

The Human Remains of the Giants Tomb Located in Pedrera, Monastir

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Introduction

The excavation of the Giants' Tombs located in Pedrera, Monastir, started 30.11.09 and finished on 17.06.10. From the start of the excavations it was immediately noticed that its purpose was for a collective ritual burial for a large number of individuals. In this type of burial the remains are dislocated and fragmented with a reduced number of bones.

The tomb was surveyed in a grid, and the excavations proceeded by layers from the entrance of the room until the apse in which were found the most deeply buried bones. With regard to the internal structure an

involuntary anthropic reworking can be observed, given the haphazard positioning of bones and parts of the tomb which have subsided, under which can be found further bone examples. After, the human remains were transferred to Monastir in order to be studied. Restoration and cleaning processes have been carried out before the remains were analysed. The remains were in a bad state of conservation above all those found nearest the surface.

Materials and Methods

The skeletal remains are stored in 53 numbered cases, and before being analysed were cleaned and sealed, taking into consideration particularly useful elements which provide important data. The cleaning process was undertaken



Fig. 1. Situation excavation in November.



Fig. 2. Final excavation situation.

with great care to avoid altering the structure and shape of the bones, whereas other more fragile elements were simply brushed or washed with cold water. After the cleaning process the reconstruction of certain elements that had broken after death was necessary. Morphological examinations of single bone elements have provided various data on the minimum number of individuals present, as well as age, corresponding pathologies and estimated statures of certain individuals.

Results

The remains suggest a minimum of 136 individuals, all part of a collective burial. Collectively they show a variety of ages, from infants to adults. Reoccurring pathologies include those of a dental nature, revealed from a sample of 3162 isolated teeth. No other types of pathologies or illnesses were revealed. Certain indicators of the presence of stress were revealed, probably due to heavy lifting and transporting of materials. These characteristics were found mainly in the upper and lower limbs of a number of adults,

which indicate that they undertook lifting and lowering of heavy weights.

Discussion

The exact period of the death and laying of the remains has not yet been analysed. Once this has been verified it will be possible to correlate the above characteristics with the period of death.

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