

Population Dynamics, Diet and Migrations
of
the Únětice Culture in Poland

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Abstract

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Metal has changed everything. No substance has ever been as important as metal in the history of man's control of his environment. Six metals were used in prehistory: gold, silver, copper, tin, lead and iron. However it was the discovery of bronze, an alloy of the two metals that significantly altered the development of the civilization.

The role of the Únětice Culture in the formation of Bronze Age Europe cannot be over-rated. The rise and the existence of this original, expansive and dynamic population marks one of the most interesting moments in Europe-an prehistory, the period of breakthrough when one era came to an end, and another begun.

The presented monograph is bioarchaeological study of the Únětice culture in Poland, focusing particularly on the territories of Lower Silesia (SW Poland). The study presents the Únětice Culture from palaeodemographic perspective based on the results of isotopic analysis of human remains dating back to the Early Bronze Age (2200-1600 B.C).

It consists of eight parts, covering all major issues regarding the Úněticean Early Bronze Age in Poland and Central Europe from archaeological perspective: burial rites, types of interments, distribution, quality and quantity of human skeletal materials. It presents number of sites in geographical environment of Silesia, their relative and absolute chronology as well as a detailed methodology of isotopic analyses, especially carbon, nitrogen and strontium.

Subsequent chapters focus on the Early Bronze Age lifestyle, medical knowledge and diseases, occupations and chosen subgroups of the Silesian prehistoric society, such as the tribal aristocracy, children and elders. Study provides information regarding diet and subsistence, transportation, human migrations and territorial mobility in prehistoric Central Europe as well as the impact of these upon Úněticean society, expansion of metallurgy and commerce, forms of rulership and collective identity.

Keywords: Early Bronze Age, Únětice culture, palaeodemography, bioarchaeology, stable isotopes, Bronze Age diet, Bronze Age mobility, population dynamics, Silesia