

Ancient Monuments Laboratory
Report 101/91

THREE EARLY ANGLO-SAXON BURIALS
FROM CARISBROOKE CASTLE,
ISLE OF WIGHT EXCAVATED 1976-1981.

S R Strongman

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Summary

One subadult (female) and two adult inhumations (one male the other unknown) of Early Anglo-Saxon date were excavated from the Carisbrooke Castle site.

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WIGHT, EXCAVATED 1976-81.

Introduction to the site

Three early Saxon burials, situated within a few metres distance of one another, were excavated from site 5 inside the lower enclosure of Carisbrooke Castle. Two burials were extended and supine, it was impossible to ascertain the layout of the other due to poor bone preservation. All three were orientated west-east. A variety of grave goods were also found in association with each burial.

Also excavated from within the same area of the castle was an assortment of human and animal skeletal remains not apparently associated with any specific burial contexts (see appendix for further data).

The Human Remains

Context: Burial 1295:- Extended supine inhumation with grave goods. Orientation west-east.

Material: Preservation moderate, 50% of skeleton surviving.

Sex: Female (Brothwell 1981).

Age: Probably 17-19 years (Brothwell 1981, dental attrition - Workshop of European Anthropologists 1980, epiphysial fusion - Perizonius 1984, cranial sutures).

Dental Formula:

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. . . . . X X X X X . X X . . T
8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
- . . . . . . . . . . T T T T -
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LEFT

RIGHT

Key: . = tooth in socket, X = lost post-mortem but socket present, T = loose tooth present but socket or jaw missing.

Note: Dental enamel hypoplasia, identified by the presence of linear macroscopic depressions running transversely across the enamel of the tooth surface, is present on both the upper and lower anterior teeth. Hypoplasia is a structural defect resulting from environmental or dietary factors during the development of the tooth. The distance between these linear depressions and the cemento-enamel junction was measured. Then, by applying Goodman et al's (1980) methodology it was estimated that the disruption in the growth of the teeth occurred at about three years of age.

The neural arch, in the dorsal region of the sacrum, is

incompletely fused in the midline. This defect, which is termed spina bifida occulta, is thought to be congenital in aetiology and occurs quite frequently in archaeological material (Brothwell 1981, Ortner and Putschar 1985).

Context: Burial 1607:- Extended supine inhumation with grave goods. Orientated west-east.

Material: Preservation extremely poor, skeleton 15-20% complete.

Sex: Not possible to ascertain .

Age: Adult (Dentition permanent)

Dentition: 15 teeth present in total. Severe post-mortem erosion of crown and root surfaces rendered positive identification of specific teeth impossible.

Notes: The small percentage of osteological material surviving was too severely eroded, due to post-depositional factors, for any accurate analysis to be undertaken.

Context: Burial 1651:- Inhumation with grave goods. Orientation west-east.

Material: Preservation poor, skeleton 15% - 20% complete.

Sex: Male (Brothwell D. R. 1981).

Age: Possibly 20-25 years (Dental attrition - Brothwell 1981; suture closure - Perizonius 1984).

Dental formula:

T	T	.	.	.	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T
8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	.	.	T	T	T	T

LEFT

RIGHT

Key: . = tooth in socket T = loose tooth present, socket missing or damaged post-mortem.

Notes: A green discolouration is evident on the buccal and mesial surfaces of the lower right first molar. This is most probably due to a coin coming into contact with the tooth. The presence of a coin in the mandibular region is suggested from the burial plan.

Enamel hypoplasia is present on the crowns of the anterior teeth. Age estimate of tooth growth interruption is calculated at about two years old (Goodman, Armelagos & Rose 1980).

Conclusion

Two of the inhumations are of adult individuals, one male and the other unknown. The third individual being a female subadult.

Generally the condition of the osteological remains is poor. However, it is worth noting that in the case of individual 1295 there is a distinct contrast in the state of bone preservation between the upper and lower skeleton. Resulting in the lower half of the material being in good condition while the upper half is extremely eroded or missing (except for the skull which is well preserved). The reason for this differential preservation is unclear but is possibly related to varying soil conditions.

References

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APPENDIX: DATA FOR INDIVIDUAL BURIALS

Cranial Measurements

<u>SKEL 1295</u>	
L	185.0
B	-
H'	132.0
LB	102.0
B'	100.0
GB	87.1
J	110.0
S'2	108.2
S'3	96.0
S'1	107.0
Biastr B	-
SC	9.6
O'1	35.7
O2	32.9
FL	38.6
GL	95.5
G'H	64.0
NH'	53.0
NB	24.5
G'1	51.2
G2	35.7
FB	26.0
DC	26.0

Miscellaneous Post-Cranial Measurements

<u>SKEL 1295</u>	
LFed1	28.6
RFed1	30.45
LFed2	32.0
RFed2	32.7
LTiD1	29.1
RTiD1	30.65
LTiD1	20.1
RTiD1	21.9

Key: Symbols for both tables are taken from Brothwell (1981).
All measurements are expressed in millimetres.

List Of Miscellaneous Osteological Material Found On Site

Context: 564

Two fragments of human skull.

Proximal region of diaphysis from tibia of large mammal, possibly small bovine.

Context: 592

Proximal end of human femur.

Proximal end of human tibia. A small bony 'spur', about 3cm in length, is present on the posterior region of the bone just below the epiphysis. This lesion seems to be caused by trauma resulting in myositis ossificans.

Context: 598

Human mandible

Dental formula

8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
X	X	.	.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-

Key: . = tooth present in socket X = lost post-mortem - = part of jaw missing.

Context: 603

Part of left human mandible. M1 present in socket. M2, M3, and PM2 missing but socket present.

Proximal part of large mammal diaphysis, possibly small bovine.

Dog tooth upper M2.

Pig premolar.

Note: Animal bone identification by Simon Davis.