

## **Az avarok trepanációs szokásai a Dél-Alföld bioarcheológiai leletanyagának tükrében**

### **The trephining traditions of the Avars as reflected in the bioarchaeological material of the Southern Great Plain**

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**Abstract:** The archaeological material of the Carpathian Basin is extremely rich in trephinations that could even gain international attention. The subjects of my thesis' investigations came from the Avar Age (6–9th c. AD) bioarchaeological material of the Southern Great Plain, where all three types of trephinations (surgical, symbolic and post mortem) known in Hungary occurred in this period. My investigations formed a part of a larger work intended to put up a database including all cranial modification cases found in the Southern Great Plain, that I have been working on since 2005. As for the aims and scope, this project is yet unparalleled in Hungary.

The aim of my thesis was to introduce and analyze the Avar Age trephination cases of the Southern Great Plain found in the scientific literature or in the bioarchaeological collection curated at the Department of Biological Anthropology, University of Szeged (Anthropological Biobank of the University of Szeged, see Hungarian Network of Strategic Research Infrastructures (SKI): <https://regiszter.nekifut.hu/ki/687>).

The investigated material of my thesis work came from formerly published cases from the Southern Great Plain and new finds from the human osteological material of the following excavations: Szeged-Kiskundorozsma-Kettőshatár I. 26/4 (M5 Nr. 63=M43–5.), Bélmegyer-Csömöki-domb (MRT 10. 342–348. 3/37. lh.), Csárdaszállás 21. site (Hanzély-tanya, MRT 10. 385. 4/21. lh.) and Szegvár-Oromdülő (KJM Szentés 84.1.1–42.). All series are housed, curated and investigated at the Department of Biological Anthropology, University of Szeged. Up to now, 9 surgically, 12 symbolically and 2 post mortem trephined skulls have been found among the Avar Age remains of the Southern Great Plain. 4 surgical and 3 symbolic cases of this material have been published as a result of our research activity since 2005, performed in the collection curated at the Department of Biological Anthropology, University of Szeged. These newly published cases considerably increase the number of Avar Age trephinations known in the Carpathian Basin.

The 3 cases of infantile surgical trephinations require special attention, as subadult cases have never been described before from Avar Age series. The Avar Age surgical trephinations of the Southern Great Plain however fit our previous knowledge of the phenomenon, since the affected individuals are mostly adult males and the majority of the lesions had a traumatic context.

Among symbolic trephinations, the occurrence of almond shaped lesions must get special attention, because such lesions formerly have only been described among the remains of the subsequent Conquest Age and Early Árpadian Age in the Carpathian Basin. The Avar Age tradition of the Southern Great Plain resembles that of the Conquest Age in almost every aspect: all affected individuals are adults, the majority is male, the size, the shape, the localization of the lesions follows trends observed in the Conquest Age material. The similarities of the Late Avar and the Conquest Age finds, and the possible sexual symbolism of the almond shaped lesions requires further studies in this field.

The interpretation of the 2 Avar Age post mortem trephinations also requires further investigations and parallels too.

Trephining traditions of the Avar Age in the Southern Great Plain are well in accordance with our formerly developed picture of the certain trephination phenomena. This is especially true when the Avar Age finds are compared to Conquest Age trephinations. Based on the trephination cases of the Southern Great Plain I think there must have been strong, close cultural connection between the Late Avar and the Conquest Age Hungarian populations. These traditions derive from a pool of knowledge that connects not only the modification practices of these two periods, but also includes the trephining traditions of the Proto-Bulgars.

**Keywords:** Trephination; Cranial surgery; Avars; Bioarchaeology; Paleopathology.