



Paper

Prehistoric cremations seen in a bioarchaeological perspective – new methods and techniques

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Abstract

Several cremation urns from the Danish Late Bronze Age have now been examined using Computed Tomography (CT). During the following micro-excavation, the digital images have been used as a registration tool.

Our results suggest that osteological ageing and sexing are more accurate when combining CT images with excavated remains.

Our data further suggest extreme fragmentation during microexcavation and systematically biased registration of cremation intensity and evidence of handling, sorting, crushing etc.

Using our CT-data, we have further evaluated different methods for calculating and describing volume and weight of cremated remains and propose new methods for estimating the original post-cremation weight.

Our data suggests that low cremation weights reported for archaeologically recovered cremated remains are markedly underestimated, and that entire cremated bodies are represented far more often than discussed in osteoarchaeology.

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