PSL UNIVERSITY, ÉCOLE PRATIQUE DES HAUTES ÉTUDES
EPHE Doctoral School
"History, Texts and Documents"
Prepared at the UMR 5199 PACEA, CNRS/University of Bordeaux

UNIVERSITY OF SZEGED
Faculty of Science and Informatics
Doctoral School of Biology
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International Cotutelle Doctorate

Doctoral Dissertation Defense

Bioarchaeological Analysis of the Mounted Archers from the Hungarian Conquest Period (10th Century): Horse Riding and Activity-Related Skeletal Changes

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Friday, 13 December 2019 at 12:00
Ceremonial Hall, Headquarters of the Szeged Committee, Hungarian Academy of Sciences
Somogyi street 7, 6720 Szeged, Hungary

Committee members

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BIOARCHAEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE MOUNTED ARCHERS FROM THE HUNGARIAN CONQUEST PERIOD (10TH CENTURY): HORSE RIDING AND ACTIVITY-RELATED SKELETAL CHANGES

ABSTRACT

Some changes observed on human bones can help to reconstruct past populations' activities, such as horse riding. To identify reliable skeletal indicators for this practice, we relied on populations from the Hungarian Conquest period (10th century), who were known for their powerful mounted archers. In many cemeteries from that period, horse riding equipment and horse bones associated with the individuals in the graves confirm the presence of riders. We analyzed morphological and pathological differences between the individuals with and without riding deposit, and with modern presumed non-riders, and we identified several types of skeletal changes on the hip bone, femur, vertebrae, or the foot that could be related to horse riding. We also observed that the use of modern methods like microtomography and 3D reconstructions could help with the identification of some activities. Our research sheds new light on the reconstruction of the lifestyles of past populations.

KEYWORDS

Biological anthropology, Bioarchaeology, Paleopathology, Activity-related skeletal changes, Horse riding, Hungarian Conquest period