

## **Request for the De-Accession of Human remains from the Torres Strait Islands, Australia**

### **Briefing note for Trustees**

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*The purpose of this briefing note is to outline the claim and its context. The letter and the submitted claim are attached here. The Trustees are asked to confirm that they are content with the actions proposed in this note, in particular, that we prepare a dossier of relevant information for their consideration and decision at a later meeting (2012), and that as part of that dossier we commission two independent reports. The Trustees are also asked to specify any further information they would like to have, e.g. more information from the claimants concerning their views of mortuary ritual in the late nineteenth century, and more on their genealogical links to the people of that time. Finally, the Trustees are asked to consider the representatives' request to meet.*

#### **The claim**

On June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2011, the Museum received a claim for the deaccession and repatriation from the Museum's Collection of two ancestral remains (human skulls), from the *Torres Strait Repatriation Working Group*, through the Prime Minister's Office of the Australian Government. The Torres Strait Islands lie between northern Australia and Papua New Guinea. Seventeen islands in the Torres Strait group are inhabited and there are nineteen separate communities. The islands are administered by Australia. The claimed remains are from the islands of Nagir and Mer.

The claim meets the criteria by which the Trustees will consider a claim, as detailed in the *British Museum Policy on Human Remains* (2006) (i.e. that the Trustees will normally only consider a claim from a community for the transfer of human remains, when it is made through the relevant national government or national agency, Section 5.12.1).

On issues of repatriation of ancestral remains from overseas institutions, Torres Strait Island peoples are represented by Registered Native Title Bodies Corporate, and the Torres Strait Repatriation Working Group. The TSRWG produced a report based on community consultation carried out in 2009-10, which confirmed that the Nagir and Mer communities support the return of the two skulls in the British Museum's collection. In the context of this claim, the communities are represented by the Chair of the TSRWG, Mr Sereako Stephen, and Co-chair Mr Lui Ned David. The claim is endorsed by the Australian Government, via the Office for the Arts within the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and the Australian High Commission in London.

The Museum met with delegations from the TSRWG in September 2010 and in May 2011 to discuss this claim (see Appendix One for further background). The Museum's policy, the role of the Trustees, and the claims process and timescale were outlined at both meetings.

During the September 2010 visit, the delegation were also visiting the Natural History Museum, Liverpool Museums (where a repatriation of the remains of a baby took place) and the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology at Cambridge. The NHM Trustees have now agreed to repatriate 138 human remains from the Torres Strait Islands (March 2011).

### ***The remains***

The British Museum's collection contains four human remains from the Torres Strait Islands. These include the two skulls which are subject to the claim:

Oc,89+.96, decorated human skull of [REDACTED] from the island of Nagir, collected by Alfred Cort Haddon (British marine biologist, anthropologist) in 1888

Oc,89+.97, decorated human skull from the island of Mer, collected by Haddon in 1889

And the following objects:

Oc,89+.182, dugong charm with fibulae, from the island of Moa, collected by Haddon in 1888

Oc,+.2489, full length crocodile mask with human jawbones inside, from the island of Mabuiag, collected by missionary Rev Samuel Macfarlane in the 1870s

*Following discussion around the distinction made between human remains, and objects with a human component, the delegation concluded they would not claim the latter two remains.*

The two skulls were collected during A.C. Haddon's first field research visit to the Torres Strait Islands in 1888-9. At this time Haddon was Professor of Zoology at the Royal College of Science, Dublin. His experiences in the Torres Strait Islands increased his interest in ethnography, and he later led the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to the Islands (1898). The first skull is identified by Haddon as [REDACTED] a young man who had died at the end of 1887. Haddon purchased this skull in August 1888 while on the island of Nagir. This type of skull is known as a *pada kuik*, and was used for divination.

The second skull is one of five purchased by Haddon on Mer in 1889. Haddon describes 'one or two' of these skulls being decorated for him. This type of skull was known as a *lamar marik*. The skull which is now in the Museum was used to demonstrate for Haddon the exact method of divination as carried out on Mer (see Appendix Two for Haddon's accounts of collecting the skulls registered as Oc,89+.96 and 97).

Preparing and decorating skulls after death was the task of close relatives of the deceased. The skulls were then presented back to the immediate kin at a funeral ceremony which took place a few months following death. Skulls were presented in specially made baskets, and were then kept in the family home or a clan repository. They were periodically accessed for the purposes of divination.

The two skulls have been physically examined by the Museum's physical anthropologist, Dr Daniel Antoine, using non-invasive methods. He suggests that both skulls are likely to be of young, adult males, but many of the morphological features are ambiguous, thus age and gender remain uncertain (see Appendix Three).

### ***British Museum Policy***

The Museum is able to deaccession human remains that are a registered part of the collection only under the terms of the Human Tissue Act 2004. The *British Museum Policy on Human Remains* (2006) details how the Trustees will consider any claim and the criteria that they will use in assessing that claim.

The procedure and criteria have been used by the Trustees on two previous occasions to consider the claim to deaccession two Tasmanian cremation ash bundles (repatriated 2006) and Māori human remains from New Zealand (nine of sixteen items claimed were returned in 2008).

### ***Proposed process***

The proposed process for the consideration of this claim will follow that used with the two previous claims (Tasmania, New Zealand) considered by the Trustees.

Firstly, two independent reports need to be commissioned, to establish the cultural and scientific importance of the remains.

We would like to suggest approaching the following experts to compile these reports:

*Professor Richard Davis*, of the University of Western Australia, an anthropologist who has carried out fieldwork in the Torres Strait Islands and has a particular interest in ritual and sorcery

*Professor Simon Hillson* of University College London, a bioarchaeologist who specialises in skulls and teeth

The reports and the dossier of information will be sent to the Torres Strait representatives and the Australian Government via the Australian High Commission to provide an opportunity for them to comment and respond. This information will then be presented to the Trustees for them to come to a decision about this claim.

Some time may be needed for the completion of the independent reports, and for the claimants to respond. As such, it is not likely that the claim will be discussed by the Trustees until 2012.

At the May 2011 meeting, the representatives asked if they could present directly to the Museum's Trustees during the period in which the claim will be considered. They also provided a DVD titled 'The Long Journey Home', which they would like to form part of the dossier. In the film, Ned David explains that in exchanging human remains with collectors in the nineteenth century, Torres Strait Islands people did not envisage that the remains would leave the islands and never return. Elders from the main islands state the importance of the remains being repatriated to the spiritual wellbeing and cultural identity of island communities.

### ***Other information***

The museum has a collection of 778 objects from the Torres Strait Islands. Of these 277 are associated with Alfred Cort Haddon. The earliest items were acquired by the Museum in the 1830s, and we continue to add to the collection.

In 2009, the Museum signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Museum of Australia. This agreement supports a five-year research programme on Australian and Torres Strait Island material culture. A major loan is planned to support a jointly curated exhibition in Canberra in 2012/3, to be followed by an exhibition here in 2014. These exhibitions will include Torres Strait Island material.

Natasha McKinney, 16.6.2011

## Appendix One

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### ***Background to the claim***

In 2001 a delegation from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission visited Britain to participate in the consultation carried out with the DCMS Working Group on Human Remains (the results of which were published in 2003 as the Palmer Report). A meeting between Prime Ministers Tony Blair and John Howard in 2000, in which they had agreed to a 'coordinated and long-term approach' to facilitating repatriation of human remains to Australia, contributed to the establishment of the DCMS Working Group. The 2001 delegation took the opportunity to visit relevant British institutions, including the British Museum, to state the importance of repatriating Indigenous Australian and Torres Strait Island human remains, for the reconciliation between the people and institutions of Australia and Britain. A claim specifically listing the remains in our collections was not made at that time.

In September 2010 we were visited by a delegation from the islands, accompanied by Australian government officials.

*Mr Sereako Stephen:* Chair of the Registered Native Title Body Corporate for Ugar Island, Chair of the Torres Strait Repatriation Working Group. Mr Stephen has ancestral links to the island of Mer.

*Mr Ned David:* Chair of the Registered Native Title Body Corporate for the Central Islands, Co-chair of the Torres Strait Repatriation Working Group. Mr David has ancestral links to Mer.

*Councillor Donald Banu:* Torres Strait Regional Authority, Member for Boigu Island, representative for Boigu on the Torres Strait Repatriation Working Group

*Mr Kapua Gutchen:* Deputy Chairman of the Erub Island Council

*Ms Stacey Campton:* Assistant Secretary, Indigenous Culture Branch, Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

*Mr David Blair:* Assistant Director, International Repatriation Branch, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

*Australian High Commission Executive Officers:* Alessandra Pretto, Namali Mackay, Vivien Allimonos

Each delegate spoke on the issue of repatriation, and it was made clear that the Torres Strait Island communities had been consulted and supported repatriation efforts. We clarified that we would need a submission specifically for the remains in the British Museum's collections, as the actions of the Australian government officials during their 2001 visit did not constitute an existing, active claim.

The meeting was also an opportunity to highlight the collaborative work currently taking place around our Australian collections, and to emphasise that we are very pleased to establish and maintain relationships around a variety of projects with communities in the Torres Strait Islands.

A second meeting was requested at the British Museum for May this year. This meeting was attended by Stacey Campton, Ned David and Sereako Stephen, and Alessandra Pretto. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Torres Strait Islands human remains collections at the Museum, and to clarify which items would be part of a planned repatriation claim. Having agreed that the two skulls from Nagir and Mer would be requested, there was discussion around the details of these remains, their identity and collection history.

Discussion then turned to the process of submitting a claim. It was explained that the Museum's Trustees make the decision based on information provided to them by the claimants, curators, and independent scholars commissioned to write reports on the cultural and scientific importance of the remains. It was noted that the delegation may wish to make suggestions or comments in relation to the person selected to write the report on the former.

Ned David explained that if the remains in question were repatriated, reburial was likely, and that in any case the decision of the elders was paramount. However, he spoke enthusiastically about their ongoing engagement with the Natural History Museum, and a proposed research partnership within which the NHM may negotiate ongoing access to the remains at an appropriate repository in the islands. Mr David suggested that the BM could follow suit, and that a visit from a BM staff member would be welcome.

Concern was expressed by the delegation that some information they may wish to provide as part of making their case should remain private and not be published on the Museum's website in the Human Remains pages, due to issues of cultural sensitivity. Assurances were made that due attention would be given to these considerations before publishing material on the web.

Natasha McKinney, 16.6.11

## Appendix Two

### *Provenance information*

The following excerpts from published works by Alfred Cort Haddon record the actual collection of the skulls on the islands of Nagir and Mer.

**Oc,89+.96, decorated human skull of [redacted] from the island of Nagir, collected in 1888**

The following excerpt is Haddon's description of the preparation of [redacted] skull, his funeral ceremony, and the collection of the skull.

Haddon, A.C. (1893). The secular and ceremonial dances of Torres Straits. Leiden: E.J. Brill.

Pages 154-6

#### NAGIR (*Mount Ernest*).

The dead were either placed on a framework supported by posts, or buried. Food, a coco-nut vessel full of water and possibly a bamboo tobacco pipe would be hung on to the posts in the former case or placed upon the grave if buried. There was always a fire.

The following information was given to me by a native named [redacted] but whose English name was 'Look here!'

When the corpse was placed on the platform, *kak*, it was either wrapped up in a mat or it was laid upon a mat and covered with leaves of the cocopalms. When decomposition had set in the skull was removed and buried in "hard ground so that smell he go." All the relatives searched for food. The skull was made "flash" (*i. e.* decorated) and put into a basket. The body might be buried immediately after death if the skull was not required, as was often the case for old people; but if young people died the skull would be preserved as a memento.

On August 13<sup>th</sup>, 1888, a few days after my arrival in Torres Straits, I visited Nagir, it was in this islands Dr. COPPINGER had obtained two decorated skulls<sup>1</sup>) on the occasion when H. M. S. 'Alert' was surveying in these waters six years previously. Remembering this fact I thought I would also endeavour to get one. My inquiries, aided by a sketch, and emphasised by a promise of ample remuneration elicited the information that my informant [redacted], by name, "savvied" and that he "got him". Forbidding me to follow him, [redacted] disappeared round a hut and in a very short space of time returned with a basket containing a skull wrapped up in two very old and dirty red cotton handkerchiefs.

I afterwards discovered that the skull was that of a young unmarried man [redacted] but called "[redacted]" by the white men, who died about the end of 1887. His death was firmly believed to have been caused by the magic of a *maidelaig* or sorcery man residing at Somerset, Cape York, although the latter was about forty miles away.



When [redacted] died, [redacted], his uncle, and [redacted] ("[redacted]"), his foster brother, "yarned" and said, "Very good we make him same as man long time fashion, we take him head but leave him body in ground." So they buried him. "First day he stop in ground; next day, stuff him run down; next day, belly he go in; next day, dig him up." It was thus that the early stages of decomposition were described to me. When the exhumation was to take place all the *Mariget*, or the relatives of the dead man whose business it is to perform the funeral ceremonies, went very quietly in a crouching manner to the grave, on arriving there they all suddenly and simultaneously stamped the ground, clapped their hands once and said 'Ah!' Then the *mari* departed from [redacted] corpse and the head could be easily severed from the body. The earth was removed from the body and one man took hold of the cranium and another seized the jaw. The "brother-in-law" (i. e. the sisters' husband) then washed the skull in the sea, when cleaned and "no stink," he stuck on strips of dark beeswax for eyebrows inserted pieces of pearl-shell for the eyes and moulded a nose out of wood and beeswax, which he painted red. He also supplied, by half-a-dozen pieces of wood, those teeth which had fallen out of their sockets, lashed the jaw on to the cranium and attached ear-pendants made of calico and adorned with beads.

After about three months a death-dance was held ("made him *merkai*") during which a central *Ipikamerkai* danced with a *Turkiam merkai* on each side. After this dance had

<sup>1)</sup> Cf. "Report on the Zoological Collections made in the Indo-Pacific Ocean during the Voyage of H. M. S. 'Alert' 1881-2". British Museum, Natural History. 1884. pp. 5-7. pls 1, 2. Report on Melanesian skulls by OLDFIELD THOMAS. "These skulls are placed on the graves where the bodies of their original possessors lie, and are surrounded with idols, models of snakes, etc. which are supposed to guard the dead." (Note by Dr. R. W. COPPINGER. l. c. p. 7).

been twice performed, a single dancer the *mari* appeared. He came alone and last of all. He had loose pieces of wood attached to his legs (?) which clattered as he jumped about.

At the same time a big feast was made, but in addition to the yams, sweet potatoes, coco-nuts, bananas and so forth of the old fashioned feasts this one was augmented by "four bags of flour, one case of gin and one case of schnaps". The decorated skull of [redacted] was placed on a mat in the midst of the feasters. The father and brother prepared food for the other *Mariget* and put it in front of the skull; these latter in their turn made food ready for the father and brother of the deceased and placed it in a similar position, but only two bottles of spirits were placed along with the food. Then "all got damned drunk all night; if woman sleep wake him (i. e. her) up — no make row (i. e. noise, or quarrel)."

Before the feasting commenced, the skull was handed over to the father, and at night it was covered with a mat and the family slept around it in memory of old times. After three nights the father kept the skull in its basket close by his pillow.

[redacted] skull was sold to me by [redacted], who was also a foster-brother to [redacted], for one tomahawk and three fathoms of calico-print. It is now in the Christy Collection of the British Museum.

#### Oc,89+.97, decorated human skull from the island of Mer, collected in 1889

The following excerpt is Haddon's description of skull divination on the island of Mer. Note that the skull shown in the sketch is stated by Haddon to be in the British Museum, and he refers to Plate XXVIII in this volume which shows a photograph of the skull.

Haddon, A.C. (1908). Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits, Vol. 6, Sociology, Magic and Religion of the Eastern Islanders. Cambridge : University Press.



*Skull divination.*

A particular form of divination by means of a specially prepared skull was practised by the elder Samsep *le* and Kòmet *le*, both of which groups were *Beizam le*.

When a mummy, *le aud*, fell to pieces the head was taken (p. 149) and the features of the deceased were modelled in the black wax of the small wild bee, the eyes were formed of pieces of nautilus nacre, spots of beeswax serving for the pupils, and pieces of wood supplied the place of missing teeth. Such a skull, *lamar-marik*<sup>2</sup> (*lamar*, ghost; *emarik*, send forth), constituted when properly employed a divining *zogo* of remarkable power (fig. 51). Probably the skulls of only important members of the Samsep *le* and Kòmet *le* were employed for this purpose.

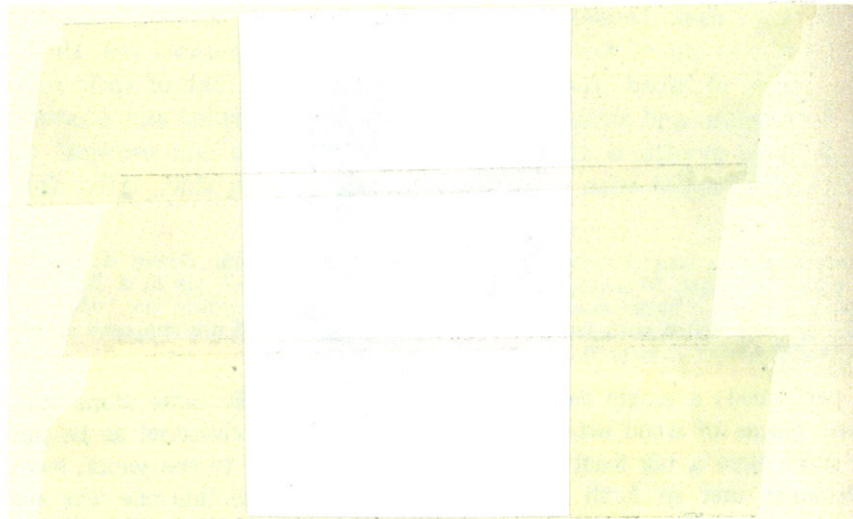


FIG. 52. A diviner with a *lamar-marik*.

Baton (Arab, 15), himself a *Beizam le* of Samsep, informed me in 1889 that if it were required to discover the man who by means of *maid* had made someone ill, several of the *zogo le* went at night to the *pelak* of Bomai, painted themselves red all over, and otherwise decorated themselves and the *lamar-marik*<sup>1</sup> (fig. 52). The men took "*lukup* belong *zogo*." A body with arms and legs was made of banana leaves, and the head was

<sup>1</sup> Baton himself dressed up to show me what was done. His head and shoulders were enveloped in a covering of croton leaves, leaving the face exposed, one large sprig was stuck vertically in his hair. The skull was similarly decorated, and was not held in the hand, but carried suspended from the leaves; the actual skull he employed is that shown in pl. XXVIII. fig. 2; it is now in the British Museum.

<sup>2</sup> These were, *taibi*, a species of croton; *sarik pas*, *Andropogon nardus*; *sam*, cassowary feathers; and *daumer lub*, feathers of the Torres Straits pigeon (*Carpophaga*).

Haddon describes the purchase of five skulls on Mer in 1889, and the preparation of two of them by the informant Baton, who demonstrated the use of the divining skull, as illustrated above.

Haddon, A.C. (1932). Head-hunters: Black, White, and Brown. London: Watts.

I was naturally anxious to obtain one of these divining heads; even by the time of my former visit they had all been done away with, at least, so I was informed. I had therefore to be content to have a model made for me. (Plate XII., B, No. 2; p. 139.)

First a skull had to be procured—and for other reasons I was very desirous of making a collection of skulls; but it was long before I could obtain any (I am referring now to my former visit), though I constantly said, "Me fellow friend belong you fellow. 'Spouse you get me head belong dead man, I no speak. 'Spouse you get him, I no savvy what name you catch him, that business belong you fellow. What for I get you fellow trouble?"



Eventually I came across a man who volunteered to get me some, and I promised to give him sixpence per head ; or, as I put it to him, " One head belong dead man he sixpence, one head belong dead man he sixpence ; you savvy ? " and as I spoke I touched and turned down, native fashion, the fingers of the left hand, beginning with the little finger. He understood perfectly.

Next day he brought me a basket of skulls, and he could tell me the names of some of them, too ! As he handed out one skull and mentioned a man's name, I noticed that the nursemaid of the missionary's wife, who was standing by, looked rather queer ; but as it was none of my business, I took no notice. Later I found that the skull in question belonged to the girl's uncle ! I do not believe she objected to my having the skull, but that the other man should have the sixpence—the money had gone out of the family. When paying the man I ticked off each skull on the fingers of my left hand, and paid for it ; but I had not enough sixpences, and so gave him half a crown for five skulls. At this he looked very askance, although I assured him the payment was quite correct. Fortunately Bruce was standing by, and said he would give him five sixpences for it at the store. My friend Baton made me one or two divining heads from these skulls in the " old-time fashion."

## Appendix Three

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### Bioarchaeological Report

Daniel Antoine, May 2011

#### Registration details:

PRN: EOC7070

Regno: Oc, 89+.96

Additional ID: Oc1889C16.96

#### Methods:

The report follows the recommendations described in the *Standards for data collection from human skeletal remains* edited by Buikstra and Ubelaker (1997) and the handbook of the *British Museum Human Remains Database*.

#### Description:

Divining skull with wooden nose tied on with a cord, pearl-shell eyes fitted into black beeswax and eye brows modelled in wax. Bead ornaments are attached to the lower jaw with plaited bindings and some teeth have been replaced with wooden inserts.

#### Preservation:

The skull and mandible are skeletonised and no hair or soft tissues were preserved or have survived. Most of the bone (class 5: 75-99%) has a sound cortical surface and the overall preservation is classed as *excellent* (solid bone with no or little breakage or erosion). The following bones were damaged to allow the cord to pass through the skull and provide an attachment for nose and the mandible: maxillae (palate only), sphenoid, palatine, vomer and ethmoid.

#### Cranial bones and joint surfaces present:

1. Greater than 75%: frontal, parietal (left and right), occipital, maxilla (left and right), temporal (left and right), temporo-mandibular joint (left and right), mandible (left and right), mandibular condyles (left and right), orbits (left and right), zygomatic (left and right), occipital condyles (left and right), nasal bones (left and right), sphenoid lesser wings (left and right), sphenoid greater wings (left and right).
2. 75-25%: ethmoid.
3. Less than 25%: palatine (left and right), sphenoid (body), vomer.

#### **Age-at-death and biological sex:**

The pelvis (not present) is the best indicator of age and biological sex in adult skeletons. The skull can also be used but sexually dimorphic features may be less clear-cut or pronounced and dental wear can only be used to provide an approximate age-at-death.

- Biological sex: the features of the skull were *male* (category 5: temporal lines), *probable male* (category 4: mastoid processes, mandibular eminence, gonial flaring, mandibular ramus) or ambiguous (category 3: nuchal crest). Some features could not be scored due to the decorations (supraorbital margin; glabella). As most of the features were male or probable male, the overall biological sex based on the skull is *male* (category 5).
- Age-at-death: the mandible and maxillae are attached together and the dental wear was hard to ascertain. Nonetheless, such modest levels of dental attrition (see dental section below) are usually found in *young adults* (20-35 years at death).

#### **Non-metric traits (result for both left and right unless stated or applicable)**

- Metopic Suture: absent.
- Supraorbital Notch: unobservable.
- Supraorbital Foramen: present.
- Infraorbital Suture: absent.
- Multiple Infaorbital Foramina: two distinct foramina.
- Zygomatico-Facial Foramina: left 1 large, right 1 small.
- Parietal Foramen: left present on parietal, right absent.
- Sutural bones – Epipteric bone: absent.
- Sutural bones – Coronal Ossicle: absent.
- Sutural bones – Bregmatic Bone: absent.
- Sutural bones – Sagittal Ossicle: absent.
- Sutural bones – Apical Bone: 1 present.
- Sutural bones – Lambdoid Ossicle: 5 left, 5 right.



- Sutural bones – Asterionic Bone: 1 left, 1 right.
- Sutural bones – Ossicle in Occipito-Mastoid Suture: absent.
- Sutural bones – Parietal Notch Bone: left absent, right present.
- Inca Bone: absent.
- Condylar Canal: patent.
- Divided Hypoglossal Canal: absent.
- Flexure of Superior Sagittal Sulcus: unobservable.
- Foramen Ovale incomplete: absent.
- Foramen Spinosum incomplete: absent.
- Pterygo-Spinous Bridge: left and right (trace/spicule only) present.
- Pterygo-Alar Bridge: left absent, right (trace/spicule only) present.
- Tympanic Dehiscence: left foramen only, right absence.
- Auditory Exostosis: absent.
- Mastoid Foramen: left 2 sutural, right 2 both sutural and temporal.
- Mental Foramen: 1 left, 1 right.
- Mandibular Torus: left and right moderate (elevation between 2-5 mm).
- Mylohyoid Bridge: left partial near foramen, right absent.

#### **Cranial Measurements:**

Some measurement landmarks were not accessible due to the attachments, decorations and ornaments.

- Maximum cranial length: 192 mm.
- Maximum cranial breadth: 135 mm.
- Basion-bregma height: 126 mm.
- Maxillo-alveolar breadth: 73 mm.
- Biauricular breadth: 123 mm.
- Minimum frontal breadth: 101 mm.
- Upper facial breadth: 108 mm.
- Frontal chord: 113 mm.
- Parietal chord: 125 mm.
- Occipital chord: 93 mm.
- Foramen magnum length: 40 mm.
- Foramen magnum breadth: 27 mm.
- Mastoid length: 31 mm.
- Height of mandibular body: 31 mm.
- Breadth of mandibular body: 11 mm.
- Bigonial width: 97 mm.

- Minimum ramus breath: 35 mm.

### Pathology:

- The temporo-mandibular joints and mandibular condyles do not show any signs of osteoarthritic change.
- No obvious pathological changes apart from periodontal disease (see below in dental section).
- The bone adjacent to the superior part of the sagittal suture appears to be elevated and thickened, possibly indicating a metabolic or nutritional disorder.

### Dental:

The maxillae and mandible are attached together in occlusion and measurements, as well as some observations (most dental non-metric traits, wear) were not possible. Dental caries were not scored as most of the occlusal (biting) surfaces were not visible but no decay was present on the sides of the crowns or root surfaces. Dental wear scores were only recorded when possible but the teeth do not have much wear. Some teeth have been replaced by wooden inserts, while others were repositioned in the wrong root socket/location (right maxillary canine; left mandibular 2<sup>nd</sup> incisor and canine). No abscesses were observed but periodontal (gum) disease was present (see alveolar resorption scores below). Some pit-form hypoplastic defects were observed on the canines, upper lateral incisors and molars, indicating this individual suffered two episodes of systemic disturbances (e.g. fevers, dietary disturbance) during their childhood (2.5-3 years and 4.5-5 years).

- Maxillary right 3<sup>rd</sup> molar: in occlusion; wear not scored; no calculus; slight alveolar resorption.
- Maxillary right 2<sup>nd</sup> molar: in occlusion; wear not scored; no calculus; moderate alveolar resorption.
- Maxillary right 1<sup>st</sup> molar: in occlusion; wear not scored; small amount of calculus; moderate alveolar resorption.
- Maxillary right 2<sup>nd</sup> premolar: in occlusion; wear 3; small amount of calculus; slight alveolar resorption.
- Maxillary right 1<sup>st</sup> premolar: in occlusion; wear not scored; small amount of calculus; moderate alveolar resorption.
- Maxillary right canine: in occlusion; wear 2; small amount of calculus; alveolar resorption not scored; tooth swapped with (accidental) and in the left mandibular canine position.
- Maxillary right 2<sup>nd</sup> incisor: in occlusion; wear not scored; small amount of calculus; moderate alveolar resorption.
- Maxillary right 1<sup>st</sup> incisor: in occlusion; wear not scored; small amount of calculus; moderate alveolar resorption.
- Maxillary left 1<sup>st</sup> incisor: in occlusion; wear not scored; small amount of calculus moderate alveolar resorption.
- Maxillary left 2<sup>nd</sup> incisor: post-mortem loss; wooden insert.
- Maxillary left canine: post-mortem loss; wooden insert.
- Maxillary left 1<sup>st</sup> premolar: post-mortem loss; replaced by left mandibular 2<sup>nd</sup> incisor.
- Maxillary left 2<sup>nd</sup> premolar: in occlusion; wear 2; small amount of calculus; slight alveolar resorption.
- Maxillary left 1<sup>st</sup> molar: in occlusion; wear not scored; small amount of calculus; slight alveolar resorption.
- Maxillary left 2<sup>nd</sup> molar: in occlusion; wear not scored; small amount of calculus; slight alveolar resorption.
- Maxillary left 3<sup>rd</sup> molar: in occlusion; wear not scored; small amount of calculus; slight alveolar resorption.

- Mandibular left 3<sup>rd</sup> molar: in occlusion; wear not scored; small amount of calculus; no alveolar resorption.
- Mandibular left 2<sup>nd</sup> molar: in occlusion; wear not scored; small amount of calculus; slight alveolar resorption.
- Mandibular left 1<sup>st</sup> molar: in occlusion; wear not scored; small amount of calculus; slight alveolar resorption.
- Mandibular left 2<sup>nd</sup> premolar: in occlusion; wear not scored; small amount of calculus; slight alveolar resorption.
- Mandibular left 1<sup>st</sup> premolar: in occlusion; wear 2; small amount of calculus; moderate alveolar resorption.
- Mandibular left canine: in occlusion; wear not scored; small amount of calculus; moderate alveolar resorption; tooth swapped with (accidental) and in the right maxillary canine position.
- Mandibular left 2<sup>nd</sup> incisor: in occlusion; wear not scored; small amount of calculus; alveolar resorption not scored; tooth moved to left maxillary 1<sup>st</sup> premolar position; wooden insert in the actual socket.
- Mandibular left 1<sup>st</sup> incisor: post-mortem loss; wooden insert.
- Mandibular right 1<sup>st</sup> incisor: post-mortem loss; wooden insert.
- Mandibular right 2<sup>nd</sup> incisor: post-mortem loss; wooden insert.
- Mandibular right canine: in occlusion; wear not scored; small amount of calculus; moderate alveolar resorption.
- Mandibular right 1<sup>st</sup> premolar: in occlusion; wear 3; small amount of calculus; moderate alveolar resorption.
- Mandibular right 2<sup>nd</sup> premolar: in occlusion; wear not scored; small amount of calculus; slight alveolar resorption.
- Mandibular right 1<sup>st</sup> molar: in occlusion; wear not scored; small amount of calculus; slight alveolar resorption.
- Mandibular right 2<sup>nd</sup> molar: in occlusion; wear not scored; small amount of calculus; slight alveolar resorption.
- Mandibular right 3<sup>rd</sup> molar: in occlusion; wear not scored; small amount of calculus; no alveolar resorption.

#### Overall summary:

- Male skull from a young adult.
- Numerous non-metric cranial traits are present, including several ossicles on the back of the skull. These variants show familial inheritance and may be used for biological distance analysis.
- Extensive periodontal disease.



# Bioarchaeological Report

## Registration details:

PRN: EOC7071

Regno: Oc, 89+.97

Additional ID: Oc1889C16.97

## Methods:

The report follows the recommendations described in the *Standards for data collection from human skeletal remains* edited by Buikstra and Ubelaker (1997) and the handbook of the *British Museum Human Remains Database*.

## Description:

Divining human skull with pearl-shell eyes, beeswax, wood and vegetable fibre. Upper part of the skull is coloured red. Face modelled with wax from brow downwards, with red painted lines at brow, on cheeks and following the line of the chin. Some of the anterior teeth have been replaced with wooden inserts. The jaw has been secured shut with fibre bindings and wooden wedges. Fibre strands are looped across the forehead.

## Preservation:

The skull and mandible are skeletonised and no hair or soft tissues were preserved or have survived. The cortical surface of the bone (class 6) is completely sound and the overall preservation is classed as *excellent* (solid bone with no or little breakage or erosion). The following bones were damaged to allow the cord to pass through the skull and provide an attachment for the mandible: palate and alveolar parts of the maxillae, palatine bones. Due to the preparation techniques, some of the bones of the face are covered in wax and not visible. Their presence/preservation could not be ascertained (see below).

#### **Cranial bones and joint surfaces present:**

4. Greater than 75%: frontal, parietal (left and right), occipital, maxilla (left and right), temporal (left and right), temporo-mandibular joint (left and right), mandible (left and right), mandibular condyles (left and right), occipital condyles (left and right), sphenoid (body) , sphenoid lesser wings (left and right), sphenoid greater wings (left and right).
5. 75-25%: none.
6. Less than 25%: palatine (left and right).
7. Uncertain (behind decorated parts) but likely to be well preserved: orbits (left and right), zygomatic (left and right), nasal bones (left and right).
8. Uncertain: ethmoid, vomer.
9. Only 40% of the frontal and temporal bones are visible but they appear to be intact.

#### **Age-at-death and biological sex:**

The pelvis (not present) is the best indicator of age and biological sex in adult skeletons. The skull can also be used but sexually dimorphic features can be less clear-cut or pronounced and dental wear can only be used to provide an approximate age-at-death.

- Biological sex: the features of the skull were *male* (category 5: nuchal crest, mandibular ramus, temporal lines) or ambiguous (category 3: mastoid processes). Some features could not be scored due to the decorations (mandibular eminence; gonial flaring; supraorbital margin; glabella). As most of the features were male, the overall biological sex based on the skull is male (category 5).
- Age-at-death: the cranial sutures are not fused, suggesting a younger individual, but the basi spheno-occipital synchondrosis is fully closed (this occurs between 13-18 years in males). The mandible and maxillae are attached together and the amount of dental wear was hard to ascertain. Nonetheless, such modest levels of dental attrition (see dental section below) is usually found in a young adult (20-35 years at death).

#### **Non-metric traits (result for both left and right unless stated or applicable)**

- Metopic Suture: absent.
- Supraorbital Notch: unobservable.
- Supraorbital Foramen: unobservable.
- Infraorbital Suture: unobservable.
- Multiple Infaorbital Foramina: unobservable.
- Zygomatico-Facial Foramina: unobservable.

- Parietal Foramen: absent.
- Sutural bones – Epipteric bone: unobservable.
- Sutural bones – Coronal Ossicle: 1 left, 1 right.
- Sutural bones – Bregmatic Bone: absent.
- Sutural bones – Sagittal Ossicle: absent.
- Sutural bones – Apical Bone: 1 present.
- Sutural bones – Lambdoid Ossicle: 1 left, 1 right.
- Sutural bones – Asterionic Bone: absent.
- Sutural bones – Ossicle in Occipito-Mastoid Suture: absent.
- Sutural bones – Parietal Notch Bone: absent.
- Inca Bone: absent.
- Condylar Canal: patent.
- Divided Hypoglossal Canal: absent.
- Flexure of Superior Sagittal Sulcus: unobservable.
- Foramen Ovale incomplete: absent.
- Foramen Spinosum incomplete: absent.
- Pterygo-Spinous Bridge: left and right partial bridge present.
- Pterygo-Alar Bridge: absent.
- Tympanic Dehiscence: absent.
- Auditory Exostosis: absent.
- Mastoid Foramen: left 1 temporal, right 1 temporal.
- Mental Foramen: unobservable.
- Mandibular Torus: absent.
- Mylohyoid Bridge: absent.

### **Cranial Measurements:**

Some measurement landmarks were not accessible due to the attachments, decorations and ornaments.

- Maximum cranial breadth: 129 mm.
- Basion-bregma height: 132 mm.
- Parietal chord: 112 mm.
- Occipital chord: 99 mm.
- Foramen magnum length: 35 mm.
- Foramen magnum breadth: 32 mm.
- Mastoid length: 31 mm.



## Pathology:

- The left temporo-mandibular joint does not show any signs of osteoarthritic change, other joints were unobservable.
- Periodontal disease (see below in dental section) with some roots very exposed (but difficult to observe as the outer/buccal maxillae and mandible alveolar regions were covered in wax).
- No obvious pathological changes apart from some micro-porosity along the lambdoid and sagittal sutures, as well as the squamous part of the occipital and posterior part of the parietals (above lambdoid suture). The bone adjacent to the superior part of the lambdoid suture and posterior part of the sagittal suture appears to be elevated and thickened. These changes may indicate a metabolic or nutritional disorder.

## Dental:

The maxillae and mandible are attached together in occlusion and measurements, as well as some observations (dental non-metric traits, calculus, wear) were not possible. Dental caries were not scored as most of the occlusal (biting) and root surfaces were not visible but no decay was present on the sides of the crowns. Dental wear scores were only recorded when possible but the teeth do not have much wear. Some teeth have been replaced by wooden inserts (5 inserts for 5 teeth in the maxillae and 5 inserts for 6 teeth in the mandible). No abscesses were observed on the lingual/palatal surfaces but the outer bone from the maxillae and mandible was covered in wax and could not be checked. Periodontal (gum) disease could only be scored on the inside of the mouth as the outer alveolar area is covered in wax (see alveolar resorption scores below). No hypoplastic defects were observed and the presence of dental calculus was not scored as the cervical margin is covered in wax.

- Maxillary right 3<sup>rd</sup> molar: post-mortem loss; alveolar resorption not scored.
- Maxillary right 2<sup>nd</sup> molar: in occlusion; wear not scored; moderate alveolar resorption.
- Maxillary right 1<sup>st</sup> molar: in occlusion; wear not scored; moderate alveolar resorption.
- Maxillary right 2<sup>nd</sup> premolar: in occlusion; wear 3; moderate alveolar resorption.
- Maxillary right 1<sup>st</sup> premolar: in occlusion; wear 4; moderate alveolar resorption.
- Maxillary right canine: post-mortem loss; wooden insert.
- Maxillary right 2<sup>nd</sup> incisor: post-mortem loss; wooden insert.
- Maxillary right 1<sup>st</sup> incisor: post-mortem loss; wooden insert.
- Maxillary left 1<sup>st</sup> incisor: post-mortem loss; wooden insert.
- Maxillary left 2<sup>nd</sup> incisor: post-mortem loss; wooden insert.
- Maxillary left canine: in occlusion; wear 4; slight alveolar resorption.
- Maxillary left 1<sup>st</sup> premolar: in occlusion; wear 4; moderate alveolar resorption.
- Maxillary left 2<sup>nd</sup> premolar: in occlusion; wear 3; moderate alveolar resorption.
- Maxillary left 1<sup>st</sup> molar: in occlusion; wear not scored; moderate alveolar resorption.
- Maxillary left 2<sup>nd</sup> molar: in occlusion; wear not scored; slight alveolar resorption.

- Maxillary left 3<sup>rd</sup> molar: in occlusion; wear not scored; slight alveolar resorption.
  - Mandibular left 3<sup>rd</sup> molar: in occlusion; wear not scored; slight alveolar resorption.
  - Mandibular left 2<sup>nd</sup> molar: in occlusion; wear not scored; slight alveolar resorption.
  - Mandibular left 1<sup>st</sup> molar: in occlusion; wear not scored; moderate alveolar resorption.
  - Mandibular left 2<sup>nd</sup> premolar: in occlusion; wear not scored; slight alveolar resorption.
  - Mandibular left 1<sup>st</sup> premolar: in occlusion; wear not scored; moderate alveolar resorption.
  - Mandibular left canine: post-mortem loss.
  - Mandibular left 2<sup>nd</sup> incisor: post-mortem loss.
  - Mandibular left 1<sup>st</sup> incisor: post-mortem loss.
  - Mandibular right 1<sup>st</sup> incisor: post-mortem loss.
  - Mandibular right 2<sup>nd</sup> incisor: post-mortem loss.
  - Mandibular right canine: post-mortem loss.
  - Mandibular right 1<sup>st</sup> premolar: in occlusion; wear 3; moderate alveolar resorption.
  - Mandibular right 2<sup>nd</sup> premolar: in occlusion; wear 3; slight alveolar resorption.
  - Mandibular right 1<sup>st</sup> molar: in occlusion; wear not scored; slight alveolar resorption.
  - Mandibular right 2<sup>nd</sup> molar: in occlusion; wear not scored; slight alveolar resorption.
  - Mandibular right 3<sup>rd</sup> molar: in occlusion; wear not scored; slight alveolar resorption.
- 5 wooden inserts used to replace 6 teeth.

#### Overall summary:

- Male skull from a young adult.
- Numerous non-metric cranial traits are present, including several ossicles on the back of the skull. These variants show familial inheritance and may be used for biological distance analysis.
- Extensive periodontal disease.
- Cranial changes suggest a metabolic or nutritional disorder.

