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PALEODEMOGRAPHIC DATA ON THE MEDIEVAL CITY OF POLOTSK (BASED ON EXCAVATIONS OF THE UPPER CASTLE NECROPOLIS)

Excavations on the Upper Castle site were conducted from 2019 to 2022 under the general direction of I.V. Magalinsky as part of the rescue archaeological research. Analysis of the archaeological material revealed that the burial ground dates to the 11th–13th centuries. A total of 145 individuals were found in both regular and irregular burials at the Upper Castle necropolis. Sex estimation identified 38 male, 55 female, and 51 subadult skeletons (aged under 15). One skeleton belonged to an individual aged 16–18, whose sex is unknown. We conducted a paleodemographic analysis using J. Angel's (Angel 1969) methodology. The peak mortality rate in the group occurred in the first, childhood age cohort (0–5 years). Adults, both men and women, most often died at the age of 40–45. The infant mortality rate in the Polotsk group was 35.17%. This means that one-third of the population died in childhood, before reaching the age of 15. This figure is consistent with the relative demographic stability of the group. Almost 50% of children died before age 5, and 18% died before age 1. The final age cohort is not representative; only 2.76% of the population survived to age 50. The average life expectancy of the Polotsk group was almost 24 years, which is comparatively low. The average age at death for adults, both men and women, was low compared to other groups from Russia and Belarus, at approximately 34 years. The Upper Castle group exhibited an abnormal ratio of adult women to men, with 18% more women identified.

Keywords: *paleodemography, survival indices, age cohort, infant mortality rate, life expectancy, peak mortality, final age cohort*

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