

REPORT ON INHUMATIONS FROM WAKERLEY, NORTHANTS.

by Justine Bayley (A.M. Lab) and D.R. Brothwell (British Museum (N.H.))

A total of 85 graves were excavated. Some were examined in the field by D.R. Brothwell and bones from most of the rest by J. Bayley in the laboratory. All the bones were in very poor condition, being soft and crushed with the surface much eroded. This meant that the remains examined were fragmentary and so in many cases insufficient evidence survived to allow an accurate sexing to be made. For this reason table 1 includes the sexing by grave goods as well as the biological sexing for each individual. In all but a few cases these agree with each other and so, in the cases where no biological sexing is possible, it is reasonable to assume that the sex indicated by the grave goods is probably correct.

The aging for those under 20 is based on the eruption of teeth (1) and the fusing of epiphyses on the long bones (2). For those over 20 the aging is by molar wear; the older the individual the more worn his teeth (1).

The only pathological change noted was in burial 20 where the second and third cervical vertebrae had fused, perhaps as a result of degenerative joint disease (osteo-arthritis).

Several anomalous dentitions were found. In burial 41 the lower right third molar was impacted. In burial 71 the lower left one was not present although all the other third molars were fully erupted. Burial 77 appeared to have no third molars at all although it was adult, and the lower right second molar had also not developed although a tooth germ for it was seen on an X-ray. The teeth from burial 55 were virtually a complete set with only the left upper medial incisor and the right upper and left lower third molars missing. Two supernumary teeth were also present. They were

shovel shaped anterior tooth type with open roots. As the bone of the mandible and maxilla had completely decayed away it was impossible to say where in the mouth they had come from.

Two skulls (Burials 3 and 70) had wormian bones in the lambdoid suture.

Burial 23 is difficult to age. The unfused epiphyses on the long bones indicate an immature individual under 18. The few teeth that remain are not a uniform group and suggest an older individual (25-35) but could just be excessively worn.

The following long bone and skull measurements were recorded (in mm):-

| Burial No. | 71 | 78 | 79 | 85 |
|-----------------------------------|--------|--------|-----|--------|
| Max. breadth (B) | | 134(?) | | 134(?) |
| Min. frontal breadth (B) | 100 | | | 84.5 |
| Biasterronic breadth (Bib) | | 113 | | |
| Frontal arc (S ₁) | 112(?) | | 121 | 127 |
| Parietal arc (S ₂) | 133(?) | 140 | 133 | 133 |
| Occipital arc (S ₃) | | | 111 | |
| Frontal chord (S ₁ ') | 98(?) | | | 111(?) |
| Parietal chord (S ₂ ') | 118(?) | 124.5 | | 116(?) |

| Burial No. | 16 | 20 | 41 | 47 | 52 |
|-----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Max. length femur | 440 | 400 | 497 | 442 | 500 |
| " tibia | 375 | | | | |
| " humerus | 332 | | | | |
| Estimated stature (cm.) (3) | 170 | 159 | 181 | 163 | 181.5 |
| " (ft. & in) | 5'6½" | 5'2½" | 5'11" | 5'4½" | 5'11½" |

(1) Brothwell, D.R. (1972) Digging up bones.

(2) Lockhart, R.D. et al (1969) Anatomy of the human body p. 142-3.

(3) Trotter, M. & Gleser, G. (1958) Amer. J. Phys. Anthron.

Table 1 Burials examined.

| Burial No. | Biological sex | Age | Sex (from grave goods) |
|------------|----------------|----------------|------------------------|
| 3 | poss. M | 17-25 | M |
| 4 | prob. F | 18-25 | F |
| 5 | - | 25-35 | F |
| 8 | - | 25-35 | F |
| 9 | juvenile | 6-7 | - |
| 10 | - | 25-35 | F |
| 11 | juvenile | 4-5 | - |
| 12 | juvenile | 8-9 | - |
| 13 | prob. M | 35-45 | M |
| 14 | juvenile | 11-12 | - |
| 15 | prob. M | 35-45 | F |
| 16 | M | 25-35 | M |
| 16A | infant | c. 1 | - |
| 17 | prob. M | 15-20 | F |
| 18 | prob. F | 18-20 | F |
| 20 | M | 17-25 | M |
| 21 | poss. F | 35-45 | F |
| 22 | - | 25-35 | M |
| 23 | - | under 18 | M |
| 25 | - | 25-35? | F |
| 26 | juvenile | 10-11 | - |
| 27 | prob. M | 25-35 | M |
| 28 | poss. F | - | F |
| 30 | - | 25-35 | - |
| 31 | - | 25-35 | F |
| 32 | - | 25-35 | F |
| 32A | juvenile | 9-10 | - |
| 33 | poss. F | 25-35 | - |
| 34 | prob. M | 25-35 | M |
| 35 | - | prob. adult | - |
| 36 | - | prob. adult | - |
| 37 | - | prob. juvenile | - |
| 38 | juvenile | 9-10 | - |
| 40 | juvenile | 12-13 | - |
| 40A | juvenile | under 7 | - |
| 41 | prob. M | 25-35 | M |
| 42 | - | prob. adult | F |
| 43 | - | prob. juvenile | - |
| 44 | prob. F | 17-25 | F |
| 45 | prob. F | prob. adult | F |
| 47 | prob. F | 25-35 | F |
| 48 | juvenile | 12-13 | - |
| 49 | - | 25-35 | F |
| 50 | prob. F | 25-35 | F |
| 51 | prob. M | 25-35 | M |
| 52 | prob. M | 17-25 | M |
| 53 | poss. F | 17-25 | F |
| 54 | juvenile | 8-9 | - |
| 55 | poss. F | 15-18 | F |
| 56 | prob. M | 17-25 | M |
| 57 | - | 25-35 | F |
| 58 | poss. F | 35-45 | F |
| 60 | poss. F | 25-35 | - |

Table 1 (cont.)

| Burial No. | Biological sex | Age | Sex (from grave goods) |
|------------|----------------|--------|------------------------|
| 61 | - | 17-25 | - |
| 63 | - | 35-45 | F |
| 65 | juvenile | 9-10 | - |
| 66 | infant | c. 2 | - |
| 68 | - | 25-35 | - |
| 70 | - | 25-35 | F |
| 71 | prob. F | 17-25 | F |
| 73 | - | 17-21 | F |
| 74 | prob. F | 35-45 | F |
| 75 | juvenile | 7-8 | - |
| 76 | juvenile | 7-8 | - |
| 77 | prob. M | 15-20? | M |
| 78 | poss. M | 25-35 | F |
| 79 | prob. M | 35-45 | M |
| 80 | - | 17-25 | F |
| 81 | prob. M | 25-35 | M |
| 82 | - | 15-20? | F |
| 83 | - | 17-19 | M |
| 84 | - | 17-25 | F |
| 85 | prob. M | 17-25 | M |

Note:- Burials not appearing in the above list were not submitted for examination.

Description of the population as a whole

The burials contain the remains of individuals varying in age from one to about forty five. No remains of infants under one year old were examined. This means that either the juvenile graves where no bones survived had contained them or that they were not buried in the cemetery with the older children and adults. None of the adults were older than about 45 and very few older than 35.

Table 2 Population summary.

| Age | No. of males | No. of females | Total No. |
|------------|---------------|----------------|-----------|
| 0-7 | | | 5 |
| 7 - 15 | | | 11 |
| 15 - 25 | 8 | 10 | 20 |
| 25 - 35 | 7 | 14 | 23 |
| 35 - 45 | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| Juveniles) | age uncertain | | 2 |
| Adults) | | 3 | 5 |
| | <u>18</u> | <u>31</u> | <u>73</u> |

Notes:- In addition to those recorded here 8 juvenile and 3 adult graves were found in which no bones had survived. Another 4 graves contained adult females (sexed by grave goods) but no bones were submitted for examination.

The Total No. column includes those individuals for whom no sexing was possible.

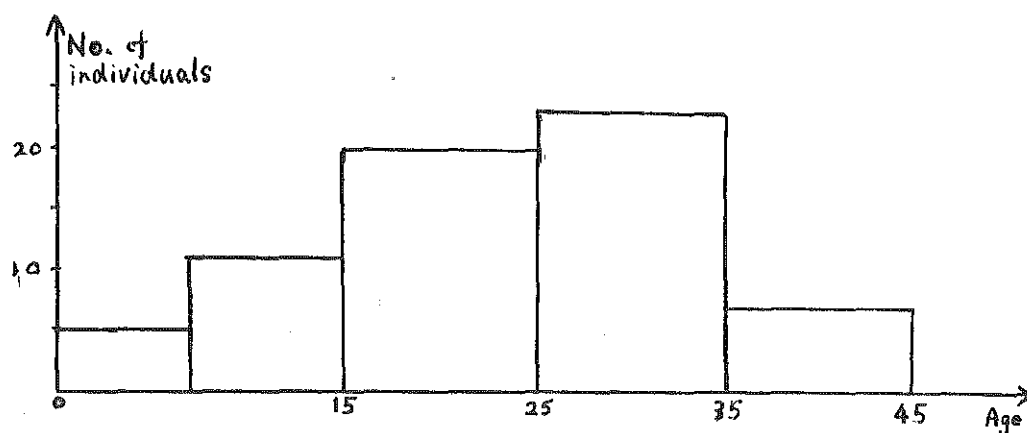


Table 3 Cultural and biological sexing of adults

| Biological sex | Cultural sex | Number |
|----------------|--------------|-----------|
| Male | Male | 14 |
| Male | Female | 3 |
| Female | Female | 13 |
| Female | Male | 0 |
| ? | Male | 3 |
| ? | Female | 15 |
| Female | ? | 2 |
| Male | ? | 0 |
| ? | ? | 5 |
| | | <u>55</u> |

It can be seen from Table 3 that in the cases where both biological and cultural sexings of the same burial were made they are almost always in agreement. A few burials which were apparently male from the skeletal evidence were culturally sexed as female as they contained beads, brooches and sleeve clasps. For those burials which were insufficiently complete to allow a biological sexing to be made the cultural evidence makes five times as many female as male. While it could be argued that female remains, being less robust, are more liable to decay, a considerable number of infant and juvenile bones were also found on this site so differential destruction cannot explain this male to female ratio.

Multiple burials

There were a total of 13 multiple burials. Burials 11/12 and 40/40A were each two juveniles. Burials 25/26 and 42/43 were an adult female with a juvenile and burial 16/16A an adult male with an infant. Burials 17/18 and 50/51 were each a man with a woman, burial 44/45 two adult females and burial 68/69 two adults, one of them female. Burial 22/23 was two men with the possibility of a third adult also being present (see above). Burial 52/53/54 was a male, a female and a juvenile and burial 8/9/10 two females with a juvenile. Burial 31/32/32A was also two females and a juvenile but 31 was probably earlier than 32/32A as the latter lay diagonally over the top.