

The Human Skeletal Remains from Roestown 2

Licence Number: A008/002

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of the analysis of the human skeletal remains excavated by ACS Ltd. at Roestown 2 (Licence number A008/002). Only two incomplete burials and a single disarticulated skull were identified during excavation.

2. OSTEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

Burial 1

Burial 1 consisted of the incomplete and fragmentary skull of a child of 10-12 years. Ageing of this individual was based on dental development. There was an additional humeral fragment recovered from the vicinity of the burial but it could not be confirmed to be associated with the skull. Preservation of the skull was poor and it suffered both surface erosion and extensive fragmentation.

Despite the poor condition of the skull there was evidence for bilateral moderate cribra orbitalia, indicative of iron deficiency anaemia. Causes of iron deficiency are variable and include a diet lacking in iron rich foods and/or a diet rich in foods that inhibit the absorption of dietary iron.

There were a total of 22 permanent teeth recovered with this individual with 16 sockets surviving. No dental pathology was noted.

Burial 2

Burial 2, an adult, was again poorly preserved and survived as a small number of parietal fragments, a small mandibular fragment and fragments of the right scapula, right and left phalanges and a single incomplete cervical vertebra. Despite the poor preservation of the skull a single parietal fragment displayed slight porosity along the sagittal suture. This porosity is suggestive of porotic hyperostosis, a condition that, along with cribra orbitalia, is indicative of iron deficiency anaemia.

Disarticulated

There was a single disarticulated adult frontal bone recovered during excavations. The orbital region of this bone suggested that this individual was male. There was no evidence for pathology.

3. DISCUSSION

A minimum number of two individuals were presented for analysis following excavations at Roestown 2. Both were very incomplete and, as such, only a small level of information could be retrieved from the skeletons. The only pathologies noted were associated with iron deficiency anaemia and it is interesting that both individuals were affected.

