

PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF THE PALEOPATHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE HUMAN SKELETAL REMAINS FROM MASS GRAVE 4 AT THE MOHACS NATIONAL MEMORIAL SITE (1526 CE), HUNGARY

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Background: The Battle of Mohacs in 1526 was one of the most decisive events in Central European history. The osteological material recovered from the five mass graves located at the Mohacs National Memorial Site is associated with this historical event. Between 2020 and 2024, two of these mass graves were excavated to gain insight into the individuals buried within them.

Objective: The aim of the present study is to provide a preliminary report on the investigation results of the osteological material originating from mass grave 4.

Materials and Methods: The study material consists of commingled and incomplete human skeletal remains recovered from mass grave 4, which were archaeologically attributed to 237 individuals during the excavation process. Standard methods routinely applied in physical anthropology were used for the demographic and palaeopathological analyses.

Results: As a first step, incomplete skeletal remains recovered under different inventory numbers during the excavation, but potentially belonging to the same individual, were reassociated. As a result, the number of individuals was reduced to 184. Demographic data indicate that most individuals buried in mass grave 4 were young adult males.

Preliminary palaeopathological observations revealed the presence of infectious (e.g., tuberculosis), degenerative, and inflammatory lesions, among others. Detailed differential diagnostic analyses are currently in progress. Minor developmental anomalies were observed at high frequency, while major and rare developmental anomalies were also identified, including tuberculum/processus paracondylaris and ponticulus posticus.

Conclusions: Our findings provide insight into the demographic composition and health status of the individuals who fought in the Battle of Mohacs and may also contribute to the identification of potential biological relationships among the buried individuals.

Keywords: Human mass grave; Mohacs; 1526; Paleopathology; Developmental disorders.

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