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BURNISHED POTTERY FROM THE ÁRPÁD AGE (12<sup>TH</sup>–13<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY)Judit SZIGETI\*  – Zoltán RÓZSA\*\* 

*This paper provides a short but comprehensive survey of the 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup>-century burnished pottery. The base of our research comprises the archaeological material of two sites: the 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup>-century settlement part excavated inside the walls of Buda and the settlement at Orosháza-Bónum. We put much emphasis into finding the origins of the pottery type in question, including visiting museums in other countries and viewing their collections. We are still tracing the type's connections to the Balkans, but may safely state already that all specimens found in Hungary were imported. The provenance and presence of burnished vessels can be linked to historical events in the last third of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the external relations of the Hungarian Kingdom, and the directions of the trade routes. We considered it essential to draw attention to the differences in surface treatment, the diversity of forms, and the appearance of new forms. Finally, we wish to call attention to the decoration of the pottery types appearing together with burnished ware.*

*Tanulmányunk rövid, de átfogó elemzést ad a 12–13. századi fényezett/polírozott felületű kerámiáról. Kutatásunk alapját két lelőhely kerámiaanyagának feldolgozása adta: a budai vár területén feltárt 12–13. századi településrészlet, és az orosháza-bónumi faluhely. A kutatómunkánk egyik fókuszja a kerámiatípus eredetének kérése, melyben külföldi múzeumok anyagai is segítségünkre voltak. Bizonyosan a Balkán irányába vezető szálak felgöngyölítése még folyamatban van, de a kerámiatípus import jellege nem kérdőjelezhető meg. A fényezett felületű edények feltűnése és jelenléte összefüggésbe hozható a 12. század utolsó harmadának történeti eseményeivel, Magyarország külkapcsolataival, a kereskedelmi utak irányával. A munkánk során fontosnak tartottuk felhívni a figyelmet a felületkezelés különbözőségére, a formák változatosságára, és az új formák feltűnésére. Végül felhívjuk a figyelmet a polírozott/fényezett felületű kerámiaanyagot kísérő edények díszítésére is.*

Keywords: burnished ware, jug, bottle, 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> century, commerce, import tableware, Balkans, Buda Castle, Orosháza-Bónum

Kulcsszavak: fényezett felületű kerámia, palack, 12–13. század, kereskedelem, import, Balkán, Budai Vár, Orosháza-Bónum

### Introduction

In this paper, the authors present the main results of a two-year-long research project that included the collecting, sorting, and dating of 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>-century pottery finds recovered from the territory of the Carpathian Basin.<sup>1</sup> The Árpád-Age ceramic material found on the territory of the Carmelite Monastery's building complex and other parts of Buda Castle and the settlement of Orosháza-Bónum provided a base for the evaluation.

The processing of the Árpád-Age ceramic finds excavated in the territory of the Carmelite Monastery began in 2016 (Papp et al. 2018; Szigeti 2020).<sup>2</sup> Sherds of burnished liquid storage vessels were found in almost half of the archaeological features (structures, layers) dated to the Árpád Age. All finds may undoubtedly be classified into a well-known burnished Árpád-Age pottery type appearing in the 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> centuries (Fig. 2, 6, Fig. 4, 2). Simultaneously, we started evaluating the archaeological material of Orosháza-Bónum (Rózsa, Tugya 2012), where the quantity of

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burnished pottery finds was also remarkably large (Fig. 2, 3; nearly one third of the 550 bottle sherds recovered had a burnished surface). The similarity of the two archaeological records marked a possible research direction we strive to follow on an international level in the future; our goal is to find the origins of this pottery.

### *Spatial distribution of the burnished pottery finds*

Collecting burnished pottery findings (Table 1, Fig. 1), we noticed a territorial cluster of related archaeological sites. Because of that, the research history of the type will be presented here in geographical units. The first presented site is in a well-researched but still little-known region: the heart of the Hungarian Kingdom (early royal centres). Next, we describe the finds excavated at the junctions of routes leading to the kingdom's central region.

#### *1. Buda and the surroundings of Esztergom*

The evaluation of the finds from the territory of the Carmelite Monastery building complex (Budapest

district 1, 1 Színház Street, Buda Castle) and analysed in an already published study (Szigeti 2020) drew our attention to some other finds from Buda Castle. The site's pottery record included burnished fragments of ceramic bottles and jugs. Similar sherds were discovered first in the archaeological material of a pit excavated at 14 Dísz Square, within the walls of Buda Castle: Imre Holl published a bottleneck fragment with a chalice-shaped mouth, "the external surface of which had probably been polished with a bone tool" (Fig. 3, 1–2, Fig. 7, 4; Holl 1956, 186–188, Fig. 12, note 9). During the excavations of the Northern Forecourt of the Royal Palace of Buda in the 1960–1970s, László Zolnay and Péter Boldizsár distinguished a particular group of pottery (Zolnay, Boldizsár 1977, 47–48, 173–178, Fig. 51, 3–5), which they described as having "a smooth surface in black and brownish red colour". The pieces, the mouth and rim of which was decorated both out- and inside (Zolnay, Boldizsár 1977, Fig. 47, 1–2), were found in the infills of basement no. VII and cistern no. II together with other ceramic vessels decorated with

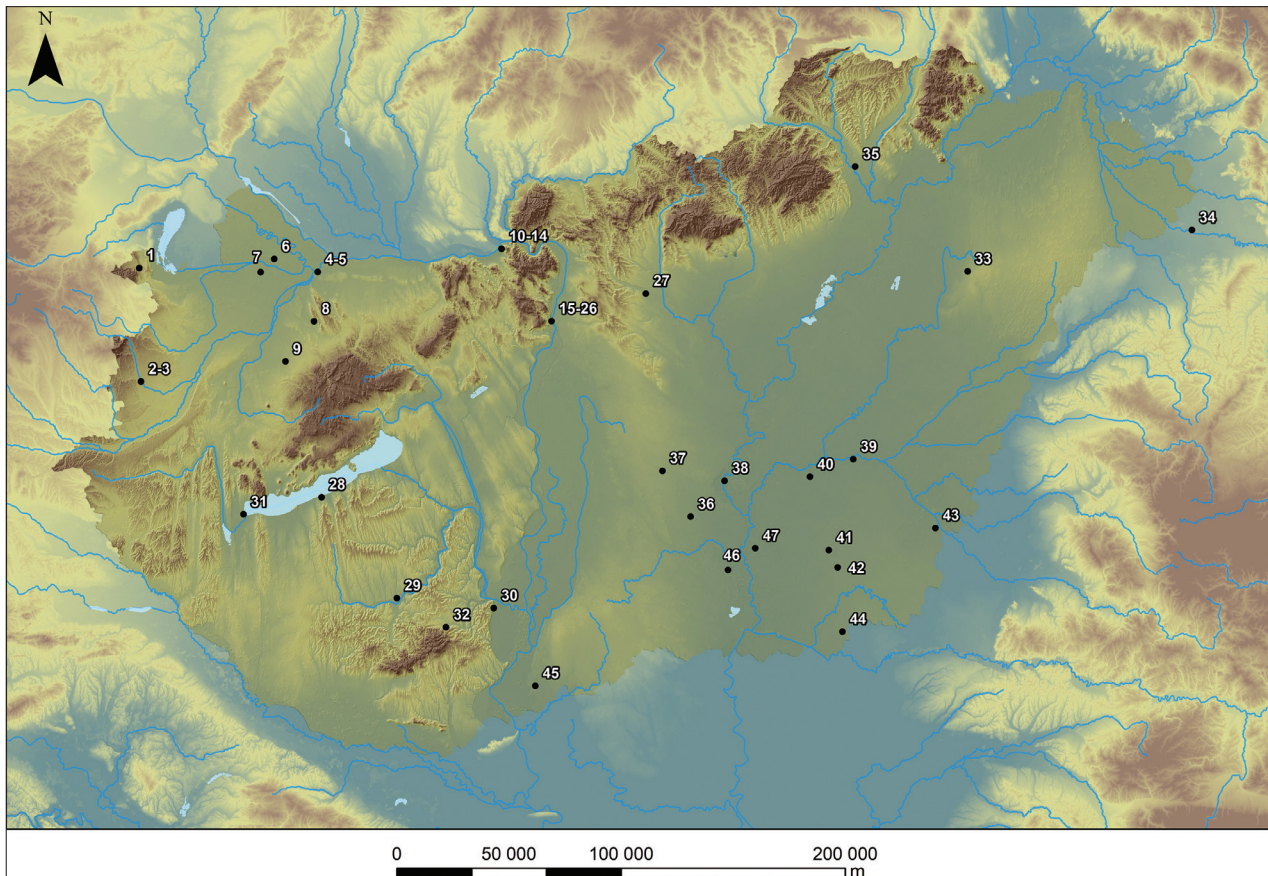


Fig. 1 Regional distribution of the material presented in the article (the numbering of the sites corresponds with that of Table 1)

1. kép A tanulmányban bemutatott hagyaték földrajzi elterjedése (a lelőhelyek számozása megegyezik az 1. táblázat számozásával)

*Table 1* Sites with burnished pottery finds, including data collected up to 2021  
 1. táblázat Polírozott edények lelőhelyei, az adatgyűjtés a 2021-es állapotot tükrözi

	<i>Site</i>	<i>Number of fragments: vessel</i>	<i>Type of vessel</i>	<i>Literature</i>
1	Sopron, Castle	?	?	Holl 1973
2	Szombathely-Országút-dűlő	1: jug	bottle	Kreiter et al. 2017; Skriba 2017
3	Szombathely-Zanat	5	bottle	Kreiter et al. 2017
4	Győr-Homokgödör	2	bottle	Takács 2000
5	Győr-Széchenyi Square	1	bottle	Herbst et al. 2017
6	Lébény-Bille-domb	7	bottle	Takács 2000
7	Markotabödöge	1: jug	bottle	Takács 2000
8	Kajárpéc-Pokolfadomb	5	bottle	Takács 2000
9	Pápa, Fő tér	1	bottle	Herbst et al. 2017
10	Esztergom-Szentkirály	~24	bottle, jug	Péter Skriba's excavation (2014), unpublished
11	Esztergom-Zsidód	~9	bottle, jug	unpublished
12	Esztergom, royal palace	~10	bottle, jug	István Horváth's excavation, unpublished
13	Esztergom-Örmény	1: jug	bottle	Lázár 2004
14	Esztergom-Széchenyi Square			Parádi 1973
15	Budapest-Budaújlak, Bécsi Street 69–70	1	bottle	Dorottya Nyékhelyi's excavation (1992), unpublished
16	Budapest-Buda Castle, Országház Street	1	spouted jug	Zoltán Bencze's excavation (2003), unpublished
17	Budapest-Buda Castle, Dísz Square	1	bottle	Holl 1956
18	Budapest, Buda Castle, Karmelita (Carmelite Monastery)	105; 3: spouted jug	bottle, jug, spouted jug	Szigeti 2020 partly published
19	Budapest, Buda Castle, northern forecourt of the royal palace	~10; 1: jug	bottle, jug	Zolnay, Boldizsár 1977
20	Budapest, District 5, Kígyó Street	1	bottle	Judit Zádor's excavation (2018), unpublished
21	Budapest, District 5, Molnár Street	1: bottle	bottle	Viktória Pomázi-Horváth's and Judit Zádor's excavation (2017), unpublished
22	Budapest, District 5, Március 15 Square	~10	bottle	Tamás Szolnoki's excavation (2017), unpublished
23	Budapest, District 9, Csarnok Square	4	bottle	Anikó Tóth's excavation (2016), unpublished
24	Budapest, District 21, Csepel-Szabadkikötő	1	jug	György Terei's and Judit Szigeti's excavation (2015), unpublished
25	Budapest, District 22, Kána village	~24	bottle, jug	György Terei's excavation 2004, unpublished
26	Budapest, Nagytétény, Csút village	7	bottle	I. Melis 2002
27	Tura-Szentgyörgypart	7; 1: jug	jug	Miklós 1991



	<i>Site</i>	<i>Number of fragments: vessel</i>	<i>Type of vessel</i>	<i>Literature</i>
28	Balatonlelle-Országút dűlő	1: bottle	bottle	Kreiter et al. 2016; Skriba 2017
29	Dombóvár-Sörkert			
30	Szekszárd, Béla Square, at the outer wall of the town	1: bottle	bottle	Vizi 2019
31	Fenek village	1	bottle	Jankovich 1991
32	Váralja-Várfő	~25	bottle, jug	Miklós 1998, unpublished
33	Hajdúböszörmény-Téglagyár	3: bottles (?)	bottle	Antalóczi 1980; Bálint 2016; Gyulai et al. 2016
34	Satu Mare (Szatmárnémeti)	2	spouted jug, bottle	Belbe 2021
35	Felsősolca	1	bottle	Simonyi 2021; unpublished
36	Kiskunfélegyháza-Amler bánya	1	bottle	Gallina et al. 2014
37	Kecskemét, Mercedes RL 15	1: jug	jug	Nikoletta Lukács's excavation (2017), unpublished
38	Tiszaug-Szociális otthon (social care home)	~35	bottle, jug	József Laszlovszky's excavation, unpublished
39	Gyomaendrőd, EN6	x	bottle	Jankovich, Szatmári 2013
40	Szarvas-Rózsás	~1	bottle	Kovalovszky 1960
41	Orosháza-Bónum faluhely (village)	~500; 4: jug	bottle, jug, spouted jug	Rózsa 2008; Rózsa, Tugya 2012; Rózsa et al. 2014; Rózsa 2018
42	Kardoskút-Hatablak	~15; 1: jug	bottle	Méri 1964
43	Gyula-Törökzug	~22; 1: jug	jug	unpublished
44	Csanádpalota	1	bottle	unpublished
45	Csátalja	~2	bottle	Cs. Sós, Parádi 1971
46	Szer Monastery	~	bottle, spouted jug	Vályi 1992; Vályi 1996; Béres 1985
47	Szegvár, Sáp village	~		Béres 1998

wavy lines. Zolnay dated the basement's infill to before the Mongol invasion. Unfortunately, the drawings of the pottery sherds were unsuitable for further analysis as they did not offer a possibility to examine the burnished surfaces (Zolnay, Boldizsár 1977, 32–33, Figs. 4–5). A spouted jug was discovered in a 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup>-century pit in Országház Street in 2002 (Bencze 2003), in context with an archaeological record dated to the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 4, 1).

After discussing examples from Buda, it is also important to survey the archaeological sites on the opposite Pest side of the Danube River. Recently, Anikó Tóth drew our attention to some burnished pottery sherds found in Budapest-Csarnok Square in

a pit dated before the Mongol invasion. Furthermore, we could view (thanks to Judit Zádor) the record of a partially excavated settlement in Kígyó Street, also on the Pest side and from before the Mongol invasion. The site's record included burnished long-neck bottles (Fig. 2, 2). A red burnished bottleneck fragment and other sherds were found in a pit in Molnár Street, a site next to the Danube. These sites are situated inside the medieval town walls of Pest, on the waterfront, near the ancient port of Pest, where the houses of merchants and tanners stood before the Mongol invasion. The most recent data came from Március 15 Square, where a dozen burnished pottery sherds were found during a rescue excavation in 2019.

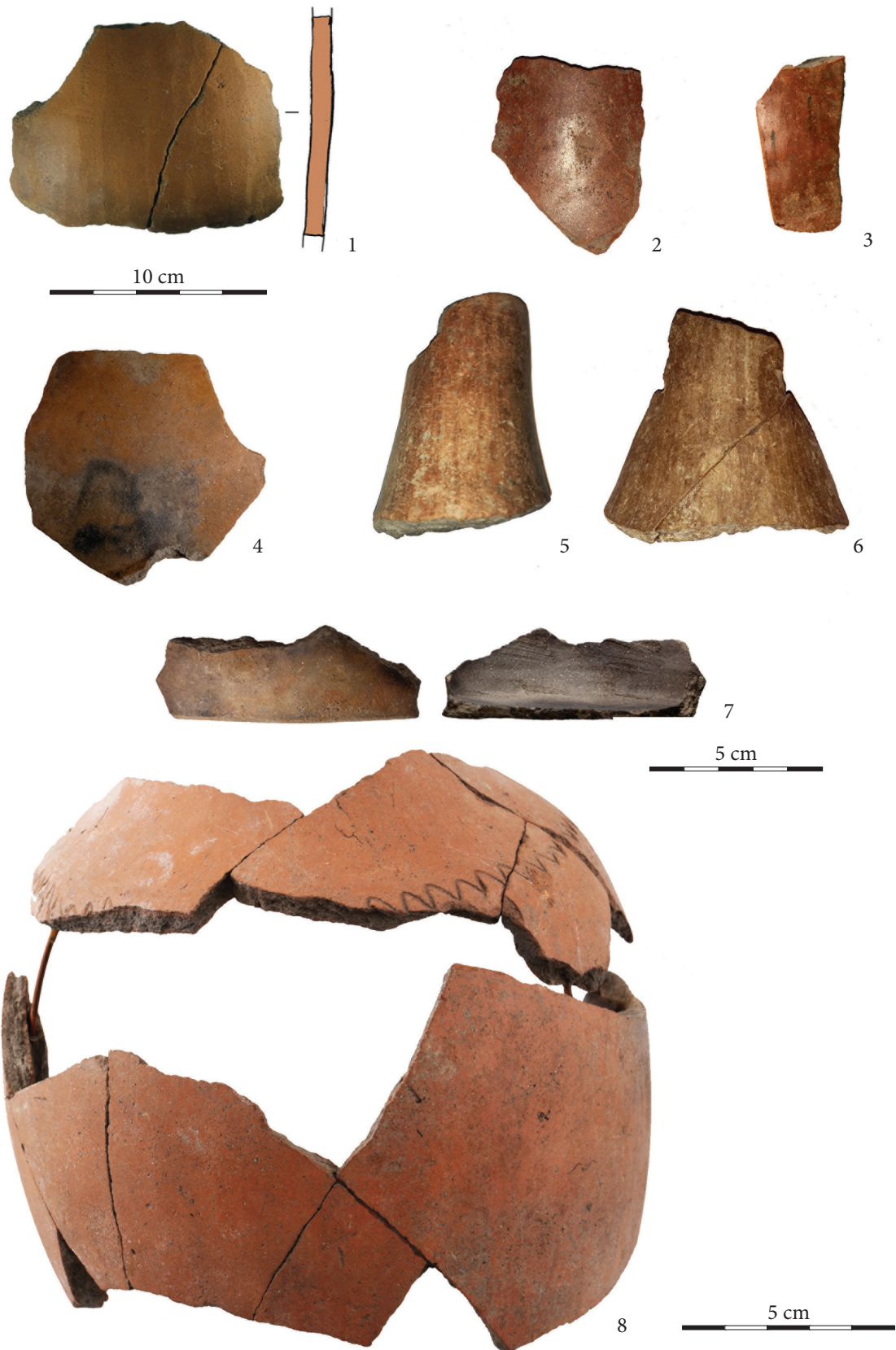


Fig. 2 1: Csanádpalota; 2: Budapest, District 5, Kígyó Street; 3: Orosháza-Bónum; 4, 7: Szombathely-Országút-dűlő; 5: Győr-Homokgödör; 6: Buda Castle, District I, Színház Street, Carmelite Monastery; 8: Kardoskút-Hatablak  
 2. kép 1: Csanádpalota; 2: Budapest 5. kerület, Kígyó u; 3: Orosháza-Bónum; 4, 7: Szombathely-Országút-dűlő; 5: Győr-Homokgödör; 6: Budai Vár, 1. kerület, Színház u, Karmelita; 8: Kardoskút-Hatablak

A red burnished bottleneck fragment was found in a house of the 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup>-century settlement south of Budapest, on the territory of Csepel-Szabadkikötő, by Judit Szigeti and her team in 2015 (unpublished).

Katalin I. Melis published burnished bottle fragments from the medieval Csút/Csót settlement (south of Buda; I. Melis 2002). The ceramic record of the medieval Kána settlement also contained burnished pottery fragments (bottles and jugs) in large numbers and many types.

At an early stage of research, it has become clear that Esztergom and its surroundings are a primary distribution area of the ware in question. We received considerable professional support from the Balassa Bálint Museum and other archaeologists working in Esztergom in examining the archaeological material recovered from the city and its surroundings. In 2004, Sarolta Lázár published a burnished bottle (Lázár 2004, Balassa Bálint Museum, Inv. No.: 2004.5.24) and its analogies from Esztergom-Örmény, recovered from a layer dated to the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries (Fig. 4, 4). In the related study, she also mentions a previous excavation by István Horváth in the 1990s, where he found eleven similar sherds in 11<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup>-century layers on the northern side of the palace. The pieces were thin-walled, sandwich-profile, and of brownish red-colour, with a simple or ribbed mouth and rim and burnished surface (Lázár 2004, 114). Unfortunately, the evaluation of the ceramic material from the excavations in the castle's territory has not yet been completed, so the data are still unavailable.

The record of Esztergom-Zsidód also contained pieces of burnished bottle necks, while the rest of the finds dated the assemblage to the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The pottery finds recovered from Esztergom-Széchenyi Square (Parádi 1973, 234–236) and the area of the royal palace cannot be assessed, but it would be essential to clarify their stratigraphical positions and places of origin. We also miss a publication of the complete evaluation of the record of Esztergom-Szentkirály. We could only publish a minor part of the ceramic record of this waterfront settlement, excavated in 2015 by Péter Skriba.<sup>3</sup> Special burnished bottle and jug fragments were recovered from two structures in the 400-m<sup>2</sup> excavation area. Based on the prominence of white pottery findings, especially bottles (Fig. 6), Skriba field dated these structures to the 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> centuries. The best analogies to the sherds are known from the region of Buda.

## 2. Great Hungarian Plain / Nagy Magyar Alföld region

In his evaluation of the archaeological record of the Csátalja settlement, Nándor Parádi mentions “*bottles with polished surface*”, describing them as brownish red (Cs. Sós, Parádi 1971, 130, Figs. 8–9; Fig. 3, 4). He also refers to excavations by István Méri in Kardoskút and Szarvas-Rózsás (Fig. 2, 8; Méri 1964, 46), while Júlia Kovalovszki highlights a burnished red piece (Kovalovszki 1960, 37, Pl. XI, 5).

The local museum has been receiving archaeological finds, including brownish-red bottle fragments, from the surroundings of Hajdúböszörmény since the beginning of the last century; nonetheless, there is no information about whether these have a burnished surface (M. Antalóczy 1980, 143, 165, Fig. 9). Marianna Bálint recently published a burnished bottleneck fragment from the area (Bálint 2016). László Szolnoki from the Directorate of the Museums of Hajdú-Bihar County carried out an excavation there in 2011, recovering burnished pottery in abundance; one is currently the best analogy to the bottle found in Esztergom-Örmény (Gyulai et al. 2016).

The large settlement discovered in the surroundings of Orosháza, excavated by Zoltán Rózsa and Attila Gyucha between 2004 and 2006, is very similar to the site at Hajdúböszörmény. The settlement was described as the residence of a Muslim community and a marketplace for their commercial activities, mainly because special artefacts such as scale weights, scale pans, and *denarii* were found in significant quantities (Rózsa 2018). In addition, the settlement had a characteristic ceramic record with a composition similar to that of the Hajdúböszörmény site. The pottery finds included, among other things, liquid storage containers (mainly fragments of bottles and jugs) with a burnished surface (Fig. 7, 5; Rózsa, Tugya 2012; Rózsa et al. 2014).

A unique bottle fragment may be mentioned from the ceramic record of Csanádpalota-Juhásztanya M43 Site 60, a settlement near Orosháza (Fig. 2, 1). The material from Gyula-Törökzug (excavated by Dénes Jankovich B.; publication in progress) comprised diverse jug types decorated by applying different polishing methods (Fig. 8, 3). Jankovich also published a settlement part, which he dated to between the mid-11<sup>th</sup> and mid-12<sup>th</sup> centuries, from beside Endrőd. He described the “*vertically polished bottle fragments*” found in House 9 as imported, classifying them into a unique and separate group in the ceramic material of the excavated settlement (Jankovich, Szatmári 2013, 223, 290, Pl. 56).

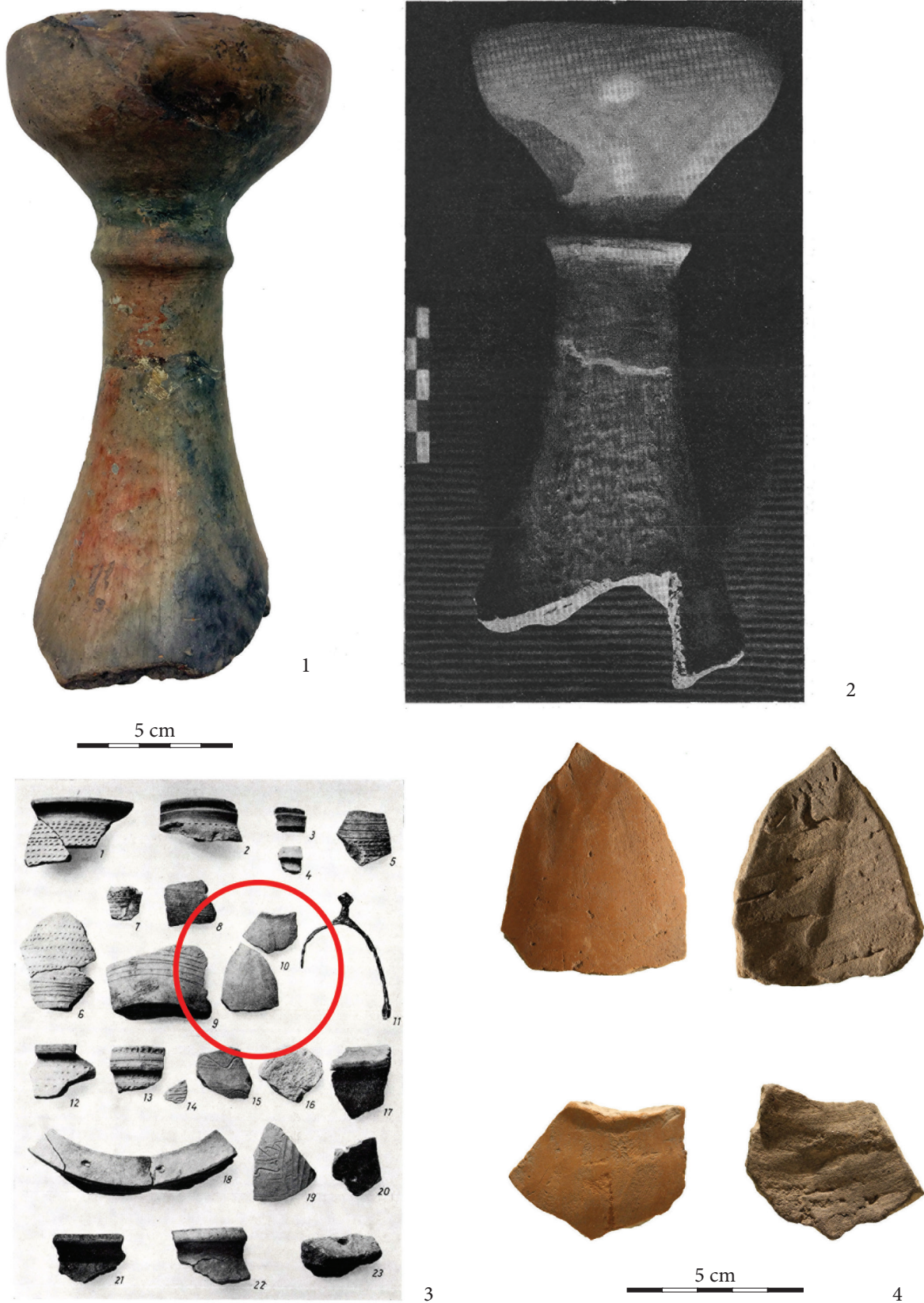


Fig. 3 1: Bottle fragment from Budapest, District I, Dísz Square, pit 14; 2: bottle fragment (Holl 1956, 185, Fig. 12); 3: bottle fragments from Csátalja (Cs. Sós, Parádi 1971, 129, Fig. 9, 10); 4: Csátalja (photo by Türr István Museum, Baja)  
 3. kép 1: Budapest 1. kerület, Dísz tér 14. gödör palacktöredék; 2: Palacktöredék (Holl 1956, 185, 12. kép); 3: Csátalja palacktöredékek (Cs. Sós, Parádi 1971, 129, 9. ábra 10); 4: Csátalja (fotó: Türr István Múzeum, Baja)



Fig. 4 1: Budapest, District I, Országház Street; 2: Buda Castle, District I, Színház Street, Carmelite Monastery; 3: Tura-Szentgyörgypart (photo by Petőfi Közérdekű Muzeális Gyűjtemény, Aszód); 4: Esztergom-Örmény  
 4. kép 1: Budapest 1. kerület, Országház u.; 2: Budai Vár, 1. kerület, Színház u., Karmelita; 3: Tura-Szentgyörgypart (fotó: Petőfi Közérdekű Muzeális Gyűjtemény, Aszód); 4: Esztergom-Örmény

József Laszlovszky called our attention to the site of Tiszaug-Szociális otthon, where both burnished bottles and jugs were found. Zsuzsa Miklós has published from Tura-Szentgyörgypart a “red coloured one-handed bottle of fine clay with polished surface” together with fragments of the body and bottom of bottles (Fig. 4, 3; Miklós 1991, 436).

The pottery recovered from under the farm buildings of Szer Monastery (Vályi 1996) was field dated by Katalin Vályi to the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries (Vályi 1992, 149, Pl. 6, 6). She considered some finds, similar, based on her description, to the types in the focus of our research, to be of Bulgarian origin. The dating is confirmed by the form of the bottles, the red slip or engobe on their surfaces, and the vertical polishing strokes. In addition, the site’s record also contained an excellent analogy to the burnished spouted vessel described below (Béres 1985, 181, Pl. II, 4; Vályi 1996).

In the light of the ca. 50 archaeological sites examined, we suggest dating this pottery type to the 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> centuries. Considering the distribution of the type variant, Miklós Takács questioned the relevance or precision of this dating for bowl-like clay cauldrons (Takács 2012, 232). In a paper published in 1986, Katalin Vályi evaluated the record of several houses, dating them – correctly – to the 12<sup>th</sup> century. By decoration, form, and material, most published sherds match the pottery of the period in question (Vályi 1986, 234, Fig. 9, 10, Fig. 15, Fig. 18).

Based on its similarity to the 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup>-century record of Szer, Mária Béres dated the record of Sáp to the early Árpád Age. We consider her opinion correct, but we wish to clarify that the pottery she published as burnished is not the same type as the ones found at Szer Monastery. Sáp settlement’s ceramic record contained Szarvas-Rózsás style pottery, a variation with a soft but unburnished surface that indeed should be dated to the early Árpád Age. Besides, 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup>-century-style burnished sherds were also found in the settlement, but only as stray finds that could not be linked to any archaeological feature (Béres 1998, 175, 177, Abb. 4).

In 2014, Zsolt Gallina, Gyöngyi Gulyás, and István Molnár mentioned several burnished pottery fragments in the publication of a late Árpád-Age settlement part from Kiskunfélegyháza-Amler bánya (Gallina et al. 2014, 317–318).

One of the most beautiful examples of the pottery type in focus, a neck-mouth-rim fragment of a vessel with a single vertical handle resembling amphora

handles, was found in Kecskemét during the preliminary excavations of the future Mercedes factory in 2017. Nikoletta Lukács dated the find to the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, before the Mongol invasion (Fig. 5, Fig. 8, 4; Kecskemét, Mercedes RL15. site, ID: 71273).

In 2021, Sebastian Belbe published a bottle fragment from Satu Mare (Szatmárnémeti), Site 1. In the study (Belbe 2021), he also surveys the type’s known analogies in the territory of Romania (Fig. 9, 2).

### 3. Transdanubia / Dunántúl

Imre Holl found, in the 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup>-century layer of the moat of Sopron Castle, fragments of fine jugs or bottles with a brown outer and grey inner surface and “vertical burnishing on the outer surface” (Holl 1973, 198).

Dénes B. Jankovich published a small fragment of “a red polished ceramic vessel” (Jankovich 1991, 186, 191–192) from the 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup>-century Árpád-Age settlement of Fenék.<sup>4</sup>

From Váralja-Várfő, Zsuzsa Miklós reported 13<sup>th</sup>-century pottery sherds with grey inner and red outer sides and burnished external surfaces with traces of painting (Miklós 1998, 131). We could examine this pottery assemblage and observe various burnished surface types. Moreover, type diversity manifested in vessel forms, too: both jugs and bottles were “decorated” with this surface treatment method. The beauty of the material of Várfő lies in the burnished-and-red painted decoration; the best analogy to these finds is to be found in the ceramic record of Gyula-Törökzug.

Miklós Takács published the only paper evaluating Árpád-Age burnished pottery from the Little Hungarian Plain (Kisalföld) in 2000, summarizing previous knowledge and known Árpád-Age analogies. He described the vessels using the expressions “smooth surfaces” and sometimes “clay slip”. From his collection, we must mention a straight bottleneck fragment from Győr-Homokgödör (Takács 2000, 11, Pl. I, 2), defined as a 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup>-century import (Fig. 2, 5). In the research history chapter of the study, Miklós Takács highlighted the impact of the Late Avar period up to the 9<sup>th</sup> century on medieval pottery style and presented a collection of available southern and eastern analogies from Bulgaria, south-western Bácska (Bačka) and the Saltovo culture. He emphasized, however, that the vessel forms in the Kisalföld region cannot be set directly in parallel to distant ones, but it was instead only the pottery techniques



Fig. 5 1–2: Kecskemét-Mercedes factory, site LR 15 (photo by Béla Kis)  
5. kép 1–2: Kecskemét-Mercedes gyár, LR 15. lh. (fotó: Kis Béla)



Fig. 6 1–6: Esztergom-Szentkirály, Esztergom-Stúrovo (Párkány) ferry, 2014 (photo by József Bicskei)  
 6. kép 1–6: Esztergom-Szentkirály, Esztergom-Stúrovo (Párkány) teherkomp-átkelőhely, 2014 (fotó: Bicskei József)



of 9<sup>th</sup>-century Southern Transdanubia that might have influenced some bottle types produced mainly at the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Takács 2000, 8–9, 25–27).

It was Péter Skriba who called our attention to Szombathely-Országúti dűlő (Fig. 2, 4, 7), Szombathely-Zanat and Balatonlelle-Országút-dűlő, sites with burnished bottle fragments in their record (Kreiter et al. 2017, Fig. 7, 2; Skriba 2016, 171).

Anna Herbst and her colleagues published burnished bottle fragments from Pápa-Fő tér and Győr-Széchenyi tér in 2017 (Herbst et al. 2017, 305, 307, Fig. 26, 5, Fig. 29, 5, Fig. 30, 7).

A burnished jug or bottle fragment with a roughly burnished depiction of an animal figurine was discovered in the excavation of the moat along the external castle wall in Szekszárd-Béla tér. The moat's infill also contained several Ottoman-Era and Árpád-Age finds. The bottle was red and burnished, with a sandwich profile and grey core. A horse figure was drawn with rough, deep rubbed strokes on the upper part of the pear-shaped body. The horse turns back its head, its mouth is opened, and some markings on its body might mark horse equipment. Its raised tail resolves in a floral motif.

We had the opportunity to actually see the bottle with the help of Márta Vizi, who identified it as a typical 16<sup>th</sup>-century Ottoman-Turkish pottery. In our opinion, however, its shape and surface treatment are characteristic of the 12<sup>th</sup>-century pottery style. Moreover, the animal figure looking backward-motif was often used in the 12<sup>th</sup> century to decorate the bezel of silver-headed rings (Vizi 2021; Rózsa, Szigeti 2021), as published in our 50-piece collection (Fig. 8, 5–6).

An analysis of the finds found together with burnished vessels outlines relatively simple situations within each focus region. A comparison of these regions, however, reveals significant differences. While in Buda, about 40–40% of the pottery finds belong to white and imported reductive types (“Austrian” pottery), these are barely present in sites in the Great Hungarian Plain, with their proportion being usually under 1% in the ceramic record. The flagship types in these settlements’ ceramic records are local: clay cauldrons and pots. Based on the dating of the finds, the emergence of the burnished ware may be dated to the last third of the 12<sup>th</sup> century in about 85–90% of the related sites, while its disappearance is linked to the Mongol invasion.

### *Formal characteristics of burnished pottery*

All known burnished pottery finds are liquid storage vessels (bottles, jugs, jars), which may be classified into several type groups.

The best-known and most common form is the bottle, usually with a narrow mouth (d.: 4–5 cm), a rib around the mouth and/or rim, a long neck, and a pear-shaped body (Fig. 7). Chalice-shaped mouths are frequent; the solution also appears later in white pottery (Fig. 3, 1–2, Fig. 7, 4).

A jug variant comes with a vertical handle resembling that of amphoras (Fig. 5, Fig. 8, 1, 4, 5), and the vessels frequently bear characteristics of metal vessels, too (Fig. 8, 2). Their shape and narrow neck make them similar to bottles; some of them are decorated.

Besides the basic jug type, it was possible to outline two smaller type variants: a spouted one with a decorated neck and one with a decorated neck and a “filter” in the neck. (Fig. 9). Vessels of these types are known from Buda Castle (Papp et al. 2018, 193–197, Figs. 3–11). Jugs were unknown until the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century in the pottery of the Árpád Age, so the appearance of a burnished type variant in a record dated to this era is surprising (Fig. 8, 3). Spouted jugs have been recovered from three sites so far: Buda Castle, Orosháza-Bónum, and Szer. As for Buda, specimens of the type were discovered in three pits in the territory of the Carmelite Monastery and a 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup>-century pit in Országház Street (Fig. 43, 1). Specimens of the other jug type, with a filter in the neck, were also found in Buda Castle: a complete vessel and three fragments from the territory of the Carmelite Monastery and the Royal Forecourt, published by László Zolnay (Zolnay, Boldizsár 1977, Pl. 48, 5). The common characteristic of these vessels is a strainer-like thin wall at the neck's base, closing off the neck part save for a relatively big hole in the middle. The start of such a “strainer” can be detected on a neck fragment from the area of the Carmelite Monastery (SE-2041; Fig. 1, 6, Fig. 3, 5; Papp et al. 2018, 193–197, Figs. 3–11). The surface of all four vessels is burnished. As for their function, it has remained unclear yet, but, in our hopes, the results of the ongoing material analysis of samples taken from their inner sides will shed light on that.



Fig. 7 1: Orosháza-Bónum; 2: Esztergom-Örmény; 3: Orosháza-Bónum; 4: Buda Castle, Dísz Square; 5: Hajdúböszörmény (<http://hajdusagimuzeum.hu/kiallitasok/allando-kiallitasok/boszormenyi-kincsek>)  
 7. kép 1: Orosháza-Bónum; 2: Esztergom-Örmény; 3: Orosháza-Bónum; 4: Budai Vár, Dísz tér; 5: Hajdúböszörmény (<http://hajdusagimuzeum.hu/kiallitasok/allando-kiallitasok/boszormenyi-kincsek>)



Fig. 8 1: Orosháza-Bónum; 2: Tura-Szentgyörgypart; 3: Gyula-Törökzug; 4: Kecskemét-Mercedes factory;  
5-6: Szekszárd, Béla király Square (2: photo by Petőfi Közérdekű Muzeális Gyűjtemény, Aszód,  
3: drawing by Károly Árpás, photo by Tibor Rosta, 5-6: after Vizi 2021)

8. kép 1: Orosháza-Bónum; 2: Tura-Szentgyörgypart (fotó: Petőfi Közérdekű Muzeális Gyűjtemény, Aszód);  
3: Gyula-Törökzug (rajz: Árpás Károly, fotó: Rosta Tibor); 4: Kecskemét-Mercedes gyár;  
5-6: Szekszárd, Béla király tér (Vizi 2019)

### *Characteristics of surface treatment and raw material*

We have already mentioned a study by Miklós Takács on “polished” pottery, where he published an evaluation of a burnished liquid storage vessel type group appearing in the Kisalföld region. Using his work as a base for our research, we have started to examine the quantity of burnishing on the surface of these vessels. We analysed three pieces from Takács’s collection,<sup>5</sup> based on which the differences between the pieces from Lébény-Bille-domb and Győr-Homokgödör are obvious (Fig. 2, 5). Based on this observation, we started to classify the available finds (from fifty sites in total in the Carpathian Basin, mainly from the territory of today’s Hungary) based on the differences of the burnished surfaces, to reveal whether different burnishing methods represent chronological inequality. Were these vessels imported or made locally? If imported, are they the products of various workshops? Unfortunately, these questions cannot be answered yet. Therefore, in this paper, we only present the observed differences and point out that, although variations are present, there seem to be no fundamental differences in manufacturing technology.

Each vessel was slow-wheeled, and most came with a potter’s mark stamped into their bottom. Incised decoration was rare, while usually, the vessels’ total external surface was burnished with pebbles or other tools, with vertical strokes perpendicular to the bottom. Burnishing was presumably made in different ways for one reason or another (or both), applied for decorative or practical purposes (it is possible to make pottery waterproof by compacting the vessel surface by burnishing before firing). With striped burnishing, potters might have imitated the channelled decoration of metal vessels.

The raw material of the vessels is rich, high-quality clay with some very fine sand temper. The pottery has a sandwich profile; the inner surface is usually grey, the outer one brown. The colour of the inside and outside of bottles is different because, during firing, the narrow neck has prevented air from reaching the inside (the inner surface of more wide-mouth jugs is reddish-brown). We started classifying the material based on the quality and diversity of burnishing and detected the following variations.

### *Variations in the burnished surface*

#### *1. Roughly smoothed vessels*

In archaeological literature, one can often read the expression “smoothed surface” in context with 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup>-

century pottery. These vessels are mainly bottle fragments featuring vertical burnishing strokes (Takács 2000; Szigeti 2016).<sup>6</sup> The marks are fine, barely facetting the vessel surface, as if the potters went for as smooth a surface as possible. However, in the 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> century, the strokes became rough, almost “cutting” into the surface. We can call it smoothing or scratching, but the latter one cannot mean they wanted to make the surface smoother but only to compact the material, thus improving the quality of the fired product. It might have been a technique for enhancing vessel durability. We know of three examples from Esztergom-Szentkirály, Kána, and Lébény-Bille-domb; in each case, the roughly-smoothed vessel was found together – in the same feature or site, respectively, or at least in each other’s vicinity – with burnished sherds. The best example is Esztergom-Szentkirály, where the fragments were discovered together in a pit dated before the Mongol invasion (the dating was confirmed by the presence of a few white sherds).

Such vessels have certainly been produced by local workshops, which were active when burnished ware arrived in the Carpathian Basin during the late 12<sup>th</sup> century. The forms imitate Carolingian-style vessels, the surface treatment of which is a lower-quality version of the technique appearing in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Burnished surface bottle types at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century were somewhat different: they had a long neck (which was unknown with Carolingian types) and a burnished surface (closely similar to those).

#### *2. Lightly smoothed burnished vessels*

All burnished vessel fragments in our collection once belonged to bottles, jars, or jugs. Their shapes are different from 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup>-century bottles (described above): most have a long narrow neck and a high-swung handle or none at all. Their colour varies between shades of brown, the inside is fired to brown or grey; the specimens are usually thick-walled, hand-wheeled, and of good quality. The external surface has a shine from burnishing; it is either mirror-like or striped. Polishing was made with 4–5 mm broad vertical strokes by rubbing pebbles or bone tools into the bone-dry clay surface. This group was divided into minor sub-groups based on the different quality of polishing (Fig. 2, 1–4, Fig. 10, 1–9).

#### *2.1. Mirror-like or stripe-burnished and/or painted vessels: the Buda type*

The current analysis relies on data obtained exclusively by macroscopic classification. The burnishing



Fig. 9 Spouted vessels with built-in "strainer". 1: Buda Castle, Carmelite Monastery, SE 2041; 2: Satu Mare/Szatmárnémeti (Belbe 2021, Plate 2); 3: Orosháza-Bónum-faluhely; 4: Buda Castle, Carmelite Monastery, SE 4003; 5: Buda Castle, Royal Forecourt, excavation by László Zolnay (Zolnay, Boldizsár 1977, Fig. 48, 5); 6: Buda Castle, Carmelite Monastery, SE 2293

9. kép Kiöntőcsöves, és belső „szűrős” edények. 1: Budai Vár, Karmelita SE 2041; 2: Satu Mare/Szatmárnémeti (after Belbe 2021, 2. t.); 3: Orosháza-Bónum faluhely; 4: Budai Vár, Karmelita SE 4003; 5: Budai Vár, Királyi előudvar, Zolnay László ásatása (Zolnay 1977, 48. kép 5); 6: Budai Vár, Karmelita SE 2293

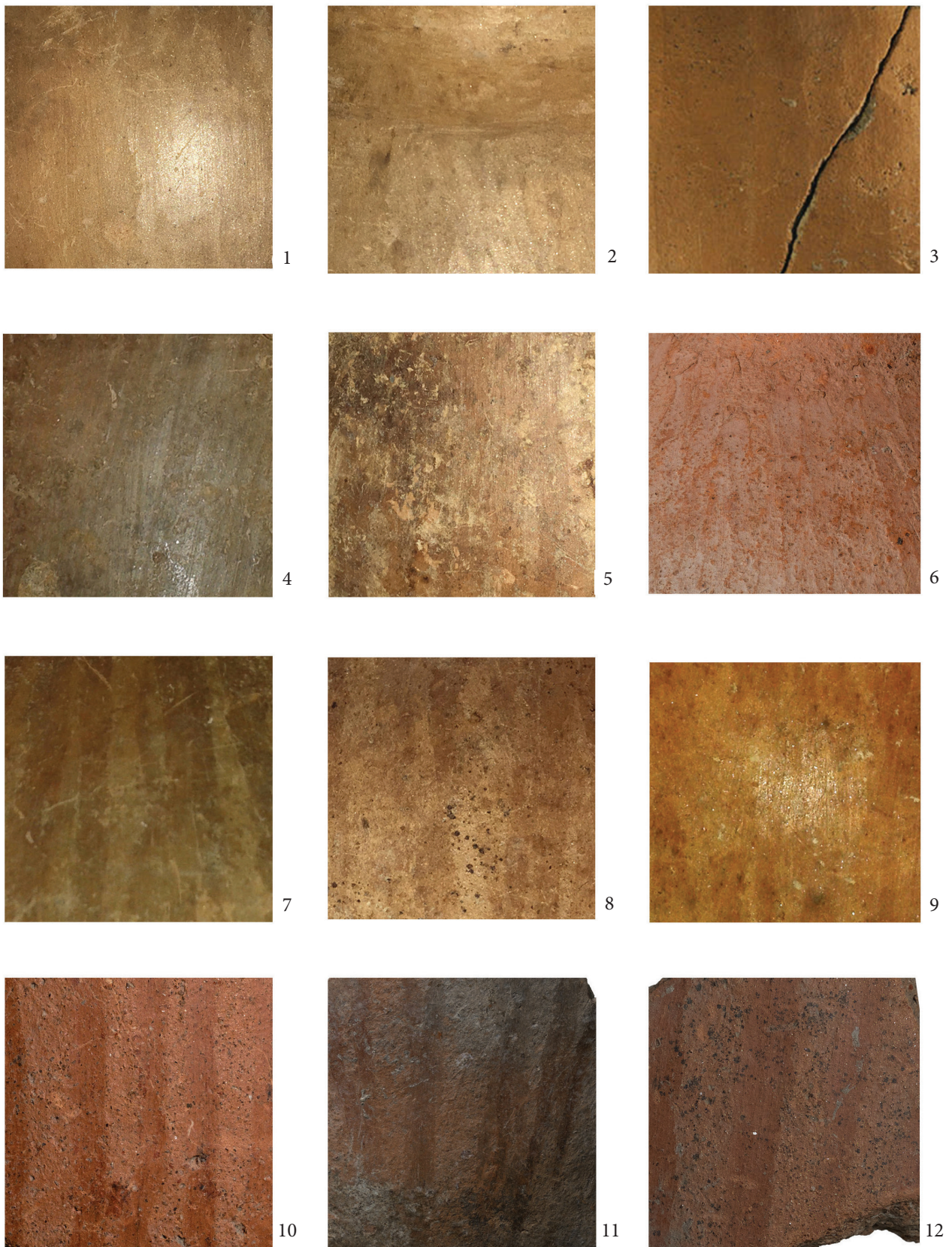


Fig. 10 Different burnishing types. 1–6: Glossy burnished surface; 7–9: Burnished surface with painted bands in the background; 10–12: Surface burnished in bands

10. kép A polírozás típusai. 1–6: Fényesre polírozott felület; 7–9: Csíkos festett hatású polírozott felület; 10–12: Csíkosra polírozott felület

of the vessels is mirror-like or striped. The sherds' surfaces have a full shine over a background that is either monochrome or "painted" in stripes. Usually, the surface has a lead glaze effect, but some fragments look striped but glittering. The cause of the phenomenon is currently unknown; hopefully, the ongoing scientific analyses will reveal whether it is due to a different way of production, an engobe layer coating the surface or a different firing temperature. This type of surface handling is characteristic not only of long-neck bottles but also simple and "strainer" jugs. Such vessels appear mainly on sites around Esztergom and Buda and are entirely missing from the archaeological record of settlements in the Great Hungarian Plain and Transdanubia. Therefore, we recommend naming this group "the Buda type" (Fig. 2, 5–6, Fig. 10, 1–9).

### 2.2. Vessels burnished in bands: the Esztergom type

The burnished sherds from Esztergom-Szentkirály are slightly different from the previous type: their surface is only partially burnished, in vertical bands. Most vessels decorated this way were brown jugs with a vertical handle and sandwich profile; in their case, polishing serves exclusively decorative purposes. Also, even the burnished bands do not have a lustrous shine, suggesting less effort having been put into surface handling compared to, for example, the heavily burnished vessels of the "Buda type". As the polishing stripes, in this case, only compressed clay a little, potters seem not to have intended to achieve a glaze effect – this type of burnishing means a transition towards painting. Coeval metal vessels from the East and the Balkans have channelled surfaces. Did they serve as a model for imitation? We cannot tell yet, but the analogy must be kept in mind. In our opinion, jugs decorated with burnished vertical bands may be the earliest type variant of burnished ware, dating back to the last third of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, before the Mongol invasion. We recommend naming this group of find "the Esztergom type" (Fig. 10, 10–12).

### 2.3. Red painted and lightly burnished vessels: the Orosháza type

The common characteristic of these vessels is the bright red colour lent perhaps by some earthen paint. Some have red colour and lightly burnished surface, while others are also red but without a shine. The best examples are known from Orosháza, Tura-Szentgyörgypart, and Kardoskút; lightly burnished sherds of the type were also found in Buda Castle and

Orosháza. The vessels are jugs or bottles with a vertical handle, decorated mainly with small burnished waves, wave-bundles, circles, or long-scratched "pokes" made with the same tool. The wave-bundle decoration disappeared at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century from the Carpathian Basin; its reappearance may be proof of an influence from the area of the South Balkans. The most beautiful bottles of the type were recovered from Orosháza-Bónum-Faluhely and its surroundings; therefore, we recommend naming this group "the Orosháza type" (Fig. 11, 2–3).

### *General characteristics of the ceramic assemblages comprising burnished pottery*

We have also examined other types of pottery found together with burnished ware, including their decoration. The so-called gear ornament was widely used by several different techniques. Though this type of ornament appears on other sites of the era in question, a high number of appearances and diversity similar to the assemblages with burnished pottery are typical only in Csátalja (Cs. Sós, Parádi 1971, 132), with six gear ornament variants in the otherwise scarce ceramic record (Fig. 2, 3). The chronological position of the emergence of gear decoration is under discussion (Pap 2013, 251–254). It was perhaps introduced more than once, as it is present on both 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup>- and 12<sup>th</sup>-century ceramic vessels. That also means its origins may be looked for outside the Carpathian Basin, in products imported from the Balkans, which then were copied by local potters with more or less success. It should be noted that the Halimba-Cseres cemetery, dated to the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century by silver S-shaped lock rings, contained a vessel with gear decoration inside the mouth and rim, a variation usually interpreted as very early (Szigeti, Szilágyi 2013, 865).

The change characterising the period's material culture is also reflected by red-painted vessels. Red-painted ceramic cauldrons and pots with a unique mouth and rim were published in some assemblages from the Great Hungarian Plain; in the course of our research for burnished pottery, we also have found several analogous vessels in the area. However, painted vessels are a type group somewhat neglected by research (See the publication of Kaszaper (Pereg, Végegyháza), a 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup>-century settlement part, with profound research history: Lichtenstein et al. 2021). Our observations suggest that in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, red painting was in use mainly in the Mid-



1



2



3



4



5

Fig. 11 Different types of decoration. 1: Buda Castle, Royal Forecourt (1977); 2–4: Orosháza-Bónum;  
5: Esztergom-Zsidód

11. kép Díszítéstípusok. 1: Budai vár, Királyi Előudvar 1977; 2–4: Orosháza-Bónum; 5: Esztergom-Zsidód



dle Tisza Region, while by the end of the century, the method became widespread, applied to pots and cauldrons, especially on their mouth, rim, and external surface. Red painting disappeared gradually in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and is thought to have reappeared on white pottery, mainly bottles, and jugs (Szigeti et al. 2020). Until the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the vessels were usually decorated with dense incised lines or line and wave bundles, sometimes reaching up to the inner rim and the top of the neck (*Fig. 11, 2–4*).

White vessels decorated by a unique painting technique, “splashed painting”, often appear in assemblages containing burnished ware. The best examples were found in Buda Castle (*Fig. 11, 1*; Gaál 2013, 221, Pl. 1, 4–5, Pl. 2, 4, Pl. 3, Pl. 7, 2–3, Pl. 10, 6–7, Pl. 12, 4; see Szigeti 2020 with further literature on research history. Splashed painting, described as “panther spots” by the author, appears again on 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup>-century ceramic pots).

It seems that the change in the trends of material culture in the last third of the 12<sup>th</sup> century brought some long-forgotten decoration techniques into fashion again. Consequently, not only did pottery forms and surface handling change, but some old-new ways of decorating also (re)appeared. Currently, we think that the related influence came from the Balkans. We do not believe, however, in the recent, widely accepted theory involving technology transfer but rather see people and their mobility behind the changes (Takács 2017, 251).

#### *About the origins of burnished pottery – a summary*

Burnished pottery caught the eye of researchers of medieval Hungary relatively early, as these spectacular vessels did not fit into any typical Árpád-Age local pottery style in either region of the Carpathian Basin. In 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup>-century find assemblages, archaeologists working in towns and centres came across mainly white pottery or graphitic Austrian vessels, while the ones working in the countryside collected fragments of vessels made of typical gravel-tempered material. Consequently, some think burnished ware represents the material heritage of a different culture. Other colleagues accept the dating of burnished ware to the Árpád Age but consider it to be of foreign origin – in our opinion, correctly. The main question is whether burnished vessels were brought into the Carpathian Basin by incoming people in the 12<sup>th</sup> century or only the artefacts arrived here somehow. To clarify that, we feel it necessary to expand

our research and include 9<sup>th</sup>-century Carolingian burnished vessels from Transdanubia. Regrettably, a key site’s material is unavailable as the results of the latest excavations in Zalavár have not been published yet. However, the resemblance between the surface treatment of the known 9<sup>th</sup>- and 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup>-century burnished pottery from Transdanubia is striking (Gergely 2016, 296, 300–308, Abb. 24, 2, Abb. 26, 4, Abb. 32, 8–9, Abb. 34, 7–10, Abb. 35, 1). As we understand it today, the 9<sup>th</sup>-century Pannonian burnished pottery style does not appear anymore in 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup>-century find assemblages in the Carpathian Basin. Although this statement, holds for the territory of the Great Hungarian Plain but not for Transdanubia, but, indeed, burnished pottery disappeared from the latter region as well during the 10<sup>th</sup> century (Takács 2000). Burnished pottery appears again, quite out of nowhere, in the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century and disappears the same way during the decades after the Mongol invasion.

Most scholars delving into 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup>-century burnished pottery consider it an imported product from the Balkans. They seem right as the find assemblages with burnished ware often contain glazed vessels and other Byzantine-style artefacts (Jankovich, Szatmári 2013, 223; Langó, Rózsa 2012, 45–46). The revival of Byzantine-Hungarian connections from the 12<sup>th</sup> century on brought about the emergence of trade routes and hubs along the Danube, especially between Nándorfehérvár (Belgrad) and Barancs (Popović, Ivanišević 1988)<sup>7</sup> – not necessarily meaning that burnished ware came right from the Balkans, only marking a direction of a place of origin.

Serbian and Bulgarian colleagues also consider burnished ware unique in their area. On the territory of former Roman provinces, we may find connections with a persisting local Roman pottery tradition and the multiple-rooted Late Avar yellow pottery style connecting Bulgaria and the Carpathian Basin. On a broader scale, one might notice similarities in the pottery record (surface treatment methods) of the much older Marosszentanna-Csernyahov (Sântana de Mureş-Chernyahov) culture, indicating contacts with Asia Minor, the Azov region, the Caucasus, and the territory of the former state of Volga Bulgaria.

In our opinion, burnished pottery, glazed bottles, bowls with inverted rims, and pots with a rib around the neck arrived in the Carpathian Basin from the Balkans in more waves. It seems, therefore, necessary to analyse the elements of this complex record separately and in an international context to under-

stand the origins of the 9<sup>th</sup>-century Pannonian ware and the 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup>-century burnished pottery in the Carpathian Basin.<sup>8</sup>

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### *Jegyzetek*

- 1 The work done in the last two years could only give a glimpse into the research of the burnished pottery of the 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> century. However, the work, including a typological classification, will be completed by collecting new material on additional trips. The present study aims to lay the foundations for future research, hoping that by studying more and more findings, we will be able to give more precise answers and clarify all details of the points raised.
- 2 The excavation was led by Adrienn Papp (Budapest History Museum) between 2014 and 2016. Judit Szigeti carried out the processing of the record.
- 3 Esztergom-Szentkirály I: preventive excavation preceding the construction of a ferry between Esztergom and Štúrovo/Párkány (2014).
- 4 We have revised the record of the related sites and found that Dunaújváros and Dombóvár-Sörkert should be deleted from the list, comprising eight sites in total, as their record did not contain 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup>-century burnished ware. Zalavár should also be deleted because the burnished finds recovered can be dated to the 9<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> century.
- 5 Lébény-Bille-domb: bottle, inv. no.: 96.1.1.1, Győr-Homok-gödör: bottleneck and fragments, inv. no: 69.10.220, 53.246.60.
- 6 According to conservators, the tiny scratches may be damage caused by a rough brush while cleaning the objects before conservation.
- 7 We would like to thank the archaeologist Dragana Spasić-Đurić for her help in viewing the finds from Branicevo and for the possibility of taking a look at her excavation and processing work.
- 8 Research on the Balkan origins will be clarified in the future through more research trips to study the findings in person.

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## AZ ÁRPÁD-KORI POLÍROZOTT KERÁMIA (12–13. SZÁZAD)

### *Összefoglalás*

Tanulmányunkban megkíséreltünk egy rövid átfogó elemzést adni a 12–13. századi fényezett/polírozott felületű kerámiákról. Kutatásunk alapját két lelőhely kerámiaanyagának feldolgozása adta: a Budai vár területén feltárt 12–13. századi településrészlet és Orosháza-Bónum, faluhely. A kutatás eddig csak érintőlegesen foglalkozott ezzel a különleges kerámiatípussal, mely gyűjtésünk alapján már félszáz lelőhelyen biztosan megfigyelhető. Számarányuk az adott települések anyagában az 1%-ot sem éri el, jelenlétük alig mutatható ki. Ám felületi eldolgolásuk miatt annyira kitűnnek egy-egy település anyagából, hogy a kutatás import kerámiaként azonosítja őket. A kutatómunkánkban nagy energiát fordítottunk a kerámiatípus eredetének vizsgálatára, mely külföldi múzeumok anyagának megtekintésével járt. Bizonyosan a Balkán irányába vezető szálak felgöngyölítése még folyamatban van, de a kerámiatípus import

jellege nem kérdőjelezhető meg. A fényezett felületű edények feltűnése és jelenléte összefüggésbe hozható a 12. század utolsó harmadának történeti eseményeivel, Magyarország külkapcsolataival, a kereskedelmi utak irányával. Jelenlétük idő- és hely-specifikus, és igen rövid időintervallumot fed le, mely alapján a jövőben a telepkek kerámiaanyaga sokkal pontosabban keltezhető lesz majd. A munkánk során fontosnak tartottuk felhívni a figyelmet a felületkezelés különbözőségére, a formák változatosságára és az új formák feltűnésére. Végül szerettük volna a polírozott/fényezett felületű kerámiaanyagot kísérő edények díszítésére is felhívni a figyelmet. Úgy véljük, mind ezen elemek együttesen jelzik a 12. század utolsó harmadában induló kerámiatechnológia-változást, melynek végső kifutása a fehér kerámiák új forma- és díszítésvilágában teljesedik majd ki.