

• Review •



Paleodontology in Bosnia and Herzegovina – History and Perspectives

• Amila Zukanović •

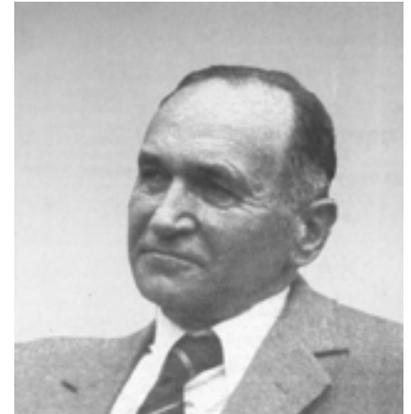
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Paleodontology in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BH) does not have a long tradition. As in many other countries, researches on earlier human population's dental samples have been done within broader archeological or paleontological studies. Ćiro Truhelka, Radimsky Vaclav, Alojz Benac, Đuro Basler are some of the archeologists who described findings on human remains during their exploration of archeological sites in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well. Furthermore, V. Radimsky wrote instructions for archeological excavation in the caves, and protection and conservation procedures of founded material, including human remains in his book "Prehistorička nalazišta" ("Prehistorical Finds"), published in 1891 in Sarajevo, (1).

Živko Mikić, an archeologist and physical anthropologist, contributed significantly to research in the field of bioarcheology. He investigated and described a large number of anthropological remains from many archeological sites in the former Yugoslavia, mostly from prehistoric periods. In his work, Mikić also studied dental samples from those sites, usually describing dental pathology.



Ćiro Truhelka



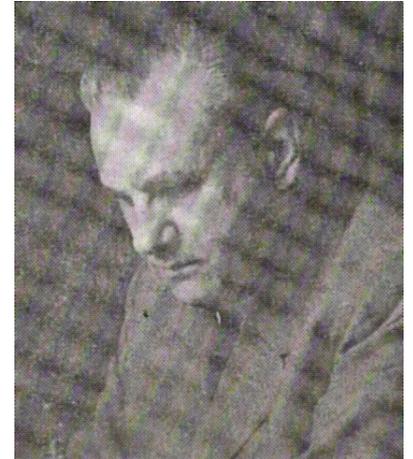
Alojz Benac

Two books should be mentioned in his bibliography: „Atlas of osteopathologic changes of historical Yugoslav populations“ written by Antun Lovrinčević and Živko Mikić (2) and „Stature and problems of physical anthropology in Yugoslavia – prehistorical periods“ written by Mikić (3). In the first book, the authors presented characteristic pathological changes on skeletal bones chosen from almost 10 thousand examined skeletons from earlier human populations originating from different sites in former Yugoslavia. All of the material is described in detail and followed with rich photographic and radiographic documentation. The first chapter of the book contains descriptions of the pathologic changes in the osteologic remains of the skull, where the authors gave examples of various anomalies in tooth growth, dental caries, cysts, traumatic changes and many others.

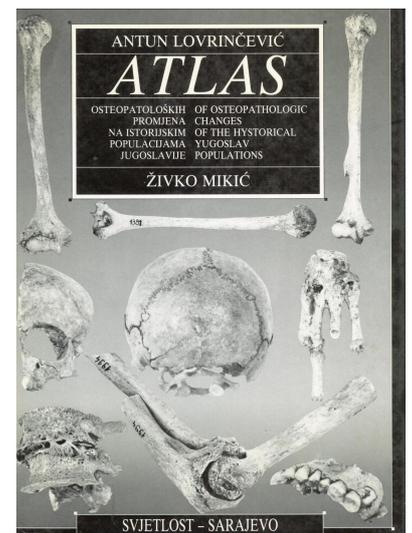
In 1991, Dinka Mucić published a paper with the results of dental caries analysis for permanent teeth on skeletal material from the Roman Age to New Age from different parts of former Yugoslavia, including Middle age samples from Bosnian archeological sites (4).

Research into the literature didn't provide us with any other data about paleodontological studies in Bosnia and Herzegovina (If some of you know of some other work in the field of paleodontology in Bosnia, please let us know.)

Actually, the word „paleostomatology“ was first used in Bosnia in 2004, at the annual Bosnian speleological meeting, where one of the speleologists (a dentist) presented the preliminary results of paleodontological analysis from the Iron age cave crypt in South Western Bosnia (5). From that moment onward, there has been renewed interest in paleodontology. Development of paleodontology in BH has been encouraged with establishment of the IAPO, which provides researches with the possibility of sharin experiences, information and new ideas. Work in the field of paleodontology in BH just began – apart from numerous museum collections of skeletal and dental findings that await proper investigation, new human remains are discovered everyday during the course of archeological investigations. Not only dentists are involved in research of dental samples of earlier human populations – molecular biologists have also become interested in this topic, which has recently resulted in cooperative, multidisciplinary research on certain prehistoric dental samples.



Đuro Basler



Atlas of osteopathologic changes of historical Yugoslav populations



Child's mandible, Iron age, Kosturnica cave, Gornji Vakuf, Bosnia and Herzegovina



Human remains in the Iron age cave crypt, Kosturnica cave



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From this short introduction into paleodontology in Bosnia, it can be concluded that there are a lot of open possibilities for research and projects in this field. We hope to publish the results of our cooperative research in future issues of IAPO Bulletins. Please, feel free to contact me at: migulin@lsinter.net ■

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