

Anthropology of the Qilakitsoq Eskimos

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Balslev Jørgensen, J. 1989. Anthropology of the Qilakitsoq Eskimos. – *Meddr Grønland, Man & Soc.* 12: 56–57. Copenhagen 1990–01–26.

The anthropological examination showed two children aged six months and 4-4½ years respectively, and six adult women aged 18-22 years, 20-25 years, about 30 years, 40-50 years, about 60 years, and about 50 years respectively. The physical type of the mummies corresponds with the general impression of physical types of Eskimos from the 16th-17th century.

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The most important features of the finds from Qilakitsoq are the extremely well-preserved clothing and the mummification of the soft tissues. For this reason the clothing of the best-preserved mummies has not been touched, and the soft tissues have not been removed from some of the other mummies. Accordingly, no in-depth removed from some of the other mummies. Accordingly, no in-depth anthropological scrutiny of the bones has been performed.

From a purely anthropological point of view the finds, consisting of only eight individuals, are not of paramount importance; the group is too small. The following article describes the anthropological observations of the various mummies. The sex and age of the mummies was determined by anthropological methods. The determinations were modified by the results obtained from X-ray and odontological examinations.

Mummy No. 1: Child, six months old. Sex cannot be determined anthropologically.

Mummy No. 2: Child, 4-4½ years old.

Mummy No. 3: Relatively large mummy with rather big head and small hands. Sex cannot be determined by anthropological investigations, it could be male. Age: adulta. X-ray revealed some pathological findings. Stature has been calculated at 165 cm.

Mummy No. 4: Small and delicate body. Vaulted frontal bone without superciliary prominence. Sex is female. Age: adulta. Stature calculated at 145 cm.

Mummy No. 5: Medium-size body with hair showing slight balding and eyebrows, no beard present. Stature could not be measured. Small hands and feet, pelvis of female type, slight superciliary prominence, weak mastoid process. Sex accordingly female. The suture has at least partly closed. Age: matura (40–50 years). Stature calculated at 158 cm.

Mummy No. 6: Small body. Perpendicular frontal bone with slight superciliary prominence. Small hands; sex

female. Odontologically, the age has been estimated at about 50 years. Stature calculated at 153 cm.

Mummy No. 7: Small delicate body with hair and eyebrows, but without beard. Small hands and feet. The stature is medium, the frontal bone perpendicular without superciliary prominence. The sex is female. The sphenobasilar synchondrosis is closed. The odontological estimation of age is given as 18–20 years.

Mummy No. 8: Small crouched body with hair and eyebrows, but without beard. Stature approximately 150 cm. The head is below medium size with vaulted frontal bone without superciliary prominence. The lower jaw is angular, teeth small. The pelvis is female with broad (1 cm) and deep preauricular sulci. The sex is undoubtedly female. The sphenobasilar synchondrosis is closed, the age accordingly over 20 years. The age has been estimated at 50 years on the basis of odontological examinations. Given the length of the long bones the stature can be calculated at 150 cm. Heavy pathological changes in cranial base and slighter changes in the lumbar part of the backbone.

The six adults were 18–22 years, 20–25 years, about 30 years, 40–50 years, about 60 years, and about 50 years old respectively. They represent all age groups but it is remarkable that three of the eight mummies were fifty years of age or older at the time of death. This indicates that survival conditions in the environment were better than might have been expected.

All six adults seem to have been women. The anthropological investigation of mummy No. 3 was not unequivocal, and from an anthropological point of view this could be a male, which also might be indicated by the stature of 165 cm against the stature of about 150 cm of all the other adults. The tattooing on the face, the absence of a beard in spite of well-preserved hair and

Measurement of the long bones.

	Mummy I/3	Mummy I/4	Mummy I/5	Mummy II/6	Mummy II/7	Mummy II/8
Femur, length (M1)	(44)	(37-38)	40	((40))		(37)
Femur, trochanteric L. (M5).....					35	34
Tibia, length (M1).....	(37)	(30)	33	31-32	30	31
Humerus, length (M1).....					27	
Ulna, length (M1).....				21-22	21	22

eyebrows, and the clothing, are on the other hand very clear signs indicating female sex.

As mentioned above, the stature of mummy No. 3 was 165 cm, whereas the others were 145, 158, 153, 148 and 150 cm respectively. This stature of about 150 cm closely matches the results of investigations of female skeletons from the Thule culture from about 1400 AD, and the stature of 153 cm for skeletal materials from the seventeenth century (Balslev Jørgensen & Vesely 1974). Thus stature must have remained constant at least until the period of colonization. It is interesting that examinations of older present-day women in the Thule area and in Upernavik show statures of 151 and 149 cm (Gilberg *et al.* 1975; Balslev Jørgensen *et al.* 1976).

There is nothing outstanding about the physical type of the mummies. It corresponds very well with the general impression of physical types of Eskimos from the

16-17th century. The odontological, X-ray and pathological tests will provide further information about the general type of these peoples.

References

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