

Historical evidences; previous Hungarian and international researches

The outstanding locality of the European cultural history, *Mosaburg/Zalavár* was the seat of the easternmost province, Pannonia Inferior of the Carolingian Empire, the secular and ecclesiastical centre of the Transdanubia between 840-907. The settlement was established in 840 by Priwina and his son, Chezil, who had been banished from Moravia by the local Prince, Moimir. From the mid 870s onwards Mosaburg became one of the residences of the last Carolingian Emperor, Arnulf. In 896 he consigned it to Prince Brazlav.¹ In 907 at *Brezalauspurc* (the castle of Brazlav) the Bavarians were calamitously defeated by the Magyars. Due to this victory the the Magyars occupied the whole Carpathian Basin.

Before the Hungarian conquest Mosaburg was the centre of christianisation. Three churches were built here until 870 and another 30 were erected in the region. In the 870s Mosaburg was the seat of Method's archdiocese in Pannonia for several years. In 1019 the Benedictine monastery of St Hadrian was founded here, on the ruins of the Carolingian Mary's church and a stronghold. North of it in a palisade fort worked the earliest centre of the county, called *Colon civitas* by the documentary evidences. The monastery became *locus credibile* from the 13th c. on, was fortified afterwards, and served as a border fortress in the 16-17th c. against the Ottomans. After its demolition in 1702 commanded by Leopold I the ruins were used as a stone mine, often even the foundations were destroyed.

So the site has three main periods.

1) The Carolingian Period. Zalavár-Vársziget is the central island of a Late Glacial moorland at the lower Zala river. It is divided into three parts by the 9th c. fortification-system. Priwina's stronghold (*munimen, castrum*)² was erected in the southern third of the 'L' shaped island, in the middle there were the 'Pfalz' of the archbishop of Salzburg and the 'town' (*civitas*) of Priwina, and a suburb of craftsmen and merchants can be located on the eastern tongue.

There were three churches on the island in this period. On 24 January 850 a private church was dedicated to Virgin Mary within Priwina's stronghold. It was rebuilt as the church of a Benedictine monastery in 1019. North of it, in the town of Priwina (*infra civitatem Priwinae*) between 853-855 a pilgrim church was erected by archbishop Adalamm of Salzburg to the honour of martyr Hadrian. Its remains were discovered by Ágnes Cs. Sós in the 1980s, nevertheless the excavations have been completed in 2000.³ The cemeteries, that surrounded these two churches reached each other and contained more than 2000 burials. Their excavation has not finished yet. From the extensive excavations is known, that the residence of the archbishop of Salzburg existed south of this church and consisted of two multilevel timber palaces. North of the pilgrim church there were the workshops of several servants. The whole complex was surrounded by a timber palisade. In 2007-2009 west of the pilgrim church the wooden church of St John the Baptist was unearthed with a separate well ('baptistry'). It was built around 840 AD and served as the first church of the settlement.⁴ Besides of Zalavár-Vársziget there was a church on Zalavár-Récéskút and another on Zalasabab-Borjúállás sziget⁵. They could be identical with churches mentioned as 'outside of the town' (*foris civitatem*) in the *Conversio*. Villages of servants settled on other islands and alongside the river Zala.⁶

Mosaburg was occupied by the Magyars in 907, but they did not settled there. (Among the bones of the deceased of the churchyard of the Hadrian's pilgrimchurch there were some with the arrowheads of the conquering Magyars jammed in.) The town slowly began to decline, the churches collapsed, the wooden buildings rotted.

2) The second blooming period of the settlement was the first half of the 11th c., when determinative events of the ecclesiastical- and state organisation of Hungary were connected to Zalavár-Vársziget: one of the earliest monastery foundation of Stephen I and the creation of the county seat. It is essential for the

¹ Cs. Sós 1973.

² Cs. Sós 1963.

³ Szöke 1999; Szöke – Wedepohl – Kronz 2004; Szöke 2007; Szöke 2009; Szöke 2010.

⁴ Szöke 2010.

⁵ Cs. Sós 1969; Müller 1994; Müller 1995.

⁶ Cs. Sós 1984; Szöke - Vándor 1986; Szöke et al. 1992

Hungarian history to ascertain the relationship between the secular (administrative) and ecclesiastical centre, the types of the architectural phenomena and fortifications. Due to the historical research the knowledge of the ecclesiastical- and state organisation became more and more exact,⁷ but the excavation and the interpretation of the architectural heritage have not been sufficient yet, because of the dimensions and programs of the excavations and because of the enormous devastation of the earliest phases of these places.⁸

Excavations of 11-12th c. county seats became the mainstream of the research from the end of the 1960s on. Its realization was hindered partly by modern building activities (Győr, Sopron, Fejér, Veszprém, Nyitra, etc.), partly by financial reasons (Borsod)⁹, but complete and extensive excavations have been persuaded not even on 'open terrains' (Visegrád). The investigation of the defending structures and the connecting debates overshadowed other subjects,¹⁰ among them the results of the suburb-researches.¹¹ Summaries were published also with international comparison¹², but the detailed results of the excavated centres have remained unknown yet (exception: Sopron).¹³

No modern constructions disturbed the Zalavár-Vársziget site, therefore here a unique possibility is offered for a complete and extensive fieldwork, and for replies of the questions remained unanswerable by the documentary evidences. On the 'open field' of Zalavár-Vársziget the pressure of circumstances (decay of medieval buildings, extension of former excavations) has arisen new questions, problems which have never been examined before:

- settlement structure (alteration of communication; cohabitation of secular and ecclesiastical institutions, within the Carpathian Basin the unique possibility of the investigation of an early secular centre)
- connections between social groups and the elements of the settlement structure
- relationship to the environs and to the heritage of the 9th c.

Most of the 11-13th c. archaeological relics found at Zalavár-Vársziget have been connected to cemeteries. Jewels found in the graves cannot be separated from those who wore them, from their environment, from the heritage of the people who once stood by the grave. Data on the depth, the orientation, the soil of the grave cannot have been limited to the problems of burial costum, but help to reconstruct the environment and its change.¹⁴

These new questions can be answered by the complex interpretation of the results of the archaeological, anthropological, archaeozoological and other scientific investigations. This complexity is emphasized in the publications which are in preparation. The results concern to the site Zalavár-Vársziget. The question of generalization can be decided after similarly complex and extensive investigations of other sites.

3) In spite of the large-scale devastation the border fortress of the 16-17th c. can be reconstructed and corresponded to the survey of 1569, made by G. Turco.

Its research was effected intensively in the 1950s and 1960s. Nevertheless the results and the finds have been unpublished yet. The Ottoman fortresses of this period are well known, but the knowledge of the material culture of border fortresses under Hungarian control is already insufficient. This shortage gives the importance of this project in this period, the expert of which is Dr Gábor Tomka.

The theoretical and practical significance of the research

1) The Carolingian remains of the site have a European significance. For from the Carolingian Western Europe there has not survived any other Carolingian centre bound to the West in all respects that is so apt

⁷ Kristó 1988; Györffy 1977, for county Zala Holub 1929; last: Tringli 2010; Zsoldos 2010.

⁸ Pannonhalma: László 1996, Pécsvárad last Bodó 2010. The extensive research at Somogyvár has not been published yet in detail.

⁹ Wolf 1996

¹⁰ ActaArchHung 28 (1976) tematikus része.

¹¹ Kovács 1994; Gömöri 2002.

¹² Bóna 1998; Mordovin 2010.

¹³ Visegrád, Doboka – the latter last Gáll 2010.

¹⁴ Ritoók 2010.

for research. It has not been destructed with any later constructions and is provided with all the criteria of the early feudal urban settlements. The scientific processing and publication of the records of the period is a common interest of both the European archeological and historical disciplines.

2) The 11-13th c. Zalavár bears a decisive significance for the Hungarian history, since here one can study the relations of the secular and ecclesiastical centers with each other in its clearest environment, and the question, what kind of architectural remains, what buildings, fortifications did belong to each.

3) The research of the border fortress of the 16-17th c. of Vársziget has an increasing significance, because it is one of those fortresses that had stayed under Hungarian supervision and because so far we have gained very little information of the material culture and nexus of connections of this age.

There have been archeological research projects executed on Zalavár-Vársziget for more than 50 years which have accelerated especially in the last 15 years. During this period we have recovered the area of the latter Kis-Balaton Museum, and many features of this densely populated part of the settlement of the Carolingian centre that lies in the neighbourhood of the Kis-Balaton Museum. These features include wells, workshops and storing pits, ditches, building-foundations. Furthermore, we have recovered the remains of the Hadrianus pilgrim church and the St John the Baptist baptistery. These excavations have been brought to light an enormous amount of archeological records, especially ceramics. As well as there have been disclosed more than 2000 graves together with artifacts and jewellery sometimes executed with and extraordinary high artistic aim. However, the vigorous excavations have not been followed by a similarly vigorous publication therefore we have begun the systematization and processing of the large number of recordings only during the previous OTKA project. We have classified the heap of data, have chosen from it smaller groups of material and units of site that are suitable for publication, and of which the catalogues are already prepared for publishing (1. Zalavár-Rezes, 2. Zalavár-Vársziget, the northernmost part of the Carolingian settlement, 3. the 11-13th c. burials of Zalavár-Vársziget). Several other catalogues in process are waiting for their completion in hope of the success of the present application for an OTKA support (see the plan presented as year by year). The archeological and historical orientation is helped by a book outlining the history and archeology of the Carolingian Pannonia with a focus on Mosaburg/Zalavár that has just been completed.

The character, originality and possible theoretical and practical significance of the basic research

We think that the most important task of the present project is on the one hand the scientific processing of the several tons of ceramics that have been excavated during the last more than 50 years and especially during the last 15 years, and that have been conserved mostly during the previous OTKA project (several hundred of them restored to a complete shape) and now are stored in approx. 2000 boxes. On the other hand, it is the complex processing of the finds of the Carolingian and 11-13th c. burials of the recovered churchyards, which have also been conserved by now. For these processes we have already completed many important preparatory works during the previous OTKA project. These are: the classification, drawings, photos and descriptions of certain outstanding groups of artifacts – such as polished yellow ceramics, special types of pottery, bottom stamps. We have executed natural scientific tests of many dozens of samples (polarizing and cathodoluminescence microscopy analysis) due to which we can distinguish the basic groups of artifacts.

Grounded on these preparatory works we will also apply statistical methods in the next 4 years, so that beside the traditional descriptive, style-critical analysis – the so-called antiquarius processing – of the archeological remains we will be able to classify the finds in the most many-sided and most objective way. We would like to lean on the natural scientific tests and investigations to a significant extent, and to create a firm ground for the definition of the finds of Zalavár by the help of macroscopic and microscopic, petrological, mineralogical and geochemical tests, which could be an effective control of the traditional analyses. During the present cycle we would like to finish the processing of the remains and finds of the bell pit and glass workshop discovered next to the Hadrianus pilgrim church, and to carry out the scientific analysis and comparative examination of the glass and brass fragments. We have given an

account of the first results of this project in a publication presented together with the University of Göttingen.¹⁵

The other issue of great importance is the examination of the Hadrianus pilgrim church and the scientific processing of and the approx. 2000 excavated graves surrounding it. This project has a basic significance for the Carolingian church studies and art history. By the digitization of the drawings made during the excavation of the church and the cemetery it is possible to base the analysis of the complicated relations of the layers on objective grounds. Further, we could describe the contemporaneous social relations in the most complete way possible through family reconstructions delivered by anthropological, paleogenetical analyses based on measuring bones, which work would be supported by the analysis of archeological recordings as well.

Connected to this project there is another concerning the cemetery around the Benedictine monastery of the 11-13th c. that was excavated during 1952-1954 and has been excavated again since 1991. This project consists in the (re-)analysis of the results of the excavations, the completion of a modern catalogue and the execution of analytic drawings of the recordings. We could begin an examination of the fortifications of the early monasteries viewed in a regional context, and the clarification of the relation between the secular and ecclesiastical centre and the question of living together and beside each other.

The scholars and colleagues partaking in the co-operation and the infrastructure:

Ágnes Ritoók PhD archaeologist (Hungarian National Museum): the cataloguing and processing of the remains of the ecclesiastical and secular organization of the 11-13th c. period (sacred and secular remains of buildings, fortifications, burials, settlement features and their finds), and the preparation of previous analyses for publication.

Gábor Tomka PhD archaeologist (Hungarian National Museum): the processing of ceramics from the late Middle Ages and the Ottoman period

Katalin Gergely archaeologist (Hungarian National Museum): the recording of the documentation of the excavations between 1952 and 1992 and its finds stored in the National Museum, the completion of a data base of this material and beginning its processing

István Vörös PhD, archaeozoologist (Hungarian National Museum): the identification and processing of the animal bones from the settlement features of Zalavár-Vársziget

Annamária Bárány archaeozoologist (Hungarian National Museum): the identification and processing of the animal bones from the settlement features of Zalavár-Vársziget

Sándor Évinger, anthropologist (Museum of Natural Sciences): the anthropological processing of the cemetery excavated around the Hadrianus pilgrim church, the definition of age and sex of the human remains

Katalin Wolff anthropologist (Museum of Natural Sciences): examination of anatomical disorders, of diseases causing deformations of the bones, and of the bones excavated in the cemetery surrounding the Hadrianus pilgrim church

András Grynaeus dendrochronologist (Baár-Madas Gimnázium): the identification of the wooden material of the fortifications and wells, the clarification of chronological relations

¹⁵ Szőke – Wedepohl – Kronz 2004

Zsolt Vienemann (surveyor): the digitalization of the drawings documenting the remains of the settlement and cemetery of Zalavár-Vársziget

Péter Posztubányi, Melinda Varga (graphic artists): drawing of the jewelry, smaller artifacts, tools, weapons excavated from graves and settlement features.

Students and PhD candidates (there might be too many changes in their person to give their names): classification, identification, description etc of the ceramics from Zalavár-Vársziget.

Literature

- Bodó 2010 Bodó Balázs: A pécsváradai bencés monostor építéstörténete az újabb kutatások tükrében, in: Benkő Elek – Kovács Gyöngyi (szerk.): *A középkor és kora újkor régészete Magyarországon*. Budapest 2010. 349–386.
- Bóna 1998 Bóna István: *Az Árpádok korai várai*. Debrecen 1998.
- Cs. Sós 1963 Cs. Sós, Ágnes: Die Ausgrabungen Géza Fehérs in Zalavár. *ArchHung*. Budapest 1963.
- Cs. Sós 1969 Cs. Sós, Ágnes: Berichte über die Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen von Zalavár-Récéskút in den Jahren 1961-63. *ActaArchHung* 21 (1969) 51–103.
- Cs. Sós 1973 Cs. Sós, Ágnes: Die slawische Bevölkerung Westungarns im 9. Jahrhundert. *Münchener Beiträge* Bd. 22. München 1973.
- Cs. Sós 1984 Cs. Sós, Ágnes: Zalavár-Kövecses. Ausgrabungen 1976-78. *RégFüz.* II.24. Budapest 1984.
- Gáll 2010 Gáll Erwin: Analiza preliminară a necropolei „din Jurul Bisericii” de la Dăbâca-Incinta IV. Cătera ideii despre termenul de cimitir „din Jurul Bisericii”. *Acta Musei Napocensis* 47 (2010) 9-49,
- Gömöri 2002 Gömöri János: *Castrum Sopron*. Sopron 2002.
- Holub 1929 Holub József: *Zala megye története a középkorban*. I. Pécs 1929
- Kovács 1994 Kovács László: Das früharpadenzeitliche Gräberfeld von Szabolcs *VariaArchHung* 1994.
- Kristó 1988 Kristó Gyula: *A vármegyék kialakulása Magyarországon*. Budapest 1988
- László 1996 László Csaba: Régészeti adatok Pannonhalma építéstörténetéhez, in: Takács Imre (szerk.): *Mons sacer 996–1996*. I. Pannonhalma 1996. 143–169.
- Mordovin 2010 Mordovin Maxim: *A vártartomány-szervezet kialakulása a kelet-közép-európai államokban*. PhD disszertáció, kézirat, Budapest 2010.
- Müller 1994 Müller Róbert: Karoling udvarház és temetője Zalasabab-Borjúállás-szigetről, in: Kovács, László (szerk.): *Honfoglalás és régészet*. Budapest 1994. 91–98.
- Müller 1995 Müller, Róbert: Ein karolingerzeitlicher Herrenhof in Zalasabab (Ungarn, Komitat Zala), *Sborník prací Filozofické Fakulty Brněnské Univerzity* 40 (1995) 91–100.
- Ritoók 2010 Ritoók Ágnes: *Zalavár-Vársziget az Árpád-korban. A régészeti kutatások eredményei*. PhD disszertáció Budapest 2010.
- Szöke – Vándor 1986 Szöke Béla Miklós – Vándor László: *Régészeti kutatások a Kis-Balaton térségében* (Lelőhelykatalógus) Zalaegerszeg 1986.
- Szöke – Wedepohl – Kronz 2004 Szöke, Béla Miklós – Wedepohl, Karl Hans – Kronz, Andreas: Silver-Stained Windows at Carolingian Zalavár, Mosaburg (Southwestern Hungary). *Journal of Glass Studies* 46 (2004) 85–104.
- Szöke 1999 Szöke, Béla Miklós: A korai középkor hagyatéka a Dunántúlon. *Ars Hungarica* 1998/2 (1999) 257–319.
- Szöke 2001 Szöke Béla Miklós: Mosaburg/Zalavár a Karoling-korban, in: Takács Imre (szerk.): *Paradisum plantavit*. Bencés monostorok a középkori Magyarországon. Pannonhalma 2001. 21–34 (Mosaburg/Zalavár during the Carolingian Period, u.o. 573–580)

- Szőke 2007 Szőke Béla Miklós: New Findings of the Excavations in Mosaburg/Zalavár (Western Hungary). in: Henning, Joachim (ed.): *Post-Roman Towns, Trade and Settlement in Europe and Byzantium. vol. 1. The Heirs of the Roman West*. Berlin – New York 2007. 411–428.
- Szőke 2009 Szőke Béla Miklós: Karolingische Kirchenorganisation in Pannonien, in: von Freeden, Uta –Friesinger, Herwig –Wamers, Egon (hrsg.): *Glaube, Kult und Herrschaft. Phänomene des Religiösen im 1. Jahrtausend n. Chr. in Mittel- und Nordeuropa*. Akten des 59. Internationalen Sachsensymposiums und der Grundprobleme der frühgeschichtlichen Entwicklung im Mitteldonauraum. Römisch-Germanische Kommission, Frankfurt a.M. Eurasien-Abteilung, Berlin des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Kolloquien zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte Bd. 12. Bonn 2009. 395–416.
- Szőke 2010 Szőke Béla Miklós: Eine Kirchenfamilie von Mosapurc/Zalavár (Ungarn). Neue Ergebnisse zur Kirchenarchäologie in Pannonien, in: Krohn, Niklot und Alemannisches Institut Freiburg i. Br. e. V. (hrsg.): *Kirchenarchäologie heute. Fragestellungen – Methoden – Ergebnisse*. Freiburg 2010. 561–585.
- Szőke et al. 1992 Szőke Béla Miklós et al.: Die Karolingerzeit im unteren Zalatál. Gräberfelder und Siedlungsreste von Garabonc I-II und Zalasabár-Dezsősziget. *Antaeus 21* (1992).
- Tringli 2010 Tringli István: Pest és Pilis megye sajátos viszonyai a török hódítás előtt, in: Hermann István – Karlinszky Balázs (szerk.): *Egyház- és igazgatástörténeti tanulmányok a veszprémi püspökség 1009. évi adománylevele tiszteletére*. Veszprém 2010. 369–420.
- Wolf 1996 Wolf Mária: Die Gespanschaftsburg von Borsod (Grabungen 1987-1993) *ActaArchHung* 48 (1996) 209–240.
- Zsoldos 2010 Zsoldos Attila 2010. A megyeservezés kezdetei a Magyar Királyságban. Az „óriás” és „átlagos” nagyságú megyék kérdése, in: Hermann István – Karlinszky Balázs (szerk.): *Egyház- és igazgatástörténeti tanulmányok a veszprémi püspökség 1009. évi adománylevele tiszteletére*. Veszprém 2010. 299–318.