

ELONGATED STYLOID PROCESSES IN INDIVIDUALS FROM EARLY MEDIEVAL CEMETERIES IN GIECZ (GREATER POLAND VOIVODESHIP, POLAND)

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Background: The styloid process (processus styloideus) is a part of the temporal bone located on its inferior surface. Its normal physiological length ranges from 20 to 30 mm. Elongation of the styloid process is a pathological condition rarely observed in archaeological material.

Objective: The aim of this study is to present cases of elongated styloid processes identified in individuals from two early medieval cemeteries in Giecz.

Materials and methods: The remains of four individuals (two males aged 40–50 and 45–55 years, and two females aged 35–45 years and approximately 40 years) were selected from the analyzed skeletal material with preserved styloid processes, focusing on cases with the greatest elongation. Styloid process length was measured using a calliper and classified according to Langlais' classification.

Results: Elongated styloid processes (50–66 mm) were identified in all individuals. In two cases, type I (elongation exceeding 30 mm) was diagnosed, while in the remaining two cases type II was observed, characterized by segmentation of the styloid process with the presence of a pseudoarticulation.

Conclusions: The obtained results may suggest the presence of Eagle syndrome in the analysed individuals. The aetiology of this condition remains unclear; however, a possible genetic background has been proposed. Planned genetic analyses may help verify the hypothesis of heritability of this trait and provide directions for further research.

Keywords: Styloid process elongation; Eagle syndrome; Paleopathology; Central Europe.

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