Human Skeletal Remains from the 1998 Excavations at
Site BSH 2, Brimstone Hill Fortress National Park,
St. Kitts, West Indies

Brimstone Hill Archaeological Project Report No. 13

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Introduction

Excavations sponsored by The Brimstone Hill Fortress National Park Society and the University of Tennessee, Knoxville at the Brimstone Hill Fortress National Park during June and July 1998 uncovered two isolated human skeletal elements from different levels of a single excavation unit at BSH 2. Previous excavations at BSH 2 recovered the cranial remains of Burial 1 from excavation unit 204-205N/100-101W in 1996 (McKeown 1997), and some postcranial remains of Burial 2 from unit 217-218N/98-99W along with two isolated elements from other units (212-213N/103-104W and 210-211N/101-102W) were encountered in 1997 (McKeown 1998). Excavations during the 1998 field season in the interior of Structure 1 recovered a fragmentary right humerus and a single permanent left maxillary canine. The humerus was encountered in level 2 of unit 211-212N/103-104W and the canine was recovered from level 4 of the same unit (Schroedl 1999). This indicates that the remains were separated by as little as 10 cm or by as much as 30 cm of sediment. In either instance, the elements cannot be associated with one another nor with any other isolated elements recovered from this area during previous field seasons. However, due to the presence of various elements from the units in this area, it is probable that at least one, if not more, primary burials have been disturbed by either subsequent burials or construction in this area.

Methods and Materials

The human skeletal material was transported to the University of Tennessee, Knoxville for analysis. Since the humerus is fragmentary, missing both the humeral head at the proximal end and the articular surfaces at the distal end, only maximum and minimum diameters at the estimated midshaft could be observed. The canine was scored for wear, however, there is little
information about canine wear in the anthropological literature, and virtually no association
between canine wear and age estimation was found.

**Description of Human Skeletal Material**

**Disturbed Skeletal Material -** The right humerus recovered from level 2 of unit 211-
212N/103-104W belonged to an adult of uncertain age, sex and ancestry. The fragmentary
humerus is missing both the proximal end or head and the distal articular surfaces (at the elbow).
The two observable measurements based on the estimated location of the midshaft are as follows:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Measurement</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maximum diameter at midshaft</td>
<td>22 mm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minimum diameter at midshaft</td>
<td>19 mm</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Discriminant analysis employing these two measurements was inconclusive with regard to sex and
ancestry. While providing little demographic information, the humerus had some fairly well-
defined muscle markings including the deltoid tuberosity and the lateral supracondylar ridge. The
deltoid tuberosity is the insertion point for the deltoid muscle which originates on the clavicle and
the acromion of the scapula. The lateral supracondylar ridge is the origin of the extensor carpi
radii/is/humus muscle which is critical for extending the wrist and grasping with the hand. These
muscle markings indicates that the individual used the right shoulder, wrist and hand for relatively
strenuous activities.

The permanent left maxillary canine recovered from level 4 of unit 211-212N/103-104W is
from an adult of unknown age, sex or ancestry. The root is completely formed and the tip of the
canine is blunted by wear both indicating that the tooth came from an adult. Based on the wear,
the canine was scored as a 2 on both Smith's (1984) and Molnar's (1971) scales. However, these
scoring systems are not designed for age estimation nor do they focus on interpreting canine wear patterns. A slight calculus buildup was observed at the cervical margin.

Summary and Conclusions

The human skeletal remains recovered from BSH 2 probably represent the disturbed remains of at least one burial. Due to their fragmentary nature and lack of associated material, little demographic information could be ascertained.

Acknowledgment

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References Cited


