

An Anthropological Study of the Skeleton from “A Grave with a Collective Finding of Ornaments in a Pot”, Veliki Preslav, Site “Administrative Building”

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We carried out an anthropological research of the skeleton from “A grave with a collective finding of ornaments in a pot”, site “Administrative Building”, Veliki Preslav. After the pelvis characterization and the skull features, the sex was determined as male. According to the suture ossification, the age of the buried individual can be assigned to the beginning of “maturus” (about 40 years of age). In accordance with the metric and scopic characterizations of the skull, the buried individual belongs to the Europeoid anthropological type.

Key words: anthropology, skull, Middle Ages.

On December 17th 2004 in the Laboratory of Plastic Anthropological Reconstruction at the Institute of Experimental Morphology and Anthropology the bones from a grave with a collective findings of ornaments in a pot, Veliki Preslav. site “Administrative Building” were brought to be investigated. According to data of the archaeologists Georgi Maistorski and Tonka Mihailova the grave is single, i.e. it is not in the framework of a necropolis. Beside the skull to the right a pot is placed in which a number of woman’s adornment have been found. This fact has misled the archaeologists to determine the sex of the buried individual as female. The skeleton is orientated to the west with the cranium, and lower limbs to the east. The lower legs and the feet are cut off in the excavation works. The legs a parallel. The body is stretched downwards from the neck. The cervical vertebrae are twisted in a curve to the left. The skull is facing north, i.e. to the left. Underneath and around the skeleton animal bones, an animal tooth and pieces of charcoal are found. The archaeologists date the finding back to 13th-14th century. In the anthropological study carried out mainly by the classical method of R. M a r t i n and K. S a l l e r (1957) [1] the following was established:

Cranial fragments and bones from the post-cranial skeleton of the individual are discovered.

The sex determined after the pelvic profile is male.

The long bones of the limbs are massive, of a well-pronounced relief, i.e. in his life the person has displayed a well-developed musculature. The lengths of the following bones were measured with the aim of calculating the height:

- right femur — 46.3 cm;
- left femur — 46.4 cm;
- right humerus — 32.2 cm;
- left humerus — 31.6 cm;
- right radius — 24.8 cm;
- left radius — 24.6 cm.

The height of the living individual was calculated to have been 175 cm using the Trotter-Gleser formula and after Pearson-Lee it amounted to 166 cm [4].

A thickening of the edges of the bodies of the cervical and thoracic vertebrae together with an emergence of exostoses of the lumbar ones is observed [5].

The handle of the sternum is separated.

After a thorough cleansing and washing of the cranial fragments the skull was restored almost reaching the degree of “cranium” with the skull basis, the zygomatic arches and the right joint protrusion of the mandible are missing. In its characteristics the skull confirms the belonging of the individual to the male sex. According to the degree of ossification of the skull sutures the age was established to have been in the age group of matures (about 40 years).

Of the taken skull measures [2] the length of the mandible proves to be very big; also big are the width of occipital bone, the full facial and the upper face height, the orbital height, nasal height, the length and width of the alveolar arch, the angular width of the mandible; of medium size are the skull length and width, the circumference of the skull taken by glabella, the orbital width, the palatal length, the smallest width of the ramus of the mandible; small are the smallest width of the forehead, the nasal width, the palatal width, the frontal width of the mandible, the height of the ramus of the mandible and the mandibular angle.

According to the calculated indexes the skull is brachycranic, stenometopic, hypsi-conchic, leptorrhinc, mesocranic and mesostaphylinic (Table 1).

The vertical skull norm is ovoid. The occipital norm is roof-like and the transition of the bones of the skull vault in profile is smooth. The occipital bone is moderately convex with a strong relief. The mastoid processes are massive, of a very strong relief, pointed forward and inward. The frontal bone is comparatively poorly tilted, low and narrow. The glabella is poorly expressed (degree 2 of the 6-degree scale of P. Broca) and supraorbital arches are of degree 1 after the 4-degree scale of P. Broca [4]. The frontal elevations are very poorly expressed.

The shape of the face is a pentagonal one. The orbits are square-shaped, with smooth angles. The nasal bones are narrow, symmetrical and concave. The shape of the nasal orifice is irregularly heart-like. Its lower end is anthropina. The zygomatic bones are slightly jutting out and moderately to the sides. The canine pit is shallow and of a good relief. The mandible is big, moderately massive, of a very strong relief and of a low bit wide ramus. The chin is triangular on a broad basis and moderately protruding. The bite is a psalydonic one (Figs. 1, 2). The tooth formula is:

$$\frac{87}{8} \quad \frac{54321}{43} \quad | \quad \frac{12345678}{2345 \quad 78}$$

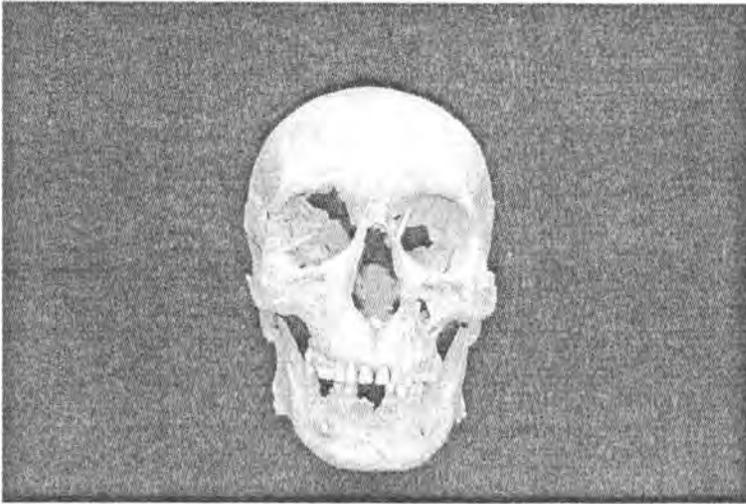


Fig.1. A skull from "A grave with a collective finding of ornaments in a pot", Veliki Preslav, site "Administrative building", 13th — 14th century, male, maturus (about 40 years of age). Norma frontalis



Fig. 2. A skull from "A grave with a collective finding of ornaments in a pot", Veliki Preslav, site "Administrative building", 13th — 14th century, male, maturus (about 40 years of age). Norma lateralis sinistra

Table 1. Metric characterization of the skull from "A grave with a collective finding of ornaments in a pot", Veliki Preslav, site "Administrative Building". Male, Maturus (~40)

No	No after Martin	Dimensions	Values	Category
1	1	Skull length	179	average
3	8	Skull width	144	average
4	9	Smallest width of forehead	93	small
5	12	Occiput width	115	large
8	23	Skull circumference through glabella	522	average
12	47	Full facial height	124	large
13	48	Upper facial height	75	large
14	50	Maxillofrontal width	20	
15	51	Orbital width	42	average
16	52	Orbital height	37	large
17	54	Nasal width	24	small
18	55	Nasal height	56	large
22	60	Alveolar arch length	58	large
23	61	Alveolar arch width	65	large
24	62	Palate length	45	average
25	63	Palate width	37	small
26	66	Mandible angle width	105	large
27	67	Mandible front width	44	small
28	68	Mandible length - projectional	90	very large
30	70	Mandible branch height	56	small
31	71a	Mandible branch smallest width	34	average
36	79	Mandibular angle	111°	small
		Indices		
42	1(8:1)	Skull width-length	80.45	brachyranic
47	13(9:8)	Transverse frontal-sincipital	64.58	stenometopic
51	42(52:51)	Orbital	88.09	hypsiconchic
52	48(54:55)	Nasal	42.86	leptorrhinic
53	54(61:60)	Alveolar	112.07	mesouranic
54	58(63:62)	Palatal	82.22	mesostaphylinic

The first and second lower molars to the right together with the first lower molar and the first upper right molar have been lost in life-time. The crown of the second lower right premolar is completely destroyed from the tooth-decay process in life to the degree of radix. The rest of the missing teeth have fallen out post mortem.

The teeth attrition (abrasio) is strong (degree 3 after A. Zubov) [3]. Periodontal alterations are found on the alveolar projection [5].

Based on a total number of skeletal features it can be asserted with certainty that these skeletal remains belong to a male of the age of "maturus" (about 40 years). The anthropological type is Europeoid. No traits typical of the Mongoloid race have been recorded.

The data from the anthropological study of the bone remains categorically prove the male sex of the buried person. The finds of woman's decoration placed in the pot cannot be interpreted with relation to the sex.

References

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