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Report on a Skeleton from Hockwold-cum-Wilton, Norfolk

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The remains of a skeleton from this site were submitted to the Laboratory for examination. The bones were found to be fairly well preserved with approximately two-thirds of the skeleton represented (a complete inventory of the bones and teeth present is kept in the archive). There were also a few fragments of animal bone present, identified by Beverley Meddens (see list below - Appendix). Observations were made for demography, anthropology and health. This involved details of sex, age, stature, skeletal metrics and morphology and pathology. Since there was only one individual available for study analysis of the metric and morphological results was not attempted - they are listed below in Appendix).

Demography

The skeleton was found to be that of a juvenile individual, aged 12-15 years. Estimates of sex and stature were not made owing to the unreliability of the criteria available for sexing juveniles and the poor correlation between long bone length and stature in immature individuals. (Long bone length has a high degree of correlation with stature in adults and is the measurement generally preferred for assessing adult height). Ageing was based on the development of the dentition (Schour and Massler 1941) and the absence of epiphyseal union.

Health

Evidence for pathological change was found to be absent on the skeleton of this individual, however the teeth presented a possible example of dental pathology. In the maxilla both mandibular deciduous second molars and the left deciduous second incisor were observed to have been retained. In the case of the incisor this had not interfered with development of the permanent dentition but at the molar position both permanent second premolars were present, unerupted. It is suggested that strictly speaking this was an example of a congenital anomaly rather than a pathological condition since there was no evidence that it had produced symptoms, the permanent teeth being embedded rather than impacted. There was no further evidence for dental disease on this individual.

References

Schour I. and Massler M.: The development of the human dentition. J. Am. Dent. Assoc. 28: 1153-1160. 1941.

Acknowledgements

I should like to thank Beverley Maddens for the identification of the animal bone fragments.

Appendix 1. Metric and Morphological Results

Dentition

Total Teeth: Maxilla: 12
Mandible: 13

No. of Sockets Examined: Maxilla: 13
Mandible: 14

Rotation/Crowding of Teeth: Absent
Variations in the Number of Teeth: Absent
Variations in Tooth Size: Absent
Supernumerary Cusps: Both maxillary first molars have a small tubercle present on the mesiolingual surface of the tooth crown (Carabelli's cusp).

Skull - Metrics

Observations were feasible on the mandible only. All measurements are given in millimetres (rounded to the nearest millimetre).

Symphyseal height: 34
Condyle symphyseal length: -
Bigonial diameter: 90
Bicondylar width: -
Ramus height: 57
Maximum ramus breadth: 35
Minimum ramus breadth: 30
Foramen mentalia breadth: 44
Body height at M1/2: 24
Body thickness at M2: 17

Skull - Morphology

Details are given below only for those observations for which data were available.

Metopism: Absent
Infraorbital suture: Left only: Present
Infraorbital foramen: Left only: Single
Zygomatico-facial foramen: Left only: 2 present
Malar tuberosity: Left only: Absent
Marginal tubercle: Left only: Small tubercle present
Bregmatic bone: Absent
Coronal suture - wormian bones: Absent
Sagittal suture - wormian bones: Absent
Parietal foramina: Absent
Lambdoid bone at lambda: Present
Lambdoid suture - wormian bones: 1 present, left side
Os Inca: Absent
Torus maxallaris: Absent
Torus palatinus: Absent
Premaxillary suture: Absent

Anterior palatine alveolar foramen: Absent

Mandibular foramen: Single
Mylo-hyoid bridge: Absent
Mandibular torus: Absent
Gonial eversion: Absent
Mental foramen - position: PMi/2
Mental foramen - number: Single

No observations were possible post-cranially for metrics or morphology.

Appendix 2. Animal Bones

1. Sheep - calcaneum.
2. Lamb - pelvic fragment.
3. Tarsal splint bone. This was very small and probably came from a donkey or pony.
4. Left temporal fragment - ?pig.
5. Pig - astragalus.