

Celts and Dacians (?) in the Great Hungarian Plain: 1st c. BC – 1st c. AD

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The topic of my article is a still poorly-researched age and territory: the transition period between the La Tène and the Imperial Age in the Great Hungarian Plain (Alföld). I have chosen this theme because it seemed probable that rescue excavations of the last years unearthing large surfaces are supposed to bring new results involving this period. Especially because we could make this conclusion on the basis of the new excavations in the Upper Tisza Region, a territory connected with the Hungarian Plain, in some cases mentioned as part of it (*Fig. 1*).

I would like to put special emphasis on three important projects: the archaeological investigation of Motorway 5 started in the 1980s, connecting Budapest with Szeged, and also that of Motorway 0, a ring road around Budapest. From the 1990s preventive excavations of Motorway 3, running from Budapest to the northeast have also been started (results summarised in: *Raczky – Kovács – Anders eds. 1997; Szalontai ed. 2003; Tari ed. 2006*).

While Motorway 5 crosses the Great Hungarian Plain in the northwest-southeast direction, Motorway 3 touches at several points the road running at the meeting point of the Plain and the mountains, used since Prehistoric times. Motorway 0, the bypass around modern Budapest, embraces the region of the Danube crossing-places. That is to say, on the one hand, these motorways run through territories densely populated in most archaeological periods, on the other hand, they gave an opportunity for the study of poorly researched regions (namely M5). Using a popular expression, we got a chance to open “gigantic excavation sections”. In this context I have to emphasise again, that these excavations and most of the others were started before construction works (such as pipelines, dams, fishing lakes etc.) together with all the advantages and disadvantages of this situation. As the only advantage, I should mention the large area of excavation. At the same time the constant lack of time is a huge disadvantage. As a consequence, there is no opportunity for really thorough observations that appears as a problem in the case of multi-layered and dense sites. Another problem is that the borders of the excavations were determined not by academic interest, but by the tracks of the roads and ground plans of buildings. Of course, mostly we have a clear idea of these problems. However, I think that one always has to emphasise the problems connected with the new excavation opportunities that also limit the possibilities of scientific research.

Compiling the site catalogue, I tried to collect all available data, gathering sites interesting from the point of view of our topic. I looked for all the new sites of the last 20 years, in which LT D or Late Celtic Period, or Dacian or 1st–3rd century sites phenomena are mentioned (*Fig. 2*). We can see that only a few sites were found! This becomes especially clear if we compare the number of late La Tène sites with the total of Celtic sites (*Fig. 3*). The question is whether the real situation is reflected, or we face a problem of research. Namely, that it is very problematic to recognise LT D pottery east of the

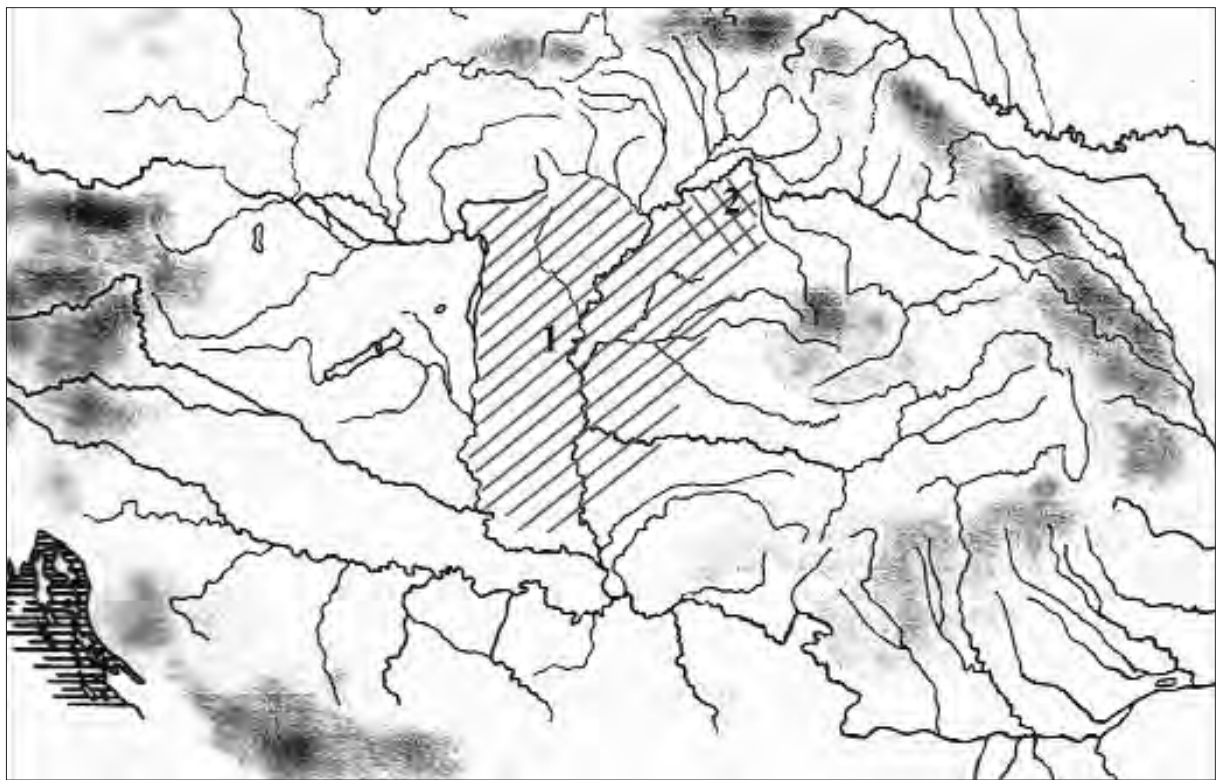


Fig. 1. The territory concerned: 1 – the Great Hungarian Plain; 2 – a part of the Upper Tisza Region.

Danube, and there is still a question as to who and when they arrived in this territory after the Celts and what their connection with the native population looked like.

What do we know about the Late La Tène Age of the Great Hungarian Plain? Ilona Hunyady and András Alföldi made the first summary of the La Tène Period in the Carpathian Basin in the 1940s, based on the analysis of the find material and literary sources. According to it, while in Transdanubia, “in the territory of the later Pannonia, the Celtic influence remained constant, and the tribes north of river Drava came under a long period of Celtic control or at least (sic!) Celtic influence, and the Dacians succeeded in liberating themselves from the Celtic rule in the 2nd century BC. From the end of this century Romans had to face Dacian invasion in Macedonia occupied by that time” (Alföldi 1943, 9). At that time the Dacian centre was situated in the Banat, but somewhere at the turn of the 2nd to the 1st century BC they occupied also the northwestern part of the Carpathian Basin. “The way of Dacian occupation through Transylvania crossed the region between the Danube and Tisza, where coin circulation was the most intensive. *In this region that was not occupied for a long time neither by Celts, nor by Dacians, the Scythian population continued to exist.*” (Italic K. A., Hunyady 1944, 10). This is contradicted by the map of the sites (Fig. 3), but also by Ilona Hunyady herself in the discussion of the Scythian-Celtic connections: according to it Celts moved to Transylvania across the valley of the river Zagyva and then through the Maros Valley (Hunyady 1944, 50). That is to say, she suggested some kind of Celtic settlement at least at these parts (This is consistent with the fact that at the Zagyva Celtic sites were commonly occurring wherever archaeological research was conducted.). The other weak point of Hunyady’s theory is that, according to her own words, at the territory of Transylvania the strengthening of the Celts can be observed in the 2nd century BC (Hunyady 1944, 10); so it is not clear how the Dacians were able to cross this territory by the end of this century.

To follow the time scale, in the 1st century BC the immigration of the Boii had thrown the Dacians back, but only until the mid-1st century, when, under the direction of Boirebistas, the already known northwestern part of the Carpathian Basin was occupied again. This idea was based on the analysis of

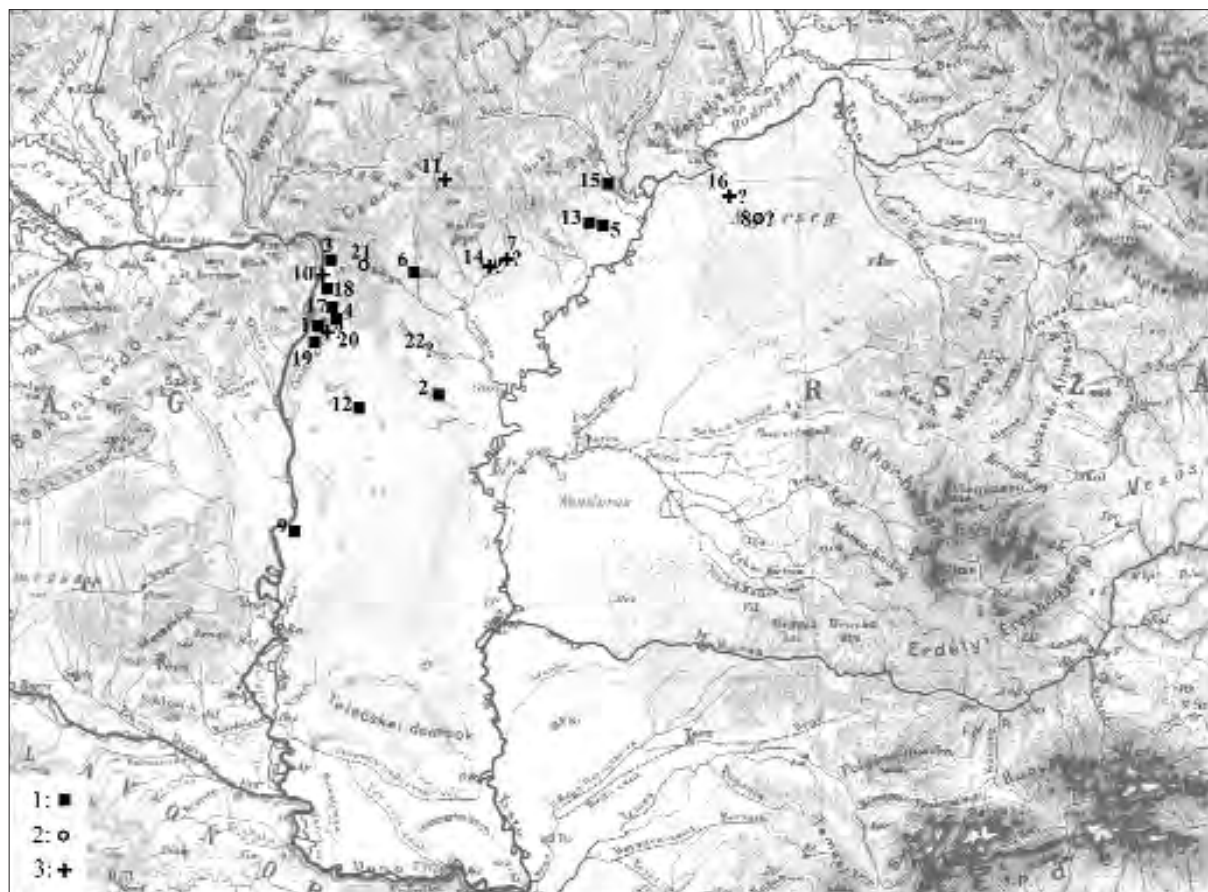


Fig. 2. Sites of 1st c. BC – 1st c. AD (excavations between 1986–2006). See the list of sites in the Appendix. 1 – LT D or Late Celtic Period; 2 – Dacian and/or 1st century AD period; 3 – 1st–3rd centuries – Early Imperial Age.

the Barbarian coin circulation. The territories of the Great Hungarian Plain came to the fore once more: in connection with the anti-Dacian campaign of Marcus Vinicius in the year 10 BC. According to the Vinicius inscription cited by Hunyady “he also defeated peoples situated at the northern edge of the territory between Danube and Tisza ... these are the Cotini, Osi, Teurisci” (Hunyady 1944, 12–13). Recently a summarising work was published on the data of antique authors on the territory of Pannonia. Beside the publication of the complete collection of data, the author re-evaluated most of the literary sources (Fehér – Kovács 2003). The “Vinicius” inscription is also presented and analysed by them. According to “[...]ius ... [...t]rans flumen Danubium [missus ... pro fligavitque Cotinos...” (Fehér – Kovács 2003, 238) the inscription doesn’t mention at all any localisation of the Celtic tribes! Considering the Alföld we have to emphasise that names of Cotini (“Osi, Teurisci” cannot be taken for granted because of the fragmentary character of the inscription), Anartii were mentioned after the Boirebistas campaign and this ensured that ethnic groups of Celts lived here. However, they cannot be exactly localised,¹ taking into consideration also that even the borders of the Boirebistas country cannot be determined (Fehér – Kovács 2003, 57–61). Political hegemony of Dacians can be suggested, but the presence of Dacian people on the Great Hungarian Plain can be testified or rejected only on the basis of archaeological material.

When studying Ilona Hunyady’s analysis of the finds, we have to realise that she practically gave no examples from the Plain to the types of the LT D period. Given that the majority of excavation

¹ For example, Gábor Vékony placed them between the Maros/Mureş and Szamos/Someş rivers (Vékony 1989, 76).

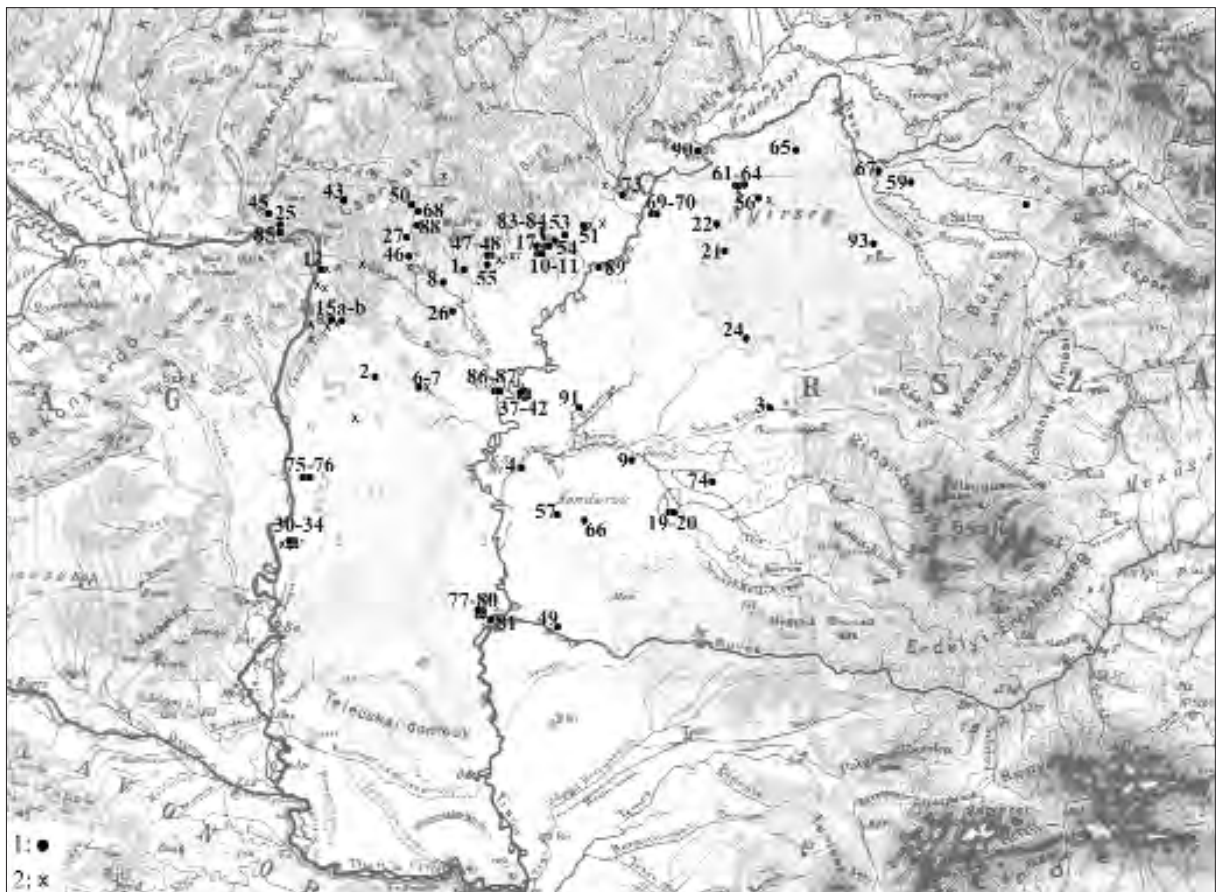
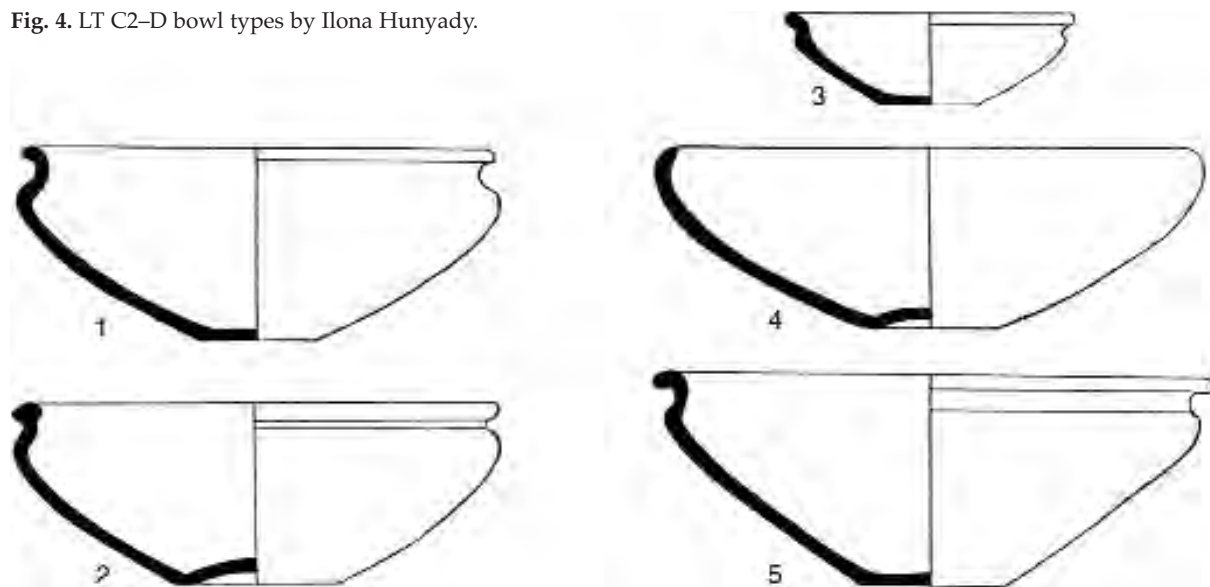


Fig. 3. Celtic sites (excavations between 1986–2006). See the list of sites in the Appendix. 1 – Celtic sites; 2 – Sites of 1st c. BC – 1st c. AD.

material is pottery, I studied the analysis of the ceramics. Among bowl shapes dated to the 2nd–1st centuries (e.g. Hunyady 1944, 130–131, Hunyady 1942, Pl. LXXXVIII: 2–3; Fig. 4: 1–2) she mentioned pieces from Balsa, Hortobágy, Békés, Kiszombor, but the dating of these types is problematic; they belong to the most common, long life vessel types that appeared already in the mid-3rd century. In connection with the characteristically 1st century BC – 2nd century AD bowl shapes (Hunyady 1942, Pl. LVII: 21, Pl. LVIII: 5, 16, 17; Fig. 4: 3–5) she mentioned pieces from the Hungarian Plain only as prototypes (Hunyady 1944, 131–133).

If we examine the large vessels, we'll see that the few LTD items coming from the Great Hungarian Plain are included into this period rather on the basis of their decoration (Balsa, polished web pattern and broad stripes: Hunyady 1942, Pl. XCI: 1, Pl. LXXX: 9), than because of their form (Hunyady 1944, 146). The prototypes themselves appeared already in the milieu of dated metal objects of an earlier phase (Radostyán: Hellebrandt 1999, 251, Pl. LXXXV: 5, LXXXIX: 1–2; Pişcolt/Piskolt: Némethi 1988, 50, 54 or Némethi 1992, 91; Almássy 2001b, 54). At the same time it is a further question whether Ilona Hunyady's suggestion concerning the origins of the different polished decorations is still valid. In her opinion the alternation of polished and not polished broad stripes is a result of Germanic influence, the web pattern made of thin lines or wavy lines shows Gallian influence and thus must be dated to the late period. Éva Bónis, following Lajos Márton's idea, emphasised the Italian roots of the Early Iron Age. She summarised those data according to which polished decoration consisting of sophisticated lines, with much probability, could be spread by the Boii migration in the Carpathian and Bohemian Basin (Bónis 1969, 175–176). According to my own observations, polished decoration must be much earlier in the material of the LT Age of the Great Hungarian Plain than we suggested. However, this is a sur-

Fig. 4. LT C2–D bowl types by Ilona Hunyady.



face decoration, which can easily disappear from the vessel.² In the Celtic cemetery of the 3rd century BC excavated near Tiszavasvári three such vessels have been found. On one of them a very dense wavy decoration could be hardly noticed, similar to which can be met later on the Sarmatian pottery (Almássy 1998, 74, Pl. XIII: 5, Pl. XVIII: 7, Pl. XXI: 4). In 1944 I. Hunyady denied the possibility of tradition continuity coming from Scythian times, because she did not find pieces that could be interpreted as connecting links between Scythian pottery of the 5th–4th century BC and Celtic vessels of the late 2nd–1st century BC. According to the results of recent research it seems to be very probable that e.g. in the Upper Tisza Region, even in the 3rd century BC we can expect the continuous existence of the population of the Scythian Age (Almássy 2002).

If we approach Hunyady's typology in a positive way, I would say that the pottery of the Late Celtic Period is similar to the shapes produced in oppida.

In the 1970s Borbála Maráz was dealing with the Celtic Age of the Great Hungarian Plain and studying the late period on the basis of two find assemblages (Maráz 1974). She assumed that glass bracelets, the three- or four-knobbed anklets, the bronze female belt-chains etc. form a single find horizon, that she dated to the LT C2–D period, the 2nd–1st century BC. She also determined that no sub-phases can be separated within this period, and the time of use of certain types cannot be determined more accurately, because a common fashion, independent of certain tribes, spread in the Carpathian Basin. Contradicting this statement, she enhanced the richly decorated glass bracelet of the Mártély grave and narrowed its dating to the second half of the 1st century BC, mainly because of the analogies from the Scordiscus territory.³ Connecting this with the material of several other sites (Csongrád–Vidre sziget, Apahida, Földeák) she wrote about the Celtic population of the Alföld in the LT D period. At the same time she rejected the idea of Dacian occupation of this territory (Maráz 1974, 116–119). Judging from field surveys, she suggested a Celtic settlement network rather consisting of small villages and vici, with only relatively few large villages (Maráz 1974, 118–120). Several

² Some examples from the Upper Tisza Region: I: Nyírtelek, Sényő, Szabolcs, Tiszabercel (Almássy 2001b, Catalogue p. 107–108, 120, 124, 125), Bodroghalom LT C cemetery: stray find and urn of the grave from 1986 – in the case of this site M. Hellebrandt noted that the decoration could hardly be seen (Hellebrandt 1999, 186, 196, 198).

³ At the same time, see e.g. cremation grave 2 from the cemetery of München-Moosach, in which a glass bracelet very close to the one from Mártély, and belt-chain links also reminiscent of the ones from Mártély were found. On the basis of the fibulas and another bronze chain, Krämer dated the grave to the LT C period (Krämer 1985, 29, Katalog 48, Taf. 56). According to the typo-chronological analysis, the glass workshop of Manching also changed to manufacturing simple, plain pieces in the LT D period (Gebhard 1989, 134, Abb. 53).

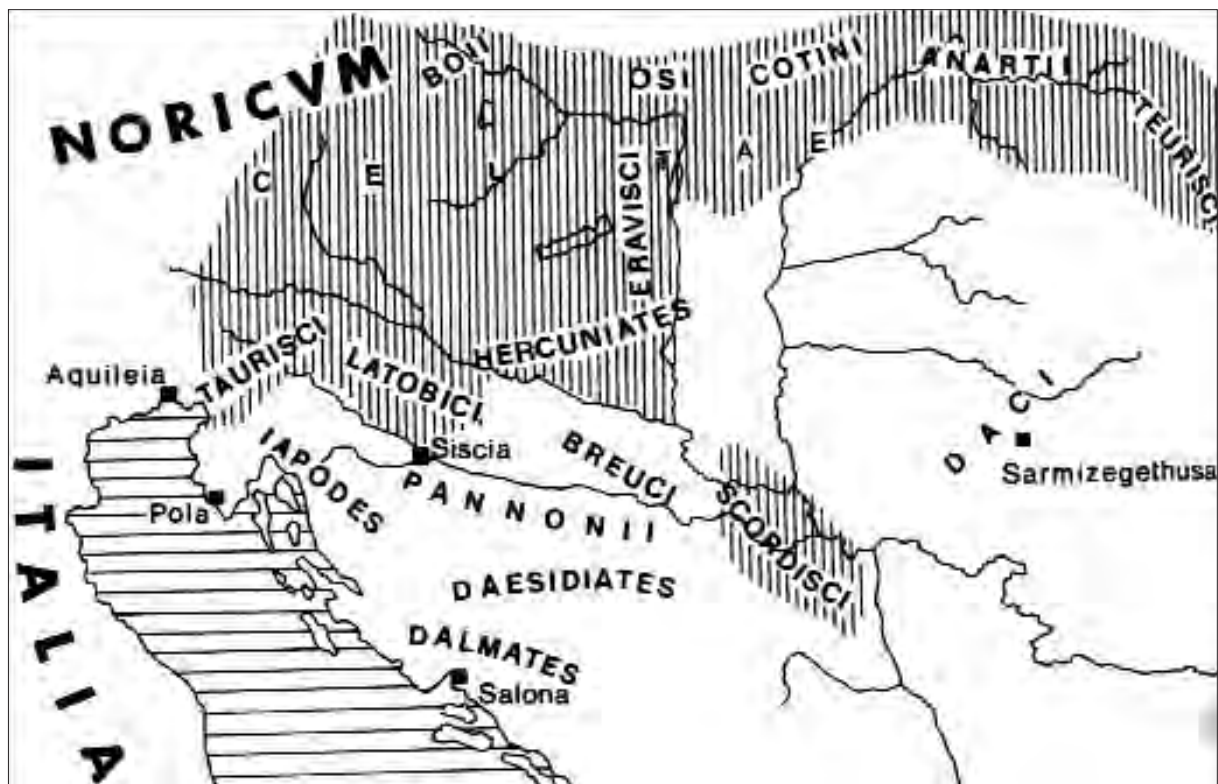


Fig. 5. Celtic tribes in the period of oppida (after Fig. in Szabó 2005, 64).

assumptions by Maráz are still valid today, but the dating of the material of the LT D group contains a number of problems.⁴ The already mentioned find horizon corresponds well to the horizon 6 of Gebhard, dated to the LT C1 period (Gebhard 1989, 80–81, 99)⁵ and also clearly shows the beginning of the same period in the Upper Tisza Region (Almássy 2001b, 52, 68–70). It is highly improbable that the same find material would appear 150–200 years later in the vicinity, in the South Alföld. When analysing the settlements, Maráz used mainly Hunyady’s pottery typology, the problems of which I have mentioned earlier.

It was Miklós Szabó who made the latest summary of the Celtic period in the Carpathian Basin. Naturally, he discussed the Late Celtic Period through the problems of the oppida. Whether we are studying the localisation of certain Celtic tribes (Szabó 2005, 51–53, figure on page 52), or the description of the Late La Tène centres (Szabó 2005, 56–63) we can read basically about Transdanubia and the northern mountainous region (Bükkszentlászló, Zemplén).⁶ There are no oppida in the Great Hungarian Plain, so, as a consequence, it would seem to us that in the large part of the Alföld there were no Celts (Fig. 5). At the same time he also (cautiously) rejected the theory of the Dacian occupation of the Alföld (Szabó 2005, 65). “By the present moment, it is difficult to prove, but also to deny that before the Jazygian immigration, the Great Hungarian Plain was populated by Dacians” (Szabó 2005, 70).

What is the situation from the point of view of Dacian research? Judging from the very controversial literary data, we have to count on their presence in the Great Hungarian Plain in the period

⁴ The dating of the settlement part from Csongrád-Vidre sziget seems to be reliable, because here fragments with painted web pattern were found (Goldman 1971, 54, 60).

⁵ He created a relative typo-chronological system of LT B–C phases for Central Europe, based on the analyses of some almost entirely excavated cemeteries (Gebhard 1989, 74–117).

⁶ To be more correct, he naturally mentioned oppida of the Scordiscus territory at the southern Danube. However, this is only the edge of the territory examined by myself.

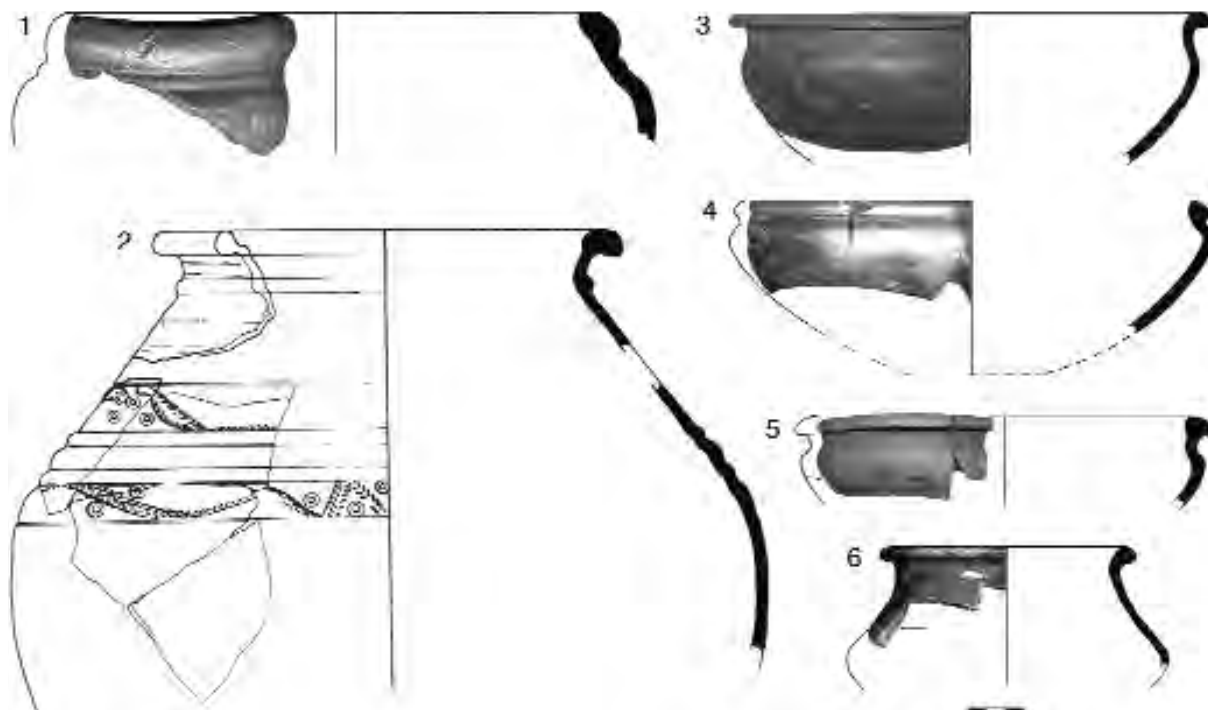


Fig. 6. Characteristic LT C forms from Kállósemjén–Fórrástanya, feature 9.

in question. Zsolt Visy has been dealing with this question in several articles, the latest of which was published in 1995 (Visy 1995). From the Hungarian Plain he has shown only one assemblage that went to the museum as a present, the one from Dombegyháza (Visy 1995, 98–100). These finds included LT C type weapons together with pottery of Dacian character and a pot, the shape of which is known from the Early Iron Age! Visy himself came to the conclusion that there are no certain traces of the presence of Dacian population in the Alföld before the Sarmatian Age, as it has been already suggested by Borbála Maráz or later by Miklós Szabó.

Concerning the immigration of the Sarmatians, Eszter Istvánovits and Valéria Kulcsár have been dealing with it recently (Istvánovits – Kulcsár 2006). Judging from the thorough analysis of written and archaeological sources on our disposal today, it is not possible to make reliable assumptions on the Jazygian immigration. The authors of the article emphasised that in the 1st century AD they appeared in the Great Hungarian Plain only as mercenaries.

In this case we have to find the traces of the Celts. Or was Hunyady right and the population of the Scythian Age continued to live here? This would be in contradiction to the fact that, according to the excavators of the late 1st–early 2nd century settlements of the Hungarian Plain, and the Upper Tisza Region there are pieces made in accordance with La Tène shapes and, what is even more important, La Tène technology. This would be possible only if the manufacturers of the vessels (and the population itself) met each other (e.g. Biharkeresztes: Nepper 1985, 236; Szirmabesenyő: Végh 1999, 212; Szegvár–Oromdűlő: Istvánovits – Lőrinczy – Pintye 2005, 74). In the case of Celtic and Sarmatian populations this meeting could have happened only in the Great Hungarian Plain.

I will present here two sites of the Upper Tisza Region that could help us to solve the problem. In Kállósemjén–Fórrástanya (Fig. 2: 8) I researched a part of a small settlement in 1997 (Almássy 2001b, Catalogue 29–85). The material of the site seems to consist of two kinds: a definitely Celtic group that, on the basis of most forms, can be dated to the 3rd–2nd century BC (Fig. 6). At the same time there is another group with a different set of shapes and made with different technology (Fig. 7). Features of the two groups did not blend with each other, though in some cases they were situated very close to each other. There are cases (features 3 and 9) when the find material belongs only to this or that

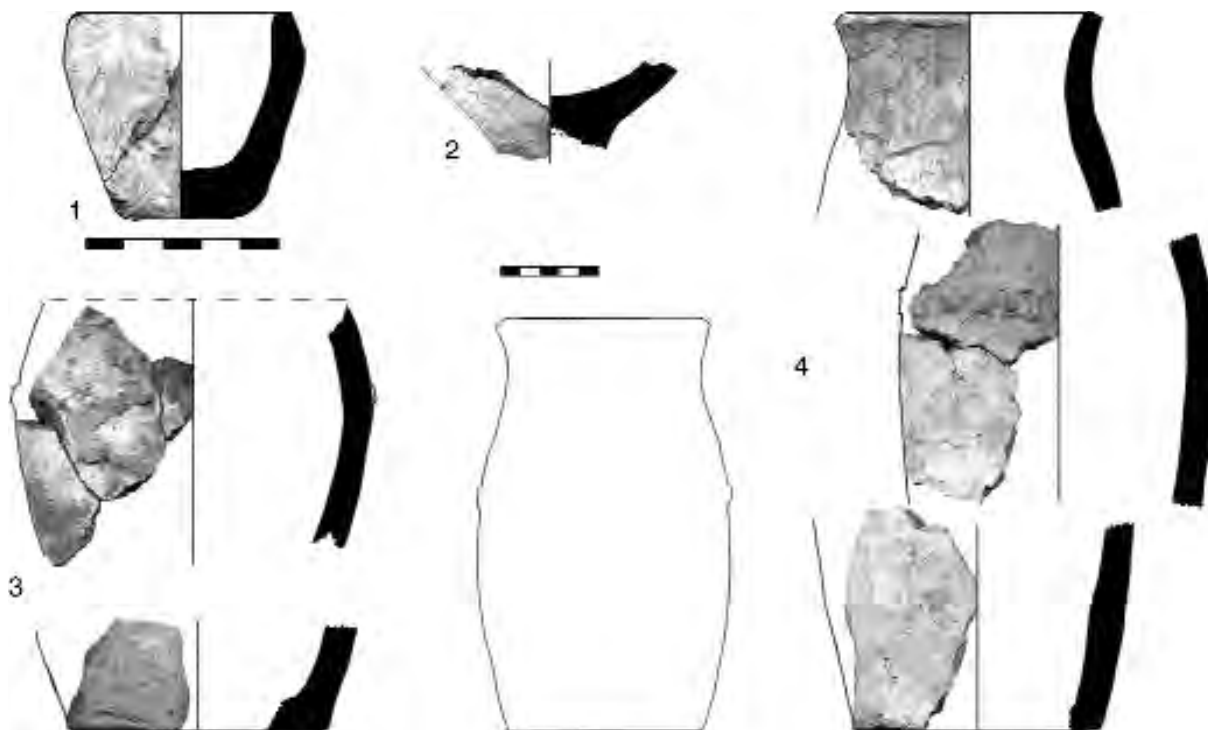


Fig. 7. Characteristic Dacian-like forms from Kállósemjén–Forrástanya, feature 3.

group, but there are also cases when we could observe a certain intermixture (features 2, 11, 22). Rude, hand-made shapes of the non-Celtic group are reminiscent of Dacian material missing from the left bank of the Tisza during this period. Dating became possible on the basis of some small and completely unique fragments: shiny, grey coated (almost glazed), very thin pieces of good quality (Fig. 8). There is a part of *Rädchenverzierung* decoration on one of them. These fragments belong to vessels of definitely not local origin. At the same time, I hardly know of any such vessels with engobe even from the territory of the provinces. The best parallel was found in the material of the pottery kiln unearthed in Kende Street (Gellért Hill). Mária Pető, the excavator, dated it to the Early Imperial Age, before the mid-2nd century (Pető 1979, 279, 281, Abb. 4: 9).

The question is whether the settlement is one-layered or two-layered, that is to say, whether we should suggest that Celtic forms of the 3rd–2nd centuries were still in use in the 1st century AD (summarised by Almássy 2001a). For financial reasons I was not able to continue the excavation, so, for the time being, we cannot answer this question.⁷

In 2004 we worked at another site prior to the construction of Motorway 3 (Fig. 2: 16).⁸ At the northern part of a large, several hundred metres long settlement of Imperial Age, beside Sarmatian graves, three buildings with La Tène material were unearthed (Fig. 9). Around the place, in some pits we found some more pottery of Celtic character. The building assemblage was situated nearly in the middle of the 60 m wide excavation area. The floor of one building (feature 805) was covered with potsherds, out of which almost 100 vessels could be reconstructed (Fig. 10). This large amount of

⁷ On the basis of the analysis of the Karaburma cemetery near Belgrade, J. Todorović wrote already in 1972: "...the shapes of the ceramic vessels in the Later Iron Age were very conservative and lasted for a long time. The forms which were already accepted by the Celtic potters in the 3rd century BC in a slightly changed form exist till the end of the first influence of the Roman culture, till the end of the 1st century BC".

⁸ At site KE (eastern bypass road, Nyíregyháza) 27; the excavation was led by archaeologists Ioan Bejinariu, Róbert Gindele, Alexandru Matei and Horea Pop (museums of Satu Mare and Zalau, Romania). I am grateful to them for having the opportunity to use their material!

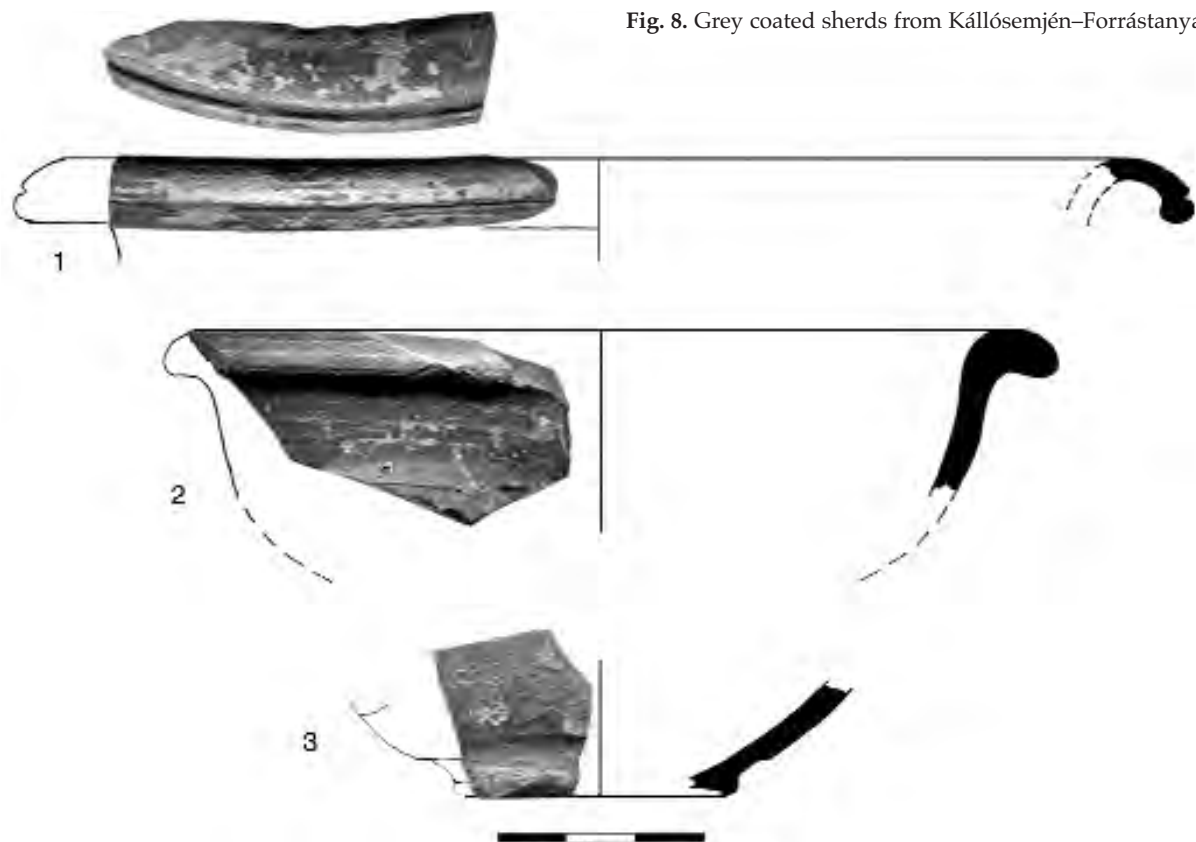


Fig. 8. Grey coated sherds from Kállósemjén–Forrástanya.

pottery represented only a few types (Fig. 11). This circumstance and the traces of damage made before burning the vessels, show that these are semi-finished products coming out of a pottery workshop. Unfortunately, we did not find a pottery kiln.⁹ Most of the types represent LT C forms. Based on the examination of vessel forms from the Pişcolt/Piskolt cemetery (SW-Romania), they were made already in the 3rd century BC, but probably stayed in use for many years (recently *Almásy 2001b*, 29, 44, 54). There are two exceptional pottery fragments (Fig. 12): one of them is a vessel with a low “pedestal”, though it would be better called a high bottom with an emphasised omphalos. It is unusual among the products of Celtic potters of the Great Hungarian Plain, though its colour and material do not differ from the rest inside the building, but is more worn. I never met an exactly similar shape in Dacian material, despite the fact that the use of a pedestal is common in the case of Dacian “fruit vases” and imitations of the Hellenistic kantharos shape. The other fragment is a well – polished vessel – lid (?) – with a very light greyish, but oxidation burnt surface, that was decorated by polished lines on the exterior surface, which was absolutely common in Celtic pottery. Normally we do not find lids in La Tène pottery or with La Tène material of the Great Hungarian Plain. According to my knowledge representatives of this type were found at three sites. The piece from grave 2 at Farnos (Fig. 2: 22) was possibly used as a lid. The metal objects of the grave can be dated rather to the second half of the LT C period, to the 2nd century BC. Two characteristic vessels represent a form used from the mid-3rd century (*Hellebrandt 1999*, Pl. VI: 1–8). M. Hellebrandt, the publisher of the material, cited analogies to the lid and to the small bowl covered with the lid from the Banat and several other sites of Romania (Bihar, Moldova). The Banat graves found between the Danube and Száva/Sava can be dated to the second half of the 1st century BC, based on e.g. the round shield bosses, Roman imports, and also of the typical bowl shapes (*Todorović 1968*, Pl. V, LVII; 1972, 92–93). The LT D dating of the pottery work-

⁹ May be this would be the case, if we were able to research outside the borders of the motorway!

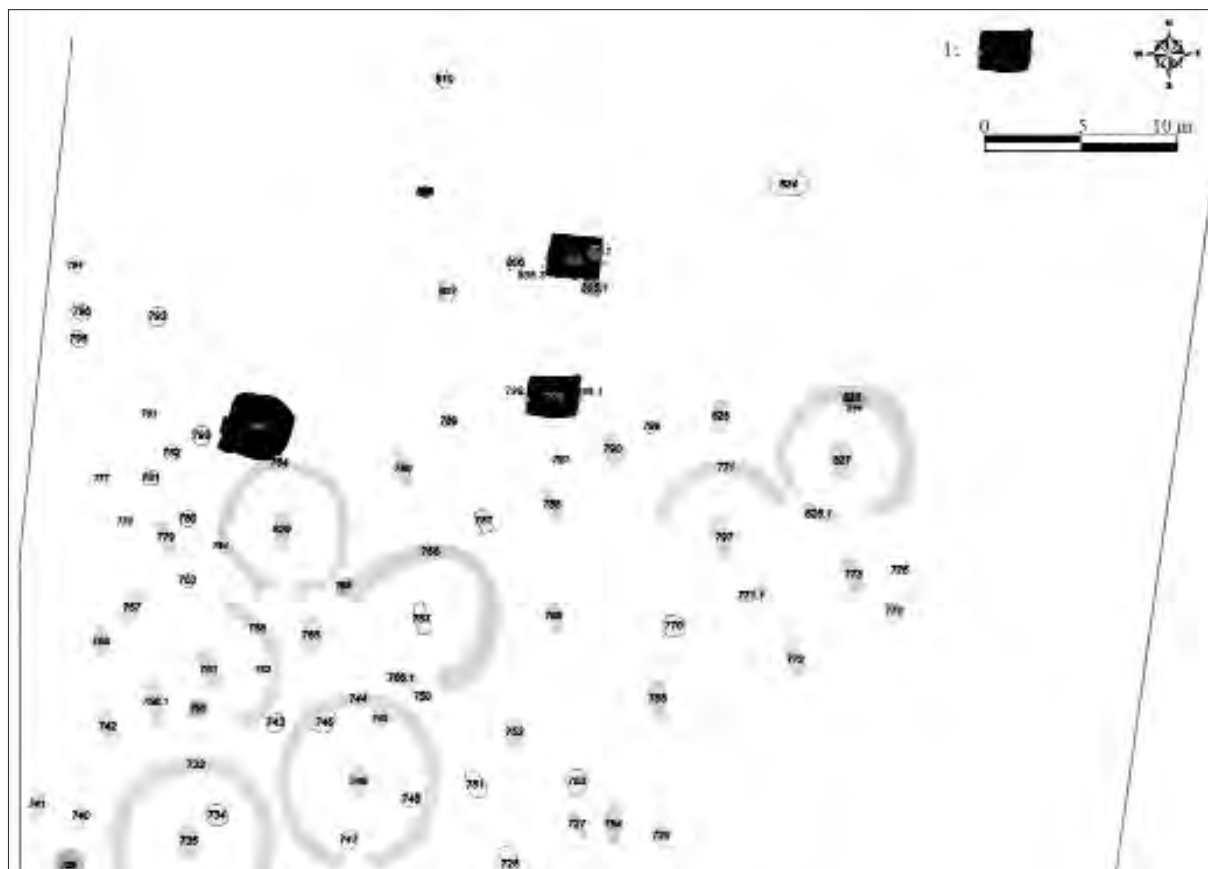


Fig. 9. Detail of the general map of site 27 of the eastern bypass road (KE) near Nyíregyháza. 1 – Celtic features.



Fig. 10. Site KE 27, feature 805.

shop from Biharea can be made judging from the few fragments with black painting (*Dumitrașcu 1982, 165; 1994, 130, 133*).¹⁰ I have to add that the shapes of Biharea's material are mostly similar to the ones made already in the LT C period. I. Ionița, the publisher of the outermost Moldavian site has dated it to the 2nd–3rd century AD (*Hellebrandt 1999, 29*). Taking this into consideration, it is not quite clear why Hellebrandt dated the Farnos assemblage to the turn of the LT C1–C2, to the end of the 3rd – beginning of the 2nd century BC (*Hellebrandt 1999, 29, Pl. VI: 1–8*).

The second vessel is an absolutely recent find: a hand-made piece found in the vicinity of Nagy-károly/Carei accompanied by a boot shaped vessel and other mixed material of Early Iron Age, Celtic or Dacian character.¹¹

The third site is the Celtic settlement excavated in Sajópetri-Hosszúdűlő where wheel-made fragments designed as lids were found in five or six features (*Szabó et alii 2007, 243*). Besides them a potsherd came to light of which the best analogy is known from site KE 27, feature 805. Excavators determined this fragment to be a bowl (*Szabó et alii 2007, 118*).¹² A complete examination of the typological analysis of this publication would go beyond the framework of this article, but I should make some notes on the assumptions connected with the lids and bowls, from the point of view of the fragment examined here. The authors of the Sajópetri publication put wheel-made lids into one group (*Szabó et alii 2007, 243*) despite the fact that they classified here two absolutely different shapes (one of them: *Szabó et alii 2007, Pl. LXX: 6–10, LXXII: 1–3, LXXVI: 2, LXXXIV: 1–2*; the other: *Szabó et alii 2007, Pl. XC: 16*). The classification of the piece determined as a bowl fragment is also problematic. This piece – unique also at this site – was listed in a group containing vessels of definitely different shapes (*Szabó et alii 2007, 118, 237, 241, Fig. 47: type II.1.4. bowls with vertical rim*). The authors themselves noticed that typology of the ceramic material of the site is not complete yet. However, it seems strange that while a relatively detailed typological classification (taking into consideration also decorations) was made for situlas, at the same time practically no attention was paid to such a rare shape as lids or the fragment of the unique (?) bowl (?).¹³

As to the chronological determination, the only thing we can use is the assumption considering the whole site: it was dated to the LT B2–C1 period (*Szabó et alii 2007, 318*). Nothing was said about these pieces in the chapter dealing with chronology (*Szabó et alii 2007, 316–318*). Summarising my assumptions I should say that chronological data of the publication do not seem convincing to me.

Ilona Hunyady mentioned the lid as a shape spreading in the Early Imperial Age (*Hunyady 1944, 148*), which is in line with Viorica Crișan's opinion (she collected the East Transylvanian Dacian material), who connected it to Romans or Roman influence (*Crișan 2000, 129, Pl. 61: 1–4*), and also with the fact that there are very few items in the published material of the Gellérthegy–Tabán site (*Bónis 1969, 180*). To summarise the above, this is a very late form in the Celtic material, a form lacking Celtic tradition that cannot be dated earlier than the 1st century BC.

It can be suggested that it is not a lid but a Roman bowl with "collar" rim (Schüssel mit Kragenrand oder Y-Rand).¹⁴ Analysing the material of sites with indigenous populations from Budaörs and Páty, Katalin Ottományi was dealing with this form at great length (*Ottományi 2005; 2007, 129*). According to her analysis, the earliest time when such (lid) shapes appeared was in the Late La Tène. In the age of the Late Republic and in the Early Imperial Age the form was in use (at least up to the period of

¹⁰ At the same time I do not agree with Dumitrașcu's analysis, because the sites namely mentioned by him (Hurbanovo/Ógyalla-Bohata, Apahida and Pișcolt/Piskolt) cannot be reliably dated to the second half of the 2nd century BC and the beginning of the 1st century on the basis of the present typological research (based on *Gebhard 1989, 74–117*). He mistakenly referred to Zirra and mentioned painted vessels from Apahida (*Dumitrașcu 1982, 165; 1994, 133*)!

¹¹ Kind verbal information from János Némethi.

¹² There is some contradiction in the publication, because later (*Szabó et alii 2007, 251*) the authors talk about the same fragment as a lid!

¹³ I would like to draw attention to one more interesting fact: in Sajópetri, at a Celtic settlement excavated on a relatively large surface, practically all the wheel-made lid fragments and the piece determined as a fragment of a bowl were found in only two assemblages (pottery "workshop"! (Feature 02.A.36–37–40 and Feature 02.A.93–93A–93B–93C; *Szabó et alii 2007, 100–102, 104–105, 115–118, 251*), similarly to site KE 27. Further research can answer the question whether these phenomena were only accidental or not.

¹⁴ Cf. my opinion on Sajópetri.

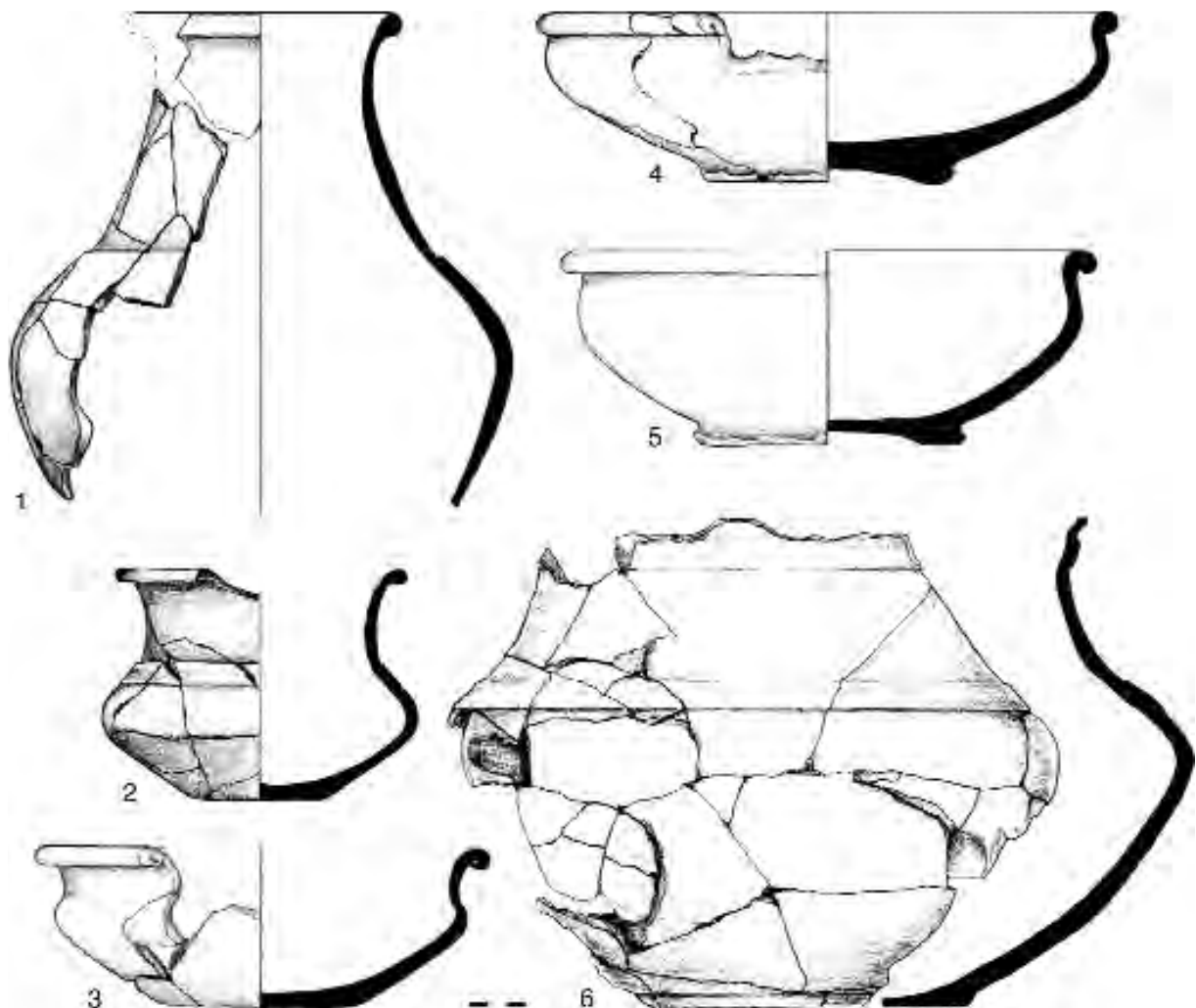


Fig. 11. Characteristic La Tène forms from site KE 27, feature 805 (drawings by Gabriella Beleznai and Csaba Svéda).

Claudius), but in a decreasing number and mostly as bowls. This shape can be considered as the antecedent of bowls with a “collar” rim of the Roman Age (*Ottományi 2005, 101; 2007, 129*).

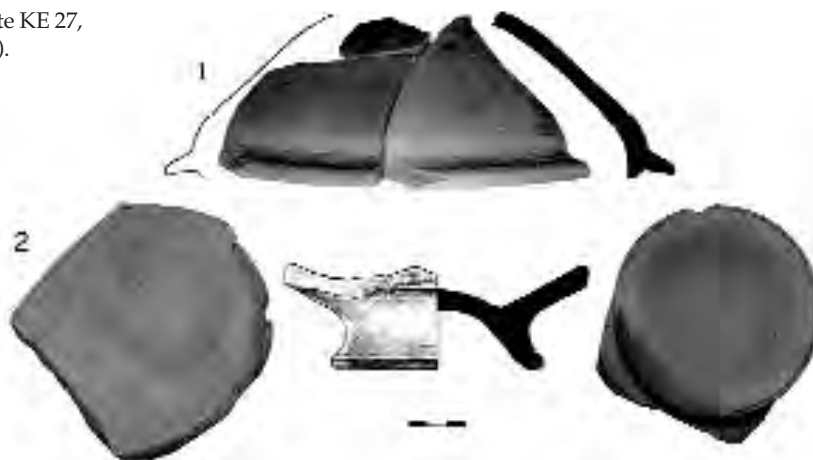
That is to say, whether we consider the piece in question being a fragment of a lid or a bowl, that would not change the fact that the dating given by 99 percent of the feature 805 would be modified by 100 years only by this fragment.

So, we can make a suggestion similar to the one as in the case of the Kállósemjén settlement. As a consequence we see that *on the basis of the present pottery typology used now – elaborated already by Ilona Hunyadi – we are not able to date our sites*. The latter statement is illustrated by a further example taken from a farther territory.

At the south-eastern section of Motorway M0, in Üllő, site N5 (very close to Budapest; *Fig. 2: 20*) the largest presently known Late Roman Age pottery workshop was unearthed on 30 hectares by the archaeologists of the Pest County Museums (*Tari ed. 2006, 42–48*). At the southwestern edge of the site a new excavation, connected with a gas pipeline, was conducted in 2006, when Celtic features, among them houses and a pottery kiln, were discovered.¹⁵ In some cases Sarmatian features blend with the

¹⁵ I would like to thank the excavators, Valéria Kulcsár and Dóra Mérai, that they made it possible for me to use the fresh material!

Fig. 12. The non-La Tène-forms from site KE 27, feature 805 (drawings by Csaba Svéda).



Celtic ones, but luckily there were also undisturbed features despite the fact, that the Roman Age settlement was extremely dense. In the material of a Celtic house (N 8026) we meet a situation similar to the one known from the Upper Tisza Region sites: judging from complete shapes the La Tène material could be dated even to the 3rd century BC (Fig. 13: 5–11). There is a rim fragment reminiscent of later forms (Fig. 13: 4). However, the crucial point is a terra sigillata fragment found in the infilling of the house (Fig. 14: 3). According to Friderika Horváth this is a piece of Drag. 37 type from the workshop of Rheinzabern that cannot be dated to an earlier time than 180 AD. Also, an imitation of a sigillata, that is frequent at other sites of the Barbaricum, and a painted Roman sherd (Fig. 14: 1–2) support the same dating! Beside these, there were some hand-made fragments (Fig. 13: 1–3), similar to which we find among the pieces of Dacian pottery. That is to say again, we have the impression that Celtic potters had been making their vessels in similar shapes for several hundred years! The question may arise, how could it happen that at this site we do not meet the material of Late Celtic pottery workshop of the Gellért Hill and its surroundings, despite being so close to it. The answer can be, on one hand, that they made their pottery themselves, as the pottery kiln evidenced it. On the other hand this phenomenon could also be observed at other sites. At Dunakeszi (practically beside the north-eastern section of the bypass road M0) a sporadic village-like Celtic settlement was also unearthed. In the material dated to the 1st century AD neither Gellért Hill, nor Roman pottery was found (Horváth – Szilas – Endrődi – Horváth 2003, 11). It is possible that these small settlements did not have a close relationship with the surrounding oppidum and settlement.

Based on the above-said I suggest that at the Great Hungarian Plain we have to count on a sporadic Celtic village network (in which the Celtic population was living mixed with the people of the Scythian Age), that could have existed as late as the Late Celtic Period *without significant changes*. This system was made of mainly small, farm-like settlements with one or two relatively significant villages like, for example, the one in Sajópetri-Hosszúdűlő (Czajlik – Tankó 2004, 101–102). Concerning the settlement's system Borbála Maráz came practically to the same conclusion, already in the mid-70s, only the dating of her material has changed since then (Maráz 1974, 122). That is why we have to add to her analysis that for chronological examinations we have at our disposal basically settlement pottery that, because of a presumably isolated settlement network, cannot be clearly categorised. The solution may be found in some fortunate discoveries, some of which I tried to show here. In the 1st century AD nothing refers to a significant immigration (of Dacian people). At the same time there are some sporadic traces of a certain relationship between the population of the Great Hungarian Plain and the territories east and south of it.

Of course, these ideas can be evidenced by complete publications of new sites. However, we have to keep in mind that typological-technological examinations cannot be enough for making further conclusions.

Translated by Valéria Kulcsár



Fig. 13. Characteristic La Tène (4–11) and Dacian? (1–3) forms from site Úllő 5, feature 8026.



Fig. 14. Roman sherds from site Úllő 5, feature 8026.

APPENDIX

LIST OF THE SITES PRESENTED ON FIG. 2 AND 3

1. Adács (RKM¹⁶ 2005, 175)
2. Albertirsa – road No.4 (M5) (RégFüz T.¹⁷ 48, 1994, 5)
3. Berekbőszörmény (RégFüz T. 40, 1986, 7)
4. Békésszentandrás (RKM 2003, 165; RKM 2005, 186)
5. Budapest – Csepel (RKM 2004, 199; *Zsidi ed.*, 47–49) / **on Fig. 2: 1**
6. Cegléd – Ipari park (RKM 2000, 121)
7. Cegléd – Botond dtűlő (RKM 2005, 213–214) / **on Fig. 2: 2**
8. Csány (RKM 2005, 222)
9. Csárdaszállás (RégFüz T. 42, 1988, 9)
10. Dormánd – Csincsai benzinkút (RKM 1999, 196; RKM 2000, 125–126)
11. Dormánd – Zsidó temető (RKM 2005, 227–228)
12. Dunakeszi – Fatelep (RKM 2000, 129)
13. Dunakeszi – Székesdűlő (*Horváth – Szilas – Endrődi – Horváth 2003*, 5–17) / **on Fig. 2: 3**
14. Ecsér, Site 2 (*Tari ed. 2006*, 15) / **on Fig. 2: 4**
- 15a. Ecsér, Site 6 (*Tari ed. 2006*, 16–20)
- 15b. Ecsér, Site 7 (RKM 2004, 210–211, *Tari ed. 2006*, 21–25)
16. Farnos (*Hellebrandt 1999*, 21–29) / **on Fig. 2: 22**
17. Füzesabony – Gubakút (RégFüz T. 49, 1995, 12)
18. Gelej – Sinka halom (RKM 2005, 241) / **on Fig. 2: 5**
19. Gyula, Site 56 (RégFüz T. 51, 1997, 31; RKM 1998, 150)
20. Gyula, Site 503 (RKM 2002, 215)
21. Hajdúböszörmény – Kadarcs part (RKM 2005, 248)
22. Hajdúdorog – Szállásföld (RKM 2005, 251–252)
23. Hatvan – Kisgombos (RKM 2005, 255) / **on Fig. 2: 6**
24. Hosszúpályi – homokbánya (RKM 2002, 218)
25. Ipolydamásd – sziget (RégFüz T. 42, 1988, 15; RégFüz T. 43, 1989, 10)
26. Jászberény – Almási tanya (RKM 2004, 233–235)
27. Jobbágyi – Tenk határa (RKM 2005, 256–257)
28. Kál 1. legelő (RégFüz T. 48, 1997, 55; RégFüz T. 49, 1997, 15) / **on Fig. 2: 7**
29. Kállósemjén – Forrástanya (*Almássy 2001a; 2001b*, 29–85) / **on Fig. 2: 8**
30. Kalocsa – belvárosi iskola (RKM 2003, 236)
31. Kalocsa – Szentháromság tér (RKM 2004, 235) / **on Fig. 2: 9**
- 32–34. Outskirts of Kalocsa (RKM 2005, 257)
35. Káposztásmegyér (RégFüz T. 40, 1986, 55) / **on Fig. 2: 10**
36. Kazár III. (RKM 2002, 224; *Vaday 2004; 2006*) / **on Fig. 2: 11**
37. Kengyel – Baghy major (RégFüz T. 45, 1991, 50; RégFüz T. 47, 1993, 51–52)
38. Kengyel – Fehér tanya (RégFüz T. 46, 1992, 15)
39. Kengyel – Kengyelpart II. (RégFüz T. 46, 1992, 55–56)
40. Kengyel – Kiss tanya (RégFüz T. 44, 1990, 16–17)
41. Kengyel – Mészáros tanya (RégFüz T. 45, 1991, 17)
42. Kengyel – Vigh tanya (RégFüz T. 46, 1992, 56)
43. Kétdobony (RégFüz T. 42, 1988, 17)
44. Lajosmizse M5/Site 16 and D1 (RégFüz T. 42, 1988, 18) / **on Fig. 2: 12**
45. Letkés – Nádireti földek (RégFüz T. 43, 1989, 11)
46. Lőrinci határa – uncertain data (RKM 2005, 267)
47. Ludas – Nagyfűged (RégFüz T. 48, 1994, 103)
48. Ludas – Varjú dtűlő (RKM 1998, 156; RKM 2000, 171; RKM 2001, 185–187; *Domboróczki 2004, Szabó–Tankó 2006*)
49. Makó – Dáli tanyák Site 44 – uncertain data (RKM 2005, 271)
50. Mátraszőlős – Királydomb (RKM 2001, 189)
51. Mezőkeresztes, Motorway 3, Site 10 (RégFüz T. 47, 1993, 15–16; RégFüz T. 49, 1995, 67–68)
52. Mezőkeresztes, Motorway 3, Site 12 (RégFüz T. 48, 1994, 17–18) / **on Fig. 2: 13**

¹⁶ RKM (the year of the excavation); Régészeti Kutatások Magyarországon / Archaeological Investigations in Hungary – short reports of the excavations of the previous year.

¹⁷ RégFüz T. (the year of the excavation); Régészeti Füzetek Seria I. – short reports of the excavations of the previous year.

53. Mezőkövesd – Mocsolyás Motorway 3, Site 6 (RégFüz T. 47, 1993, 17)
54. Mezőszemere – Szihalmi út (RKM 2000, 177)
55. Nagyfűged – Malomi rész (RKM 2005, 277)
56. Nagykálló – Cuker (*Almássy 2001b*, 99–101)
57. Nagymágócs – Szendrei major (RégFüz T. 40, 1986, 82)
58. Nagyút 4 (RégFüz T. 48, 1994, 21) / **on Fig. 2: 14**
59. Nemesborzova – Mánd, Darvas (*Almássy 2001b*, 93–99)
60. Nyékládháza (*Hellebrandt 2001; 2006*) / **on Fig. 2: 15**
61. Nyíregyháza – Manda (RégFüz T. 48, 1994, 22–23; *Istvánovits 1997*)
62. Nyíregyháza – Császárszállás, Motorway 3, Site 137 and 144 (RKM 2005, 285, 288)
63. Nyíregyháza – Felsősimá, Motorway 3, Site 179 (RKM 2005, 259)
- 64a-b. Nyíregyháza – Oros, KE 27 (and sandpit) (RKM 2004, 257, 294) / **64/a = on Fig. 2: 16**
65. Nyírtass – Macskálló (RKM 2002, 248–249)
66. Orosháza – Vásárhelyi út, Szűcs tanya (RKM 2004, 260)
67. Panyola (RKM 2003, 270)
68. Pásztó (*Tankó 2006*)
69. Polgár – Királyérpart (RégFüz T. 47, 1993, 21–22, *Szabó 2000* with the earlier references)
70. Polgár – Csószhalom (RKM 2002, 257)
71. Rákoscaba – Major-hegy (RKM 2005, 211–213) / **on Fig. 2: 17**
72. Rákospalota – Újmajor (*Zsidi ed. 2005*, 30) / **on Fig. 2: 18**
73. Sajópetri – Hosszú dűlő settlement and cemetery (*Szabó – Kriveczky – Czajlik 2004* with the earlier references; *Szabó 2006* with the earlier references)
74. Sarkadkeresztúr – Csapháti legelő (RégFüz T. 44, 1990, 58)
75. Solt – Erdélyi tanya (RKM 2003, 284–285)
76. Solt – Tételhegy (RKM 2005, 306–308)
77. Szeged – Kiskundorozsma (RKM 1999, 247)
78. Szeged – Kiskundorozsma, Kettőshatár (RKM 2004, 284–285)
79. Szeged – Kiskundorozsma, Pick (RKM 2004, 285–286)
80. Szeged – Kiskundorozsma, Subasa (RKM 2004, 286–287)
81. Szeged – Vár (RKM 2003, 295)
82. Szigetszentmiklós (RégFüz T. 42, 1988, 24; RégFüz T. 43, 1989, 16) / **on Fig. 2: 19**
83. Szihalom – Pamlényi tábla (RégFüz T. 49, 1995, 26–27; RégFüz T. 51, 1997, 100–101; RKM 2001, 223; RKM 2002, 276)
84. Szihalom – Sójajtó (RégFüz T. 51, 1997, 45)
85. Szob – Malomkert (*Kővári 2004*)
86. Szolnok – Alcsisziget (RégFüz T. 47, 1993, 27–28)
87. Szolnok – Zagyvapart (RégFüz T. 40, 1986, 29–30; RégFüz T. 42, 1988, 24)
88. Szurdokpüspöki – Alsó-Dolinka – uncertain data (RKM 2005, 325–326)
89. Tiszaftired – Tiszaszőlős (RégFüz T. 41, 1987, 23)
90. Tokaj – Ménesoldal (RégFüz T. 45, 1991, 27)
91. Túrkeve – Görög halom (RKM 2004, 297–298)
92. Üllő, Site 5 (unpublished; about the site: *Tari ed. 2006*, 42–48) / **on Fig. 2: 20**
93. Vállaj – határátkelő (border station) (RKM 2003, 312)
94. Tura (unpublished)¹⁸ / **on Fig. 2: 21**

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¹⁸ I would like to thank the excavator, Valéria Kulcsár, that she made it possible for me to analyse her fresh material!

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