

ABSTRACT

The occurrence of enthesopathies is associated with muscle insertion sites and physical activities. The aim of this work is focused on two basic target areas. In the methodical section, I tested two methods of enthesopathy evaluation (Crubézy, 1988; Villotte, 2006) and I monitored the influence of age and physical stress on the incidence of enthesopathies in a documented skeletal collection from Greece. The main aim was then the evaluation of enthesopathies in the Great Moravian population from the settlement agglomeration Mikulčice-Valy (9th–10th century) using the selected method and the subsequent interpretation of the results attained, taking into consideration the archaeological facts relating to the given locality.

Based on the observed degrees of concordance between the repeated evaluations, I used Villotte's method (2006) for final evaluation. I proved the correlation between the prevalence of enthesopathies and age in individuals from a recently documented skeletal collection. I was unable to demonstrate the influence of physical activity on the incidence of enthesopathies. This is apparently due to the small number of individuals with manual and non-manual occupations.

In individuals from the Mikulčice settlement agglomeration, I recorded a demonstrable difference between individual population groups. The highest incidence of enthesopathies was demonstrated by males in the hinterland and females from the castle. The most surprising finding is the high prevalence of enthesopathies in females from the castle, which points to the fact that, in contrast to the males, they were not a privileged class. Lateral asymmetry in the incidence of enthesopathies was not demonstrated. The incidence of enthesopathies in individuals with different grave equipment was also evaluated. Individuals from the castle demonstrated the highest incidence of the marker in the group with the richest equipment and in the group completely lacking any equipment. In the hinterland, individuals with common grave equipment and without any equipment were most affected. These results may testify to the existence of a lower aristocracy within the hinterland. In the case of individuals lacking grave equipment, the possible influence of the onset of Christianity and the associated abandonment of pagan traditions, which included the placement of gifts into graves, should be kept in mind.

Keywords: enthesopathies, Great Moravia, Mikulčice, grave equipment, physical stress, habitual activity