

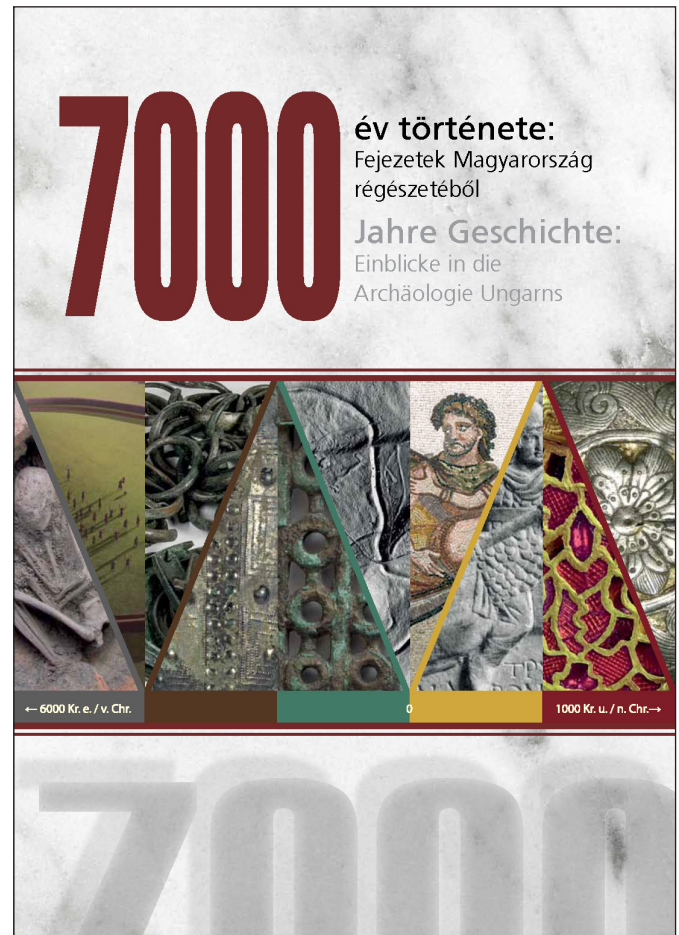
7000 ÉV TÖRTÉNETE: FEJEZETEK MAGYARORSZÁG RÉGÉSZETÉBŐL 7000 Jahre Geschichte: Einblicke in die Archäologie Ungarns [7000 years of history: Chapters from the archaeology of Hungary]

VIKTÓRIA KISS – GERGELY CSIKY

This bilingual (Hungarian and German) volume, published in Germany, puts out a series of papers on Hungarian archaeology, presented by Hungarian and German specialists in the Institute of Archaeology of the Freie Universität Berlin. These studies cover a long period, from the Neolithic to the founding of the Hungarian kingdom, and present the material culture throughout these centuries in a plain language, with numerous color illustrations. The narrative chapters focus on specific questions of history, while special objects and archaeological phenomena are discussed as separate case studies. Maps showing the archaeological sites discussed in the text help the reader's orientation at the beginning of each chapter. The first half of the book focuses on the six millennia of Prehistory in the area of present-day Hungary, while the second half reviews the thousand years between the Roman occupation and the Hungarian Conquest.

The preface introduces the preparations for the book (pages 5-6), followed by an introductory chapter, both by Orsolya Heinrich-Tamáska (pages 11-32). The latter provides an overview of modern scientific methods that have been utilized in archaeology in the past decades with increasing intensity, from bioarchaeology to archaeometric studies on different techniques of measurements, from the methodology of climate history to the scientific dating of archaeological finds. The case studies presented throughout the book provide excellent examples on how such multidisciplinary approaches broaden the horizon of the humanities in general.

In the first chapter, Eszter Bánffy discusses the spread of food production in Europe in the Neolithic (pages 33-50). Groups that arrived from the Balkans to the Carpathian Basin and continued their journey to the north, spreading from present-day France to the Ukraine and passing through different ecological and social zones, disseminated the knowledge of plant cultivation, animal husbandry, and pottery production. Although this expansion has been explored by scholarship with the aid of multidisciplinary methods—such as climate history, archaeogenetics, and archaeometry—archaeologists who specialize in the research of



7000 év története: Fejezetek Magyarország régészetéből
7000 Jahre Geschichte: Einblicke in die Archäologie Ungarns [7000 years of history: Chapters from the archaeology of Hungary].

Edited by
Orsolya Heinrich-Tamáska and Daniel Winger.
Remshalden: Verlag Bernhard Albert Greiner,
2018.

282 p
ISBN 978-3-86705-085-2

Neolithic communities are still puzzled by the drives behind these revolutionary changes. One plausible explanation for the need to move is the trade in salt and stone as raw material, two of the most important assets in the life of early communities. However, the aim to settle in a different area and put new lands into agricultural use may also have been an important factor. In her study, Judit P. Barna presents a typical archaeological phenomenon of the Neolithic, the so-called circular enclosures or rondels; these constructions shed light on the astronomical knowledge and ritual behavior of people who lived in the Carpathian Basin six thousand years ago. The enclosures were made of wood and soil, required a collaboration of large communities, and may have been associated with symbolic attempts to “tame the world.”

Klára P. Fischl and Róbert Müller outline the current hot topics in the research of Bronze Age settlements, and discuss two recent projects. During the investigation of Middle Bronze Age tell settlements habited between 2000 and 1500 BC, a new and complex ‘research package’ was utilized. The so-called BORBAS project used a range of non-invasive methods, such as systematic field walks, magnetometric surveys, and aerial photography, to demonstrate the network of a tell-like central settlement (1-2 m high dwelling hill) spread over one hectare, and other hamlets around it, spread over an area of 10 hectares. Further research is needed to answer the question how this regional system of compeer villages fit to the overall, at least two-level settlement network in the Carpathian Basin, and to the trade routes of bronze, the most important raw material in the period. Róbert Müller also presents an important later hilltop site, settled from 1100 BC, and excavated in Várköly in the early 2000s. This village demonstrates the changes in the second half of the Late Bronze Age: in addition to bronze jewelry and prestige weapons, agricultural tools and craftsmen’s appliances of everyday use were also made of bronze. This is clearly shown by the 600 bronze artifacts, 12 bronze hoards, and two golden treasures, brought to light from an excavation area covering only 3% of the whole settlement. In a small essay within this chapter (pages 70-71), Gábor Ilon discusses a treasure assemblage of gold from the Late Bronze Age, unearthed from Velem-Szent Vid hegy, and identified as the clothing accessories and jewelry of a high-status woman.

Several authors cooperated in writing the chapter about the Iron Age (pages 91-126). Éva Ďurkovič’s contribution discusses recent advances in the study of early Iron Age settlements in Transdanubia, habited during the 5th-8th c. BC, while Attila Molnár provides an excellent summary of burial practices. These essays are supplemented with Csilla Gáti’s review of new research projects on the early and late Iron Age, around present-day Pécs. A joint contribution by Erzsébet Jerem and Károly Tankó explores the archaeological heritage of the late Iron Age, a result of the encountering early Iron Age groups and Celtic communities that migrated into the area along the Danube in the 4th c. BC. Scholarship in the 1990s brought along new advances in the research of their fortified, urban-like settlements of the period. Large-scale rescue excavations preceding motorway constructions also produced significant new information, facilitating a deeper understanding of the settlement structure in the Iron Age. Interdisciplinary methods started to be utilized, such as the scientific analysis of pottery production and typological variations, archaeometallurgic studies on bronze and iron, and archaeozoology, yielding compelling results in terms of both settlement and cemetery studies. The 3D reconstructions of craftsmen’s workshops and dwelling houses help the interpretation of the archaeological heritage of Iron Age peoples for the wider public. Recent investigations that operate with a combination of aerial photography and field walks should be continued systematically in the years to come. The short case study in this chapter (pages 112-113), written by Ádám Szabó, discusses an extraordinary artifact made by Celtic goldsmiths: the insignia of a nobleman.

The Roman period of the Carpathian Basin is discussed both from a Roman and a barbarian perspective. The Barbaricum is represented here by Sarmatian tribes that habited the Great Hungarian Plain, i.e. the Iazyges, the Roxolani, and the Alans. This is no wonder, because they are well-researched and archaeological finds associated with them are abundant (pages 127-146). Valéria Kulcsár provides an overview of the history, archaeology, and migrations of the Sarmatians of Iranian origin, and summarizes their archaeological heritage in Eastern Europe. This chapter is mainly historical in character. The historical introductions are frequently illustrated with primary sources, and the focus then turns to the available archaeological findings. In the case of the Iazyges, e.g., the chapter presents Tacitus’s description of king Vannius, fol-

lowed by an essay on early Sarmatian female burials with golden grave goods. The informative narration is interspersed with historical anecdotes, such as the one about 8,000 Sarmatian mounted warriors who settled in Britannia, a story that is thought to have formed the basis for Arthurian legends. The religious life of the Sarmatians has been reconstructed on the basis of the so-called Nart sagas, a series of Ossetian tales from the Caucasus. There was a steep rise in the population at the end of the period, and this was the time when the Sarmatians took on the extraordinary enterprise of building the so-called Limes Sarmatiae, also known as the Csörsz or the Devil's Dykes, more than 1200 km in length. The author hypothesizes the survival of these tribes even after the Hunnic period. The chapter is complemented by an essay by Gyöngyi Gulyás on Sarmatian female garment (pages 174-156), the most important specialty of which is the extensive use of glass pearls sewn on the outer garments, the sleeves, the belt, or the trousers. The highlighted case study in this chapter (pages 134-135) presents an iron shield-boss covered with gilded silver, brought to light at Herpály.

While Sarmatians habited the Great Plain, the Roman Empire created its own administration, hierarchical settlement network, and complex economy on the other side of the Danube, in the province of Pannonia. After an exhausting geographic introduction, László Borhy discusses how Pannonia was conquered, the province organized, the native population integrated into the imperial system, and how towns were founded and the border guards set up, as Pannonia was a borderland (pages 157-176). Art, primarily the making of frescos and mosaics, flourished in the towns as well as in the villas outside them.

In the 5th century, the Roman Empire's power quickly diminished. The study by Orsolya Heinrich-Tamáská (pages 177-186) demonstrates, however, that this change did not necessarily mean a demographic or cultural break of the local population. The author has been involved in the research of the Roman castellum of Keszthely-Fenékpuszta since 2006, within the framework of a joint German-Hungarian archaeological project and made important contributions to the debate on Roman continuity. This fortress, built in the mid-4th century, is a typical example of Pannonian forts situated not on the limes, but inside the province. Continuity was researched here first and foremost through cemetery material; in addition to 4th-5th-century burials, another large cluster of graves date from the 6th-7th century, and Carolingian burials as late as from the 9th century have been documented as well. Recent research shows that the Roman population merged with new groups, and used the fort and its Christian basilica until the mid-7th century without interruptions. A community with late Antique cultural characteristics survived around Keszthely even into the 8th century. In the 9th century, however, the fort was briefly occupied by a small Carolingian garrison, and the main center of the region shifted to present-day Zalavár.

After the Hunnic era, a period of Germanic kingdoms followed in the Carpathian Basin, both in the Great Hungarian Plain and in Transdanubia. In the eastern part of the region, in the Great Plain and in Transylvania, a Gepidic kingdom was established, while the former province of Pannonia was occupied by the Lombards. The 5th-6th-century Merovingian archaeological heritage of the region is discussed by two specialists (pages 187-210): Zsófia Rácz, who has researched the Gepids for years, and Tivadar Vida, a distinguished scholar involved in excavations and international projects on the Lombards; the latter is also known as the organizer and publisher of István Bóna's unpublished manuscripts on the topic. The historical introduction features a wide range of primary sources, followed by a general introduction into early Gepidic archaeological findings and settlements; this part is based on the research of János Cseh and Ágnes B. Tóth. In the discussion of the cemeteries, the authors bring attention to the typical jewelry, clothing, and grave goods, as well as the widespread custom of artificial cranial deformation. The importance of the huge 6th-century row cemeteries is emphasized. Gepidic cemeteries and settlements are mainly presented through findings in the Great Plain, the discussion of "royal" finds and centers focuses on Transylvania, where these were unearthed.

The Lombard occupation of Pannonia was short-lived and temporary, and so scholars face interesting methodological questions in their research. Lombard history as we know it consists mainly of royal marriages and wars, while their archaeological heritage is dominated by cemeteries and burials; that's why their settlements are discussed only in a concise form. Compared to the chapter about the Gepids, the

discussion of the Lombard cemeteries is based more on funerary monuments and burial customs. It is worth to mention here that burials surrounded by a circular or rectangular ditch, known from western Merovingian territories, have recently been identified in the Lombard material. Bioarchaeological research made significant contributions, including studies on strontium isotopes revealing the mobility of the Lombard population. These results, produced primarily within the framework of a joint German-Hungarian project on the cemetery of Szólád, are presented in the book by Uta von Freeden and Daniel Winger (pages 211-220). This small cemetery had only a few graves and was used for a short period of time, and therefore it was suitable for a study on Lombard migration and the character of the population. Uta von Freeden attempted to separate the Lombard and the Romanized local population through complex natural scientific methods, examining their nutrition, genetic connections, and migration patterns. A patrilocal community lived at Szólád in the 6th century, with women who had a much more varied genetic background than men. All the adults in the cemetery were migrants, only the children were born in this area. This shows how important individual mobility must have been: the traditional concept of migrations in this period should be revised, and movements of small communities, covering relatively small distances, must be considered.

A central topic in the Migration-period history of the Carpathian Basin, as well as in the early history of the Hungarians, is the arrival and settlement of eastern steppe peoples: the Huns, the Avars, and the conquering Hungarians. Hungarian scholarship was dominated from the 19th century onwards by a romantic interest in the heritage of nomadic mounted warriors, a trend that Csanád Bálint called “Orient preference.” As opposed to this positive and mythical picture, historiography identified nomadic peoples with savagery, ruggedness, and greediness from the Antiquity onwards. The study by Orsolya Heinrich-Tamáská (pages 221-244) discusses the history and archaeological heritage of these peoples of eastern origin from the point of view of such topoi. The study focuses mostly on the eastern analogies of the archaeological finds, but it is important to note that these do not necessarily evidence migration but reflect the fashion of a period, as the author rightly emphasizes. She discusses the Hunnic period as a heterogeneous “Eastern Germanic complex along the Danube,” highlighting artificial cranial deformation, diadems, Hunnic cauldrons, and burial sacrifices as notable characteristics. From the Avar period, she identifies the typical sacrificial finds (or caches), niche graves, and belts ornamented with pseudo-buckles as the most important Eastern elements of culture. It is important to note, however, that these three phenomena have analogies in different regions; pseudo-buckles may have a Byzantine origin. The archaeological heritage of the Hungarian conquest is presented in the volume primarily through partial horse burials and the eastern analogies of sabretache plates. Following the topoi of Antique historiographers, mounted archery, the hunger for gold, and their archaeological remains are discussed in this chapter in detail.

The last study in the book (pages 245-252) focuses on a small cemetery from the time of the Hungarian conquest, for which archaeogenetic information is available. Written by Péter Langó, Rozália Kustár, and Aranka Csősz, this paper is an important test of a theory that gained foothold in Hungarian scholarship. Cemeteries of this period have been, at least partly, viewed as burial places of traditional extended families or nuclear families. However, research on mitochondrial aDNA of people interred in the cemetery at Harta-Freifelt in the Danube-Tisza Interfluve revealed no matrilineal connections. Such diversity in the genetic record excludes the possibility to interpret the site as a family cemetery; it must have been used by a larger community, and for a short period of time.

The authors and editors of the volume took on a great challenge with organizing the bilingual texts and presenting 7000 years of heritage in chronological tables. This ambitious book, supplemented by a number of color illustrations, provides a cross section of Hungarian archaeological research. No doubt, this volume will be frequently used and referenced in the decades to come.