

relation to females of the same age. This disproportion is likely related to the high social rank of patriarchs. Another demographic feature is the high mortality of females in the reproductive age. Owing to the large size of the Lchashen sample, its average craniometric and osteometric parameters can in some sense be regarded as standard. The Late Bronze Age Lchashen-Metsamor culture was also named after the Etiuni ethnonym uncovered in the Urartian cuneiform inscriptions (P. Avetisyan, H. Avetisyan). If so, the Etiuni people were moderately robust, tall, and quite long-lived.

Key words: *Bronze Age, Sevan-Artsakh culture, Lchashen-Metsamor culture, robusticity, gracilization, microevolution, longevity*

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ON THE ORIGIN OF MEDIEVAL EAST SLAVIC TRIBES

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Nonmetric cranial trait frequencies in medieval East Slavic tribes and comparative samples from unrelated groups were examined. The aims of the study were as follows: (1) to assess the degree of biological affinity in medieval East Slavic tribes and to test the hypothesis that East Slavic peoples have a common origin; (2) to reveal their genetic affinities with the autochthonous (Baltic and Finno-Ugric) populations of northeastern Europe; and (3) to see if a genetic continuity existed between people of the Chernyakhov culture and medieval Eastern Slavs. Analyses of phenotypic differentiation were based on Nei's standard genetic distance and hierarchical GST statistics. The results suggest that the genetic affinity of the East Slavic tribes is due not only to inter-tribal gene flow but, more importantly, to their common population history. Evidence of gene flow between the Baltic and Finno-Ugric groups was revealed in the gene pool of Eastern Slavs, as was genetic continuity between medieval East Slavic tribes and the preceding Chernyakhov population. These findings support a "generalizing" hypothesis of East Slavic origin whereby the Slavonic community was formed in a particular ancestral area and subsequently spread throughout Eastern Europe.

Key words: *East Slavs, Balts, Finno-Ugrians, Chernyakhov culture, cranial nonmetric traits*

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