites). This can be explained by the fact that human were not well preserved due to various factors (e.g., soil acidity, shallow burials); and/or that archaeological sites in northern Québec tended to be excavated more superficially than in the southern regions.

Figure 3 illustrates archaeological sites that have human remains associated with Indigenous people, sorted chronologically (n=103 sites). Most of the sites are located near important water points, particularly in the Saint-Lawrence lowlands (39% of entries, n=37 sites) and the Ungava Bay (27% of entries, n=20 sites). The sites from “12,000 to 3000 BP” are concentrated in southern Québec, representing 11% of the data with human remains (n=11 sites). The sites from “3000 to 500 BP” are concentrated in the Saint-Lawrence lowlands and near Ungava Bay, representing 32% of the data (n=31 sites). For the Historic

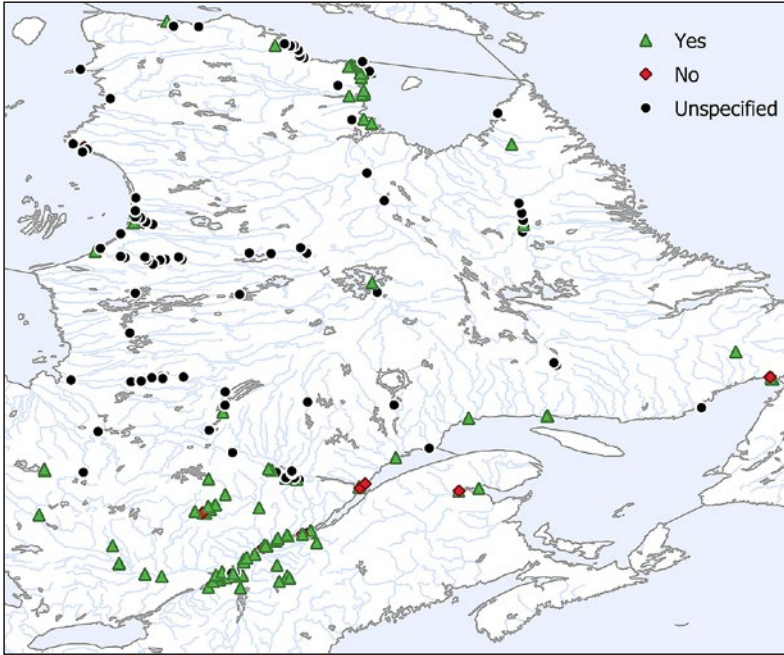


FIGURE 2. Geographical distribution of sites listed in the database and sorted according to presence of human remains.

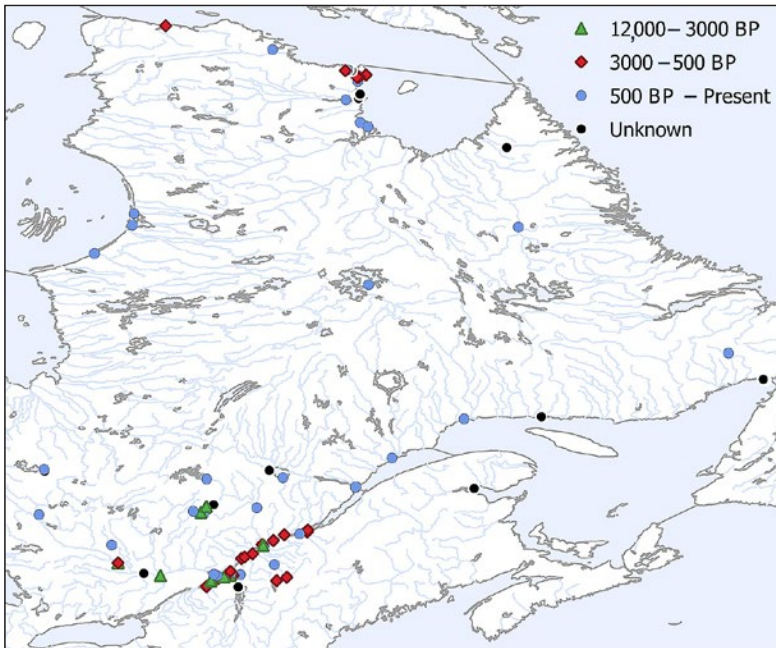


FIGURE 3. Geographical distribution of the sites with human remains, sorted chronologically.

period or “500 BP to present,” comprising more than 38% of the entries ( $n=39$  sites), the sites seem to be more widely distributed compared to the previous periods. The sites where Indigenous human remains have not been associated to a specific period represent 20% of the entries (or 21 sites).

There are a few sites ( $n=8$ ) where no skeletal material was found, but where traces of cremation or other clues suggested Indigenous human burial (Figure 4). Of six sites, three belong to the “12,000 to 3000 BP” period and overlap one another in the Gulf of Saint-Lawrence.

Figure 5 highlights sites ( $n=79$ ) where the presence of human remains was not specified in the reports. Two percent of the entries ( $n=2$  sites) are associated with the “9000–3000 BP” period, 19% ( $n=15$  sites) are from the “3000 and 500 BP” period, 65% ( $n=52$  sites) are Historic sites, and 14% ( $n=11$  sites) are unknown. Most of these sites (70% of the entries,  $n=55$  sites) are in northern Québec.

Finally, Figure 6 shows the distribution of the sites with human remains but with uncertain cultural affiliation, sorted chronologically. These are: either 1) sites where there is a possibility of finding a burial, but the excavation report did not confirm it; or 2) sites where human remains were found, but where information on the cultural affiliation was missing. Only four sites are from the “12,000 to 3000 BP” period and are located in southern Québec; and five sites are associated with the “3000 to 500 BP” period and are mainly situated in Ungava Bay. The majority of the sites are historical ( $n=19$  sites) or not associated with any specific period ( $n=22$  sites) and are more widely distributed across Québec.

In short, the maps indicate the distribution of archaeological sites near major water sources, particularly along the St. Lawrence River valley and Ungava Bay (Figures 2–6). Perhaps this is due to the higher number of archaeological research projects conducted in these two areas, in relation to urban development in the St. Lawrence Valley and the Tuvaaluk and Tornatgat archaeology projects in Ungava Bay (Clermont 2001; Fitzhugh 2015; Martijn 1998). When comparing sites with Indigenous human remains from different periods, the Archaic sites appear to be concentrated in the Saint Lawrence lowlands. The sites dated to later periods, which includes the Woodland, Thule, and Dorset cultures, are mainly located in southern Québec, but also further north, unlike the Archaic. This might be linked to the initial peopling of the territory by Indigenous people moving west to east and/or then south to north, thus leaving the older sites in the south.

### Discussion

This preliminary database allowed us to build an overview of Indigenous archaeological human remains in Québec. As the information in the database/maps are based on online material, the results directly reflect the current situation with its lacuna. The “Presence of Human Remains,” which was a key variable, remained unknown for 42% of the sites associated with Indigenous people. Similarly, the “Current Location of Human Remains” found during previous archaeological excavations remained unknown for 340 individuals (out of 678). Furthermore, 20% of the sites that have provided human remains are associated with no specific “Chronological Period.” The 50 entries included at the end of the dataset (which cor-



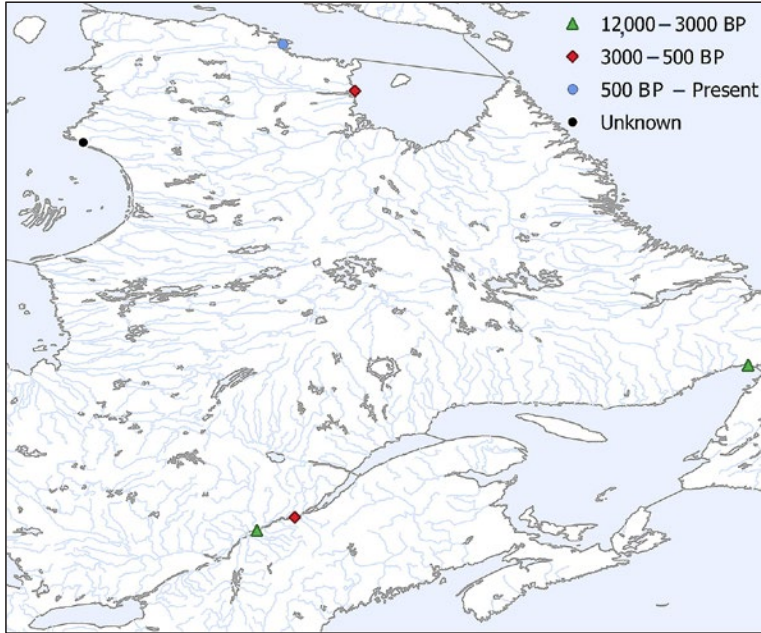


FIGURE 4. Geographical distribution of the sites without human remains, sorted chronologically.

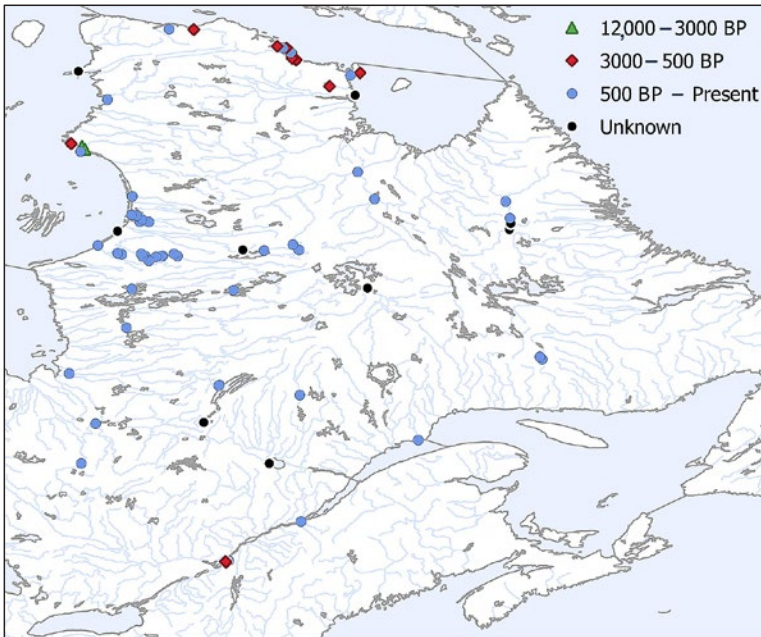


FIGURE 5. Geographical distribution of the sites without human remains but with archaeological traces suggesting the presence of a burial, sorted chronologically.

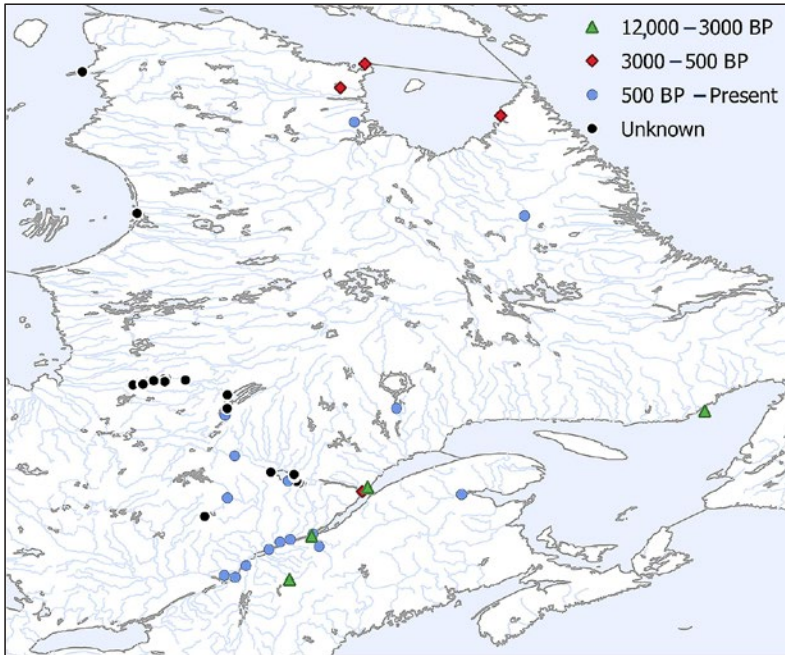


FIGURE 6. Geographical distribution of the sites with human remains, but with uncertain cultural affiliation, sorted chronologically.

respond to 40 sites) need additional research, as they are most likely associated with Indigenous people. The generated maps, based on the reports, also reveal missing information in relation to various variables (e.g., presence of human remains, chronological period, affiliation, traces of violence or manipulation on human remains). The difficulty to find data is causally related to the lack of a centralized database on human remains.

During this project, a significant limitation in obtaining data was probably due to the fact that there are many unpublished documents that may not be available online and/or that the human remains have not yet been identified and/or analysed. Thus, the data included in the database may not be current. Consequently, it will be important to update the database regularly with

new information and publications, and why collaboration between different parties (e.g., Indigenous communities, institutions, academics) will be important. A more exhaustive archival search that includes access to paper archives and grey literature needs to be continued in addition to a more detailed list of institutions/museums that may have human remains.

Following the limitations encountered during this work, our four main recommendations are:

1. It is necessary to continue archival research to update variables used in the dataset (e.g., “excavation reports,” “other publications associated”), especially for the sites with missing information ( $\pm$  40 sites) and add any new sites. More detailed information is needed

on the chronological context (e.g., sub-phases) as well as the osteological information (e.g., age, sex, ante-mortem, or post-mortem modifications). Therefore, new variables may be created and added to improve and expand the content of the dataset. However, it is important to note that without a direct examination of the skeletal remains, the osteological data remains uncorroborated.

2. In order to complete the variable related to the “Current Location of the Human Remains” various institutions (e.g., governments, cities and municipalities, universities, museums, private archaeological companies) need be contacted to locate the human remains found during past excavations. At the same time, they should be asked to update missing data in the database (e.g., “Absolute Date,” “MNI”). This could help to create a detailed catalogue of the human remains belonging to Indigenous people, housed publicly or privately, within or outside Quebec.
3. Finally, as the database needs to be a useful tool for the return of human remains to descendants, it is necessary to determine who will have access to it (e.g., Indigenous communities, governments, cities and municipalities, universities, museums) and where the database will reside.
4. Finally, it will be important to share results of previous research with the descendant communities and provide opportunities for the latter to know more about their population history via recent techniques in human remains analysis (e.g., 3D technology,

paleogenetics, paleopathology, paleonutrition), as well as educating future Indigenous academics. In fact, nowadays, by creating 3D documentation, it is possible to accelerate the process of reburial (Martin-Moya et al. 2020).

### Conclusion

This paper describes the first phase of a new project, which consisted of: 1) the creation of a database of archaeological sites that included Indigenous human remains; and 2) the production of maps to visualize the geographic distribution of these archaeological sites.

This first phase of the work is completed, and our database now needs to be continued so that more relevant and missing information is added. According to our recommendations, the second phase needs to concentrate on 1) the identification of the current location of the human remains; and 2) the identification of the cultural affiliation of human remains with unspecified origin. This database will then become a useful tool for the Mohawk community of Kahnawake and other Indigenous groups wishing to engage in repatriation/rematriation processes (the authors of this paper intend to share this database with other Indigenous groups). Hopefully, it will also encourage other provinces to do similar projects. Therefore, as the thirtieth anniversary of NAGPRA approaches, this project constitutes a great opportunity in Canada to open a wider discussion on repatriation/rematriation and to create an appropriate and useful solution for all parties involved, Indigenous communities, institutions, and academics.

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## Appendix 1

APPENDIX I. List of the keywords in the BNA (Bibliothèque numérique d'archéologie) with 265 results (~215 documents were consulted).

Keywords Searched in BNA	Number of Results Generated
Cimetière	92
Sépulture	62
Amérindien	24
Indian	24
Remains	10
Ostéologique	9
Indien	8
Restes humains	7
Grave	6
Autochtone	4
Ossement	3
Human remains	3
Squelette	2
Burial	2
Bone	2
Skeletal	2
Crémation	1
Cemetery	1
Ostéo	1
Osteo	1
Osteological	1
Tombe	0
Tomb	0
Ensevelissement	0
Inhumation	0
Cannibalisme	0
Cannibalism	0
Skeleton	0
Indigenous	0
Cremation	0

## Appendix 2

APPENDIX II. Summary of the dataset showing 103 sites (classified alphabetically according to their Borden code) with skeletal remains belonging to Indigenous people in Québec. See Table 1 for the definitions of the variables.

Borden Code <sup>a</sup>	Site Name <sup>b</sup>	Chronological Period <sup>c</sup>	MNI <sup>d</sup>	Traces of Violence or Manipulation on Human Remains <sup>e</sup>	Current Location of Human Remains <sup>f</sup>
1 BgFi-2	Site B	Unknown	1	No	No
2 BgFn-1	Droulers-Tsionhiakwatha	Late Woodland	1	No	Maybe
3 BhFa-2	Pointe Merry	Early Woodland	2	No	No
4 BhFl-1	Pointe-du-Buisson (c, d, e)	Early Woodland (c) Middle Woodland (d) Late Woodland (e)	c: 4 (6–10) d: 4 e: 1	No	Maybe
5 BhFn-1	Coteau-du-Lac	Late Archaic	17	No	Yes
6 BhFn-7	Cadieux	Late Archaic	2	No	No
7 BiEx-13	Brompton Road	Late Archaic?	8	No	No
8 BiEx-3	Île du Collège	Late Woodland	2	No	Maybe
9 BiFh-10	Fort Chambly	Historic	2	No	Yes
10 BiFi-15	Église de la Nativité	Before Contact	2	No	No
11 BiFj-31	Burials of Westmount	Archaic	21 in total	Yes	Yes
		Late Woodland		Yes (postmortem)	
12 BiFj-49	Leber	Late Woodland	1	No	No
13 BiFj-85	Maison Nivard-De Saint-Dizier	Archaic/Early Woodland	8 in total	No	No
		Late Woodland?			
14 BiFj-88	Chemin Queen-Mary	Late Woodland?	5	Yes (antemortem)	No
15 BiFj-97	Parc King George	Historic	20	No	No
16 BiFk-1	Ile Saint-Bernard	Late Archaic/Early Woodland	18	No	Maybe
17 BiFl-5	Ile aux Tourtes	Historic	1	No	Maybe
18 BiFm-3	Fort Oka	Historic?	3	No	No
19 BiFw-14	Baie Squaw	Terminal Archaic/Woodland	1	No	No
20 BiGb-3	Pointe Mondion	Unknown	6	No	Maybe



## APPENDIX II continued.

<b>Borden Code<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Site Name<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>Chronological Period<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>MNI<sup>d</sup></b>	<b>Traces of Violence or Manipulation on Human Remains<sup>e</sup></b>	<b>Current Location of Human Remains<sup>f</sup></b>
21 BjFj-1	Site Dawson	Late Woodland	20 (25)	Yes (postmortem)	Maybe
22 BjFj-112	Première Église Notre-Dame	Historic	6	No	Yes
23 BjFj-22	Premier cimetière catholique de Montréal	Historic	12	Yes (antemortem)	No
24 BjFj-98	Sépulture de Rosemont	Late Woodland/ Historic	1	No	No
25 BkFb-2	Ancien cimetière Abénakis et Métis	Historic	1	No	Maybe
26 BkGg-11	Île aux Allumettes 1	Late Archaic	17	No	Maybe
27 BkGg-12	Île Morrison-6	Late Archaic	16	No	Maybe
28 BkGg-24	Ile Morrison 2	Middle Woodland	1	No	No
29 BIFh-1	Lanoraie	Late Woodland	4	No	Maybe
30 CaFf-3	Lachapelle	Late Woodland?	8 (9)	No	Maybe
31 CaFg-1	Mandeville	Late Woodland	9	No	Yes
32 CcFb-1	Gisement de Batiscan	Early Woodland	1	No	No
33 CcFd-15	Manoir de Tonnancour	Historic	1	No	No
34 CcFd-3	Bourassa	Middle Woodland/ Late Woodland?	3	No	No
35 CcFd-7	Collège Séraphique	Archaic/Early Woodland?	1	No	No
36 CcGh-1	Cimetière du Lac Saint-Patrice	Historic	20	No	Maybe
37 CeEt-1	Platon de Sillery	Historic	7	No	Yes
38 CeEt-2	Boulevard Champlain	Early Woodland	1 (2)	No	Maybe
39 CeEt-27	Maison des Jésuites-de-Sillery	Historic	50	No	Yes
40 CeEt-38	Parc Montmorency	Historic	1	No	Yes
41 CeEt-47	Saint-Romuald d'Etchemin	Middle Woodland?	7	No	Maybe
42 CeEt-9	Place Royale	Middle Woodland/ Late Woodland?	14 (23)	Yes (antemortem)	Yes (partly)

## APPENDIX II continued.

<b>Borden Code<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Site Name<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>Chronological Period<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>MNI<sup>d</sup></b>	<b>Traces of Violence or Manipulation on Human Remains<sup>e</sup></b>	<b>Current Location of Human Remains<sup>f</sup></b>
43 CeEu-12	Lambert	Historic	1	No	Maybe
44 CeEx-3	Paquin	Late Woodland	1	No	Maybe
45 ChGu-2	Fort-Témiscamingue	Historic	60	No	No
46 CiFn-1	Le détroit brûlé	Prehistoric	1	No	No
47 CiFo-12	Bay of Maida	Historic?	1	No	No
48 CiFo-4	Obanaga Bay	Archaic/Middle Woodland?	2	No	No
49 CjFe-1	Cimetière St-François de la rivière Croche	Historic	12	No	Maybe
50 CjFm-1	Green Island	Unknown	1	No	No
51 CjFm-2	Sick Bay/Baie des malades	Unknown	1	No	No
52 CjFm-4	Lac Lortie	Historic	1	Yes (antemortem)	Maybe
53 CjFn-1	Baie du Tabac	Archaic	1	No	Maybe
54 DaEk-34	Caverne du Canot	Historic	1	No	Maybe
55 DaEk-35	Sépulture de Tadoussac	Historic	4	No	No
56 DaEk-36	Caverne de la Squaw	Historic	5 (6)	No	Maybe
57 DaEk-37	Caverne du Cèdre	Historic	1	No	Maybe
58 DcEw-?	Belle-Rivière	Unknown	1	No	Maybe
59 DcEx-1	Métabetchouane	Historic	2	No	No
60 DcFn-1	Kikendatch Cemetery	Historic	150	No	No
61 DdGt-28	Rivière Duparquet	Unknown	1	No	No
62 DeFd-?	Ashuapmushuan	Unknown	1	No	No
63 DeGt-17	Île 38	Historic	1	No	Maybe
64 DgEd-b	Pessamit	Historic	1	No	No
65 EbCx-1	Ile du Havre de Mingan	Unknown	2 (3)	No	No
66 EbCx-64	Mingan	Middle Woodland	1	No	Yes
67 EbDa-8	Poste Mingan - Terre ferme	Unknown	2 (7?)	No	Maybe
68 EbDo-1	Vieux-poste de Sept-Iles	Historic	4	No	Yes
69 EhBn-4	Anse du portage-1	Historic Inuit	1	No	Maybe
70 EiBg-9?	Blanc-Sablon	Unknown	2	No	No
71 EiBh-16?	Anse aux Dunes	Unknown	2	No	No
72 EiBh-19	Anse des Dunes	Prehistoric	1	No	No

## APPENDIX II continued.

Borden Code <sup>a</sup>	Site Name <sup>b</sup>	Chronological Period <sup>c</sup>	MNI <sup>d</sup>	Traces of Violence or Manipulation on Human Remains <sup>e</sup>	Current Location of Human Remains <sup>f</sup>
73 GcEi-8	Lac Lantagnac	Historic Inuit	3	Yes (antemortem)	Maybe
74 GhGk-66	Kuujuaraapik	Historic Inuit	1	No	Maybe
75 HaDe-5	Lac de la Hutte Sauvage	Historic Inuit	1 (2)	No	Maybe
76 HaGd-3	Castle Peninsula	Modern Inuit	3	No	Maybe
77 HdGd-3	Umiujaq	Modern <sup>?</sup>	1 (2)	No	Maybe
78 IdDI-1	Ford Island	Unknown	7	No	No
79 IhEj-1	Aupaluk	Modern Inuit	5	No	Maybe
80 IhEj-45	Aupaluk	Historic Inuit	1 (2)	No	Maybe
81 JaEj-1	Imaha	Dorset	1	No	No
82 JaEj-3	Kuglukturuk Point	Unknown	1	No	Maybe
83 JaEj-5	Tuvalik Point	Unknown	2	No	Maybe
84 JaEm-7	Kangirsuk	Historic Inuit	2	No	No
85 JbEj-2	Sugar Loaf	Unknown	1	No	Maybe
86 JdEj-1	Big Tide	Unknown Modern Inuit	2 1	No	Maybe
87 JeEi-2	Imilik	Thule <sup>?</sup>	3	No	Maybe
88 JeEj-5	Du Ruisseau	Neoeskimo	1	No	Maybe
89 JeEj-7	Pointe aux Bélugas	Dorset/Thule	1	No	Maybe
90 JeEk-2	Ungava	Thule <sup>?</sup>	4 (5)	No	Maybe
91 JfEk-2	Baie Diana	Unknown	3	No	Maybe
92 JfEl-1	Cordeau	Thule/Dorset <sup>?</sup>	1	No	Maybe
93 JfEl-15	Naudet	Thule	1	No	Maybe
94 JfEl-18	Opingivik	Historic Inuit	6	No	Maybe
95 JfEl-5	Talirug	Unknown	2 (3)	No	Maybe
96 JfEl-6	Mikoalat	Unknown	1	No	Maybe
97 JfEl-7	Opingivik	Historic Inuit	1	No	Maybe
98 JfEm-5	Narrow Island	Dorset <sup>?</sup>	1	No	Maybe
99 JjEv-5	Ukiivik Island	Thule <sup>?</sup>	20	No	No
100 JjFb-6	Rivière Wakeham	Modern Inuit	1	No	No
101 KbFk-?	Sugluk Post	Unknown	1	No	No
102 KbFk-7	Sugluk Island	Dorset	1	No	No
103 N/A	Pointe des Bourques	Unknown	2	No	No
<b>Total</b>			<b>678 (710)</b>		

<sup>a</sup>Variable 1.<sup>b</sup>Variable 2.<sup>c</sup>Variable 15.<sup>d</sup>Variable 18.<sup>e</sup>Variable 22.<sup>f</sup>Variable 23.