Study of an osteological sample exhumed from the Roman necropolis of Quinta da Torre/Quinta de Sto. António – Monte da Caparica, Portugal (3rd-5th centuries AD)

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Introduction
The archaeological site of Quinta da Torre/Quinta de Sto António is located in the South of Portugal, close to a small village named Monte da Caparica. Geographically, it integrates the Peninsula of Setúbal, a land platform surrounded by the Tagus and Sado Rivers, and by the Atlantic sea.

The archaeological work revealed 22 graves:
- 21 single inhumations
- 1 double inhumation
- Reuse of graves

The necropolis
In the year of 2005, during the South Tejo railway construction, human osteological remains were discovered. An archaeological survey was conducted confirming the existence of a Roman necropolis, dated from the 3rd – 5th centuries AD.

Funerary data
Orientation, deposition and gravegoods
The individuals were inhumed:
- Lying on their back (extended supine);
- Predominantly with their arms extended and the legs straight and parallels;
- Aligned, mainly, in a East-West axis (34,8%) and on a West-East axis (30,4%).

Gravegoods accompanied 11 of the 22 excavated burials.

Shallow graves

Inhumation in amphora, imbrices and/or tegulae box

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Burial type
Shallow graves covered by amphora, tegulae and/or imbrices

Inhumation in amphora, imbrices and/or tegulae box

Anthropological data
The excavation recovered 25 individuals:
- 23 in primary inhumation and 2 in ossuary.

The anthropological analysis identified:
- 12 adults, from both sexes, and 13 subadults (fig. 1). 1, 2

The stature mean values were estimated in 184,04 cm (♂) and 152,26 cm (♀). 3

Morphologically, the individuals were robust, with high flattening femur values. 4

Non metric traits observed in the skull (e.g. metopic suture and Inca bone) and in the post cranial skeleton. High frequency of lateral squatting facets in tibiae (90% - 9/10). 5

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*Some paleopathological cases*

Severe occlusal wear in the anterior teeth. Masticatory and non masticatory use. 5

High frequency of degenerative joint lesions: vertebrae, shoulder, hip and feet.

Spina bifida semi-occult in a young male (18-25 years old). 6

Scoliosis in an old male (> 50 years old). 6

Osteoarthrosis in the feet bones

Several traumatic events: ribs, radius, clavicle, vertebra, hand bones, etc.

References
6. Eshed, V.; Gopher, A.; Hershkovitz, I. 2006. Tooth wear and dental pathology...