

Paul R. Duffy

**COMPLEXITY AND AUTONOMY
IN BRONZE AGE EUROPE**

**Assessing Cultural Developments
in Eastern Hungary**



BUDAPEST 2014

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Front Cover

Dry land (in grey) suitable for farming within four kilometers
of the Békés-Várdomb tell settlement (in black)

Back Cover

A view of a section of the Fás-ér, a major watercourse in the study area

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Introduction to the Series

We first met in the spring of 1998 at the Békéscsaba museum in southeastern Hungary. After a brief conversation among the shelves in the *raktár* we decided to continue our conversation at the wine bar in the center of town later in the evening. The talk went well. To be honest it went better than we ever could have anticipated. Personal and professional issues faded into each other. The twilight of the evening turned into dark, then into the starry skies of early morning. We found ourselves drinking *pálinka* in a corner booth inside a loud club.

Conversations about the technical and logistical details of Bill's doctoral dissertation unrecognizably slid into discussions about past and current loves. Different perspectives were proposed about the prehistory of the Körös Region, the Great Hungarian Plain and all of southeastern Europe. We had friendly disagreements about which *pálinka* tastes better. As the night went on and the waitress cleaned our table, we began to contemplate the then improbable prospect of working together collaboratively in the future. Lacking paper, we grabbed some coasters and made a sketch that basically summarized a research design for the next 5-10 years. The coasters were lost that night, but the ideas remained. This series, at least in part, represents the fruition of many of the collaborative ideas that were hatched that night.

The story continues with the establishment of the Körös Regional Archaeological Project the same year. Our goal was to examine the socioeconomic changes that occurred on the Great Hungarian Plain and in the broader region throughout prehistory using the Körös Basin as a laboratory for these investigations.

The Körös Region has been a hot spot for regional scale archaeological research in Eastern Europe for the past few decades. The Archaeological Topography of Hungary project, aimed at mapping the archaeological sites of Hungary, was launched in the late 1950s by the Archaeological Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. As part of that project, team members conducted field surveys in the Körös Region from the late 1960s to the mid-1990s. The resulting, massive, database of thousands of sites from the Neolithic through the 17th century, covering nearly 4,000 km², has been published in three volumes from the beginning of the 80s and another one currently is being prepared.

János Makkay first used the survey data to answer specific scientific questions regarding Neolithic settlement organization in his seminal book that was published in 1982. About the same time, Andrew Sherratt and his Hungarian collaborators carried out a thorough, internationally recognized, examination of changes in settlement patterns and social organization from the Neolithic to the Bronze Age in the Szeghalom microregion of the Körös area. Based on the results of the archaeological topographic surveys, the Archaeological Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences also conducted a micro-regional scale research program in the vicinity of Gyomaendrőd in the western part of the Körös Basin in the 1980s. The goal of the Settlement Archaeology Project was to gain a better understanding of the changes in the occupation history of the microregion from the Neolithic to the Middle Ages by employing a multidisciplinary approach that included excavations, field surveys, paleoenvironmental studies, and geophysical surveys. Attila's studies on Iron Age settlement pattern and Bill's doctoral dissertation research on the social organization of the Neolithic and Copper Age societies of the Körös Region also were based on the important results of the archaeological topographic surveys.

In the past 15 years the Körös Regional Archaeological Project has applied a wide variety of different methodological tools at multiple sites in the Körös Region. During our regional exploration of the Late Neolithic and Early Copper Age, we have conducted systematic surface collections, excavations, and paleoenvironmental studies as well as many kinds of geochemical and geophysical surveys. These

different research programs have brought together dozens of specialists and students from Hungary, North America and all over Europe. In addition to the scientific results, the establishment, maintenance, and continuous extension of this collaborative international network have been one of the most important aspects of the project. Numerous North American and Hungarian students, many of whom started as undergraduates on the project, developed topics for their Bachelors and Masters theses based on the prehistory of the Körös Region. Several of them launched their own independent research projects that have resulted in doctoral dissertations.

This book is the first volume of a series that is the joint effort of the Körös Regional Archaeological Project and the Archaeolingua Foundation. The series will present the results of recent archaeological investigations on prehistory in the Körös Region and on the Great Hungarian Plain. In the framework of the series, our primary goal is to publish the American and Hungarian doctoral dissertations that have been written in the past few years. In addition to the first six volumes of this kind, our long-term goal is to provide high-quality publication opportunities for monographs on prehistoric research in the Körös Region and the neighboring areas. We believe this initiative will serve as a good example for regional scale archaeological research in Europe and worldwide, and will contribute to the establishment of additional archaeological projects in the Körös Region and on the Great Hungarian Plain. We can only hope that some of those new projects will be as collaborative, productive, and long-lasting as ours has been.

Attila Gyucha and William A. Parkinson
Series editors

Table of Contents

Introduction to the Series	5
List of Figures	9
List of Tables	13
Acknowledgements	17
Chapter 1: Introduction	19
Theoretical Context	19
A General Approach for a Specific Trajectory	20
Structure of the Book	21
Chapter 2: Bronze Age Europe, the People Without History	23
Part I: Wealth, Indo-Europeans, and the Conquest of Gaul	25
Part II: Analogy, Homology and Models for the Bronze Age	34
Part III: The Social Context of Bronze	40
Conclusion	42
Chapter 3: Background to a Study of Middle-Range Society	45
Intellectual Framework	45
Dimension 1: Primary Unit of Food Production/Consumption	56
Dimension 2: Segmentation	58
Dimension 3: Household Distinctions	59
Dimension 4: Access to Exotics	60
Dimension 5: Craft Production	61
Dimension 6: Demographic Scale	62
Dimension 7: Intensification of Food Production	63
Dimension 8: Regional Consolidation	64
Conclusion	65
Chapter 4: The Geoenvironmental Setting	67
Part I: Terrain and Hydrology	67
Part II: Resources for Inhabitants of the Körös Basin	76
Vegetation and Fauna in the Bronze Age	78
Conclusion	81
Chapter 5: The Archaeological Context in the Körös Region	83
Part I: Archaeological Background to the Bronze Age	83
Part II: Bronze Age Körös Research and Chronology	85
Part III: Thematic Overview of the Middle Bronze Age	100
Conclusion	107
Chapter 6: Middle-Range Theory for Middle-Range Societies	109
Dimension 1: Primary Unit of Food Production/Consumption	111
Dimension 2: Segmentation	114
Dimension 3: Household Distinctions	115
Dimension 4: Access to Exotics	117
Dimension 5: Craft Production	119
Dimension 6: Demographic Scale	123
Dimension 7: Intensification of Food Production	129

Dimension 8: Regional Consolidation	133
Conclusion	139
Chapter 7: A Preliminary Study of Societies in the Körös Region	141
Dimension 1: Primary Unit of Food Production/Consumption	142
Dimension 2: Segmentation	144
Dimension 3: Household Distinctions	149
Dimension 4: Access to Exotics	151
Dimension 5: Craft Production	158
Dimension 6: Demographic Scale	160
Dimension 7: Intensification of Food Production	162
Dimension 8: Regional Consolidation	162
A Preliminary Reconstruction of a Bronze Age Society	163
Required Research	164
Conclusion	165
Chapter 8: The Sites and Assemblages	167
Part I: The <i>Magyarország Régészeti Topográfiaja</i> Project	167
Part II: Surface Collection in the Micro-Region	175
Part III: Magnetometry and Excavation at Open Settlements	184
Part IV: Fortified Settlements Outside the Micro-Region	193
Conclusion	196
Chapter 9: Bronze Age Society in the Körös Region	197
Dimension 1: Primary Unit of Food Production/Consumption	197
Dimension 2: Segmentation	203
Dimension 3: Household Distinctions	206
Dimension 4: Access to Exotics	207
Dimension 5: Craft Production	214
Dimension 6: Demographic Scale	222
Dimension 7: Intensification of Food Production	230
Dimension 8: Regional Consolidation	235
Conclusion: The Middle Bronze Age in the Micro-Region	250
Chapter 10: Regional Consolidation in the Lower Körös Basin	255
Regional Consolidation (Continued)	255
Conclusion: Regional Consolidation in the Körös Basin	274
Chapter 11: The Bronze Age Körös among Middle-Range Societies	279
The Körös Trajectory	279
Complexity in Bronze Age Europe	283
Studying Complexity in Middle-Range Societies	285
Concluding Thoughts	289
Appendix A: Radiocarbon Dates for the Great Hungarian Plain	291
Appendix B: Technical Terms for Middle Bronze Age Ceramics	297
Appendix C: Volumetric Calculations for Tell Excavations in the Lower Körös Basin	303
Appendix D: Process of Data Creation in the GIS	307
Appendix E: Description of Collected Sites	309
Appendix F: Chipped Stone Tool Production	355
Bibliography	357