

THE KERKA VALLEY IN THE BRONZE AGE

It has already been mentioned repeatedly that County Zala was a *terra incognita* in terms of archaeological research for many decades and that the distribution maps of various periods showed this area as an “unknown country”. This was especially true for the Copper and the Bronze Ages (*fig. 1*).

Systematic research in County Zala started with the topographical surveys in the county’s north-eastern part in the 1960s.¹ The archaeological investigation of the other parts of the county began with the field surveys of Jolán Horváth, László Horváth, Róbert Müller, László Vándor and Nándor Kalicz,² and a few small-scale excavations.³ The rescue excavations preceding the reconstruction of the Little Balaton in the 1980s brought an upswing in the archaeological research of this region. The excavations conducted over extensive surfaces yielded important new information for practically all periods in the region’s history.⁴ The archaeological mapping of the region continued with the micro-region investigations in the Hahót Basin, as a result of which new sites were identified from practically all periods. Some of these sites were excavated. The findings of this research project were published in two volumes.⁵ Parallel to the investigations in the Hahót Basin, László András Horváth and Katalin H. Simon conducted field surveys in the northern part of County Zala.⁶ These were followed by the systematic field surveys and excavations in the Kerka Valley. As a result of these investigations, County Zala can no longer be regarded as “uncharted territory”.

The most important finding of these investigations in terms of the Bronze Age is that the local population of the Late Copper Age could finally be determined: this population can be identified with the Baden communities, whose settlements have been identified at a few sites.⁷ Their settlements span the entire Late Copper Age, from the early phase represented by the

¹ This area was part of County Veszprém at the time and was incorporated into County Zala at a later date. For the results of the survey, cf. *MRT 1*.

² *J. Horváth: Az Alsó-Zalavölgy és környéke őskori településtörténete* [Prehistoric settlement patterns in the Lower Zala Valley and its area]. University dissertation, Eötvös University, Budapest 1970 (Manuscript); *R. Müller: Régészeti terepbejárások a göcseji „szegkek” vidékén és településtörténeti tanulságaik* (Archäologische Bodenforschungen im Göcsejer „Szegkek”-Gegend und ihre siedlungsgeschichtliche Lehren). A Göcseji Múzeum Kiadványai 30. Zalaegerszeg 1971; *L. Vándor: A Mura-völgy magyarországi szakaszának története* [History of the Hungarian section of the Mura Valley]. University dissertation, Eötvös University, Budapest 1972 (Manuscript); *Horváth 1994*.

³ *N. Kalicz: Letenye-Szentkeresztomb. Ausgrabung und Bibliographie. MittArchInst 1 (1970) 108–110; N. Kalicz: Nagykanizsa-Sánc. Ausgrabung und Bibliographie. MittArchInst 6 (1976) 149–150; N. Kalicz: Becsehely. Ausgrabung und Bibliographie. MittArchInst 7 (1977) 119–120; N. Kalicz: Becsehely. Ausgrabung und Bibliographie. MittArchInst 8–9 (1978–1979) 201–203; *Horváth 1984*.*

⁴ *Müller 1989; Évezredek 1996*.

⁵ *Hahót Basin 1995 and 1996*.

⁶ *Horváth – H. Simon 1997*

⁷ *Horváth 1984; M. Bondár: Újabb adatok a badeni kultúra temetkezéseiről* (Neue Beiträge zu Bestattungen der Badener Kultur). *ZalaiMúz 1* (1987) 47–58; *K. H. Simon: Neolit és rézkori települések Tekeny határában* (Neolithische und kupferzeitliche Siedlungen in der Gemarkung von Tekeny). *ZalaiMúz 1* (1987) 7–46; *M. Bondár: Fröh- und Mittelbronzezeit*, in: *Müller 1989* 30–36; *L. A. Horváth: Eine kupferzeitliche Kultstätte in der Gemarkung von Bak. ActaArchHung 42* (1990) 21–44; *K. H. Simon: Der Stand und die Aufgaben der Neolithikum- und Kupferzeitforschung im Komitat Zala. ZalaiMúz 2* (1990) 47–66; *L. A. Horváth: Rézkori település Nagykapomakon* (Die kupferzeitliche Siedlung bei Nagykapomak). *ZalaiMúz 3* (1991) 113–135; *M. Bondár: A badeni kultúra telepe Balatonmagyaródon* (Die Siedlung der Badener Kultur von Balatonmagyaród). *ZalaiMúz 3* (1991) 137–154; *Horváth 1994; M. Bondár: Késő rézkor* [Late copper Age], in: *Évezredek 1996* 34–41, figs 6–11.; *E. Bánffy: Neolithic and Copper Age settlements at Hahót and Zalaszentbalázs-Pusztatető, Hahót-Szartóri I–II*, in: *Hahót Basin 1995* 35–50; *E. Bánffy: Újkőkori és rézkori települések Zalaszentbalázs határában* (Zalaszentbalázs-Pusztatető, Hahót-Szartóri I–II). (Neolithische und kupferzeitliche Siedlungen in der Gemarkung von Zalaszentbalázs. Zalaszentbalázs-Pusztatető, Hahót-Szartóri I–II). *ZalaiMúz 6* (1996) 97–147; *Horváth – H. Simon 1997*



fig. 1. Bronze Age sites in the Kerka Valley

Boleráz group to the late Baden period. The sites can be found in the Keszthely area, in the Little Balaton region, in the Nagykanizsa area and in the Hahót Basin. No Baden sites have been identified in the Kerka Valley.⁸

No settlements of the Kostolac culture from the late Baden period have yet been found in County Zala. However, the presence of this population in County Zala is indicated by the single Kostolac site known to date, an urn burial from Keszthely.⁹

The determination of the earliest Bronze Age population of south-western Transdanubia is also problematic. No sites of the Makó group of the Zók culture, which was assumed to represent the initial phase of the Early Bronze Age, had been identified in this area, and neither were there any Vučedol finds. We now know that the earliest Bronze Age communities in the Nagykanizsa area and in the Hahót Basin can be identified with the Somogyvár–Vinkovci culture.¹⁰

⁸ See Eszter Bánffy's study in this volume, pp. 13–19.

⁹ MRT I Site 21/30.

¹⁰ M. Bondár: Eine frühbronzezeitliche Siedlung in Börzönce, Komitat Zala (Vorbericht). ZalaiMűz 5

(1994) 9–19; Horváth 1994; Bondár 1996; Bondár 1998; Bondár 1999; Bondár 1999a.

A total of twenty-five Somogyvár–Vinkovci sites have been identified in County Zala.¹¹ Most of these sites yielded no more than a handful of pottery sherds; a couple of richer settlements are known from Nagykanizsa-Sánc, Nagykanizsa-Inkey-kápolna, Letenye and Börzönce-Temetői-dűlő. A few fortified settlements are also known (Nagygörbő,¹² Oltár-Márkihely¹³ and Galambok-Öreghegy,¹⁴ as well as Pécs-Nagyárpád, with a natural protection on three sides, in County Baranya¹⁵). The sites of the Somogyvár–Vinkovci culture can be equally found in the Little Balaton region, the Keszthely and Nagykanizsa area, and in the Hahót Basin. The westernmost site lies at Lenti.¹⁶ We did not find any Early Bronze Age settlements in the Kerka Valley proper, except for an extensive settlement site with the culture's typical pottery at Kissziget-Temetődomb on the fringes of the micro-region (*fig. 1*).¹⁷ The most recently identified site from this period has been reported from Muraszemenye at the Kerka–Mura confluence: this Somogyvár–Vinkovci site was investigated by Judit Kvassay in 2000.¹⁸ Together with these two new sites, the number of Early Bronze Age sites now totals twenty-seven.

The low number of sites can in part be explained with the structure of these sites. The few excavated settlements from this period (Pécs-Nagyárpád, Szava, Zók-Várhegy, Nagykanizsa-Inkey-kápolna, Vinkovci, Börzönce) all featured pits, which usually lay 15–20 m from each other. Only in instances of archaeological luck did these pits, spaced far apart from each other, fall into smaller trenches. The situation is far worse in the case of field surveys. During the excavations it was noted that some of these pits had been empty and they could only be assigned to the Somogyvár–Vinkovci culture on the basis of their fill. It seems likely that these had been storage or clay extraction pits. The other pits, yielding a rich assortment of finds, were refuse pits filled with household debris. At Börzönce, for example, some sixty vessels were found (either in an intact condition or reconstructable from their fragments), together with an intact idol, an idol head, a wagon model, wagon wheels, a clay mould, miniature animal figurines, spindle whorls, small stone axes and silex. The pottery finds from Börzönce have enriched our knowledge of the range of vessel types used by the Somogyvár–Vinkovci communities and have enabled the elaboration of a detailed typology.¹⁹ Each vessel type had a fairly wide range of variants. It became clear that instead of the previously known 4–5 typical vessel types, the variants make up a complete set. The validity and usefulness of the typology proposed on the basis of the Börzönce finds was tested during the evaluation of the finds from Nagykanizsa-Inkey-kápolna.²⁰ Most of the vessel types identified at Börzönce also occurred among the finds from this site and a few types, barely represented among the fragments in the Börzönce assemblage, could be determined more precisely on the basis of the Nagykanizsa finds. Cult finds were represented by a phallus shaped perforated clay pendant.²¹

The analysis of the known Somogyvár–Vinkovci sites suggested a settlement pattern of a few major centres surrounded by smaller settlements.²² One of these centres apparently lay in the southern part of County Zala as shown by the central settlements at Börzönce and Nagykanizsa-Inkey-kápolna.²³ This settlement pattern does not reflect the extent to which a particular area has been investigated since in spite of the large-scale excavations conducted as part of the Little Balaton project, not one single extensive Somogyvár–Vinkovci settlement was

¹¹ Bondár 1996 fig. 19; Bondár 1998 fig. 2: Sites 3–4, 6, 10, 23, 26, 32, 38, 39–42, 57, 62, 70–72, 77, 92–93, 99, 100–101, 121–122. The distribution map was redrawn (Bondár 1998 fig. 2), the site numbers refer to this map. For a description of the sites, cf. Bondár 1996.

¹² Gy. Nováki: A Nagygörbő-Várhegy-i korabronzkori erődített telep (The Early Bronze Age fortified settlement at Nagygörbő-Várhegy). ArchÉrt 92 (1965) 168–175.

¹³ Horváth 1994 97.

¹⁴ Horváth 1994 97.

¹⁵ G. Bándi: Korai bronzkor. Somogyvár-Vinkovci kultúra [Early Bronze Age. The Somogyvár-

Vinkovci Cultur], in: G. Bándi (ed.): Baranya megye története az őskortól a honfoglalásig. Baranya monográfia. Pécs 1979, 64.

¹⁶ Bondár 1998 fig. 2, Site 57.

¹⁷ Cf. pp. 77–78, Site 59, in this volume.

¹⁸ Judit Kvassay's kind personal communication.

¹⁹ Bondár 1996 200–213, figs 13–18.

²⁰ Bondár 1999a.

²¹ Horváth 1984 fig. 5. 1; Horváth 1994 fig. 8.

²² Bondár 1996 Pl. 3.

²³ Bondár 1996 234.

identified, only a few pits (the size of the investigated area at Balatonmagyaród-Hídvépuszta was 4 ha). In other words, we can hardly claim that an extensive excavated area automatically means a large settlement, while field surveys only yield small settlements. Although the size of the excavated area at Nagykanizsa-Inkey-kápolna and Börzönce can hardly be compared to the large-scale rescue excavations preceding the motorway constructions, the intensity of the settlement features and the high number of find assemblages nonetheless indicate that these sites represented the permanent settlements of larger communities.

In view of the research results outline above we may say that in the southern and south-western parts of County Zala the initial phase of the Early Bronze Age was represented by the Somogyvár-Vinkovci culture, the Hungarian counterpart of the Vinkovci culture of Yugoslavia. In terms of relative chronology, this culture falls between the classical Vučedol culture and the Kisapostag culture. The internal chronology of the culture is still the subject of debates.²⁴

Only ten sites in County Zala represent the Kisapostag culture, assigned to the last phase of the Early Bronze Age.²⁵ Kisapostag settlements have been found in the Keszthely area and in the Little Balaton region, for example at Balatonmagyaród-Hídvépuszta, where a major fortified settlement was uncovered.²⁶ The structure of Kisapostag settlements – pits scattered over a large area – resembles the Somogyvár-Vinkovci ones. The finds from these pits can only be found accidentally during field surveys. It is generally accepted that the River Rinya marks the western boundary of the Kisapostag distribution.²⁷ Although the investigations in the Little Balaton region have shown that this boundary lay slightly more to the west,²⁸ no Kisapostag sites were found either in the Hahót Basin²⁹ or in the Kerka Valley. To the best of our present knowledge, sites of the Kisapostag culture have not been identified in other parts of County Zala either.³⁰

The same holds true for the Encrusted Pottery culture succeeding the Kisapostag culture. Six sites were identified in the Little Balaton region:³¹ one of these, Esztergályhorváti-Alsóbárándpuszta, falls into the Koszider period marking the close of the Middle Bronze Age. Sites of the Encrusted Pottery culture have not been found west of the Little Balaton region – either in the Hahót Basin, or in the Kerka Valley – and the Esztergályhorváti site remains the westernmost site of the culture.

The lack of sites of the Kisapostag and the Encrusted Pottery culture in the western and south-western parts of County Zala can no longer be explained by the lack of research. Similar observations were made in the northern part of the county, in the Zalaegerszeg area. László András Horváth and Katalin H. Simon noted that none of the over one thousand sites identified during their systematic field surveys could be assigned to the late phase of the Early Bronze Age or the Middle Bronze Age represented by these two cultures.³²

The close of the Middle Bronze Age and the onset of the Late Bronze Age brought fundamental changes in the settlement patterns of the Carpathian Basin, as a result of major migrations. The earlier dominance of cultural influences from the Balkans and South-East Europe was replaced by cultural impacts from western Europe in the mid-2nd millennium BC. The historical background to these changes can be sought in the arrival of Tumulus groups in successive waves. Named after its distinctive burials, the Tumulus period can be broadly divided into three subperiods, even if a sharp boundary cannot be drawn between them. The less than peaceful events at the beginning of the Tumulus period are reflected in the bronze hoards buried during the Koszider period. Only one such hoard is known from County Zala: arm spirals and a mould for a spearhead were found at Zalaszentiván-Kisfaludihegy.³³

²⁴ Bondár 1999.

²⁵ Honti 1996 53–55: Sites 113, 15, 10, 13, 7, 65, 101, 72, 75, 85.

²⁶ Honti 1996 47.

²⁷ Kiss 2001 18.

²⁸ Balatonmagyaród-Hídvépuszta: cf. Honti 1996 47.

²⁹ Szőke 1996 23.

³⁰ Horváth 1994 97; Kiss 2001 18.

³¹ Honti 1996 53–55: Sites 113, 70, 15, 3, 76, 89.

³² H. Simon – Horváth 1999 202.

³³ H. Simon – Horváth 1999 202, with the earlier literature.

Two sites of the Middle Bronze Age–Late Bronze Age transition are known from County Zala: Esztergályhorváti-Alsóbáránpuszt, mentioned above, and Gellénháza-Budai szer II. The finds from Esztergályhorváti clearly prove that the occupants of the settlement arrived to this area from south-western Slovakia since the distinctive pottery wares of the Dolný Peter phase of the late Magyarád culture could be distinguished among the finds.³⁴ Katalin H. Simon and László András Horváth excavated the pit of a similar settlement at Gellénháza near Zalaegerszeg.³⁵ The pottery finds from the site revealed trade contacts with distant regions. Both sites can be assigned to the Koszider horizon.

The new “invaders” of the early Tumulus period probably arrived from Austria, from the Alpine region. Few sites of the period corresponding to Reinecke’s Br B2–BC are known west of the River Zala. One of the major settlements of this period was excavated at Gelsesziget in the Hahót Basin, where László Horváth uncovered a 20 m long timber-framed house. The remains of the wooden posts were preserved by the waterlogged soil in two postholes. The postholes of a timber-framed pen-like structure were unearthed north of the house. Over fifty vessels could be reconstructed from the pottery finds;³⁶ other finds included bone tools and implements, five ornamented bronze pins³⁷ and two bronze daggers.³⁸ The other settlement from this period lies in the Nagykanizsa area.³⁹

Only a single site in the Kerka Valley, Ramocsa-Két út köze, betongyűrű,⁴⁰ yielded a handful of sherds, which can perhaps be assigned to the Tumulus culture.

Many sites of the late Tumulus–early Urnfield (Br D–Ha1) period are known in the Keszthely, Nagykanizsa and Little Balaton area,⁴¹ as well as in the Hahót Basin.⁴²

One of the most important sites from this period is the settlement at Balatonmagyaród-Hídvégpuszta, spanning the Br C–D–Ha period, and the cemetery from the same period. A number of grain storage pits and various other pits of the Tumulus and Urnfield cultures were uncovered at this site, together with fifty-six burials of the late Tumulus–early Urnfield period lying some 100 m from the settlement. The cemetery itself overlies an earlier Tumulus settlement. Two periods – an earlier and a later one – could be distinguished in the cemetery, based on the typology of the finds. The Urnfield settlement was enclosed by a 2–3 m wide and 2 m deep ditch; the settlement features lay in the area enclosed by the ditch. The settlement and the cemetery was separated by a shallow ditch.⁴³

Several Late Bronze Age settlements and their cemeteries have also been found in the Little Balaton region.⁴⁴

A number of changes can be noted in the late Tumulus period. The late Tumulus development was apparently broken by a new wave of immigrants arriving to the Carpathian Basin from the north and north-east since beside the distinctive traits of the late Tumulus culture, a number of early Urnfield features can be noted among the finds. A new ethno-cultural transformation began in the area between the Alps and the Rhine, which is usually labelled Urnfield culture after the large cemeteries containing inurned burials. This transformation also affected Transdanubia. The ethnic and cultural impacts – perhaps also accompanied by the arrival of new population groups – led to the almost imperceptible transformation of the late Tumulus culture into the Urnfield culture. There followed a peaceful development lasting for several centuries, during which there emerged a rather uniform pottery and metalwork over an extensive area, reflecting a peaceful existence and trade contacts between major centres and metal workshops.⁴⁵ At the

³⁴ L. Horváth: Spätbronzezeit, in: Müller 1989 37–38; Horváth 1994 98, fig. 25; Horváth 1996 57.

³⁵ H. Simon – Horváth 1999.

³⁶ The finds from the excavation are still unpublished. For a brief description of the site and its finds, cf. Horváth 1994 98.

³⁷ Horváth 1994 fig. 9.

³⁸ Horváth 1994 fig. 9.

³⁹ Miklósa-Mórichelyi halastavak: Horváth 1994 98.

⁴⁰ Cf. pp. 58–59, Site 22, in this volume.

⁴¹ Horváth 1996 72–73, fig. 7, Sites 51, 113, 115, 121, 123, 134, 70, 155, 17, 23, 1, 15, 22, 9, 66, 67, 63, 76.

⁴² Szőke 1996 Pl. 4.

⁴³ Horváth 1996 60. The site is still unpublished; its finds will be published by the members of the team who excavated the site.

⁴⁴ Balatonmagyaród-Kiskányavár, Garabonc-Ófalu.

⁴⁵ For an overview of the different theories on the emergence of the Urnfield culture, cf. Horváth 1994 98–99.

close of the Late Bronze Age, a number of changes shaped the life of the Carpathian Basin. The find assemblages reflect the emergence of regional groups, while the burial of metal hoards too reflect this transformation. The break marked by the onset of the pre-Scythian period in the Great Hungarian Plain also had repercussions in Transdanubia.

Relatively many sites are known from the early phase of the Urnfield culture in the Keszthely and Little Balaton area. Only a few settlements and burials from the later phase of the culture (Ha1–HaB) have been identified west of Lake Balaton.⁴⁶ Four sites of the culture were found in the Kerka Valley: Nemesnép-Harmadik-dűlő,⁴⁷ Zalabaksa-Győrfa,⁴⁸ Zalabaksa-Belterület⁴⁹ and Kissziget-Temetődomb.⁵⁰

Summary

The above brief outline of the Bronze Age settlement of County Zala reveals that the Kerka Valley was sparsely settled or downright uninhabited during certain periods (the Late Copper Age Baden and Kostolac periods, the Bronze Age Kisapostag and Encrusted Pottery culture periods, as well as the late Urnfield period). The lack of sites from these periods can no longer be explained with a lack of research since the territory of County Zala has been systematically investigated with various methods (field surveys, rescue excavations, systematic excavation campaigns over an extensive area) during the past few decades.

There could have been many reasons for the “empty” landscape (or marchland, as it was called in later ages): geographic factors, soil conditions, climatic factors, the lack of an optimal environment needed by an individual community etc.

How is this reflected in the Kerka Valley? The Kerka Valley covers the western part of County Zala, criss-crossed by the Kerka and its tributaries. The Kerka flows from the Silver Mts in Austria, passing through the Zala hills in a north-west to south-east direction, entering the Mura at the country’s border. Its course is more or less parallel to the middle reaches of the River Zala and the Principális Stream. Flowing through the gently rolling hills and the Lenti plain, the Kerka is not a particularly abundant stream, which only swells into a river in the rainy season. This area lies at around 200 m a.s.l. Morphologically it is a Tertiary and Quaternary hill region and, to a lesser extent, a floodplain. It is covered mostly by brown forest soil.⁵¹ The area is covered with large tracts of forests and turf and it is not particularly suited to agricultural cultivation since there are no contiguous large areas. Larger rivers and lakes are also lacking. Neither should it be forgotten that the Palaeo-Mura flowed through the Kerka Valley⁵² and that this also shaped the pedology of the region. Today, the number of sunny hours is low in this region, while the annual precipitation is rather high, although its distribution varies and does not always fall into the periods favourable for agriculture. These are all factors determining the economic conditions of this region. Unfortunately, there are no similar data for the Bronze Age, except for the well known pollen data indicating a climatic change at the Middle Bronze Age–Late Bronze Age transition, bringing a cooling (late sub-Boreal period). It is possible that this climate played a role in the emergence of a dense settlement network; the occupants of these settlements were engaged in agriculture and they also cleared large tracts of forest. In his evaluation of the plant remains from Balatonmagyaród-Hídvégpuszta, Ferenc Gyulai noted that “compared to Middle Bronze Age, the climate of the Late Bronze age became cooler and wetter. The water level of the lakes and rivers rose, as did the level of the groundwater table. Owing to the deterioration of the climate, a change can be noted in the formerly continental vegetation, together with the spread of sub-Atlantic species. Beside beech, hornbeam too became widespread.”⁵³

⁴⁶ Horváth 1996 66: Sites 10, 22 and 29.

⁴⁷ Cf. p. 53, Site 20, in this volume.

⁴⁸ Cf. p. 71, Site 46, in this volume.

⁴⁹ Cf. p. 71, Site 48, in this volume.

⁵⁰ Cf. pp. 77–78, Site 59, in this volume.

⁵¹ Gy. Füleky: A talaj [The soil]. Budapest 1988, fig. 30.

⁵² Gy. Lovász: A Dráva–Mura vízrendszer vízjárási és lefolyási viszonyai [The watercourses and

drainage of the Dráva–Mura catchment]. Földrajzi monográfiák. Budapest 1972, 24.

⁵³ F. Gyulai: Balatonmagyaród-Hídvégpuszta későbronzkori település növényletei és élelmiszermaradványai (Plant findings and food remnant of the Late Bronze Age settlement at Balatonmagyaród-Hídvégpuszta). ZalaiMúz 6 (1996) 177.

The Middle Bronze Age was characterised by a dry climate, a lack of rivers abounding in water and extreme temperature fluctuations. The poor forest soil would also explain why the Kerka Valley and the Mura–Drava Interfluve (Medimurje/Muraköz, Croatia) were not occupied in certain periods. During their hunting and reconnaissance expeditions, prehistoric communities were able to choose locations for their settlement, where there was ample space for cultivation, water and good pastureland for their animals, and opportunities for fishing etc.

Topographical surveys in neighbouring Slovenia yielded more or less similar results: the presence of certain archaeological cultures could be documented through their sites, while others were absent. There were no sites from the Late Copper Age, the Early and the Middle Bronze Age, while the Late Bronze Age was amply represented.⁵⁴

The same holds true for Styria, with its similar geographic conditions,⁵⁵ although it must in all fairness be noted that systematic investigations resembling the ones in County Zala and Slovenia have not been conducted in this region. However, the distribution of the few known archaeological sites according to various prehistoric periods more or less corresponds to the data from the Kerka Valley and the region of the Mura–Drava Interfluve.

This apparent lack, however, does not necessarily mean a genuine lack of sites. The traces of smaller and larger settlement sites can – in cases of archaeological luck – usually be identified from the surface finds collected during the field surveys of systematic archaeological investigations. Under less favourable conditions, for example in a forested area with marshland, which has few areas suitable for cultivation, such as the Kerka Valley, these larger settlements and smaller campsites might not be identified, but this does not necessarily mean that there was no human settlement during certain periods. At Balatonmogyoród-Hídvépuszta, one of the largest sites investigated as part of the Little Balaton project, no settlement finds of the Balaton–Lasinja culture, no burials of the Baden culture, no pits of the Somogyvár–Vinkovci culture and no burials of the Kisapostag culture had been uncovered on the 18,000 m² large area excavated until 1985.⁵⁶ The finds of these cultures were only recovered during the later excavations conducted over a similarly large area. Other examples could also be quoted to illustrate that new results concerning settlement structure and settlement patterns can only be expected from the large-scale excavation of sites. One case in point is the investigation of the Muraszemenye–Aligvár site, where Judit Kvassay uncovered a few settlement features of the Somogyvár–Vinkovci culture in 2000 as part of the excavations preceding the construction of the M7 motorway.

It is to be hoped that the excavations conducted over extensive areas as part of the research projects preceding the motorway constructions will allow a more precise reconstruction of the settlement patterns of various periods. If these large-scale excavations too yield a “negative” result concerning the presence of a particular culture, we may safely conclude that a given culture did not settle in the investigated area.

⁵⁴ I. Šavel: Archeološka topografija Slovenije. Topografsko področje XX (Prekmurje). Ljubljana 1991, 28; I. Šavel: Kulturni vplivi v prazgodovini v pokrajini ob Muri (Cultural Influences During

Prehistory in the Country on the River Mura), in: *Völker an der Mur* 1996 20.

⁵⁵ D. Kramer: Neue Aspekte zur älteren steirischen Siedlungsgeschichte, in: *Völker an der Mur* 1996 9.

⁵⁶ *Évezredek* 1996.

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