

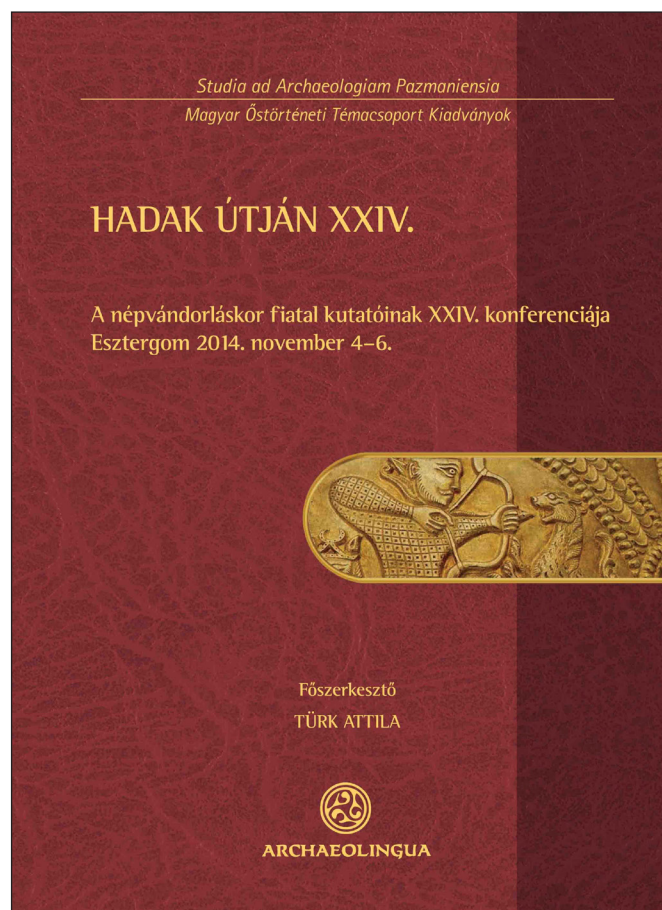
BOOK REVIEW: CSILLA BALOGH & BALÁZS MAJOR (EDS.), HADAK ÚTJÁN [ON THE WARPATH] XXIV

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This book review does not entirely follow the traditional style of reviews. After all, the author of the review is not in every sense an external evaluator and reviewer of the essays found in the volume, since the editors of the book have dedicated the published work to the author of the present text as a birthday gift. Thus, perhaps it is an opportunity for the colleague being honored to reflect and offer his own opinion. In other words, it is like when the person being feted has a chance to respond and share their own thoughts on what has been said during the birthday toasts. For just this reason, the thoughts written here do not deal with all of the studies in the two volumes published on the conference, just those that are related to the author's own area of research. We could even state the common proverb "don't look a gift horse in the mouth" in relation to the topics of the Conquest period and the equestrian burials of the era. However, it is being done here because this noble "gift" is worth reviewing and sometimes even judging as well. Due to this, we are only endeavoring to assess the second volume related to the conference, despite the fact that both publications were completed and dedicated to the present author for his 75th birthday. Perhaps one day the editor-in-chief of these two extensive volumes (a total of 1,689 pages), Attila Türk, himself will let us know what prompted him to issue the works.

Young or young-at-heart researchers, in particular, archaeologists who study the Great Migration Period met for the 24th time in the series of "On the Warpath" conferences in November of 2014. The presentations have been published in two substantial volumes, with the second volume containing studies extending from the second half of the Avar period to the Árpád period. A rather significant chapter in the ancient history of Hungary can be found in the book, comprised mainly of essays sent to the editorial staff. The nearly 820-page volume is divided into three large units. The writings of the first seven authors contain topics from the Avar period. In the second segment, we can read about a range of topics from ancient Hungarian history, while in the third and most extensive section there are ten essays on the conquest period in addition to eight dealing with the early Árpád period. The total of 35 essays are supplemented by the biography of the scholar being honored.



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The first essay of the first section contains a scientific examination of the 75 vessels found from the 372 graves of the Avar cemetery at Dunaszentgyörgy (Tolna County). Since an Avar period ceramics center has already been professionally excavated in Tolna County, its vessels provide a good opportunity to perform a scientific comparative analysis of the ceramics from all other Avar cemeteries. The new vessels from the Avar cemetery have also provided new data for later research. However, the ceramic materials from Avar cemeteries in the area will also certainly bring additional results in connection with the activities of both local potters providing wares for smaller districts and specialized ceramics masters producing goods for more distant markets. The second study on the Avar period presents details from four cemeteries in the Mezőföld region (Fejér county), promising many more in its title than what is presented in the end (Frigyes Szűcsi). Zbigniew Robak examines the Carolingian finds from a Slavic clan center at Bojná (Nyitrabajna) in Nitra County, a center of peripheral Carolingian culture following the Avar period. A team of archaeologists endeavored to catalogue a private archaeological collection (the Old Bulgaria Collection) with museum standing in Varna (Bulgaria). The authors (Gergely Csiky, Péter Langó, Olga Pelevina and others) provide a preliminary report on this in the book, with a presentation of the objects belonging to the Vrap-Erseke find group. The other three essays study anthropological topics.

In the second unit of the book, one can read in Russian about the excavations of two important scenes of ancient Hungarian history. One is about the excavations at Uyelgi (Russia) on the far side of the Urals, and the second is about the excavated graves at Staraya Katerinovka (Ukraine) along the Dnieper. According to our present-day understanding, the latter is from the area referred to as the Etelköz region in Hungarian historical traditions. The most recent excavations on the far side of the Urals, which previously had been difficult to get to and evaluate from Hungary, are taking place in the grassy steppe on the shores of Lake Uyelgi, about 60 km north of Chelyabinsk. Several (preliminary) reports have been produced on the excavations that have been ongoing continuously since 2010, and even from these it is difficult to gain a picture that is satisfying in every respect about their entirety. Thus, the itemized report on the graves in the present volume goes a long way in helping Hungarian experts. However, the finds that are of expressly Hungarian character (rosette mountings on equestrian gear) have elicited heightened interest from both the Russians and the Hungarians. Essentially simultaneous to the writing of the book reviewed here, the third international conference on early Hungarian history and archaeology was held in Budapest (6–10 June 2016), where Sergey G. Botalov provided information on the most recent phases of the excavations at Uyelgi (BOTALOV, 2018). At that time, new details about the earlier excavations also came to light, which we now are able to use. We are able to see a colored outline relief map of the vicinity of the site, while the publication on the Budapest conference presents a vivid panorama photograph of the grassy steppe landscape. There was a communal cemetery on the lakeshore, where the deceased were buried in tumuli. However, the tumuli were so low for the most part that today they are essentially imperceptible. According to the published cemetery map, it is possible to trace the outline of each tumulus from the group of graves, but this was rather uncertain in some cases. There are also graves that lie in the areas between the mounds. According to the descriptions, they found over ten burials in each tumulus, but the majority of them had been significantly disturbed since the cemetery was in use over several periods from the very end of the 8th century to the beginning of the 11th century. The presentation of the excavated tumuli is not systematic, so we can see one grave from each kurgan, presumably those that had not been destroyed entirely. According to the publication on the Budapest conference, a total of four kurgans have been fully excavated, and a total of 30 graves were found in these, but only four graves were undisturbed. We can see the photographs of these in the reports and the find materials have been reported in the illustrated tables. The majority of the graves are skeletal and their orientation is west-east, but there are a few cremation burials as well, which have been identified with the Kyrgyz / Kimek population. The scattered finds that had previously been discovered at the site were categorized into five stylistic classes by Sergey G. Botalov, according to the decoration of the mountings. He categorized the undecorated mountings in the first group, parallels of which were characteristic of the 8th century at the excavations in Panjakent. The second stylistic class is comprised of the mountings with floral decorations, while the third group is called ‘Hungarian-style’ due to the Hungarian parallels. The fourth group is related

to this and the distinction seems open to dispute. The Hungarian-style mountings are either very similar or entirely identical to 10th century Hungarian mountings, but unfortunately their function cannot be identified due to their nature as scattered finds. Various kinds of animal bones have also been found in the graves, and an undisturbed full equestrian skeleton has also been uncovered. This, along with the cremation burials clearly indicates the use of the cemetery by a mixed population. Very few vessels have been found in the graves. For the most part these are hand-built vessels with round bottoms of the so-called Kushnarenkovo / Karayakupovo type, but there is a rare-shaped, flat-bottomed vessel with three handles amongst them as well. The study goes on to show the versions of the indicated vessel type with more extensive comparative materials than what usually can be expected from a preliminary report. The Uyelgi cemetery has been dated from the end of the 8th century to the beginning of the 11th century, which they are attempting to confirm with a few radiocarbon tests. Since the Hungarians were already migrating to the west when the cemetery was first used, the Uylegi population was part of a remaining branch of the Hungarians that intermixed with newer arrivals according to the Russian researchers. The Hungarian-style finds are viewed as evidence of continuing communication with the Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin. Although the written sources speak of the tribes that moved to the Danube visiting the Hungarian splinter groups that were moving towards the area of Persia, it is not inconceivable that there were also personal connections with Magna Hungaria. Hungarian research has not yet taken this possibility into account. The continuing excavations provide hope that the latest archaeological evidence of the Hungarians that remained in the east will be found.

The second significant essay of interest to Hungarian ancient history presents the double grave excavated in Staraya Katerinkova (Sergey Razumov, Maria Daragan and Sergey Polin). However, this is not a preliminary report, but a full account of the graves that is satisfactory for the Hungarian reader as well. The burial of the two men, one younger and one older man, perhaps simultaneously interred secondarily in a Scythian kurgan, was discovered as a by-product of the latter's excavation. Since the excavation was begun with a bulldozer and the Hungarian graves were barely 40 cm deep, the ends of each man's skeleton above the head were destroyed and only the bottom part of the vessels next to the head of the older man survived. Otherwise, these two graves are the second authentic Hungarian cemetery excavated by experts along the lower Dnieper River in addition to the Subottsi cemetery. The relatively abundant finds from these two graves along with the other burials that have become known along the Dnieper provide a sufficient basis to identify the first generation of conquest-period Hungarians. The anthropological examination suggests a father-son relationship between the two men (Alekszandra Kozak). Both men had belts decorated with mountings, made from leather covered in gold foil on the elder man and from gilded silver on the younger. There were human forms on the latter, similar to those on the mountings at Subottsi. The younger man had a series of mountings between his legs near his knee, so in other words a decorated strap, on which birds can be seen. There was a series of mountings made of gilded silver about 20 cm from the older man's left leg, which were perhaps from a quiver strap. In addition to these, another decorated strap was found in the older man's grave below his left pelvis at the upper end of his left thigh. The finds from the graves along the Dnieper represent a link between both Magna Hungaria and the Carpathian Basin. The direct contacts show that the Hungarians left their home on the western side of the Urals relatively late and settled along the Dnieper without any stops along the way. The migration occurred around 830, and this information corresponds with the appearance of Hungarians in the written sources as well. The Pechenegs expelled them from their home along the Dnieper about sixty years later. According to this reconstruction, the old Turkic loan words entered the Hungarian language in Magna Hungaria, where the Hungarians must have been in close contact with the Bulgars from the evidence of numerous Bulgar cemeteries (Bolsie Tarhani, Bolsie Tigani, Tankeyeva, etc.). Russian researchers also report on Hungarian tribes migrating from Magna Hungaria in the 9th century (Andrej Belavin, Vladimir Ivanov; Belavin, DANICH & IVANOV, 2015), as do the Hungarian researchers István Bóna (BÓNA, 2000), and István Erdélyi (ERDÉLYI, 1986), and the historian Gyula Kristó (KRISTÓ, 1980) was of a similar opinion. Khazar links cannot be excluded during the time along the Dnieper, since even Kiev paid tribute to the Khazars for a time, so the linguistic influence of old Turkic that has been observed in the Hungarian language continued here as well. If Levedi travelled from

this area to the Khazar Khaganate, then he may have gotten there from the mouth of the Dnieper by boat, thus the phrase meaning an aquatic journey used by Constantine VII is explained (HARMATTA, 1996, 108). This perhaps means that the Pechenegs pushed between the Hungarians and the Khazar Khaganate, with whom they had a hostile relationship. It is certainly a telltale sign that there are important sites of the Saltovo culture in the zone to the west of the Don River, but Hungarian cemeteries are not found there. These would have been expected even though they do show evidence of a series of settlements not only in Magna Hungaria, but also now along the Dnieper River (TÜRK, 2010).

The fourth Russian-language essay in the ancient history section reports on the results of excavations on the cities of Kievan Rus in the last 25–30 years. This is a summary by Natalia Hamayko, who also led a master class on the topic at the conference. A large book was published recently edited by Nikolay A. Makarov (MAKAROV, 2017). In this, Oleksiy V. Komar summarized the new research on Kiev, Chernihiv, Iskorosten (present-day Korosten), Ovruch and other cities. A very condensed excerpt from Komar's two essays can be read in volume 24/2 of *Hadak útján* (On the Warpath). However, it is apparent even from these brief reports that in the wake of the new excavations, the emergence of the Russian cities (Kiev, Chernihiv and Korosten) must be re-dated, for the most part later, and the role of the Scandinavian Rus in the formation of the Slavic principalities must be rethought. From a Hungarian perspective, we receive relatively greater information about the research into Chernihiv and Kiev from the brief study, but the author essentially only mentions early Iskorosten. However, there are many metal objects related to Hungarians (belt mountings and strap decorations) amongst the archaeological finds from this city that fell and was destroyed in 945 as a result of the expansion of Kievan Rus, and the book edited by Nikolay A. Makarov provides a nice selection of these. Ovruch was famous far and wide for their spindle wheels and the products made there from slate, some of which even made it to the Carpathian Basin.

The 10 studies in the ancient history block deal with seven historical issues. Yaroslav Pilipchuk delves into the disputed problems of the Bashkir-Hungarian relationship. János B. Szabó and Balázs Sudár discuss one of the legendary ancestors of the Árpáds, Ügek. Gábor Gyóni sets forth his opinion related to the home of those Hungarians that remained in Magna Hungaria, and he also shows that a Hungarian by the name of Ugrin immortalized himself amongst the early wall inscriptions at the Saint Sophia cathedral in Novgorod. Dániel Bácsatyai draws attention to a record from Reichenau that had remained “unnoticed” until now, which mentions one of the pilgrimage sites from 9th century Pannonia, presumably Zalavár. Olivér Kápolnás writes about the notable places and sites he has revisited in the Mongolian Plains (sites of the election of khans and the kurultai).

The third unit of this celebratory volume contains ten essays about conquest period cemeteries, grave groups, burial remains and object types. The analysis of the cemetery at Vörs and the presentation of its finds is more suited to arousing attention than seriously providing information, with the exception of its descriptions of graves and finds (L. Költő – B. Hegyi). Sándor Varga describes the relics from three conquest period sites in Rösztke and pays heightened attention to the boots with metal mountings from these materials. However, following the categorization of the sites according to László Révész, he leaves the elaboration of them for a later essay. Péter Straub and Gábor Tóth describe a cemetery section of a few graves in Alsónemesapáti (Zala County), while Péter Langó, Zoltán Rózsa, László Lichtenstein and János Balázs along with the anthropologist Antónia Marcsik report on the graves in Nagyszénás (Békés County). Their attention is focused on discussing battle wounds in the wake of the injuries on one of the human skeletons. Gabriella Lezsák writes about one of the types of burial customs, broken bows placed in the grave. Márta Kissné Bendefi, Zsolt Petkes and Attila Türk report on the craft of leather processing in ancient times on the basis of the remains of a leather sabertache from the Sárbogard cemetery and a few other early medieval leather finds from Hungary and Eastern Europe. Szabina Merva examines the opportunities in researching conquest period pottery, placing an emphasis primarily on issues of chronology/dating. An essay with multiple authors analyzes the origin, role and significance of axe-shaped amulets in early Árpád period Hungary starting from the circumstances surrounding recent finds of this type in Hungary. As they are characteristically not grave goods, but instead settlement finds, they also provide assistance in dating

11th century settlements. The essay in its original form in Russian was also in the aforementioned book on the Budapest conference, but the previous data have been supplemented with the inclusion of new finds and new co-authors (in addition to Ágnes Füredi, Attila Türk and Bertalan Zágórhidi Czigány, the new co-authors are Ágnes Király, Dániel Pópity and Szabolcs Rosta; TÜRK & ZELENKOV, 2018). An expressly anthropological essay is also included amongst the conquest period topics. Antónia Marcsik and Erika Molnár present a group of cemeteries in the region between the Danube and Tisza rivers in a separate study.

The chronological framework of the other eight essays is provided by 11th–12th century topics. They include minor find reports such as the publication of the 11th century church and cemetery in Abasár (Heves County) (Zoltán Tóth), the report on the 11th century cemetery section in Baks (Csongrád County) (Csilla Balogh, Gábor Lőrinczy, Attila Türk, Sándor Varga) and studies on the history of objects, such as the essay on hair / veil pins in 12th century Transylvanian cemeteries (Erwin Gáll, Zsolt Nyárádi). Zsolt Gallina and Gyöngyi Gulyás report on the relics of the Mongolian invasion (1241) in Csanádpalota. Two essays deal with the production techniques of metal objects (Béla Török, Árpád Kovács) and ceramics (Péter Véninger). The topic of anthropology is also represented by two essays in this section, one presenting the anthropological materials from a site in Csárdaszállás (Békés County) (Zsolt Bereczki) and the other analyzes the tuberculosis lesions observed on the skeleton in grave 187 of the Pósdomb site in Győr (Eleonóra Juhász et al.). Balázs Tihanyi and György Pálfi take note of problems on the borderline between biology and archaeology. They searched for the evidence of bow use on bones where the muscles used in drawing a bow attach. It seems that their hypothesis that the powerful muscle work represented by drawing a bow leaves visible traces on certain bones can genuinely be proven. However, we are not sure whether this “hazard of the trade” was only typical of warriors.

If we consider the entirety of the book, then it is possible to state without any bias that this volume is amongst the better of the flood of commemorative books. The overwhelming majority of the essays are reports on materials and archaeometric examinations. Due to this, it will be a publication that is read for a long time. Naturally, in conclusion we can find an adage from our past as an equestrian nation, “every Gypsy praises their own horse”. The quality of the book is influenced by the person of the editor-in-chief, in part through the choice of authors and in part through the assurance of quality. Whether there was a need for this work will come to light through the number of citations. I entrust the readers for further judgement, hoping that through the two volume Esztergom conference publication, Hungarian archaeology has not only been provided with one of its largest books, but also one that is useful and will be read with great impact abroad as well.

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