

PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE HUMAN SKELETAL REMAINS FROM ÖKÜZINI (ANTALYA)

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INTRODUCTION

Öküzini Cave is located approximately 30 km north of Antalya and 1.5 km north of Karain Cave. First excavated by Professor İ. Kılıç Kökten in 1956, this cave yielded in the same year a female skeleton found 25-30 cm below the Chalcolithic level, which was examined by M.S. Şenyürek (1958).

Systematic excavations have continued at Öküzini Cave under the scientific direction of Professor Işın Yalçınkaya from Ankara University. Skeletal remains belonging to two individuals were brought recently to our laboratory for analysis; due to shortage of time, detailed examinations on the remains could not be completed before this preliminary report was prepared; such analysis is still in progress.

As Yalçınkaya has expressed, the burials were damaged by limestone blocks which fell from the walls or the ceiling of the cave. Öküzini is considered, according to Yalçınkaya, the first example of the intracaveum burial in Anatolia. She has also stated that two other human skeletons have been discovered in the cave on the same level (see Kartal and Erek, this volume, and in press), but have not yet not removed; they will be extracted during the 1998 field season.

Preliminary information about the aforementioned remains is as follows.

SKELETON NO. 1

Skeleton no. 1 was exhumed in 1994. It was laid on its left in the hocker position. The head was laid in the direction of the opening of the cave. Burial gifts were found near the skeleton. The skull has been well preserved except for the basilar part. The mandible is almost complete. The skull and the long bones were largely repaired after cleaning. Two small openings were observed on the skull which may have been caused during the excavations.

Sex: The skeleton may be said to be a male, due to anatomical details of the skull, long bones and the pelvic structure.

Age: Taking into account the morphological metamorphose of the sternal extremity of ribs and pubic symphyseal face, we may deduce that age at death is 35-40 years.

Stature: The stature estimated according to the Pearson formula of femur+tibia is 166.39 cm, whereas the Trotter-Gleser formula from the lengths of femur+tibia gives an estimate of 170.92 cm.

No pathological lesion has been observed on the skeleton, but marginal osteophytes had formed on the superior and inferior articular facets of some of the vertebral bodies.

Ten teeth are in the alveoles of the lower and upper jaws, and in the lower jaw, I_1 and I_2 on the right and I_1 , I_2 and C_1 on the left were preserved. In the upper jaw, P^1 , P^2 and M^1 and M^2 on the left were preserved. The remaining 18 teeth were lost prior to death. Whether the third molars are congenitally missing will be decided after X-rays. The fact that 18 teeth have been lost antemortem is quite striking; the Öküzini specimen must have masticated with his gingiva since the height of the lower jaw has been considerably diminished.

Caries has been observed on the crown of one lower tooth. The wear score, referring to Murphy's table, is not marked when the age of the individual is taken into account.

SKELETON NO. 2

This specimen was unearthed during the 1996 excavation season, approximately on the same level as the Skeleton no.1. It had been surrounded by limestone blocks and was buried in the hocker position. The head was directed towards the wall of the cave. The blocks fallen from the ceiling have caused damage, to some extent, to the skeletal remains, but the skull was largely repaired. Concretions which formed on the bones have been cleaned with the help of acetic acid diluted 50% by water.

Sex: The morphological features of the skull as well as long bones and pelvic morphology give the impression of a female.

Age: The pubic symphyseal facet which has been well preserved and the sternal extremity of ribs make it possible to deduce the age at death as 30-35 years.

There is a slight porotic hyperostosis on the parietal and occipital bones.

Teeth are in their sockets; 5 (I_1 on the left and I_2 , C_1 , P_1 , P_2 on the right) in the mandible and 8 (I^1 , P^2 , M^1 , M^2 , M^3 on the left, I^2 , M^2 and M^3 on the right) in the maxilla. M_1 , M_2 and M_3 on the left in the mandible and P^1 on the maxilla were lost prior to death. No caries have been observed on the teeth. The wear is not advanced.

Stature: The stature estimated from the lengths of the femur, tibia, humerus and radius by the Pearson's formula gives a value of 149.97 cm; whereas the one estimated from the lengths of femur, tibia and humerus by means of the Trotter-Gleser formula is 152.83 cm. Senyürek, who examined the first female skeleton found in 1956, used the Pearson formula and obtained a value of 152.60 cm.

Apart from the Öküzini skeletons no. 1 and no. 2 about which brief information has been provided above, few bone remains which are not associated to our specimens have been conveyed to us by Prof. İşin Yalçınkaya.

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