

A SKULL WITH A POSSIBLE SWORD STROKE FROM TROPAEUM TRAIANI

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The skull was discovered in 1972 at Tropaeum Traiani, a Late Roman Empire city from eastern Romania (Adamclisi village, Constanța county), in sector D, edifice D3, level NW at 1.05 m depth. Archaeologists connect the end of the level with the Avars' invasion in 586. The skull has the trace of a hit in the right cheek, temporal and maxilla. It is very sure that the mandibular condyle and coronoid process were affected. Anatomically, the sharp object meets the masseteric muscle, facial artery, parotid duct, and the temporal muscle, after cut resulting hemorrhage and bony splits. I suppose that the hit came from the lateral right, from up downwards at an angle of 15°, with a sharp object of 100 mm length and 30 mm breadth, possibly a sword or an axe.

INTRODUCTION

This skull (with notation TT/72, P.E., S III, square 15, depth = 1.05 m) belongs to the collections of Dr. Cantemir Rîșcuția and came into our possession in 2004 when we took the archive and different osteological materials from the "V. Babeș" Institute. The skull was discovered in 1972 at Tropaeum Traiani, a Late Roman Empire city from eastern Romania (Adamclisi village, Constanța county) during the excavations of I. Bogdan-Cătănicu" (Morintz 1973, p. 361).

The archaeological state was presented as follows: "Over the NW trading level there is a large quantity of burned remains, bricks and ceramic fragments. We believe that the housing of edifice D3 was interrupted by a huge fire which also affected other areas. There was a skull without mandible in the inner courtyard, near the first trunk of a column (C₁) and near of southern wall of room 4 among the ruins (Barnea 1979, p. 102 and fig. 87). Note 5 of the same text specifies about this skull that it will be analyzed by Dr. Cantemir Rîșcuția, but for unknown reasons this he did not happen. In the present article we try to recover the anthropological information thereof and to pay our respect to Dr. Cantemir Rîșcuția.

Level NW was dated by archaeologists at the end of the VIth century A.D. and the skull may well belong to the same epoch (Barnea 1979, p. 106).