

Book review – Photographic Atlas of Bioarchaeology from the Osteological Collection of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts

Title:

Photographic Atlas of Bioarchaeology from the Osteological Collection of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts

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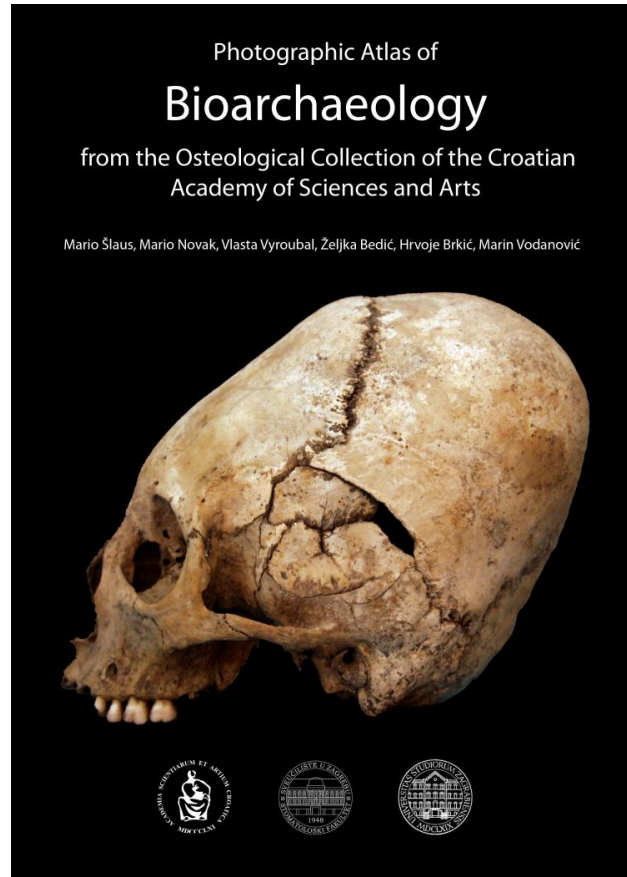
163

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The book *Photographic Atlas of Bioarchaeology from the Osteological Collection of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts* written by a group of authors (Mario Šlaus, Mario Novak, Vlasta Vyroubal, Željka Bedić, Hrvoje Brkić, and Marin Vodanović) presents an overview of pathological conditions recorded in skeletal and dental material recovered from various Croatian archaeological sites. The book has 161 pages divided into 14 chapters. The book is illustrated with 109 high resolution photographs. Each chapter deals with a different aspect of bioarchaeological research including archaeological excavations, taphonomy, pathological changes in the skeleton, etc.

Archaeological research and excavation, as well as preparations needed for the anthropological analysis are presented in the first two chapters. Particularly interesting is the presentation of a female individual from the cemetery of St. Lawrence in Šibenik buried with a fetus in her pelvic girdle suggesting that both mother and child died during childbirth. This situation is rarely recorded "in situ", and for that reason is of special interest to both archaeologists and anthropologists.

The third chapter entitled Taphonomy and preservation gives an insight into different post-mortem changes in the skeleton. In this chapter different stages of preservation, ranging from well preserved auditory ossicles to the nearly unidentifiable incinerated skeletal material are illustrated with 8 photographs. This chapter also illustrates the range of staining on bones and teeth that is caused by contact with metal - usually jewellery, armour, or coins.

The fourth chapter illustrates what types of material (organic or inorganic) were found commingled with the remains during the time that the bones were being prepared for analysis in the Osteological laboratory of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts. Most often these objects were different types of personal jewellery, parts of clothing, or objects of everyday use.

The fifth chapter is dedicated to changes and pathological conditions that affect the teeth; the 7 photographs illustrate dental caries, abrasion, alveolar abscess, antemortem tooth fracture as well as complete antemortem tooth loss.

The following chapter Subadult stress presents examples of cribra orbitalia and linear enamel hypoplasia.

Examples of infectious diseases that can be identified in the skeleton are shown in following 10 photographs. Pathological conditions presented in this chapter include non-specific periostitis, osteomyelitis, tuberculosis, and leprosy. Two images in this chapter are of particular interest to students of dental medicine; the photographs show the resorption of the upper jaw caused by leprosy – facies leprosa.

The following two chapters deal with the changes in the skeleton caused by physical stress and habitual activities, and by osteoarthritis.

In the following three chapters the authors illustrate different types of trauma, highlighting among other things the main differences between antemortem, perimortem and postmortem traumas.

The twelfth chapter entitled Miscellaneous brings 5 photographs and 3 x-ray images that show cases of osteochondritis dissecans, spina bifida occulta, ossified pleura, ankylosing spondylitis, and a benign bone tumor.

Chapters 13 and 14 are the Bibliography and Index.

This photographic atlas will give students of anthropology and dental medicine an insight into basic bioarchaeological analyses and enable them to identify and recognize specific features such as cribra orbitalia, caries, linear enamel hypoplasia etc. Free access to this Atlas is available at: http://issuu.com/mslaus/docs/131128_atlas_of_bioarchaeology or at the ResearchGate page of Mario Slaus.