NEW DATA ON THE LATE COPPER AGE AND EARLY BRONZE AGE SETTLEMENT HISTORY OF BUDAPEST - CSEPEL ISLAND

The Budapest History Museum carried out rescue excavations in 1999 along the track of a gas pipe crossing the northern end of the Csepel Island in a length of about 12 km. The track crossed the archaeological site called Csepel-Vízmű, which is situated about 300 m from the main branch of the Danube in the north-western part of the island (Fig. 1, site 1). Klára Póczy and Tibor Nagy conducted rescue excavations at this site in the spring of 1956. They uncovered a part of a settlement fragment of the late Copper Age Baden Culture (hearths and garbage pits) and graves of the middle Bronze Age Vatya Culture.1 The rescue excavations conducted in the area between 1974 and 1988 unearthed finds from the late Copper Age, settlement features and graves from the early and middle Bronze Age, graves from the Avar period and medieval pits and an open hearth.2 The section of a 600 m long and 7 m broad track of the gas pipe was excavated in 1999. In result 25 features of the late Copper Age Baden Culture (garbage pits and hearths), 24 graves and 16 garbage pits of the early Bronze Age Bell-beaker Culture, 20 urn graves and 1 settlement feature of the middle Bronze Age Vatya Culture, 63 Avar graves, 2 Avar pits and pits, hearths and houses (altogether 27 features) of a village from the Árpádian Period have been unearthed.3 These are the finds that constitute the elements of the horizontal stratigraphy of the archaeological site.

Ferenc Schweitzer’s and Márton Pécsi’s works describe the geomorphology of the Csepel Island.4 The Csepel Island is a drained flood plain. The oldest surface formations seem to be the Old Holocene I/b terrace of the Danube with gravely sand, alluvial mud and clay, and the II/a terrace of the Danube (younger Würm) built of sandy gravel and fluviatile sand. The river denuded the surface of the II/a terrace and cut channels into it. In result NNW-SSE aligned terrace islands developed between the channels creating the Old Holocene surfaces, the high flood plain levels, the terrace islands. The archaeological sites of the island can be found on these surfaces. The above described channels were observed and documented several times both on the bank of the Soroksár branch of the Danube and near the main branch of the river, that is at the Csepel-Vízmű site. The main Danube branch was 50–100 m broader in average than at present,5 so the site may have been about 100–150 m far from the Danube bank.

The finds of the late Copper Age Baden Culture from Szigetscél and Szigetőfalú in the Csepel Island were first published by Ferenc Tompa in 1934 then by Pál Patay in 1938.6 János Banner completed the site list of the Csepel Island with the Tököl finds in his monograph edited in 1956.7 Tibor Nagy published some late Copper Age pottery finds from the Csepel-Vízmű site in 1973.8 József Korek published the settlement at Szigetscél-Tangazdaság in 1984,9 then the author of the present paper described the settlement of the late Baden Kosztofán Culture from Szigetzentmiklós-Údülő sor in 1992.10

The following Late Copper Age settlements and settlement traces are known on the northern tip of the Csepel Island within the legal boundary of Budapest (Fig. 1):

1: Csepel-Vízmű. Excavations by Tibor Nagy and Klára Póczy in 1956 and by A. Endrődi in 199911 (Fig. 1, site 1).

2: Csepel-Háros, Csepel-BUCEM. Rózsa Schreiber conducted rescue excavations in the area of the Csepel-Háros plant of the Cement Wares and Stone Industrial Company of Budapest in 196112 (Fig. 1, site 2). There has been a dense part of an early Bronze Age settlement unearthed in the territory of the Cement- and Stone Industrial Company north of the vízművek (Waterworks). The site can be found 400 m from the Danube, next to the Early Bronze Age cemetery and the Baden Culture settlement in the territory of the Csepel-Vízművek. Workers found inhumation graves with skeletons in crouched position on an approximately one and a half metre high sand knoll beside the sand pits in the territory of the waterWorks.

1 Nagy T. BTM A. 1053-79.
3 Excavated by A. M. Horváth, and E. Kovács

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Finds: Flowerpot-shaped cup in light brown fabric with a band handle raised above the rim. The rim fragment of a pot bearing a rib ornament with finger impression. Fragment of an amphora-shaped vessel with brown spots on the surface and oblique channelled ornament. Body- sherded of a brownish grey bowl with inverted rim and channelled ornament. The analogies of these finds can be found among the finds from the sites of the Late Baden Culture at Szikra, Úny and Tlince in Slovakia.3

3. Csepel-Hários-Dunapart (Danube bank). Rescue excavation by Margit Nagy and Rózsa Schreiber in 1974. An Avar grave and the of an early and late Bronze Age settlement were unearthed, and some scattered sherds were also found from the Baden Culture14 (Fig. 1, site 3).

4. Csepel-Mikes Kelen street. The owner of the lot handed in a few sherds that could be completed to the Budapest History Museum in 1960. The hemispherical bowl with inverted rim and a horizontally pierced handle fits Pavukovka’s type H, which is characteristic of the early classical Baden Culture. The finding circumstances are unknown15 (Fig. 1, site 4).

5: Csepel Dunasadő street. R. Schreiber conducted rescue excavations in the track of a gas pipe in 1984. She found scattered pot sherds of the Baden Culture together with Neo lithic and early Bronze Age sherds16 (Fig. 1, site 5).

The following sites of the Baden-Kosztolac Culture are situated along the Râckeve branch of the Danube outside the legal boundary of Budapest: 6. Sziget- szentmiklos-Údülősor17 (Fig. 1, site 6), 7. Szigetscep-Tangazdaság.18

The Csepel-Vizmaj site can be found on a sand knoll east of the wells established along the eastern bank of the Csepel branch of the Danube. The northern part of the N=S aligned knoll has been removed. No ground plan was made of the excavations in 1956, only a tectonic turn excavation report informs about the excavations conducted in three campaigns.19 The present paper will describe some types characteristic of the period.

Bowls. Conical bowls with funnel-shaped mouth (Fig. 3–5). The high, conical bowl without handles matches type “J/3” in Pavukovka’s typology20 (Fig. 2. 4). It is ornamented by vertically incised lines under a double row of grooved notches. Pots. Several types have been uncovered from the late Copper Age settlement. Slightly profiled pots with coarse-grained surfaces (Fig. 2. 2). They occur with the common ornaments, e.g. one or two lug-handles under the rim. A similar item is known from Bina in Slovakia.21 A pot with two band handles placed on the opposite sides of the vessel (Fig. 2. 1), which matches Pavukovka’s type R. A horizontally impressed dot row runs on the body under the rim and above the foot. Between the middle part and the foot there is a hatched triangle motif flanked by rows of impressed dots. Its analogy was found in sector III/b of Červeny-Hradok.22 The finds are characteristic of the classical phase of the culture. The 25 features of the late Copper Age Baden Culture unearthed by the author in 1999 were probably parts of the settlement excavated in 1956. Seven of the settlement features were ovens, from which no. 137 proved to be a unique of its structure in the culture.23

The heating chamber of the oven was lined all around in an oval shape with sherds of a storage jar, which functioned as wind shield. The sherds were discovered standing on the edges. An ashy burnt layer could have been observed within, of which the cross-section showed a black and burnt layer on the top, a grey and ashy layer in the middle and a burnt layer of daub at the bottom above the yellow unbroken ground. The bottom of the ash pit of the thoroughly burnt oven was flat, the pit itself was filled up with ashy soil of humus.

Finds: Fragments of a gynaecomorphic vessel. 1. Thick-walled amphora-shaped vessel burnt red, with protruding, pointed knobs. It was ornamented with impressed dots between bunches of lines running on the bend of the neck and the knobs. 2. Fragments of a thick-walled, polished gynaecomorphic vessel, burnt red. Protruding knobs bordered by dot rows ornament the vessel between horizontal bunches of channeling on the body. Hatched triangle ornaments can be seen under them. Fragments of a large thick-walled, amphora-shaped vessel, secondarily burnt red. Horizontal channeling can be seen on the neck and vertical channeling on the belly.34 Its parallels can be found among the vessels of the Pönyőd horizon at Tekovsky-Hradok although similar items also occurred in the Nevizdany site classified into a younger phase and at the settlement unearthed at Budapest-Andor street. The strong profile of the vessel, which could be reconstructed, reminds already of the large storage jars of the Úny type. Beside the above cited types, fragments of large, pot-shaped vessels were found with notched, slightly inverted rims and with rims ornamented by
impressed ribs. Their parallels can be found, among others, in the material from the site Budapest Andor street.25

F. Gyulai identified the chaffy grain of Hordeum vulgare (barley), the naked grain of Triticum turgidum subsp. Dicoccum (emmer), the naked grain of Triticum aestivum subsp. Compactum (dwarf wheat) and grain fragments of Cerealia (cereals) during the archaeobotanical analysis of the soil samples from the oven.26

An earlier paper already dealt with the typology of gynaecomorphic vessels,27 so only the followings will be emphasised in the present publication. An analogy of the gynaecomorphic vessels is known from the Cotofeni Culture as well in the form of a sherd with pine branch ornament.28 According to E. Neustupny it is a typical find of the later phase B of the Baden Culture.29 In the opinion of V. N. Pavíková, anthropomorphic vessels are frequent in the older phase of the classical Baden Culture, then she states that the vessel from Felsőzsolca is younger but the ceramic type can no longer be found in the younger classical (Baden phase III) Baden Culture.30 The amphora-shaped vessels with protruding knob ornaments unearthed at Kajdác31, Andor street32 and Csepl–Vízmű sites are younger, they represent the classical phase of the Baden Culture. The gynaecomorphic vessels and their fragments from the classical phase of the Baden Culture can be interpreted as a type variant of the anthropomorphic (gynaecomorphic) vessels of the previous period, a derivation that has lost its religious function. In the case of the Csepl–Vízmű site, the fact that they were broken and built into the structure of the oven justifies this theory.

Feature no. 96 unearthed in 1999 contained ceramics with typological characteristics different from the above-mentioned ones. The diameter of the pit was 210 cm, its depth was 56 cm. It was oval, deepens toward the centre and contained large stones in the upper third of the fills. Finds: Fragments of a brown, spotted cup, with a bipartite disc-handle (Fig. 3. 1). Rim and channelled body fragments of reddish-brown, spotted, thick-walled storage jars (Fig. 3. 2–3), wall fragment of a reddish brown storage jar ornamented by notches and a triple, segmented, applied rib (Fig. 3. 4). Fragments of a brown, polished conical bowl ornamented by rows of impressed dots (Fig. 3. 5). Daub lumps and animal bones were also uncovered in the dark brown filling.

The analogies of the cup with disc-shaped bipartite handle can be found among the finds of the Özd–Piliny group33 (Özd–Kőaljatető34), while the partition between the two “buttons” resembles the handle forms of the Viss group,35 which cannot be observed on the similar disc-handled vessel fragments of the Özd site and the Polgár36 site beyond the Tisza. The conical, angular bowl shape is characteristic of the form variety of the late phase of the Baden Culture, a similar one is known among the finds of the Center cemetery.37 The notched ornament is a forerunner of the ornamental motif of the Kosztolács Culture. It can be said that this find assemblage represents the late phase of the Baden Culture, which directly precedes the Kosztolács Culture. The appearance of the disc-handled cup in the find material of the Budapest, Csepel–Vízmű site evidences, in our view, the existence of contacts between Budapest, the north–eastern territories of Hungary and the south–western part of Slovakia.

The study of the legacy of the early Bronze Age Bell Beaker-Csepel group is associated with Rozsa Schreiber in the territory of the Capital. The sites along the Soroksár branch of the Danube in the Csepel Island within the legal boundary of Budapest are the following ones: Csepel–Hollandi road38 – settlement proton (Fig. 1, site 11), Damjanich J. road – urn grave39 (Fig. 1, site 14), and also Szügentszentmiklós–Üdülősor 3 km from the former sites and the boundary of Budapest – settlement and graves40 (Fig. 1, site 17). The sites along the main branch of the Danube are: Csepel–Háros Danube bank41 – settlement proton and graves (Fig. 1, site 9), Cement factory42 – cemetery and settlement traces (Fig. 1, site 8), Rákóczi F. road43 – inhumation grave with a crouched skeleton (Fig. 1, site 8) and Csepl–Vízmű44 – settlement traces and graves (Fig. 1, site 7).

In 1999, seven urn graves, one inhumation grave with a crouched skeleton, a symbolic grave and an other grave with scattered ashes have been unearthed in the area of Szügentszentmiklós–vízmű (Soroksár Danube bank), an urn grave, an inhumation grave with a crouched skeleton and a symbolic grave were unearthed at the site Budapest, Csepel – II. Rákóczi E.

25 ENDRÔDI 1997. Fig 13. 4-6, Fig 16. 1-6, Fig 23. 1, 5.
28 ROMAN 1976. 30-31, Fig 51. 10.
32 ENDRÔDI 1997. Fig 31. 6.
33 PATAY 1999. 45-56.
34 BANNER 1956. Fig 63. 21; Fig 70. 7,11.
35 BANNER 1956. Fig 80. 6,10.
36 BANNER 1956. Fig 83. 1, 8.
37 KALICZ 1963. Fig 6. 5.
Inhumation grave with crouched skeleton (Fig. 4, Fig. 5.1). It appeared as a N-S oriented oval discolouration. Twenty cm deeper an oblong – shaped darker discolouration indicated the grave. The grave shaft was 180 cm long, the discolouration at the appearance measured 130 cm. The width of the grave was 100 cm, its depth 50 cm. It was intersected by the gas pipe and a Celtic ditch in the north, which destroyed the skull. The skeleton was laid on the left side in a strongly crouched position.

Finds and analogies: 1. Ornamented bone amulet at the shoulder. Arched, crescent-shaped, perforated in the centre. The terminals are rounded, the ornament was incised. L: 13.3 cm, w: 1.2 cm (Fig. 4.1). A single analogous find has been published from Hungary from a grave of the Békásmegyer cemetery.47 Several types of the crescent-shaped bone amulets of the Bell Beaker Culture are known. Items analogous to our one were found with men buried in crouched position in the territory of the Bell-beaker population groups in Burgenland (Deutschkreutz),48 Bohemia and Little Poland.49 They are, accordingly of certainly western origin. We agree with the opinion that the crescent-shaped bone amulets of the Bell Beaker population may have been the antecedents of the crescent-shaped and “winged” pendants of the Nagyrév, Hatvan, Nyírség and Perjámos cultures made first from bone then from bronze,50 although their appearance is dated to an earlier period, phase II of the Early Bronze Age. 2. Stone tool – a retouched blade. At the shoulder. 3. 5 × 2 cm (Fig. 4.2). 3. A convex wrist plate at the right upper arm. It is perforated at the corners and of 10. 8 × 4. 9 cm in size (Fig. 4.3). It usually occurs as a grave good in inhumation burials with crouched skeletons and in graves with scattered ashes. Similar ones are found from burials at Békásmegyer, Csepel. Tököl, Szigetzentmiklós – trench of the water pipe.51 A fragmentary item was found in a pit in the settlement at Szigetzentmiklós – Údülőasor as well.52 It belongs to Sangmeister’s type “C”, which was distributed along the Moldva river, the lower reach of the Elbe (Bohemia) and the middle reach of the Elbe (Germany), and it also occurred in Baden-Württemberg (Rhine region).53 4. Flat copper dagger with the hilt in the western wall of the grave shaft, 8. 1 × 4 cm in size (Fig. 4.4). Similar daggers can be found in graves with scattered ashes (Szigetzentmiklós–Vüzmu).54 In urn graves (Békásmegyer)55 and also in inhumation burials. They appeared in the Bohemian-Moravian region just as well as in the Bell Beaker burials in Little Poland.56 Two types are known in Hungary: one is longer with a rounded or a pointed tip, the other one is shorter with a smaller pointed tip. Both are angled. Small bell beaker with roughly executed striped ornament beside Bell Beaker no. 6 (Fig. 4.5). Rd: 9 cm, bd: 5 cm, h: 7. 2 cm. 6. Bell beaker with striped ornament at the western wall of the grave shaft behind the end of the leg (Fig. 4.6). The stamped ornament is distributed in zones. The band handle starts from under the rim, on which traces of encrustation can be observed in the stamped ornament. Rd: 9. 8 cm, bd: 5 cm, h: 8. 5 cm. 7. Vessel with four perforations on top of bell-beaker no. 8. There is a horizontal lug handle with two perforations under the rim and there are two more holes in the wall of the vessel under the lug (Fig. 4.7). Rd: 17 cm, bd: 5 cm, h: 5 cm. The fragment of a similar vessel was found at the settlement of Csepel-Hollandi road, a bowl with two large long oval perforations and holes on the body was uncovered in grave no. 4 of the Szigetzentmiklós–Alsóbucka site and analogous vessels are known from graves in Moravia.57 It is interesting to note that the bowl at Szigetzentmiklós was placed on the top of the bell beaker that contained the ashes, while the one at Csepel (Rákóczi F road) stood beside the skeleton also on the top of a bell-beaker. We think that this pottery type was used as a kind of a lid and its ritual function was associated with burials. It is possible that bell beaker no. 8 and the fenestrated vessel no. 7 were bound together at the matching holes. 8. Bell beaker with stamped ornament distributed in zones behind the pelvis at the western wall of the grave shaft (Fig. 4.8). Rd: 12 cm, bd: 6 cm, h: 11 cm. Similar items are known, among others, from graves with scattered ashes at Békásmegyer and from inhumation graves at

48 Schreiber 1973. 16.
49 Kalicz-Schreiber 1984. 141; Fig. 40. 1.
50 Oienberger 1936. Fig. 1.
51 Harrison 1980. 35; Fig. 45.
53 Schreiber 1975. Fig. 14. 9; Schreiber 1973. 12; Kalicz-Schreiber 1974. Fig. 16.
54 Endrödi 1992. Fig. 76. 10.
55 Sangmeister 1974. Fig. 9.
57 Schreiber 1974. Fig. 18.
58 Hayek 1957. Fig. 7. 5; Harrison 1980. Fig. 45. 8.
59 Kalicz-Schreiber 1997. Fig. 5. 1.
Szigetszentmiklós. Fragments of this type have been unearthed in settlement features. It has already been observed that bell beakers appear in the same shapes and with the same ornaments as in large territories of Central Europe. A pierced hole can be observed on this bell beaker under the rim.

The listed analogies imply that the inhumation graves with a crouched skeletons can be affiliated to the western group of the Bell-Beaker Culture, especially to the Bell-Beaker population of the Bohemian-Moravian region. The find assemblage is dated from phase II of the early Bronze Age, which is parallel to the Somogyvár – Vinkovci, late Makó-Kosihy Čaka, Nyírség and Protoaunjetitz Cultures.

The soil samples taken from the graves and settlement features unearthed at Szigetszentmiklós-vízmű site contained many archaeobotanical finds, which were analysed by Ferenc Gyulai. He estimated that the people of the culture cultivated three cereal types: six-row barley, millet and chaffy emmer. The cultivated plants and their proportions are identical to the cereal remains analysed from the site 33. Hollandi road, Csepel (excavated by Rózsa Kalicz-Schreiber).

In the territory of the Csepel-Island discussed in this paper (northern tip of the Csepel Island within the legal boundary of Budapest, Fig. 1), the finds of the classical and late phases of the Late Copper Age Baden Culture were unearthed. The settlement traces can equally be found along both the main branch and the Soroksár branch of the Danube. No sites of the culture were found in the inner territories of the island. Similarly no finds have been uncovered so far from the early Bronze Age Makó Culture, the first intensive settlement after the late Copper Age can be demonstrated in the period of the Bell Beaker-Csepel group. A chain of settlements is distributed along both branches of the Danube, which are followed by groups of burials containing the finds of the early Bronze Age Bell Beaker-Csepel group.

58 Kalicz-Schreiber 1974. Fig. 16.
59 Endrődi 1992. Fig. 65. 4.
61 Ferenc Gyulai's kind oral communication, unpublished.
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Schreiber 1973

Schreiber 1975

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A Csepel-sziget északi csúcsán egy gázvezeték nyomvonala, valamint a korábban az M0 autóút déli szakaszán végzett régészeti kutatások, lelemények során, teljes keresztszetet kaphattunk a sziget (Budapest közigazgatási határán belül) betelepüléséről.

A sziget geomorfológiai viszonyaira jellemző, hogy a Duna nem csak felületileg tarolta le a kőszősz, teraszfelszint, hanem medreket vágott bele, melynek következményeként ÉENY-DDK-i teraszszigetek vésődtek ki, köztük futó medervonulatokkal, létrehozva az óholocén felszíneket, magas ártéri szinteket, teraszszigeteket. A sziget régészeti lelőhelyei is ezeken a felszín darabokon helyezkednek el. A fent említett medervonulatokat több alkalommal megfigyeltük mind a soroksári Duna-ág partjánál, mind a Duna fő medre közelében.

Az általunk tárgyalt területen a késő rézkori bádeni kultúra 5 lelőhelye - telepnyomok és sírok - ismeretes, melyek közül a legintenzívebb kutatás 1956-ban, majd 1999-ben, a Csepel-sziget nyugati partja mentén, Csepel-vízmű területén volt, ahol a feltárt telepobjektumok közül 7 bizonyult tűzhelynek.

A Csepel-sziget északi csúcsán feltárt lelőhelyeken előkerült leletanyag többsége a késő rézkori bádeni kultúra klasszikus fázisát képviselik. Csepel-vízmű 96. számú objektumának feltárt lelőhelyének mintegy a felhő alatt látható, melyhez hasonló leleteket szerint az egyes térképes evolúció alatt támadták a területet. A feltárt lelőhelyek közül 7 bizonyult tűzhelynek.

A késő rézkori bádeni kultúra klasszikus fázisát képviselik a Csepel-sziget északi csúcsán feltárt lelőhelyeken előkerült leletek többsége a késő rézkori bádeni kultúra klasszikus fázisát képviselik. A feltárt lelőhelyek közül 7 bizonyult tűzhelynek.
Fig. 1. The sites of the late Copper Age Baden Culture and the early Bronze Age Csepel group on the Csepel Island, Budapest. (1,7: Csepel-Vízmű (waterworks), 2–3: Csepel-Háros (Danube bank), 4: Mikes Kelemen street, 5: Dunadűlő street, 6, 17: Szigetszentmiklós-Lidulósa; 8: Rákóczi Ferenc road, Csepel-cement factory, 10: Kökényes street, 11: Hollandi street, 12: 775 street, 13: Hajós street, 14: Damjanich road, 15: Csepel vízcsőrók, 16: Királyerdő street.)
Fig. 2. 1-5: Late Copper Age finds from the site Budapest, Csepel-vízmű (waterworks) (1956)
Fig. 3. 1-5: Late Copper Age finds from the site Budapest, Csepel-vízmű (1999), the finds of feature No. 96.
Fig. 4. 1–8: Early Bronze Age inhumation grave with a crouched skeleton from the site Budapest, Csepel - II. Rákóczi E road (1999)
Fig. 5. 1: Inhumation grave with a crouched skeleton of Bell Beaker Csepel group from the site Budapest, Csepel - II. Rákóczi F. Road (grave 1).
2: Urn grave of Bell Beaker Csepel group from the site Budapest, Csepel - II. Rákóczi F. Road (grave 11.)
Fig. 6. 1-3. Urn graves of Bell Beaker Csepel group from Csepel-vízmű (waterworks) (grave 94, 133, 123.)
Fig. 7. 1-3. Urn graves of Bell Beaker Csepel group from Csepel-vízmű (waterworks) (grave 121, 133, 181.), 4. grave with scattered ashes of Bell Beaker Csepel group from Csepel-vízmű (waterworks) (grave 86.)