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BOOK REVIEW: FOCUS ON THE MOTORWAY PATH VOLUME 2.

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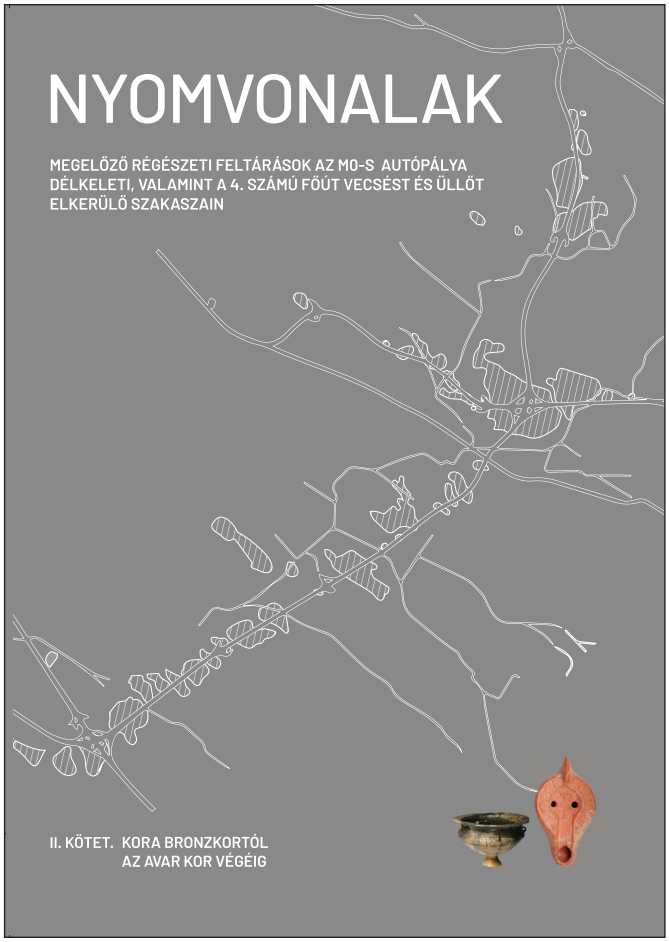
Entitled The natural environment and Copper Age sites, the first volume, published in 2024, introduces the research carried out between the summer of 2001 and the spring of 2006 (on a stretch of 36 kilometres with 47 sites) in the southern and south-eastern section of the M0 motorway and along the section of the Road 4, bypassing Vecsés and Üllő. This book was reviewed on pages 45–47 of Vol. 14 (2025), Issue 1, of Hungarian Archaeology. Therefore, the general background is not repeated here.



Patay, Róbert & Rajna, András (eds.).
Nyomvonalak. 2. kötet: Megelőző régészeti feltárások az M0-s autópálya délkeleti, valamint a 4. számú főút Vecsést és Üllőt elkerülő szakaszain.
[Focus on the motorway path Volume 2. Environmental Historical Research of the Sites in the Path of Motorway M0 and the Vecsés and Üllő Bypass of Road 4].
Szentendre: Ferenczy Museum Centre, 2025.
Soft cover, 231 p., colour and black-and-white illustrations

Save for a different title, Volume 2 has the same cover as Volume 1. Following a brief foreword by the editors, it contains fifteen studies ranging from the Early Bronze Age to the end of the Avar Period by eleven authors. Six apply a classic archaeological approach, one deals with lithic material, another one is written from an archaeological, and seven others from an anthropological-archaeological perspective. As already indicated by the list, there is a large number of archaeozoological studies, which is a welcome trend. Each paper is concluded with a list of the relevant literature and an English-language abstract. I am pleased to see that, unlike in Volume 1, captions are included in English, as well as in Hungarian.

Due to limitations of space, my review concentrates on the periods of my main interest, the Bronze and Iron Ages.

Róbert Patay discusses Bronze Age sites in the southern part of the Pest Plain, located along the motorway's path (pp.7–31). In the case of Vecsés 83, he focuses on the Early Makó horizon, while in the cases of Vecsés Site 54 and Üllő Site 5, he presents settlement remains from the late phase of the Early Bronze Age (pp. 7–31). The associated features include a deposit found at Üllő, with casting moulds and a casting ladle, suggesting a metal workshop; the results were published already in 2005. At the site Ecser 6 – Maglód 1, archaeological features attributed to the Bell Beaker Culture have been identified. Radiocarbon results from the past 15 years concur the results of processing of the find material obtained from the path of the then.-future motorway: communities of the Late Makó, Bell Beaker, and Nagyrév Cultures lived side by side in the same space and at the same time, outlining a cultural patchwork akin – based on recent data – to the settlement pattern of the coeval Transdanubia.

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Beáta Tugya evaluated the Early Bronze Age archaeozoological record (pp. 32–39). The small number of finds all seem to originate from kitchen waste. In the Makó sites, cattle and small ruminants seem to have been present everywhere, with horses appearing only in the late phase. Among the hunted animals, only red deer can be confirmed in the early Makó communities. The Bell Beaker settlement is characterised already by a classic pattern: domesticated animals include cattle–sheep, sheep/goat–swine–horse, and dog. The most important hunted animals are red deer and wild boar. Four bone tools have also been found at the site. Tugya argues that the most marked difference is not between the sites of the Makó and the Bell Beaker Culture, but rather between the settlements of the two cultures located in different geographical settings. I would advise more caution though when drawing such conclusions, because the sites of the two cultures have been excavated only in very limited areas, namely at the points designated by building plans. For assessing the role of fishing in the economy, we know well that as long as we collect fish bones relying on our own hands and eyes, the 'findings' cannot be regarded as more than interesting observations. A more realistic picture will only be gained when dry sieving, levigation, and possibly archaeological flotation become regular part of the excavation practice.[2]

Norbert Nándor Nagy introduces a completely(!) unearthed Urnfield cemetery from Maglód. The site comprises 48 graves in an area of 50 × 60 metres (pp. 40–59). Nevertheless, according to the author, some burials likely have not been excavated, as they were in the topsoil that was removed by machines. A total of 37 scattered cremation and 11 urn burials have been documented. No pyre place or pit with burnt sides has been found. Bronze items were found in 17 graves, but not a single weapon, tool, implement, or pot was among them. The cremains recovered from 37 graves could be studied. The author gives a thorough analysis of the of vessel types in the cemetery, citing parallels from the vicinity and the broader region. I would particularly point out the two boot-shaped vessels and the two feeding vessels. The five spindle whorls imply textile making. The rattles must have served several functions, including childrearing and dancing. The cemetery is probably dated to the Ha A–B1 period, prior to the so-called Vál II period. Tamás Hajdu and Ivett Kővári present the results of the anthropological examination of the graves (pp. 60–63). Only in two cases was it possible to define the the buried person's gender because of the small amount of ashes (the average weight of cremated bone fragments unearthed in the scattered ash graves is 107.2 grams). The age of the deceased could be determined in 26 cases (12 adults and 14 children). On the questions of the total number of graves (48 or 47) and dual burials, there is some contradiction between the archaeological and anthropological studies. In her contribution on food offerings, Beáta Tugya discusses ten burials (pp. 64–69) with bones from 37 animals indicating the addition of meat dishes to the grave. Of these, 27 are pig bones, seven cattle bones, while the rest are small ruminant, horse, and chicken bones: 56% per cent come from meaty limbs. The fact that chicken bone has been identified is crucial because we have an increasing amount of data to prove that chicken appeared in the Late Bronze Age. The two graves in the Szombathely-Zanat cemetery are missing from the comprehensive list of Hungarian parallels of food offerings in graves.

A significant settlement of the Scythian Vekerzug Culture, with 22 post-framed outbuildings, was partly unearthed at Vecsés, Site 4. Some of feature clusters indicate 'plots'. Of the find material, a pottery body stamp (Fig. 20. 1) and the tinkering of broken vessels (Fig.11) should be highlighted. The settlement published by Róbert Patay is another piece of evidence for the occupation of the Pest Plain; he dates it to the HA D1–D2 period (mid-6th–5th century BC) (pp. 70–101). It must be noted tha mechanical soil removal excludes any possibility to find traces of one-time surface architecture. A conscientious overview of the some four thousand animal bones excavated in the settlement is given by Andrea Kőrösi (pp. 102–111). Of this huge amount of data, I would highlight the three chicken bones.

János Kalmár examined the lithic material of the site, dating from the Scythian and Roman Imperial

[2] A pertinent example: Ilon, G., Bartosiewicz, L. & Galik, A. (2016): Research tradition and the archaeological reconstruction of fishing in the Small Hungarian Plain. *Magyar régészet.* http://www.magyarregeszet.hu Winter. In the same place, insects have also been found through dredging: Merkl O. & Ilon G. (2012): Rovarmaradvány egy római kori kútból Ménfőcsanak–Széles-földekről. Insect remains found in a Roman Age well located in the lands of Ménfőcsanak–Széles-földek. *Archaeometriai Műhely* IX/1: 53–56.

Periods.[3] Most stone finds (grindstone, whetstone, and building material for ovens) are of Pannonian limestone quarried in the vicinity, but some come from the Börzsöny, the Cserhát, the Buda Hills, or Northern Hungary. The author has also identified slag with iron pellets and lumps of limonite, a kind of iron ore, suggesting possible Sarmatian metallurgy in the area. János Kalmár's manuscript was edited for publication by co-author Róbert Patay (pp. 112–123). Beáta Tugya also processed the ca. 1,000-piece Scythian archaeozoological material from Ecser, Site 6 – Maglód 1 (pp. 124–133). The general picture aligns with the patterns known from the era; again, two chicken bones and the surprising presence of a brown bear bone should be highlighted. The animal bones from the Celtic settlement in Ecser 6 are also published by Beáta Tugya (pp. 134–139).

The African Red Slip Ware oil lamp from Ecser Site 6 is a unique find dated to the early Hun Period. It is rare because it is the only one from a modern archaeological context in the province of Pannonia; moreover, it was not found on the Roman side. According to the author, Tamás Szabadváry, "the Christian aspect of the *staurogram* in its *discus* may be interpreted as evidence of the religious life around Aquincum" (pp. 140–147).

Zoltán Farkas and Mónika Jászberényi present 28 graves from a partially excavated Late Avar (but still 8th-century) cemetery from Vecsés Site 67. The graves are rather poor in relics – perhaps not by accident, as they were robbed for their content (pp. 148–185). The food and animal offerings of chickens, sheep, and cattle taken from ten graves in the cemetery were analysed by Andrea Kőrösi. It is noteworthy that – unlike in other Avar sites – a rooster was placed in a woman's grave (pp. 186–193). Zoltán Farkas describes a settlement at Üllő Site 10, dated to the first half of the 8th century (pp. 194–215); the archaeozoological record, including animal bones from the Árpád Age and later features, were evaluated by Zsófia Anna Biller (pp. 216–226).

The book concludes with a list of abbreviations and another with the authors contributing to the volume. The photos, sketches, maps, and surveys of the book and the CD are of exquisite quality.

[3] (1937–2023) worked for the Geological Institute of Hungary. From the early 2000s, he was in charge of processing the stone relics of several archaeological sites.