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Results of the analysis of the Early Iron Age human remains unearthed at Alsónyék, Hungary

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Material and Method

The material of our examination comprise the anthropological remains of the Early Iron Age individuals unearthed at the site Alsónyék-Elkerülő 2. After the physical anthropological investigations the human remains will be housed in the Wosinsky Mór Museum. The bad state of preservation and the small amount of the material prohibited us from drawing firm conclusions regarding the overall population using the cemetery, thus, the results were evaluated individually.

The determination of the morphological sex was carried out according to the method put forward by K. Éry, A. Kralovánszky, and J. Nemeskéri.[1] The estimation of the age-at-death was based on the development of teeth,[2] the degree of the ectocranial obliteration,[3] and the age-related morphological alterations of the symphyseal face.[4] The cranium and the postcranial bones were measured according to R. Martin and K. Saller.[5] The estimation of stature was performed according to T. Sjøvold's method.[6] In the case of the examination of the pathological deformations we used the works of D. Ortner,[7] A. Aufderheide and C. Rodríguez-Martin.[8]

Results and evaluation

We were able to identify 12 individuals in the material. Six among them must have been adults based on the age-at-death estimations, one individual was identified as an adolescent (juvenis) and one as an older child (infans II). The majority of the subadults were under the age of 3.

1 Éry et al. 1963.
2 Schour – Massler 1941.
3 Meindl – Lovejoy 1985.
4 Brooks – Suchey 1990.
5 Martin – Saller 1957.
6 Sjøvold 1990.
7 Ortner 2003.
8 Aufderheide – Rodríguez-Martin 1998.

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Due to the badly preserved remains and the relatively large number of children determining the sex with high confidence was possible only in a few cases. The basic data of the individuals are included in the descriptions below and in *Tab. 1.*

Tab. 1. Basic data of the anthropological material recovered from the site Alsónyék-Elkerülő 2.

Grave no.	*Feature no.*	*Age*	*Age group*	*Sex*
1	183	35–45	Adultus/Maturus	female
2	203	35–50	Adultus/Maturus	?
3	216	2.5–3	Infans I	?
4	225	35–60	Adultus/Maturus	male
6	231	25–35	Adultus/Maturus	male?
8	263	50–x	Maturus/Senium	?
9	268	1–2	Infans I	?
10	281	0.5–1.5	Neonatus-Infans I.	?
11	292	35–50	Adultus/Maturus	?
12	333	0.5–1	Neonatus	?
13	421	11–12	Infans II	?
15	465	15–18	Juvenis	?

Grave 1 (Feature no. 183)

Sex and age: Adult/mature female aged between 35 and 45 years.

Description: The postcranial skeleton and the jaw are intact, the skull is fragmentary.

Metric traits: Based on the maximal length of the femur the individual's estimated height is approximately 156.7 cm *(Tab. 2).* According to the cranial indexes the skull is medium long (mesocran), medium high (orthocran) compared to its length, and it is low (tapeinocran) relative to its width. The forehead is very wide (hypereurymetop) *(Tab 3).*

Pathological alterations: In both orbits slight healed porotic hyperostosis can be observed. Degenerative deformations (spondylosis deformans) occur to modest extent on all regions of the vertebral column. More severe deformations can only be seen on the cervical spine, where the articular facets showed signs of eburnation. Similarly, the marginal osteophytes seen on the rim of the hip joint and on the acromioclavicular articular facet can also be regarded as alterations related to age or physical activity. The insertions and origins of the muscles of the postcranial skeleton, chiefly those of the upper arms and the lower limbs, are pronounced.

Tab. 2. M1 measures of the long bones of the individual unearthed in Grave 1 (feature no. 183).

Clavicula		*Humerus*		*Ulna*		*Radius*		*Femur*		*Tibia*		*Calcaneus*	
left	right	left	right	left	right	left	right	left	right	left	right	left	right
145	145	287	292	241	247	220	–	409	409	338	341	74	74

Tab. 3. Cranial metrics of the individual unearthed in Grave 1 (feature no. 183).

M1	*M5*	*M8*	*M9*	*M10*	*M11*	*M12*	*M17*	*M20*	*M65*	*M66*	*M70*	*M71*
174	98	138	119	95	116	106	127	104	119	90	51	27

Grave 2 (Feature no. 203)

Sex and age: Adult/mature individual of indeterminable sex, aged between 35 and 50 years.

Description: The postcranial skeleton, the skull and the jaw are all fragmentary and incomplete.

Pathological alterations: Around the root of the left maxillary first molar (LM^1) a forming cysta/abscessus penetrated into the facial cavity.

Grave 3 (Feature no. 216)

Sex and age: 2.5–3-year-old child of Infans I age group.

Description: The postcranial skeleton, the skull and the jaw are all fragmentary and incomplete.

Grave 4 (Feature no. 225)

Sex and age: Adult/mature male, aged between 35 and 60 years.

Description: The postcranial skeleton is fragmentary and incomplete, the skull and the jaw are both missing.

Grave 6 (Feature no. 231)

Sex and age: Adult male (?), aged between 25 and 35 years.

Description: The postcranial skeleton and the skull are fragmentary and incomplete, the jaw is missing.

Metric traits: Based on the maximal length of the femur (433 mm) the individual's height can be approximated as 163.2 cm.

Grave 8 (Feature no. 263)

Sex and age: Mature/elderly individual of 50 plus years, indeterminable sex.

Description: The postcranial skeleton, the skull and the jaw are all fragmentary and incomplete.

Grave 9 (Feature no. 268)

Sex and age: 1-or-2-year-old child of age group Infans I.

Description: The postcranial skeleton, the skull and the jaw are all fragmentary and incomplete.

Pathological alterations: On large parts of the inner surface of the cranium

Grave 10 (Feature no. 281)

Sex and age: Mature/elderly individual of between 35 and 50 years, indeterminable sex.

Description: The postcranial skeleton is fragmentary and incomplete, the cranium and the jaw are missing

Grave 12 (Feature no. 333)

Sex and age: A neonate child between 0.5 and 1 years of age.

Description: The postcranial skeleton, the skull are all fragmentary and incomplete, the jaw is missing.

Grave 13 (Feature no. 421)

Sex and age: 11-or-12-year-old child of age group Infans II.

Description: The postcranial skeleton fragmentary and incomplete, the skull and jaw are missing.

Grave 15 (Feature no. 465)

Sex and age: Adolescent (juvenile) individual of between 15 and 18 years of age.

Description: The postcranial skeleton, the cranium and the jaw are all fragmentary and incomplete.

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