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THE ANGLO-SAXON CEMETERY AT MONKTON, THANET

~~The presence of imported Frankish pottery, a sword and, above all, the jewelled composite gold disc brooch, indicate the moderate to high social status of some persons in the seventh-century community at Monkton.~~

~~All in all this new cemetery, situated between Sarre and Minster in what was evidently a prosperous and important area of the Kentish Kingdom, promises to be one of the most critical sites of the Anglo-Saxon period to offer itself for excavation since the nineteenth century.~~

S.C.H.

REPORT ON THE SKELETONS

By C. B. DENSTON

INTRODUCTION

Owing to the circumstances of their discovery, some of the skeletons were represented by only a few fragments, others by more substantial remains, and this has precluded a detailed report. Apart from being fragmentary, the bones also showed varying degrees of post-mortem decay, due to the soil conditions.

Grave 22 had the most complete or near complete bones; two other graves, nos. 10 and 19, had fairly complete mandibles, and only Graves 7 and 21 contained any remains of skull which could be partially restored.

The measurements of the two nearly-complete femora of the male skeleton in Grave 22 allowed the reconstruction of the individual to be computed as approximately of 5 ft. 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. in stature. The series of Anglo-Saxon long bones measured by Dr. A. H. Munter and the calculation of the stature by Dr. J. C. Trevor, on the basis of the Trotter-Gleser formulæ, suggested a mean stature of 5 ft. 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. Comparative material from Holborough, Kent, gives a mean stature of 5 ft. 9 in., and a mean stature of 5 ft. 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. and 5 ft. 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ in., from Burwell and Melbourn, Cambs., respectively. The stature of the Monkton skeleton would seem to fall within the range of stature for the Anglo-Saxon period, as at Holborough the range was 5 ft. 6 in. to 5 ft. 11 in., and at Melbourn 5 ft. 4 in. to 6 ft. 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. The individual from Monkton must have been quite large and masculine, as seen from the size and robustness of the bones, one of their characteristics being a fairly wide lower jaw, with a mandible measuring about 140 mm. bi-gonial breadth.

From the appearance of the bones, at least four other males probably possessed physiques similar to that in Grave 22.

SEX AND AGE

Though most of the Monkton skeletons were very fragmentary, there were enough sex characteristics present to suggest that eight were adult males, two adult ? males, three adult females, one adult ? female, two ? females of indeterminable age; one immature; and two of indeterminable sex and age.

Age at death was estimated primarily from the degree of attrition of any surviving teeth and, secondarily, from the closure of cranial sutures or any other evidence of maturity. The male individuals were tentatively restricted to the following age-groups: 20-25 years, 1; 20-30 years, 1; 30-35 years, 1; 30-40 years, 1; 35-45 years, 1; and five others could only be aged as adult. The females were: 20-25 years, 1; 25-30 years, 1; 30-40 years, 1; and one could only be aged as adult.

OSTEOMETRIC VARIABILITY

Some standard measurements could be taken with reasonable accuracy on three mandibles and one cranium. Maximum length measurements were recorded on two femora from the same skeleton and were used for the computation of the individual's stature. The only other measurements obtained were those relating to the anterior-posterior and transverse diameters of the shafts of the femora and tibiae. The two measurements are calculated as an index, and all such indices from the Monkton bones come in the region of 69.7 mm. 80.0 mm., within the index known as platymeria, a condition which may be attributed to nutritional causes or, more probably, mechanical causes.

DENTAL AND GENERAL PATHOLOGY

Owing to the fragmentary and decayed condition of the alveolus of the mandibles and maxillae, nothing could be certainly recorded about the ante- and post-mortem conditions of the teeth; of the 79 permanent teeth, from seven individuals, only one mandibular molar showed evidence of caries.

The condition of the bones precluded the possibility of discovering any general pathology. A hole, however, in one case (Grave 6), passing through from the external to the internal surface, involving the mastoid process and supramastoid crest of a left temporal bone and measuring 11×8 mm. in diameter, may have been of ante-mortem origin, probably the result of an abscess.

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF INDIVIDUAL SKELETONS

Grave 1. Very fragmentary remains of a cranium and mandible. A few very small fragments of postcranial bones. One mandibular molar and two premolars.

Sex:	? Male
Age at death:	20-25 years

Grave 2. Very fragmentary postcranial remains only. From the evidence of the proportions of the bones, this individual was probably rather robust.

Sex:	Male
Age at death:	Adult

Grave 3. Very fragmentary remains of a cranium and a mandible, also postcranial bones. Dentition: Two molars; five premolars; three canines; three incisors: mostly of the mandible.

Sex:	Female
Age at death:	25-30 years

Grave 5. Very few and very fragmentary remains of a cranium and postcranial bones.

Sex:	? Female
Age at death:	? Adult

Grave 6. Very few and small fragmentary remains of a cranium and postcranial bones.

Sex:	Indeterminable
Age at death:	Indeterminable

Grave 7. Very fragmentary postcranial remains and a calotte of a cranium.

Sex:	? Male
Age at death:	30-40 years

Grave 8. Very few and fragmentary remains of a cranium and a mandible, also postcranial bones. Dentition: Two molars; four premolars, all of the mandible.

Sex:	Female
Age at death:	c. 30-40 years

Grave 10. Very fragmentary remains of a cranium. Mandible fairly complete. Fragmentary postcranial bones. Dentition: Four molars, one canine, one incisor; all of the mandible.

Sex:	Female
Age at death:	c. 20-25 years

Grave 11. Very fragmentary remains; four fragments of long bones.

Sex:	? Female
Age at death:	Indeterminable

Grave 12. Very fragmentary remains of a cranium and a mandible. Six small fragments of postcranial bones.

Sex:	Immature
Age at death:	Indeterminable

Small mastoid process of a left temporal bone. Portion of a mandible from the anterior aspect (mental protuberance), and although the alveolus was rather eroded there were signs of probable abscesses.

Grave 13. A few very small fragments of a cranium and post-cranial bones.

Sex:	? Female
Age at death:	Indeterminable

Grave 14. Very fragmentary remains, mostly postcranial, with a few fragments of a cranium and a mandible. Possibly a rather robust individual.

Sex:	Male
Age at death:	Adult

Grave 15. Very fragmentary remains of a cranium and a mandible; also postcranial bones.

Sex:	Male
Age at death:	Adult

Grave 16. Fragmentary remains of shafts of long bones.

Sex:	Male
Age at death:	Adult

Grave 18. Just four very small fragments of postcranial bones.

Sex:	Indeterminable
Age at death:	Indeterminable

Grave 19. Fragmentary remains of a cranium and a mandible, postcranial bones. More remains of this skeleton. Dentition: Two molars; three premolars; two canines; and two incisors of the maxilla. Six molars; four premolars; two canines; and one incisor of the mandible.

Sex:	Male
Age at death:	c. 25-30 years

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Grave 20. Very fragmentary postcranial remains only. Possibly a rather robust individual.

Sex:	Male
Age at death:	Adult

Grave 21. Remains in less fragmentary condition. Cranium, mandible, and postcranial bones. Probably a rather robust individual. Dentition: Five molars; three premolars; one canine; and two incisors of the mandible.

Sex:	Male
Age at death:	c. 35-45 years

Grave 22. The most complete of the series. Two intact femora, an axis and a cervical vertebra, a talus, a patella and two metacarpal bones, a nearly complete mandible and two tibiae. Other fragments were of a cranium and various postcranial bones. Probably a rather robust individual. Dentition: Three molars and two premolars of the maxilla. Six molars, three premolars, two canines, and three incisors of the mandible.

Sex:	Male
Age at death:	c. 35-45 years
Stature:	c. 5 ft. 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.