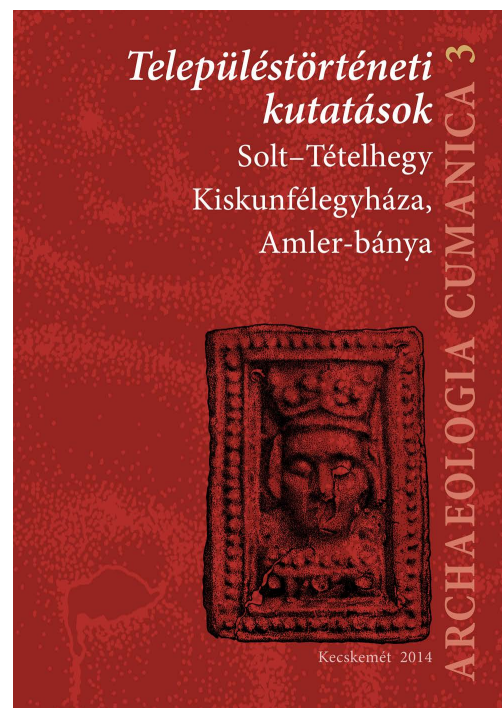


ÁGNES SOMOGYVÁRI – JÓZSEF SZENTPÉTERI – GYÖRGY V. SZÉKELY (EDS) Settlement Studies. Solt-Tételhegy, Kiskunfélegyháza, Amler-bánya

DÉNES JANKOVICH B.

This book is divided into two major sections, which in terms of content are only connected by the fact that they deal with the same county. The first section introduces the results from the *Castrum Tetel Program*, the archaeological investigations into the Solt-Tételhegy site between 2005 and 2013. In the *Preface* József Szentpéteri reveals what has been his pet project for a long time – the discovery of the Avar Hring. Unfortunately, there is no conclusive source related to the location of the Hring. The starting point for the author's conception is that the castle referred to as *castrum Tetel* in the 13th century chronicle (Anonymus) – which gave its name to the research program – is not to be found next to Titel in the Bácska (Bačka) region, but instead is the same as Tételhegy on the outskirts of Solt, and so it is possible that this site preserves the remains of the center of the Avar Period Khaganate. During the excavations between 2005 and 2009 on this archaeological site that has been known of for a long time, a Bronze Age settlement surrounded by ramparts, an Early Árpád Period (11–12th century) cemetery and a medieval church were uncovered. During the program every related branch of science that could be applied was employed: thorough archival, literary and cartographic research, aerial archaeological photography, geographic information system analyses, as well as botanical, zoological and anthropological examinations all contributed. In 2013 there were renewed excavations, supplemented by further interdisciplinary examinations. The reports published in the book present the results of all of this research. In the illustrations of the *Preface* we can see the drawings demarcating the 2013 excavation and its most beautiful finds, as well as a map of the 10th–11th century archaeological sites in the broader surroundings of Tételhegy and a comprehensive map of further sites in the micro-region where investigations are planned, the original of which was in color but is reproduced in black and white in the book.

The first essay provides a geological explanation for the formation of the Tételhegy hill (here referred to as Tételhalom) that differs from previous conceptions. The geological team (Balázs Nagy, Erzsébet Horváth, Balázs Bradák and Zsófia Ruzsiczay-Rüdiger) drilled 60-70 cores during the course of the research program, and in the wake of the examination of the excavation trenches they came to the conclusion that the hill of Tételhegy accumulated in a depression as an alluvial cone of the ancient Danube River as a result of the red clay and tufa here resisting erosion. The accumulation of deposits and the erosion of the adjacent areas created a significant hill rising 17 meters above its surroundings. On its edges, erosion that



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was amplified through human intervention caused indents and a gradual lowering. The essay highlights the presence and the significance of the red clay and tufa outcroppings that reach the surface in many places, but also emphasizes the fact that these rocks do not make up a continuous layer in the hill, but have settled in a lenticular structure.

Adrienn Zsiga-Hornyik wrote a short article on the “Titélhalom” excavations by Aurél Török in 1886, in which she mentions that the Anthropological Depository preserved twenty skulls unearthed at Solt-Titel. Since besides a few disputed photographs no documentation from the excavation has survived, the results of the excavation are essentially unknown and its site has not yet been identified. However, the headless skeletons excavated by Aurél Török in the churchyard cemetery may provide an answer to the question.

Máté Szabó comes with the results from the aerial archaeological research. Following the detailed introduction to the methodology, he presents a map of the phenomena from the site, which has been compiled with the use of four aerial images by Otto Braasch from the early 90s. To integrate these he was able to use the excavation data as well.

Sándor Puszta performed magnetic surveys on an area of more than 11 hectares at the site. The illustrations in this report, which contains primarily methodological observations, unfortunately only show the results inserted into the aerial image at a quite small scale, and we still await a comparison with the observations from the excavation.

Ágnes Somogyvári wrote a preliminary report in the book with the title *Bronze Age Settlement Phenomena and Evidence of Fortification at Solt Tétel*. The research had previously hypothesized that the triangular area enclosed by ramparts on the northern end of the hill could be an earthwork fort. During the successful excavation across the rampart it was verified that the ca. 20 meter wide and more than three meter deep ditch that was constructed/used in the Vátya III and Urnfield culture period was reconstructed at least one time and in the Árpád Period two shallower ditches were also dug into the side. The red clay dug out of the ditch was piled up on the rampart. The ¹⁴C test performed during the geological coring showed a value of 4155 B.C. During the course of excavations on about 2,000 m² within the earthwork fort, pits were excavated that had finds that could be dated to the Vátya III and the Koszider Period (e.g. on the basis of a Kelebia type dish). Storage pits were also found outside the earthwork fort, and on the basis of these it is clear that there was also a settlement outside the fortified area in the Bronze Age. The excavating archaeologist hypothesizes that the cemetery from this period will also be found on the hill, but no traces have been found so far. Amongst the illustrations we find the cross-section drawings of the trench across the rampart and several pits, as well as a rich sample of the ceramic finds on a table with 12 illustrations.

Zsolt Petkes in his essay entitled *Árpád Period Cemetery on the Tételhegy Church Hill* reports on the 99 graves that have been identified as being from the Árpád Period amongst those excavated at the site opened to the south of the medieval church. The graves that are densely placed but still organized in rows represent the earliest layer from the churchyard cemetery. On the basis of the finds they may have been burials dating from between the second half of the 11th century and the end of the 13th century. A coin of Ladislaus I King of Hungary (1077–1095) dates the opening of the cemetery. The material finds do not differ from the customary finds from contemporary cemeteries. No graves from the Conquest Period (10th century) have been found, although the cemetery has not yet been completely excavated.

Miklós Takács presents *The Medieval Settlements of Tételhegy in Solt* in his essay. On the basis of the research up to this point it has become apparent that four clearly defined settlements existed on the 100 hectare promontory, three of which are found near the hill’s northern edge. In the trial trenching in the interior of the Bronze Age earthwork fort, on the Church Hill and also on the western edge of the hill ordinary Árpád Period settlement objects came to light that can be dated to the middle or last third of the period. Only scattered finds (e.g. fragments of Austrian import graphite ware) suggest a settlement earlier than this. However, on the basis of these – rather scattered – finds and the observation of details, Miklós Takács has come to the conclusion that the Tételhegy sites indicate a settlement that is larger and more significant than typical Árpád Period villages.

Szabolcs Rosta and Gergely Buzás introduce the results of the *Excavation of the Solt-Tételhegy Medieval Church in the years 2006-2009*. Without doubt the most significant object on the Tételhegy hill is the medieval church, the most recent, 14th–16th century levels of which have been uncovered so far during the excavations. The authors categorized the single-nave church with a polygonal apse, Gothic stone vaulting, tracery windows and extended with a western tower and vestry as belonging to the most common type of village parish churches, and also compiled the building's theoretical reconstruction. A find that is worth particular mention is the vessel that held animal bones hidden in a cavity behind the base of the altar. From several minor details they came to the conclusion that in the period prior to the Gothic building the church may have been even bigger.

Erzsébet Fóthi and Zsolt Bernert examined *The Anthropology of the Solt-Tételhegy Árpád Period Cemetery*. The authors identified the remains of 125 humans from the bones of the 108 graves excavated. The most interesting conclusion from their analyses is that in the interior of the church and next to its walls they found individuals who differed in terms of anthropology – and ethnicity – from those who were buried further from the church in the so-called row graves characteristic for commoners.

Gergő Persaits, Pál Sümegei and Tünde Töröcsik in their study reconstructed the environmental history of Tételhegy in Solt on the basis of an analysis of pollen and phytoliths. Within the context of the research project they performed cores in the stream bed approximately a kilometer and a half from Tételhegy. With the aid of the samples they determined the vegetation of the area from the Iron Age up to the Hungarian Middle Ages. The Bronze Age, Árpád Period and medieval samples taken from the excavation site proved to be poor in phytoliths, and this allowed them to conclude it was a poorly wooded area.

Ferenc Gyulai wrote up the results of the research into the *Archaeobotany of the Solt-Tételhegy Archaeological Site* for the book. The sluicing of the 32 soil samples taken from the excavation site resulted in thirteen thousand plant remains, which the author evaluated separately by period. The most common remains (primarily grains) came from the Árpád Period layers. Fewer samples could be identified from the Late Middle Ages, from which Ferenc Gyulai concluded that production decreased. On the basis of the weeds he reconstructed a well-watered, marshy type of environment. The remains of foodstuffs that could be identified were of outstanding importance.

Anna Zsófia Biller presents the *Animal Bone Finds from the Excavation of Solt-Tételhegy*. Similar to the plant remains, the composition of the zoological finds indicates meadow cultivation and a wooded/shrubby environment covered with aquatic habitats. A prominent phenomenon is that in the middle phase of the Árpád Period the consumption of pork was shown to be of outstanding importance.

The historical study of Attila Zsoldos discusses the *Medieval Landowners of Tétel*. The academic author definitively establishes that the Tétel next to Solt cannot be the same as Titel in Bács County, and that in contrast to József Szentpéteri's hypothesis Anonymus wrote about the latter. However, in addition to this there is an opportunity to distinguish between the medieval sources that mention the Titel/Tétel place names. In the surviving documents medieval Tétel appears as a prominent town with ranking nobles. The author also takes into account sources related to the surrounding settlements, and publishes a map of these.

István Bacskai's essay entitled *Archaeological Reconnaissance with Technical Instrumentation at Solt-Tételhegy* discusses the historical overview and methods of employing metal detectors in archaeology. The author has already made a name through his research using metal detectors in the service of Hungarian archaeology. Following his brief description of the research at Tételhegy he presents a map of the distribution of metal objects and also the finds.

György V. Székely performed an evaluation of *The Numismatic Material Found at Solt-Tételhegy* for the book. The majority of the 225 coins found at the site were discovered with the aid of a metal detector. In terms of their spatial distribution it can be stated that they were found in the highest density in the vicinity of the church. The majority of the coins come from the Late Middle Ages. The number of finds diminishes to an increasing extent moving back in time, all the way to the Roman Period. Characteristically these coins are small change of lower value. The interesting conclusions about economic history are enhanced by detailed descriptions and distribution maps for the various periods.

Enikő Török's essay entitled *Tételhegy on Maps* evaluates the depiction of Tétel from the beginnings to the present-day tourist map.

More than a quarter of the book is taken up by the report entitled *An Árpád Period Village on the Outskirts of Kiskunfélegyháza*, written by Zsolt Gallina, Gyöngyi Gulyás and István Molnár. The authors in just two months in 1997 excavated a total area of 20,000 m² at an earth quarry opened in connection with the construction of the M5 expressway, and brought 213 settlement objects to light. We find here the full reporting on the Árpád Period features that made up about 80% of these. An important factor was that the extensive – and in all likelihood hastily performed – excavation only represented a portion of the site, the rest was destroyed as a result of the earthmoving work. It can hardly be estimated how large a portion of the original extent this is. Although there have already been reports issued previously on the excavation, we can read the final publication in this book. The inhabitants abandoned this single layer settlement that presumably only lasted for a short time, as the archaeologists did not find a destruction layer. The features show the customary composition: semi-subterranean houses (with five kinds of ovens), holes, ditches and pits. The archaeologists determined that three semi-subterranean features were pens. The relatively small amount of pottery also indicates that the settlement was lived in for a short time. The majority of potsherds were cauldron fragments, but there was also some white ware, on the basis of which the settlement can be dated to the 12th–13th centuries. The remains of the buildings are organized in two rows, which indicate roadside development with a saw-tooth orientation. They performed evaluations thoroughly supported with analogies from the secondary sources in connection with every settlement phenomenon and type of find. The report is closed with a summary of the knowledge related to the Árpád Period settlement history of the broader surroundings (Kiskunfélegyháza). In this they included a catalogue of the settlement excavations performed on the outskirts of the city, the cemeteries of the commoners and church locations and reconstructed the road network. Two accompanying essays are related to the full excavation report. In Miklós Szónoky's report entitled *Petrological Account of the Group of Samples from Kiskunfélegyháza, Amler-bánya* he presents the methods for quarrying, working and utilization (in the form of millstones and grinding stones) of the tufa and the other types of stone found. In Beáta Tugya's article entitled *Late Árpád Period Animal Bone Finds from the Kiskunfélegyháza, Amler-bánya Site* she analyzes the zoological materials. It is interesting that a bone anvil made from a horse bone was also found.

In accordance with the requirements for modern scholarly publications, this well designed, richly illustrated book combines the results up to this point from six years of interdisciplinary research planned with scientific aims as well as the observations made during a preventive excavation that lasted barely two months.