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EXCAVATIONS ON CSESZTVE-STALÁK

Csesztve is lying in one of the valleys of the hill region south of the Ipoly-valley (of Balassagyarmat). It is characteristic of the surface of the northern borders of the Cserhát, that the thick, sandy loess smoothed, levelled the extreme features of terrain in a plateau-like form. The loess formation of the hill region is portioned only by the more or less west-east oriented water-courses.

The site is the southeastern foothills of the Lipini-summit, above the swampy territory of a filled spring. The hill is the highest point of the Stalák in the southwestern corner of the Madách-mansion, 250,6 m above sea level. There is a Saint Martin Chapel from the 13th c. standing in the old village cemetery on the northeastern border of the Stalák. The lands around the village are mostly cultivated. In the close vicinity of the excavations we found a redeposited, artificially disturbed modern surface in result of the earth moving in course of smaller and larger scale buildings.

Archaeological phenomena were first discovered south of the Madách-mansion, on the top of the hill covered by loess, by I. Horthy, collector from Balassagyarmat. During earthworks former to the building of tobacco drying-sheds some finds were uncovered: a large amount of chipped stone tools, some fragments of grindstones, and also some objects of the disturbed Late Bronze Age urn cemetery were rescued. He gave the finds to the Kubinyi Ferenc Museum in Szécsény. Following his report we surveyed the summit and collected finds from several points. The finds were verified between 3 to 20, June, 1984. During the excavations the inhabitants of the village mentioned some lost finds: bronze objects and silex arrow points collected at the constructions. According to the eye-witnesses the finds occurred the densest around the shed built the earliest, indicated by us as No. 2. (fig. 1.).

During the excavations we opened 13 trenches, occupying altogether a territory of 150 m², on the open space of the new cemetery and between the sheds and the fence of the Madách-mansion (fig. 1.). The trial trenches were deepened to 150 cm. The generalized profile according to the western wall of trench "L" is the following:

0— 30 cm: disturbed, cultivated humus with scattered, mixed (also modern) find material,

23— 35 cm: a Late Neolithic house disturbed by the plough on the bottom of the humus,
30— 60 cm: reddish stripe-coloured, "zebra-streaked" sandy loess with scattered finds,
60—100 cm: loess with manganese-ferrous colouring,
under 100 cm: very dry, limy loess with vertical root-hollows, lime concretions, snails.

The depth of ploughing sometimes is deeper than the humus, and the reddish sandy loess is intercalated by dark brown humus. No undisturbed settlement phenomena could be observed.

On the profile-drawing of the southern wall of section "E" the cultural layer runs (parallelly to the present surface) 20 metres long slanting 120 cm gradually towards east. The neolithic house was found on this slightly slanting eastern border of the summit. The remains of the house were uncovered in sections "I"—"E"—"H". Its orientation is approximately northwest-southeast. The thickness of the fallen remains of the house disturbed by the plough, that of the daub burnt partly to red partly to black colour was sometimes 10—15 cm. On some places we succeeded in unearthing some coherent sherds in original position. Judging from the finds the original length of the house must have been minimally 6, its width 3 metres. After removing the daub we could not find any traces hinting at the building of the house, its arrangement or structures of the wall or of the roof.

On the excavations the majority of the finds were found in the debris layer of the house or in its direct vicinity. The small zoomorphic vessel was also found here in two pieces, somewhat fragmentary.

One of the aims of the excavations was to verify the original position of the bronze objects collected on the surface by Horthy. The finds of both ages (Late Neolithic and Late Bronze Age) could be found on one place only in section "F" (fig. 1.) on the narrow stripe between the wire fence of the new cemetery and the shed. In the southern part of the trial trench, in the depth of 40—45 cm fragments of grindstones, daub fragments and scattered sherds indicated that the neolithic settlement could have reached the edge of the loessplateau. In the middle part of the same trial trench in the depth of 50 cm, under the present artificial surface an undisturbed part of an urn grave was found in original position: the bottom of a small urn with some

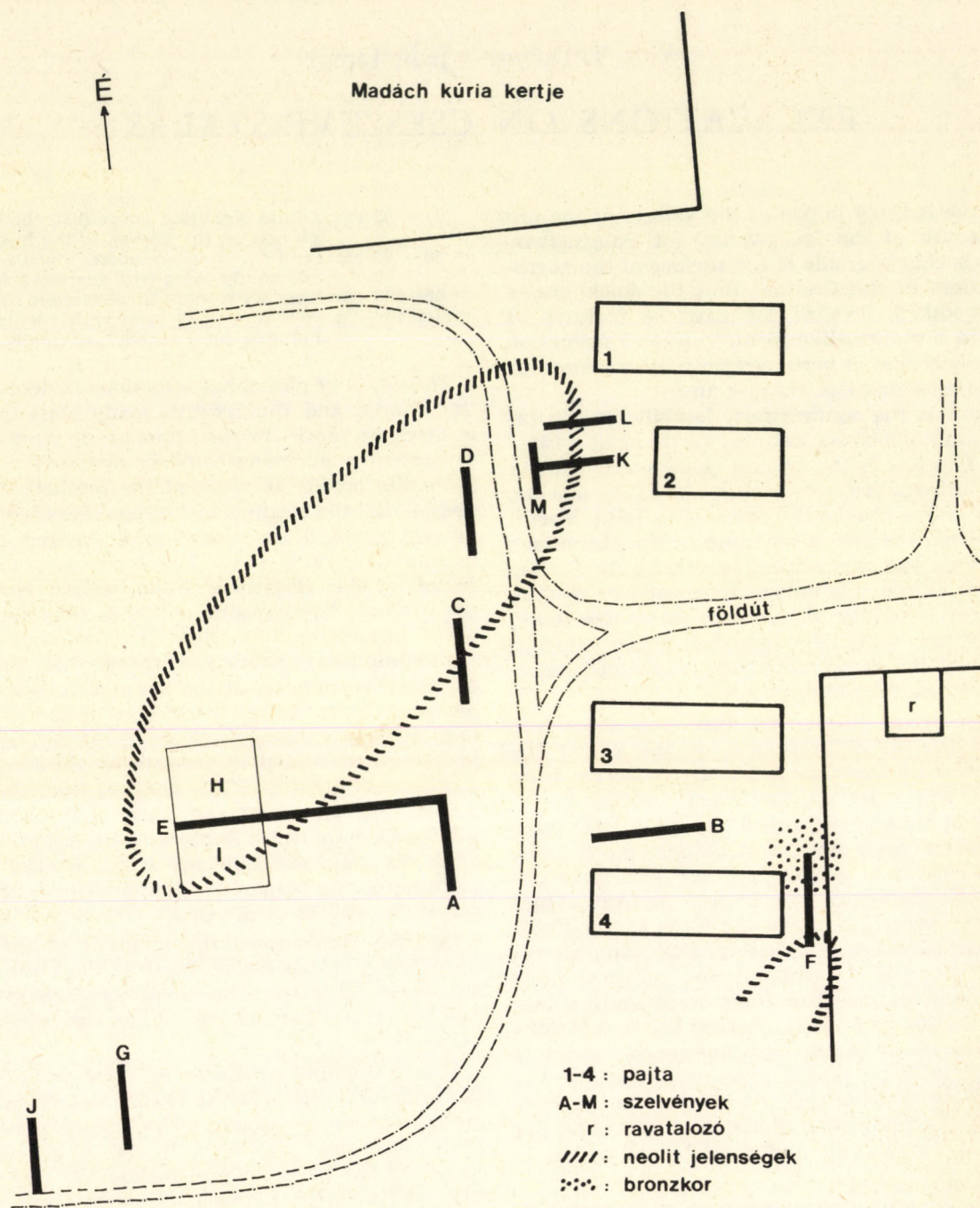


Fig. 1. Csesztve-Stalák, excavational ground-plan. Sketch.

calcinated bone particles in it, the top of the grave was removed by surfacelevelling.

The excavational observations prove that a Late Neolithic house (or settlement) and a Bronze Age urn cemetery were disturbed and partly annihilated in Csesztve-Stalák. As neither of us is specialized in Neolithic studies we only describe the finds, calling the attention of our colleagues to the results of the excavations.

Archeological finds

The chipped stone material collected in different times and on different occasions is considered to have belonged to the Neolithic house. Consequently they are treated together independent of the fact if they came from authentic excavations or were collected as scattered surface finds.

Altogether we found:

409 chipped

5 polished stone tools

3 sharp-edged quartzite pebbles with concentrated traces of use.

Polished stone tools:

3 fragmentary grindstones of rough-grained andezite, 11, 13 and 15 cm

1 chisel, finely elaborated, thin polished serpentine (fragmentary) 62×27 mm (fig. 3. 1.)

1 axe, polished of silicified sandstone, the edge is missing, the head is damaged, 78×56 mm.

Chipped stone tools (fig. 2.):

Raw material distribution:

hornstone	79 p.	19,3%
silex	25 p.	6,1%
hidroquartzite	218 p.	53,3%
obsidian	80 p.	19,6%
quartzite	5 p.	1,2%
others	2 p.	0,2%
	409 p.	100,0%

We have to call attention to a half-core with unique raw material: transparent, *glassy bottlegreen* rock. The high ration of obsidian is also worth mentioning.

The *hornstone*: blueish grey, homogenous, fine raw material with chalky nodule cortex, on upper palaeolithic sites usually referred to as "baltic hornstone" from behind the Carpathians, coming from endmorenas. This material being represented on Hungarian sites in a great quantity, needs, however to be revised concerning our former concepts of the origin of this perfect raw material.

The *silex* can be found with to colour varieties: a light grey with light stripes and a honey-yellow translucent one. They are fine structured materials easy to elaborate.

The circle of raw material acquiry may have expanded till the western foot of the Mátra, except

for the obsidian of the Zemplén mts (Biró 1984, 43—45).

The ratio of the tools and flakes of different raw materials reveals that the silex and hornstone nodules were treated the most carefully, while the use of the hidroquartzite and obsidian shows more wastefulness.

rock type	tool	flake
hornstone and silex	59	45
hidroquartzite	72	146
obsidian	12	68

The number of the whole tools: 175 pieces, their average length: 31,7 mm. Most of the tools fall in the measurement field of 20 to 30 mm, but the average length surpasses 30 mm due to some extremely large tools.

The striking surface is of upper palaeolithic character, sometimes with emphasised bulbe. The retouche is fine, regular, though not pronounced (except for the endscrapers), the edge formation does not reach the scale of blunting.

The value of the breadth-length ratio is under 1:2. The short tools are finely elaborated, and due to the flat original form they do not seem squat. The *cores, raw material fragments* group is divided into two parts:

— hidroquartzite and silex cores (26 p) are large, irregular or symmetrical with one- or multidirectional flaking. The negatives can be found sometimes on rolled pebbles of worn edges or on rough flakes. There are many core fragments.

— obsidian core (9 p) and core fragments (7 p), very fine, conical, regular cores with smaller or larger patches of nodule cortex. Their dimensions: 18—30 mm, core fragments (sometimes with shisel edges) 14—17 mm.

Blades (58 p) hornstone 18, silex 3, obsidian 6, hidroquartzite 31. Disregarding some fragments they are 20—30 mm long in average. Usually they are slightly irregular, bent or vaulted, the edges are not always or not in their whole length parallel. There are some slice-formed ones, too (with nodule cortex on one of the edges or on the frontal part). *Trapezes* (3 p), two of which are obliquely truncated blades on both ends, one is retouched on the upper end, and obliquely cut on the lower end. Between 25—30 mm.

Points (4 p)

— obsidian arrow-head, asymmetrical, formed by biconvex scale retouch, flaked on the whole of both surfaces, 27×19 mm.

— high flake of triangular section, with flattening point, made of obsidian, 25×14 mm

— slender, pyramidal flake, all the three edges are retouched, 41×18 mm

— levallois-type flake, pointed with alternate retouch, 48×20 mm.

Scrapers (3 p)

— "U"-shaped, high flake scraper on highly patinated hidroquartzite. Both its type and execution are archaic of paleolithic feature. 75×63 mm.

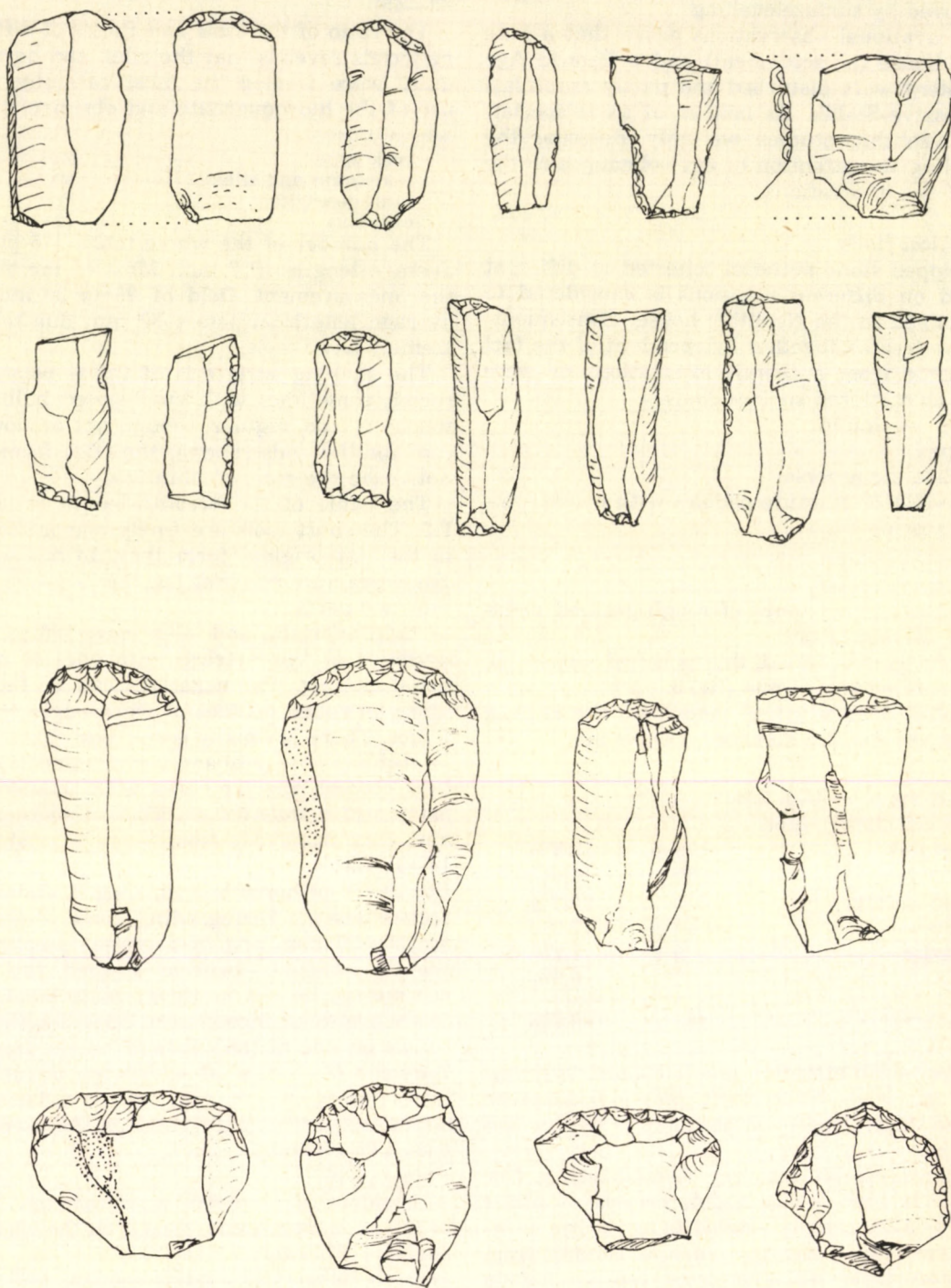


Fig. 2. Chipped stone tools, endscrapers, retouched blades. 1:1



1



2



3

Fig. 3. Polished chisel, 2: jar, 3: pot. 1:1

— highly vaulted, high scraper of alternate flaking on the quarter of a pebble, 43×39 mm.

— flat flake of raclette type with fine, straight edge, 29×26 mm.

Endscrapers (58 p), a standard, characteristic group of tools, the working edge is usually regular though the retouch does not always surpass the measure of truncation. A general feature of the type is that the working edge is somewhat angular, fan-shaped on both sides. It is especially valid for the tools, where the frontal part is mildly vaulted and flat.

— *endscrapers on blades* (23 p) were made on flat short blades, the working edge is slightly vaulted, finely retouched, regular, often going on on the edges of the blades. Scattered or continuous retouch can often be found on the edges of the blades independent of the endscraper retouch, executed from the frontal or the dorsal sides.

— *endscrapers on flakes* (32 p) comprise pieces with endscraper retouch, where the sides of the groundform are not parallel, independent of the value of the length-breadth ratio. Various pieces were grouped here. Some of the flakes are high or covered by cortex. The working edge maybe vaulted, straight, nosed or concave. Sometimes it was formed aside from the longitudinal axis of the tool. The flaking surface of the flake maybe rectangular or oblique to the longitudinal axis of the tool (*déjeté flaking*).

— three pieces were defined as combined endscrapers, two of which are endscrapers — atypical borers, while a high flake is the combination of an endscraper and a scraper.

Flakes: waste of tool production of various dimensions, irregular form, usually flat, where some scattered retouch attests their temporal use.

Ceramics

The material collected from the sections "A"—"M" during the excavations and the Neolithic material collected on the surface are uniform, it cannot be connected to settlement traces other than the daub debris of sections I—H, consists of a few pieces, so during our examination they were treated together.

The fragments are of rough elaboration, no polishing can be observed, only some irregular smoothing of the surface could be detected. There were no painted or engraved ornaments, ornamentation was found only on the plastic applied ornaments or on the handles.

Vessels: the find material contained two vessels which could be completed and a zoomorphic vessel.

— *Jar*: Trench C, 1. spit (fig. 3. 2.). Small, with barrel-shaped body, the rim is straight-cut, rounded, the bottom is unprofilized. The widest part of the belly probably had three tiny, round, wart-shaped knot. Brownish-red, sometimes smoothed. H: 8,1 cm, mth: 4,4 cm, Bd: 3 cm.

— *Pot*: Trench L, 1. spit (Fig. 3. 3.). Narrowing

mouth, the neck of cone-frustum type is slightly profilized at the attachment of the globular belly, stands on a low sole-disc. There is a small vertical knot (probably 2) pressed from both sides, on the meeting point of the neck and the shoulder. Rough surface, brownish grey, a large part is completed. H: 11,1 cm, Md: 8,2 cm, Bd: 6,2 cm.

Zoomorphic vessel (fig. 4. a—b). Its fragments were found in the debris of the house in section I. The body of the vessel is flat, angular, the back is slanting obliquely. It is standing on four feet. Though the neck is fragmentary the edge elaboration can be observed on a short portion (Fig. 5. 1.), that is it had no head. The tail is indicated by a small, pointed bored knot. The body is ornamented on both sides with three parallelly attached of tiny globular wart-shaped, bored knots. Similar 2—2 knots can be found on the breast and the hind-quarters. Probably it figures a bull.

It is red burnt with brown spots, sometimes with smoothed surface, refitted. H. at the neck 11,8 cm, at the tail 9,3 cm, L: at the central line of the belly 10,8 cm, W: (on the same place) 5 cm.

The types of plastic ornaments according to their frequency:

— 22 large globular knots, jutting out far, in one case even larger than semiglobular. Where it could be observed it was applied on the sides of the vessels (fig. 4—5).

— 4 small, round, wart-shaped knots on the sides of the vessels.

— 3 small knot-ornaments, pressed from the two sides vertically as if shaping a knot-handle. In one case it was found directly on the rim, while on the whole vessel it was on the shoulder.

— 2 horizontally placed tongue-shaped knobs. In one case it was on a side fragment, in the other case directly on the rim (fig. 5.3.).

— 1 large globular knot with two pressed hollows on a side fragment.

— horizontal short ribs on the shoulder fragment of a vessel, which could not be completed.

The fragments, ornamented or not, rarely hint at the form of the vessels. The most frequent type is the thin-walled, medium large pot or mug with S-profile, and in one case a larger amphora of funnelshaped neck could be reconstructed. There were also two small jar-fragments with globular belly found, and also the fragments of an inverse cone-frustum type dish. The material also contains the fragments of two thick-walled larger vessels with hollow pedestals.

Chronology

The age of the finds can strictly be defined against the low number of the finds. The unearthed house/daub debris, highly disturbed, demolished by ploughing and the scattered sherds without settlement traces can be grouped, on the basis of the vessel forms and the ornaments to the *Lengyel Culture*.

Find materials of similar constitution and execution were published from the vicinity of Veszprém



Fig. 4. a-b Zoomorphic vessel

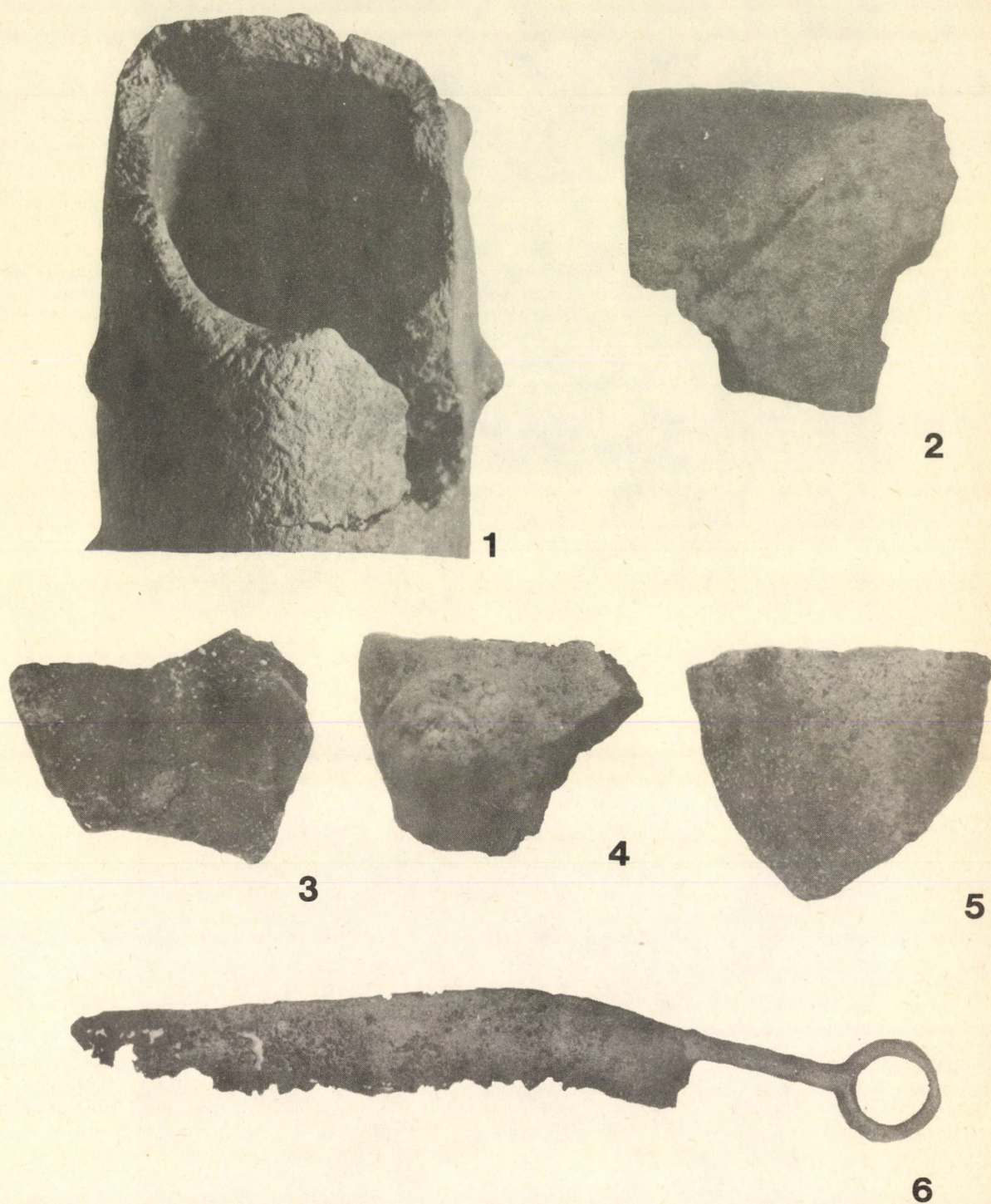


Fig. 5. 1. The mouth of the zommorphic vessel (2:1),
2. rim fragment, 3. handle, 4—5 knots, 6. bronz knife. 1:1

by P. Raczky with thorough biographical reference, and a sketch of chronology and contacts of the Lengyel Culture. He proved that the last, III. phase of the Lengyel Culture is characterized by the purification and rougher appearance of the ceramics. The number of the polished vessels is very low, the engraved-painted ornament disappears, and the knots of different forms rule the patterns. (RACZKY 1974, 199, 205). The analogy of the jar from Trench C in Stalák can be found, with nearly the same measurements, in the Veszprém-Felszabadulás street material also published by him (*ibid.* fig. 14. 5.). The other vessel with its biconical body, narrowing neck is a general form, its parallel though with painted ornament is known from Zengővárkony (DOMBAY 1960. Taf. LV. 19; CI. 4). The Csesztve material with the modestly elaborated vessels, the high number of knot ornaments fits in the picture of the IIIrd phase of the Lengyel Culture. Topographically the site is one of the settlements of the area of the culture east of the Danube (KALICZ 1985, fig. 2).

Some more words are to be said about the zoomorphic vessels, however are known only from two Lengyel Period in form of separate idol, rattle, ornament on vessels, knots. The finds display mostly dog, pig, cattle, goat, more or less realistically. Zoomorphic vessels, however, are known only from two sites, Zengővárkony (DOMBAY 1960, LX. 1., CX 1.) and Aszód (KALICZ 1985, fig. 74. 2.). Even these ones are fragmentary, and judging from analogous pieces in Slovakia from the same age, depict bear (VLADÁR 1970, fig. 19—13). The zoomorphic vessel of Csesztve is significantly different from this type: the hole is not on the back of the animal but in the place of the head, the body is not ornamented by painting, but by rows of knots. The Csesztve vessel with the slanting back, the drawn up belly, the slightly prismatic body, the legs straightened backwards seems to depict a bull.

A site of the Lengyel Culture in county Nógrád is not a novelty. P. Patay published a pit and some sherds from it from Nógrádkövesd in 1956 (PATAY 1956, 186). According to N. Kalicz, the excavations by L. Márton in Patvarc-Öreg Hradistya in 1908 yielded sherds of the Lengyel Culture (KALICZ 1985, 10). Pits of the Late Lengyel Culture were disturbed between Bánk and Romhány on the Szarka-hill during the construction of a sewage reservoir, the age of which is identical with the Csesztve finds. This find is also characterized by large knots, though one of the sherds showed traces of red painting.

As the geographical surroundings and the ecological conditions are identical on the Aszód settlement and the Nógrád hill region, and as the contemporary finds of the northern neighbourhood are wellknown, the lack of the predecessors of the Csesztve site (the early phases of the Lengyel Cul-

ture) is probably due to the insufficiency of research.

The site yielded against the unfavourable circumstances a whole material unity; though being somewhat fragmentary, the zoomorphic vessels compensates for the disturbed, demolished settlement.

We have gained important data about the prehistoric population of a rather scarcely known territory, and the site may provide a link between the Galga-area and the Slovakian Late Neolithic settlements.

We carried out a field survey around Csesztve during the excavation in 1984. It was attached to the smaller collection by I. Horthy handed in the Museum. It seems worthwhile to give a short description of these topographical data.

Csesztve-Stalák — Kyjatice Culture

According both to the inhabitants of the village and I. Horthy graves with metal grave goods were found during the construction of the tobacco-drying sheds at Stalák and the enlargement of the cemetery. It seems to be verified by the highly fragmentary urn fragment in Trench F of the excavation and the sherds from the Late Bronze Age without further characteristics from two other trenches. The exact definition of their age could be carried out on the basis of a bronze knife of Baierdorf-type with ring-shaped handle ending and vaulted back and the edge fragment of an axe, both collected by I. Horthy at the construction of the sheds. The knife can be dated from the end of the R BD — HA₁ (KEMENCZEI 1984, 96). According to the research by T. Kemenczei the territory of the county was inhabited at that time by the population of the Kyjatice Culture (*ibid.* 40—56). It seems probable that the earthworks in Stalák destroyed the graves of an urn cemetery of the Kyjatice Culture.

Csesztve-Nagypart — Lengyel Culture

Southeast of the village, on 284,2 m a.s.l. archaeological material was collected on the surface around the transmission line. The finds are identical with the Lengyel Culture of Stalák. The most frequent ornament of the ceramics is the large, globular knot, sometimes the horizontally bored smaller wart-knots. We have found a small mug-fragment with zig-zag pattern between vertical engravings. The chipped stone material: cores, endscrapers, blade fragments, flakes from obsidian, hornstone, hidroquartzite. The plough disturbed here also a Late Lengyel settlement.

Patvarc-Öreg Hradistya — Bronze Age

Sherd of the Hatvan and the Kyjatice Cultures were collected on the site of the excavations in 1908

(MÁRTON 1908, 168—174). The presence of the Kyjatice Culture on the hill was testified by the excavations in 1986, as well. An interesting piece of the surface finds is an angular, short, footed tray with a mug-like depression in its centre fragment of an altar, belonging based on its material, to the Hatvan Culture.

Hont — Csitár chapel — Eearly Middle Ages

I. Horthy's collection contained sherds from the 9th century, so far unknown on the territory. The ceramics of material with sand and pebble is characterized by wavy pattern and engraving of parallel line-bundles just like with several lines of pricked ornament.

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