

This bachelor thesis seeks explanations for the deficit of juvenile skeletons on cemeteries of past populations. First we briefly describe the process of extinction of human populations in which the distinction between today's developed and developing countries is made. It is the age-specific mortality rate in developing countries, in particular the level of child mortality, which is very close to the mortality pattern of past pre-industrial populations. Then the research methods of child mortality in the past are outlined including their problems and obstacles. Subsequently, the causes which led to higher child mortality rate in the past are stated and the probable values of child mortality are found out from the available literature which uses the above mentioned methods.

Particular attention is paid to the representation of children skeletal remains in cemeteries. Comparing the empirical number of children from twelve Central European cemeteries with theoretical values indicated that especially the youngest children are under-represented. Therefore, the thesis focuses on the explanation of this phenomenon by biological, cultural and methodological factors. On the basis of available data we conclude that the biological and physicochemical properties of child bones lead to poorer preservation of these skeletal remains. Consequently the taphonomic factors are the most important in the explanation of child under-representation because of the generality of these properties.