

Ancient Monuments Laboratory
Report 68/89

TWO CREMATIONS FROM CRUNDALE
LIMEWORKS, KENT.

S A Mays

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Summary

Two cremation burials, one of which consists of the remains of two individuals, are discussed. These are additions to the cremations described in AM Lab Report 99/88.

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Two Cremations From Crundale Limeworks, Kent

Introduction to the site

Several cremations dating to the second century AD were excavated at Crundale Limeworks, Kent in 1984. Six burials have been reported on previously (AM Lab report 99/88),

Context: Cremation **7**.

Material:

| Quantity: | Weight (g) | Fragment count | Fragment size (mm) | |
|-------------------------------|------------|----------------|--------------------|-----|
| | | | mean | max |
| Skull | 25.3 | 31 | 18 | 33 |
| Post-cranial & unidentifiable | 118.6 | 336 | 13 | 45 |
| Total | 143.9 | 367 | | |

Colours: mainly white (with some staining from chalky soil); some fragments grey-blue; the broken edges and endosteal surfaces of many fragments are grey-blue.

Identifiable elements include fragments of: occipital bone; thoracic vertebrae and midshaft parts of fibula, femur and radius. In addition there are midshaft femur and a few other bone fragments of a neonatal infant.

Ages: adult and new-born infant.

Sexes: unknown.

Context: Cremation **8** / **8b**.

Material

| Quantity: | Weight (g) | Fragment count | Fragment size (mm) | |
|-------------------------------|------------|----------------|--------------------|-----|
| | | | mean | max |
| Skull | 28.3 | 25 | 18 | 50 |
| Post-cranial & unidentifiable | 320.5 | 330 | 18 | 45 |
| Total | 348.8 | 355 | | |

Colours: mainly white (with some staining from chalky soil); some fragments blue/grey & many endosteal surfaces and broken edges are also blue/grey coloured.

Identifiable elements include fragments of: occipital bone, dentine parts (crown & 1 root) of a mandibular molar (? permanent M2), right part of mandible, right scapula, midshaft radius, midshaft and distal joint surface of femur and midshaft tibia.

Age: probably adult.

Sex: the smoothness of the posterior surface of the occipital bone is suggestive of female sex.

SUMMARY OF THE CREMATIONS FROM CRUNDALE LIMWORKS, KENT
INCLUDING THOSE REPORTED ON IN AM LAB REPORT 99/88

A total of 8 cremation burials representing a minimum of 10 individuals (2 of the burials contained the remains of 2 individuals) were studied. Eight were adult (7 unsexable and one ?female), 1 was a new-born infant (in a double cremation burial with an unsexable adult) and the other was probably a child or adolescent.

Modern studies (discussion in Wahl 1982) suggest that cremation of an adult body yields approximately 2kg of bone. Thus cremation AML 874404 (3) seems to represent the near complete remains of an adult individual. The other contexts are, as is generally the case for archaeological cremation burials, substantially incomplete.

Bones from all contexts were white/blue-grey. Colour can be used as a very approximate guide to firing temperature (Shipman et al. 1984). The colours of the Crundale Limeworks material suggests a temperature in the region of 645-940C.

References

- Shipman, P., Forster, G. & Schoeninger, P. (1984). Burnt Bones & Teeth: An Experimental Study of Colour, Morphology, Crystal Structure and Shrinkage. Journal of Archaeological Science 11: 307-325.
- Wahl, J. (1982). Leichenbranduntersuchungen. Ein Überblick über die Bearbeitungs- und Aussagemöglichkeiten von Brandgräbern. Prähistorische Zeitschrift 57: 1-125.