

THE MOHACS NATIONAL MEMORIAL MASS GRAVES: YEARS OF STRUGGLE FOR THE RESEARCHERS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SZEGED

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Objective: To present the progress, challenges, and preliminary anthropological results of the multidisciplinary investigation of the Mohacs mass graves.

Subjects and methods: As the Mohacs National Memorial Mass Grave 3 excavation could not be completed in 2020, additional field campaigns were conducted in 2021 and 2022, the latter involving an international team. Following excavation, the skeletal remains were transferred to the University of Szeged for detailed osteological analysis. In 2024, Mass Grave 4 was also excavated and is currently under investigation. The primary aim of the osteological analysis is the re-association of fragmented remains to reconstruct individual skeletons, determine the demographic composition of the graves, and identify perimortem traumatic lesions and palaeopathological lesions

Results: The investigations have established a comprehensive multidisciplinary research framework combining archaeology, field and laboratory anthropology, paleopathology, forensic osteology, archaeogenetics, and isotope analyses. Osteological examinations are progressing, providing new evidence on the demographic characteristics of the buried individuals and the nature of their traumatic injuries, while supporting the reconstruction of the events surrounding the mass burials.

Conclusions: The Mohacs mass grave project represents one of the largest and most challenging anthropological investigations ever undertaken in Hungary. Despite numerous logistical and scientific challenges, the ongoing research is yielding important new insights into the victims of the Battle of Mohacs while providing the basis for their respectful identification and eventual reburial.

Keywords: Battle of Mohacs; Mass graves; Osteological analysis; Paleopathology.

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