Bioarchaeology in Forensic Laboratory: The Skeleton of a Medieval Man with Arrowheads (Lobor, Croatia)

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Abstract

During the summer archaeological excavation in 2002, on the archaeological site Our Lady of the Mountain Church in Lobor, the grave number 149 was revealed, with skeletal remains of a young male person. It was dated to the first half of the 10th century. The very position of the grave in the first raw beside a Pre-Romanesque church, accentuate the status of this person in the society. According to the grave pit contour it is possible to conclude that the body was placed inside a coffin and buried. It was a primary burial with the position of the grave West-East (the head toward West). During the excavation of the skeleton, it was noticed that the tip of a broad arrowhead penetrated shallow into the body of the right scapular bone. Other, completely preserved arrowhead was placed beneath the fragments of the same bone. The arrowheads were not grave objects or gifts, but a part of a weapon thrust into the region of the right upper part of the body (around the right arm). An anthropological analysis was performed: determination of sex and age at death, of body height, of musculo-skeletal stress markers, and description of trauma and other pathological conditions. With the application of a scanning electron microscopy (SEM) and a X-ray fluorescence spectroscopy (µXRF) an elemental chemical analysis, together with a morphological 2D and 3D characterization of the arrowhead were obtained.