

Pushing Up Daisies. A Collective Burial at Alba Iulia-Lumea Nouă Eneolithic Site

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Abstract:

This paper discusses a funerary discovery from the Eneolithic site of Alba Iulia-Lumea Nouă (Romania). Rescue excavations in Trench V/2018 uncovered an unusual mortuary context, an irregularly shaped pit containing the skeletal remains of three individuals: two non-adults and one female. Palaeopathological analysis revealed metabolic stress indicators, such as cribrotic lesions (cribra femoralis and cribra orbitalia) and endocranial changes in the non-adults, while the adult female displayed minor degenerative alterations. No traumatic injuries were observed on any of the skeletal remains. The individuals were discovered at different depths, indicating distinct depositional events. Radiocarbon data indicates that the individuals' deaths occurred within a short temporal span. The archaeological context shows that the pit was initially used in multiple domestic sequences, possibly for clay extraction or storage, before being reused as a burial place. The associated artefacts, not directly linked to the funerary depositions, are attributed to the Foeni group, placing the discovery within a mid-5th millennium BC timeframe.

Keywords: *Eneolithic, Alba Iulia-Lumea Nouă, mortuary practices, collective burial, human skeletal remains, disposal pit*