

ANTHROPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE HUMAN OSTEOLOGICAL REMAINS DISCOVERED IN THE TUMULAR CEMETERY FROM CERNAVODĂ – A2 HIGHWAY (TUMULI NOS. 7, 7A, 7B)

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Keywords: tumular necropolis, Cernavodă, Early Bronze Age, paleodemography, paleopathology.

Abstract: The paper proposes an anthropological analysis of the skeletons dug out from three tumuli discovered on the Cernavodă-Medgidia segment of highway A2 (district of Constanța), investigated archaeological in the year 2011 (tumuli 7, 7A and 7B). The tumular necropolis was dated on the basis of the archaeological inventory in the Early Bronze Age. Archaeological diggings produced 10 human skeletons, most of them preserved quite well, thus permitting a thorough anthropological analysis. The osteological material was analysed anthropometrically, demographically and paleopathologically. Special attention was paid to the bones anomalies and pathologies capable of providing clues on the daily activities as well as on the health condition of the subjects, all these aspects contributing to establish the lifestyle of the community under investigation.

Cuvinte cheie: necropola tumulară, Cernavodă, epoca bronzului timpuriu, analiza demografică și paleopatologică.

Rezumat: Lucrarea prezintă analiza antropologică a scheletelor deshumate din trei tumuli descoperiți pe tronsonul Cernavodă-Medgidia (jud. Constanța) al autostrăzii A2 și cercetați arheologic în anul 2011 (tumulii 7, 7A și 7B). Necropola tumulară a fost datată pe baza inventarului arheologic în epoca bronzului timpuriu. Săpăturile arheologice au scos la lumină 10 schelete umane, majoritatea aflate într-o stare de conservare satisfăcătoare, astfel încât s-au prestat unei analize antropologice amănunțite. Materialul osteologic a fost studiat din punct de vedere antropometric, demografic și paleopatologic. O atenție deosebită a fost acordată anomaliilor și patologiilor osoase care pot oferi indicii asupra activităților cotidiene și asupra stării de sănătate, toate aceste aspecte ajutându-ne la conturarea stilului de viață al comunității studiate.

Introduction

The tumular necropolis is situated in the South-East part of Romania, more precisely South Dobrudja – one of the richest provinces in archaeological and historical vestiges. Geographically, the territory belongs to the Plateau of South Dobrudja, characterized by a steppe and forest steppe bioclimate. Extended archaeological investigations have been initiated in 2010, concurrently with the initiation of work at the A2 Highway (Constanța-Cernavodă), when several funeral complexes (tumuli) have been discovered. Administratively, the zone under investigation belongs to the district of Constanța, village Peștera, not far from the town of Medgidia. Nowadays, the estimated¹ number of tumular structures of various sizes is around 20. The first tumulus (no. 3), analysed in the year 2010, provided especially interesting results, being rich in archaeological remains; the results obtained

by specialists have been published² in 2011 in an interdisciplinary volume.

The osteological material analyzed in the present study comes from tumuli nos. 7, 7A and 7B. These three funeral complexes have been investigated in the autumn of 2010 by archaeologists Alexandru Morintz, Andrei Măgureanu and Cristian Ștefan, under the coordination of Christian Schuster from the “Vasile Pârvan” Institute of Archaeology of București³. The exhumed skeletons belong to persons buried with an E-V or S-N orientation, flexed on either left or right side, or stretched on their back. Based on the inventory discovered in the three tumuli, the authors of the excavations assert⁴ that the chronological period to which the tumular necropolis might belong is Early Bronze Age.

² *Ibidem*.

³ The archaeologists who excavated the human skeletons entrusted us with the osteological material and offered complete information on the archaeological context. The authors are grateful for their most kind support and collaboration.

⁴ Morintz *et al.* 2012.

¹ Schuster *et al.* 2011.