

THE SKELETAL REMAINS OF A BYZANTINE-PERIOD MONK FROM HAR ḤOMA

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Human skeletal remains were found in a grave underneath the floor of a central room in the Byzantine monastery at Har Ḥoma (see Zelinger, this volume). The deceased was placed on an east–west axis, his head on the west.

The remains included a fragmentary, partially articulated skull and postcranial bones indicating primary burial. The skull's morphology is typical of a male (Bass 2005:82). The vertebrae show osteophyte growth, the skull exhibits advanced suture closure, and the teeth manifest advanced attrition—all indicating that the individual was an adult, possibly over 50 years of age at the time of death (Hillson 1986; HersHKovitz et al. 1997; Bass 2005:20–21). No pathologies were noticed in the long bones, and no porosity was observed in the skull vault (*porotic hyperostosis*) or the orbital roof (*cribra orbitalia*).

Burials beneath the floors of Byzantine-period monasteries are a common find in the Jerusalem region. In the samples inspected from Umm Leisun (Nagar 2015), Khan el-Aḥmar (HersHKovitz et al. 1993) and Deir Hajle (Peleg 2009), mostly older males are represented, differing in their characteristics from contemporary, civilian-cemetery demographics.

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