

RESULTS OF PALAEOPATHOLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF SKELETAL MATERIAL OF CATHOLIC CHURCH IN BODROGKERESZTÚR, HUNGARY

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Background: In the village of Bodrogkeresztúr, the condition of the medieval Roman Catholic church had deteriorated to such an extent that its restoration as a monument became inevitable. The restoration was preceded by an archaeological excavation in several stages between 2017 and 2021. Human skeletal remains were also excavated from both the interior of the church and the cemetery surrounding the church.

Objective: Our goal was a systematic bioarchaeological analysis of skeletal assemblages of Roman Catholic Church in Bodrogkeresztúr, Hungary including basic demographic reconstruction and assessment of palaeopathological conditions and markers of physiological stress.

Subjects and methods: Anthropological examinations were carried out at University of Nyiregyhaza, Hungary. Skeletal remains of 341 individuals were identified. Most of the skeletons can be dated to the 15th-17th centuries. Age at death, sex estimation and assessment of the palaeopathological lesions were carried out following the Historical Anthropological Protocol generally used in Hungary detailed in the oral presentation.

Results: 245 (71.85%) adult and 96 (28.15%) juvenile individuals were identified of the total 341. In the adult group 65 males, 49 females were identified and there were 131 undetermined individuals. 60% of the subadult individuals died before 6 years of age. Palaeopathology: 166 observed lesions altogether. Lesions indicative of physical stress and inflammation were the most common. More traumatic cases of fractures on ribs, humeri and skulls were observed.

Conclusions: The graveyard and the church were probably used by one community over centuries. Lesions caused by physical stress, inflammation and oral cavity lesions were the most frequent alterations in this community. Genu hypervascularisation was the second most frequent lesion type. It might be in connection with some physical activity. More cases of traumatic lesions suggest that local conflicts and other historical events might resulted in violence over the centuries.

Keywords: Catholic church in Bodrogkeresztúr; Palaeopathology; Anthropological examination.