

Bioarchaeology of the Near East 4:50–52 (2010)

**Short Fieldwork Report: Tell Fares al-Sharqi (Syria), seasons 2006–2009**

A. Sołtysiak

(published online on [www.anthropology.uw.edu.pl](http://www.anthropology.uw.edu.pl))



**Figure 2.** Polysyndactyly in the left third finger. T202, Achaemenian period.

## References

- Jaskulska E. (2009), *Skeletal bilateral asymmetry in a medieval population from Deir an-Naqlun (Nekloni), Egypt*, *Bioarchaeology of the Near East* 3:17-26.
- Sołtysiak A. (2008), *Short Fieldwork Report. Tell Barri (Syria), seasons 1980-2006*, *Bioarchaeology of the Near East* 2:67-71.

---

## Tell Fares al-Sharqi (Syria), seasons 2006–2009

Arkadiusz Sołtysiak

Department of Bioarchaeology,  
Institute of Archaeology, University of Warsaw,  
ul. Krakowskie Przedmieście 26/28, 00-927 Warszawa, Poland  
email: a.soltysiak@uw.edu.pl

---

Excavations at Tell Fares al-Sharqi (36°44'31"N 41°04'04"E) began in 2006 by a French team directed by Jean-Daniel Forest and Régis Vallet (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique). This small site, covering some 4ha, was occupied chiefly during the Late Chalcolithic (LC) period and abandoned in the beginning of the Early Bronze Age (EBA), with no traces of settlement dating after the Ninevite 5 period. Recently the mound was used by local Bedouin tribes as a cemetery and several modern burials disturb earlier strata.

Between 2006-2009, the remains of several buildings were unearthed together with 22 simple intramural burials, most of which were infant skeletons (**Table 1**). In spite of the small sample size, some temporal differences in mortuary habits at the site were observed, with neonates and infants less than one year old dominating the Late Chalcolithic 1 and 2 deposits, older subadults more common in the Late Chalcolithic 4 and 5 deposits, and a few adult skeletons were found in the Ninevite 5 strata. However, the differences between LC 1/2 and LC 4/5 are not statistically significant (Fisher's Exact Test,  $p=0.12$ ). So far, no human remains dated to the LC 3 were found.

Human remains from Tell Fares al-Sharqi were studied in September 2010 in the dig house at Tell Beydar. The sample included all LC and EBA skeletons and two from about 20 modern skeletons (**Table 1**). All of them were described according to Buikstra and Ubelaker (1994), modified. Although most subadult skeletons were fairly complete and well preserved, a high degree of erosion was noted in all adult remains.

Six instances of localised enamel hypoplasia were observed in the deciduous canines of four individuals. This feature is thought to reflect perinatal or neonatal stress (Lukacs & Walimbe 1998). The frequency of this stress marker at Tell Fares al-Sharqi (~27%) is the same as in the Bronze Age / Iron Age sample from Kish (Lukacs et al. 2001), but the small sample size prevents any reliable interpretation of this coincidence.

**Table 1.** Basic description of human remains from Tell Fares al-Sharqi. Age: FT – foetus, AD – adult.

Completeness: S – skull, T – teeth, U – upper limb, C – central skeleton, L – lower limb. Comments: CO – cribra orbitalia (0 – absent, 1 – slight to moderate), DEH – enamel hypoplasia in deciduous canines (affected/observed), PEH – enamel hypoplasia in permanent canines (affected/observed), OA – osteoarthritis, SL – spondylolysis.

No	Chronology	Sex	Age	Completeness					Comments
				S	T	U	C	L	
41	LC 5 (?)	–	1	+	+	+	+	+	CO 0, DEH 1/3
41	LC 5 (?)	–	7	+	+				PEH 0/1
43	LC 2 (?)	–	FT	+	+	+	+	+	
45	LC 5 (?)	–	1	+	+	+	+	+	DEH 1/4
77	Ninevite 5	?	AD	+	+	+		+	PEH 3/3, OA in foot
78	LC 5 (?)	–	0	+	+	+	+		
81	Ninevite 5	M	AD	+	+	+	+	+	PEH 0/2, SL in the thoracic spine, OA in distal tibia
94	LC 5	–	0.5	+		+		+	
100	LC 5 (?)	–	2		+			+	
138	?	F??	14-21					+	
150	LC 5	–	2	+	+	+	+	+	
180	Modern	–	0	+	+	+	+	+	
191	Modern	M	AD	+	+	+	+	+	PEH 0/3, SL in thoracic & lumbar spine, healed fractures of the clavicle, rib, and navicular
316	LC 2	–	0.25	+	+	+	+	+	
316	LC 2	?	AD		+				
318	LC 2	–	0.25		+	+	+	+	
319	LC 2	–	0.75	+	+	+	+	+	CO 0, DEH 3/3
325	LC 2	–	1.5	+	+	+	+	+	DEH 0/1
439	LC 1	–	0.5	+	+	+	+	+	
547	LC 4	–	8	+	+	+	+	+	DEH 0/3, PEH 2/4
629	Ninevite 5 (?)	–	0.25	+	+	+	+	+	
633	LC 4	–	1.25	+	+	+	+	+	DEH 1/2
645	LC 4 (?)	–	FT	+		+		+	
	LC/Ninevite 5	–	3.5	+	+	+	+	+	CO 1, DEH 0/4

**Acknowledgements.** Many thanks are due to the directors of the Tell Fares expedition, Dr. Jean-Daniel Forest and Dr. Régis Vallet, as well as to all members of the archaeological team excavating at the site.

## References

- Buikstra J.E., Ubelaker D.H., ed. (1994), *Standards of data collection from human skeletal remains*, „Arkansas Archaeological Survey Research Series” 44, Fayetteville.
- Lukacs J.R., Nelson G.C., Walimbe S.R. (2001), *Enamel hypoplasia and childhood stress in prehistory: new data from India and Southwest Asia*, *Journal of Archaeological Science* 28:1159-1169.
- Lukacs J.R., Walimbe S.R. (1998), *Physiological stress in prehistoric India: new data on localized hypoplasia of primary canines linked to climate and subsistence change*, *Journal of Archaeological Science* 25:571-585.

---

## Gohar Tepe and three other sites (Iran), seasons 2009–2010

Arkadiusz Sołtysiak\*<sup>1</sup>, Ali Mahfrouzi<sup>2</sup>,  
Serollah Ghasemi<sup>2</sup>, Ebrahim Amirkolaei<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Bioarchaeology,  
Institute of Archaeology, University of Warsaw,  
ul. Krakowskie Przedmieście 26/28, 00-927 Warszawa, Poland  
email: a.soltysiak@uw.edu.pl (corresponding author)

<sup>2</sup>Iranian Center for Archaeological Research,  
Baharestan Sq., 11416 Teheran, Iran

<sup>3</sup>Islamic Azad University, Savad Kooh Branch,  
P.O. Box 155, Savad Kooh, Iran

---

Excavations at the site-museum Gohar Tepe (36°40'42"N 53°24'07"E), which have been reported previously (see Sołtysiak & Mahfrouzi 2008, 2009) continued in the autumn of 2009 and the summer of 2010. During restoration works at exposed parts of the cemetery, 12 skeletons were explored and subsequently studied in August 2010 by Sołtysiak in the dig house at the site. All of them are dated to the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age. Moreover, during the analysis of animal bones by Anna Gręzak (University of Warsaw, Poland), additional 100 often small assemblages of human remains were retrieved, some of which likely originated from regular graves, but some from secondary contexts.

Approximately half of the skeletons excavated in the regular graves belonged to subadult individuals (see **Table 1**), while the human bone retrieved from the zooarchaeological assemblages was primarily subadult and infant. In the latter, taphonomic effects were frequently noted, such as root etching, invertebrate activity, rodent tooth marks, as well as possible tooth marks from a carnivorous animal (AGXXX 45.132, **Figure 1**). In a few cases, some evidence