



6.13 Weapons and physiology

When we excavated the skeleton, we had seen two injuries potentially on the head. We didn't know a lot about the characteristics of those injuries. We wanted to learn more about them. But we also had a very good look at the skeleton to identify any further injuries on it.

And when we did that, it became clear that the skeleton had suffered from quite a number of traumas in the period around death, so there was no healing on any of these. We found, firstly, a series of small very shallow wounds on the skull, which appeared to be consistent with a sharp blade just touching the skull as it came through, so perhaps, a blow that had not quite hit home. And those had taken off small parts of the skull bone.

We also had a closer look at the two injuries that we had identified in the ground. The one to the top of the head had an appearance that was perhaps consistent with something along the lines of a dagger or perhaps the end of a sword pommel being hit into the head with some force. None of these injuries that I've discussed so far would have been fatal.

The slice on the back of the head is probably a different matter. It's a large injury. It's clearly been inflicted with a sharp blade. It's taken off a large area of the skull. And this is probably something that would have caused death. It might or not have been absolutely instant, but it would have caused him to die.

We noticed a further two injuries on the skull itself. One of those was in the area of the right cheek, where there was a small rectangular perforation in the bone. And in a similar vein, there is a cut mark on the mandible, a jaw bone, which again doesn't seem to have had a huge amount of force behind it. So there's a question about whether this was a blow that didn't really hit home or, again, whether this was one that could have happened immediately after death.

We found a further two injuries on the skeleton that were not on the skull. The first of those was on one of the right ribs and, again, it was a cut mark. And then there was an injury on the pelvis, that's the area of the hip bones.

And what's actually happened there is that a sharp blade has come through the pelvis from the back to the front. So again, it's a very unpleasant injury. And it's the kind of injury that you might associate with an attempt to humiliate somebody.