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Archaeology beneath the City

Short Report on the Excavations at Sárospatak in 2019–2021

ABSTRACT | The Rákóczi Museum, a branch of the Hungarian National Museum located in Sárospatak intended to build a new visitor centre and a showcase exhibition in the framework of the National Castle and Castle Programme. The construction of the new visitor centre in Szent Erzsébet Street covered an area of nearly 1300 m², where archaeological excavations have been carried out in several phases since 2019. These have uncovered artefacts from several archaeological periods, from prehistory to the Early Modern period. This paper presents the preliminary results of these excavations.

KEYWORDS | Sárospatak, Szent Erzsébet street, Rákóczi Showcase Exhibition, archaeological excavation

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Régészet a város alatt

Rövid beszámoló a 2019–2021-es sárospataki ásatásokról

ABSZTRAKT | A Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum Rákóczi Múzeuma Sárospatakon a Nemzeti Kastély- és Várprogram keretében egy új látogatóközpontot és látványtárat szándékozott megvalósítani. A Szent Erzsébet utcában az új látványtár építése közel 1300 m²-es területet érintett, melyen 2019 óta több ütemben folytak régészeti feltárások. Ezek során az őskortól kezdve egészen az kora újkorig, számos régészeti korszak emlékegyaga került elő. A tanulmány ezeknek a feltárásoknak az előzetes eredményeit mutatja be.

Kulcsszavak | Sárospatak, Szent Erzsébet utca, Rákóczi Látványtár, régészeti ásatás

Introduction

The Rákóczi Museum, a branch of the Hungarian National Museum located in Sárospatak, was granted substantial funds in the framework of the National Palace and Castle Programme in 2015, to construct a new visitors' centre and an open storage exhibition, the latter for providing additional space for future collections.¹ The new multistoried complex with a floorspace over 1300 m² is scheduled to be built in a former domestic garden, located north of the inner ward of the castle, which was formerly occupied by storage facilities. Preliminary archaeological fieldwork included a geophysical survey and a trial excavation carried out by the Budavári Cultural Nonprofit Ltd. in 2017.² At that time, the site was still occupied by a few buildings from the 1980s, thus both surveys and excavations were restricted to a limited area, yet the significant results of early fieldwork warranted a full-scale excavation. From 2019 onwards, a series of excavations were conducted

by experts from the Herman Ottó Museum and the Archaeological Heritage Protection Directorate of the Hungarian National Museum (Fig. 1). This study presents the preliminary results of these excavations.

Brief research history

To study historical city centres, one must examine archaeological evidence alongside historical data. Restoration of the inner ward of the castle began in the 1950s, and a series of related archaeological excavations were conducted in the medieval core of Sárospatak in the 1950s and 1960s. The excavations were led by Júlia Kovalovszki, then by Vera Molnár and János Gömöri, and focused mostly on the inner ward, including the so-called Red Keep (Hungarian: Vörös-torony) and city walls. Fieldwork confirmed that the Red Keep, which was thought to have been built during the Árpád Age, was in fact contemporary with the city walls, and no layers from the Árpád Age were identified. Further field-



Fig. 1. Bird's-eye view of the area excavated (photo by Zsolt Zsiga)

1. kép. A feltárási terület madártávlatból (fotó: Zsiga Zsolt)

1 <http://www.zemplentv.hu/15-milliard-forintbol-ujul-meg-a-sarospataki-rakoczi-var>

2 Sárospatak-Víztorló (ID 36054) Sárospatak-Várnegyed (ID 64402), and Sárospatak-Keleti városkapu (ID 41005).

3 HEGYI 2020.

work was conducted in the powder house, and remains of a bakehouse were documented.³ Minor improvements were made in the 1960s in the outer ward, eliciting a series of archaeological observations on prominent features, such as the parish church of John the Baptist. Vera Molnár, and later on János Gömöri conducted a series of excavations on the parish church from 1964 until the 1970s. These excavations yielded significant results, including the discovery of one of the earliest monuments of Sárospatak, a rotunda located in the forefront of the parish church, erected in the mid-11th century.⁴ In 1968–1969, János Gömöri also uncovered a rectangular (3 m long and 2 m wide) semi-sunken building from the Árpád Age in the vicinity of the parish church.⁵ At the end of the 1960s, the National Superintendence of Monuments approved the construction of a kitchen near the Trinitarian cloister and Zsuzsa Lovag was charged with conducting rescue excavations. However, by the time archaeologists arrived at the site, initial earthworks removed most of the cultural layers, leaving little room for scientific fieldwork. Nonetheless, Zsuzsa Lovag recorded multiple freestanding hearths, details of several ovens, alongside large pits and post-holes.⁶ In May 1970, János Gömöri partially excavated plot 38 Kossuth Street.⁷ Although excavations were spatially restricted, he documented a few features from the Árpád Age, and part of a Late Medieval dwelling, yielding a Romanesque baptismal font and coin hoard from the time of Sigismund of Luxembourg. During the 1970s, Katalin Dankó led small-scale excavations on plots 1–5 Kossuth Street, unearthing features of the former Franciscan cloister.⁸ In the 1980s and 1990s, a new series of reconstruction works began on Sárospatak Castle and its environs, granting Katalin Dankó and István Feld the possibility to conduct systematic research on the walls of the Red Keep.⁹ Katalin Dankó also partially excavated the Lion's Bastion (Hungari-

an: Oroszlán-bástya) at that time. In the early 2000s, archaeological fieldwork was conducted in the area of the former Trinitarian cloister, revealing traces of a medieval dwelling in the nave of the church.¹⁰ Soon afterwards, a section of the eastern city wall located in the courtyard of present-day Saint Elizabeth House was uncovered. István Ringer directed excavations in the area of the former cannon foundry and a tannery situated outside the eastern city wall.¹¹ In 2018, Dóra Hegyi led trial excavations along the western city wall and the former powder tower.¹² Later on, Katalin Dankó also conducted here systematic research on the walls and preventive excavations.

It is worth noting, that previous research concentrated on the inner ward of Sárospatak Castle and the city walls, and clarified numerous issues. Considerably less emphasis was placed on the outer ward, including the domestic garden that now accommodates the Open Storage Exhibition. Júlia Kovalovszki conducted the first minor archaeological fieldwork in the castle gardens in 1965.¹³ A year later, Zsuzsa Lovag directed fieldwork in the domestic gardens and oversaw excavations in the forefront of the Trinitarian cloister. She reported her results in the series *Régészeti Füzetek*.¹⁴ She recorded the discovery of a Gothic door frame in the outer ward, near the cistern located inside the eastern city wall, north of the inner ward. The door frame was uncovered during preliminary earthworks for a subterranean fire safety water tank. Its discovery elicited a small-scale rescue excavation, aimed at ascertaining the direction of the medieval walls, and recording as many details as possible of the building, which has been reburied since. This fieldwork revealed the corner of a room with brick flooring, and traces of a subsequent edifice traversing it. In the 1960s, this part of the garden was in the focus of heritage reconstructions, and Zsuzsa Lovag was tasked with conducting a rescue excavation. After this excava-

4 MOLNÁR 1966; HEGYI 2020.

5 GÖMÖRI 1969, 88.

6 LOVAG 1966, 98.

7 GÖMÖRI 1969, 88.

8 J. DANKÓ – SZEKÉR 1994, 359–376.

9 J. DANKÓ 1984; J. DANKÓ 1986; J. DANKÓ 1992; FELD–SZEKÉR 1994; J. DANKÓ 1996; FELD 2005.

10 M. JUHÁSZ – J. DANKÓ 2003.

11 RINGER 2007, 43–44; RINGER et al. 2010.

12 HEGYI–NÁDAI 2019.

13 FELD–SZEKÉR 1994, 173.

14 LOVAG 1966, 98.

tion was concluded, the National Superintendence of Monuments set about to construct a limepit, located 77 m inside the eastern city wall. János Gömőri was tasked to conduct a preliminary survey on the spot in 1968. His excavation on the 5 × 5 m area revealed traces of a wattle-and-daub dwelling from the 16th–17th century, with an east-facing entrance. He also identified a hearth in the southeastern corner and a freestanding oven outside the building. Numerous sherds and iron objects were recovered from the fill, situated beneath a layer of rubble. However, the bottom of the limepit was located ca. 1–2 m beneath the current surface level and it did not penetrate sterile subsoil, leaving some archaeological layers unexamined.¹⁵

No further excavations were conducted in this area, until the obligatory archaeological fieldwork that preceded the construction of the Open Storage Exhibition in Autumn 2017, which involved geophysical surveys and trial excavations. A MALA GX type GPR (ground-penetrating radar), operating at 450 MHz frequency was used for geophysical surveys. GPR use was restricted to areas unoccupied by former buildings. Raw data was processed by Zsombor Klembala, and interpreted by László Nagy. The results did not reveal any clear layouts, yet some anomalies observed between 55–72 cm and 88–105 cm depths could be interpreted as building features. Borbála Hegyi led a follow-up trial excavation, opening two trenches (No. 3 and 5) on the two largest anomalies situated in the southwestern quadrant of the surveyed area. 32 distinct archaeological features were identified in the two trenches. A ca. 280 cm long, 60 cm wide and 65 cm thick section of a stone foundation was observed in trench No. 3 at 65 cm relative depth. Its bottom was located at 150 cm relative depth. Right beneath the foundation, a 15 cm thick compact burnt layer from the 14th–15th century was documented. Further burnt layers were uncovered at 200 cm relative depth. A uniform, blackish dark grey

prehistoric layer was identified at the bottom of the trench, at 200–240 cm relative depth. 13 archaeological features were documented beneath the modern topsoil in trench No. 5, including several burnt layers, yet no traces of walls.¹⁶

Historical background

A cursory overview of the urban development of Sárospatak will be provided, to serve as a frame of reference for new results. The region is bordered by the Zemplén Hills from the northwest, and by Bodrogköz (the microregion between the rivers Bodrog and Tisza) from the southeast. The area was inhabited since the Palaeolithic, with several registered prehistoric settlements. Scarce evidence is available after prehistory and before the Hungarian Conquest Period. The early history of Sárospatak was recorded in Chapter 15 of the *Gesta Hungarorum* by Anonymus,¹⁷ recounting how Árpád donated “*all lands from Sátorhalom to the river Tolcsva*” to the champion Ketel. Later on, Andrew I of Hungary acquired these lands from Ketel’s descendants. Anonymus argued that the king coveted these lands because they were suited for royal hunting, and because his wife, Anastasia of Kiev, daughter of the Grand Prince, cherished this country located close to her homeland.¹⁸ Although brief, the account reveals, that the region between Sátor Hill near Sátoraljaújhely and Olaszliszka was a contiguous crown land from the early 13th century, a fact confirmed by historical and archaeological evidence.¹⁹ Later on, this area became part of the manorial lands of Patak.²⁰ Many peoples settled on the steep plateau located on the western bank of the Bodrog in the second half of the 11th century, marking the beginning of urban development at Sárospatak. New dwellings were raised on either side of the existing main road, forming a linear settlement,²¹ with a Franciscan and a Dominican cloister at its ends.²² At the centre of the

15 GÖMÖRI 1969, 88.

16 HEGYI–NÁDAI 2018; NAGY–HEGYI 2018.

17 RINGER 2017, 11.

18 SZÜCS 1993; RINGER 2017, 11.

19 RINGER 2017, 11.

20 HEGYI 2020.

21 DÉTSHY 2005.

22 One must note that in the absence of archaeological evidence the exact location of the Dominican cloister is still a matter of debate. Miklós Pfeiffer and András Harsányi published relevant historical data. Mihály Détshy suggested that the cloister was built in the southern part of the town (PFEIFFER 1917, 58; HARSÁNYI 1938, 81; DÉTSHY 2002, 10; DÉTSHY 2005, 97).

town the road forked, forming a town square in between (this town layout is called Angerdorf). First a round church dominated the town square, then a Gothic parish church, which was built slightly northwards.²³ The Tatars plundered and burnt the town down during the late 13th century. The forest demesne of Patak was last mentioned in 1323 and its last *comes* (Hung. *ispán*) in 1329. By the mid-14th century, forest demesnes lost their former role as administrative entities, and the lands were joined to the territories of Zemplén and Abaúj counties.²⁴ In 1390, Sigismund of Luxembourg donated Sárospatak, the nearby Sáros Castle, and the town of Újhely to Miklós Perényi, although he could not relish his acquisitions for long, as both he and his younger brother, János fell at the Battle of Nicopolis in 1396, and his three sons inherited the lands. The House of Perényi held Patak for nearly forty years until the death of Miklós Perényi the Younger in 1428; afterwards, the estate returned to the crown. In 1429, Sigismund of Luxembourg decreed Sárospatak a free royal city, yet four months later he revoked this decision and donated Patak, Újhely and Sáros Castle together with accompanying lands to György Pálóczi.²⁵ The city remained in possession of the House of Pálóczi until the late 15th century. It was granted market rights by Matthias I of Hungary.²⁶ In the aftermath of the Battle of Mohács in 1526, the lands were consigned to Péter Perényi and grand construction works took place at Sárospatak. Historical sources convey the existence of a thriving urban community of nobles, artisans, and traders in the 16th–17th century.²⁷

The lands came into possession of the Rákóczi family in the first quarter of the 17th century, and Sárospatak was thoroughly refurbished. Following Rákóczi's War of Independence, a German garrison was stationed in the city for a while. In the 19th century, both the city and adjoined lands were overseen by the Bretzenheim-

ians, and later on by the House of Windischgrätz until the communisation in the mid-20th century, when all possessions became state-owned.²⁸

Relevant historical sources

A brief overview of relevant historic sources will be provided, to facilitate a better understanding of the site and its history, including chiefly contemporary *urbaria*, inventories and topographical illustrations documenting different phases of the settlement. *Urbaria* and inventories were subjects of systematic study in the past decade, providing ample information. Many plot owners are known, however, without relevant topographical data from contemporary illustrations many plots are impossible to pinpoint within the city. Unfortunately, relatively few illustrations of the city and its environs are available.

The Italian military engineer Nicolo Angelini made the first detailed survey of the inner and outer wards of the castle in 1573, documenting the early Perényi phase.²⁹ His work had a purely military focus, concentrating on defensive structures and omitting urban features, thus providing little data relevant to the subject of the present article. A *veduta* from 1685 documented the alterations and constructions made to the castle during the time of György Rákóczi I and Zsuzsanna Lorántffy.³⁰ Although the *veduta* depicted the city in an offhand manner, the presence of numerous gambrel-roofed dwellings within walls imply, that the inner ward was densely populated, as suggested also by contemporary census data.³¹

Unfortunately, no illustrations depict the urban transformations of the following century, and the earliest visual representation of the settlement following this gap is the map entitled *Planum Regio Cameralis Oppidi Saros Nagy Patak* from 1776. It provides de-

23 DÉTSZY 2005; HEGYI 2020.

24 RINGER 2017, 23–24.

25 DÉTSZY 2002, 9–12; RINGER 2017, 29–35.

26 DÉTSZY 2002, 9–12.

27 DÉTSZY 2005, 97–104.

28 TÖRÖK 2000, 141; DÉTSZY 2002, 329–334, 353–355; HEGYI 2020, 165–172.

29 DÉTSZY 2002, 93; E. g. Wien, Nationalbibliothek. Codex 8609. N. 58. *Mappae geographicae regni Hungariae et terrarum adiacentium*.

30 DÉTSZY 1970, 17; Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Wien.

31 E.g. MOL U et C 156. A. Fasc. 40. No. 39; MOL U et C 156. A. Fasc. 41. No. 3; MOL U et C 156. A. Fasc. 41. No. 11; MOL U et C 156. A. Fasc. 36 No. 25.

tailed insight into contemporary matters,³² having recorded serf lands after the royal *urbarium* of 1767.³³ Three different plots are discernible in the subject area of the present study: a garden with a central layout, likely in possession of the Jesuits, and a bipartite parcel with several buildings, including two edifices facing the street and one located at the back of the plot.³⁴ It is curious, that although the plots are drawn separately on the map, they share the same number. An additional small edifice was depicted near the previous buildings.³⁵

Ferenc Römisch mapped the city in 1785.³⁶ Although his chart is barely any younger than the previously discussed map, it demonstrates that numerous changes occurred in the subject area. For instance, there are two plots discernible in the subject area instead of three. Three buildings are still seen standing on the southernmost plot, yet their positions and layout differ: all three edifices are facing the street and two of them were drawn immediately beside each other. A small quadratic building stands in place of a previous rectangular building, which had its longer side facing the street. The garden of the Jesuits had become an empty plot. Péter Török recovered the land register compiled alongside the map with help from Kálmán Ujszász.³⁷ Péter Török noted that the register recorded the plot in possession of the Jesuit Residence, as the site of the seminary.³⁸ It is worth mentioning, that the map used the numbers from the 1776 cadastre.³⁹ Compared to the map from 1785, the First Military Survey (1763–1787) rendered the city in a much simpler manner. The plots in question can be distinguished, although complete with a row of buildings, each facing the streets with their shorter sides. Another four buildings are scattered all over the plots, without any discernible order.⁴⁰

The subsequent Second (1806–1869) and Third Military Surveys (1872–1884) depicted the area as empty land.⁴¹ During the Bretzenheim period in the 19th century, dilapidated buildings were cleared away, levelled or converted to fake ruins in fashionable English gardens throughout the castle.

Most of the abandoned medieval and Early Modern stone buildings were buried around this time. A parcel map from 1866, and a cadastre map from 1896 documented these changes, as both depict the subject area as a large garden (Fig. 2).⁴² During the Windischgrätz period in the 20th century, the plot was converted to a tennis court and flower garden. From the late 1960s onwards, during the restoration of the castle, the area was a construction site of the National Superintendence of Monuments.⁴³

Excavations

The preventive excavation preceding the construction of the Open Storage Exhibition and Visitors' Centre was carried out in August 2019, as a joint venture by the HNM Archaeological Heritage Protection Directorate and the HNM Rákóczi Museum. Some edifices were still standing when the excavation began, so fieldwork was conducted in two stages (Fig. 3). During stage one, the empty southern half of the area was excavated. Stage two took place after the old storage facilities occupying the rest of the excavation site were cleared away. During fieldwork, a total of 44 trenches were opened on a 1300 m² large surface.

The excavation focused on the historical core of Sárospatak, called “Inner city” during the Middle Ages and

32 TÖRÖK 2000, 141; E.g. Planum Regio Cameralis Oppidi Saros Patak ad I: *Dominium eius, dem Nominis Spectantis Exhibens Geometrican pelitianonen totius Intravillani*, 1776. Rakoczi Museum of the HNM in Sarospatak.

33 J. DANKÓ 1998, 466–470.

34 J. DANKÓ 1998, 466–470.

35 TÖRÖK 2000, 141.

36 TÖRÖK 2000, 141; E. g. Mappa Regii Camera: *Oppidi Saros Nagy et Kis Patak ad Inclitum: Camerale Dominium Saros Patakiense Spectantis accurate dimensionum a Franz Romisch Caali Geometra*, 1785. Scientific Collections Archives at Sarospatak Reformed College. 1785. Scientific Collections Archives at Sarospatak Reformed College.

37 TÖRÖK 2000, 141–142. Unfortunately, the manuscript is lost and had not been recovered by the time this study was published.

38 TÖRÖK 2000, 141–142.

39 TÖRÖK 2000, 141–142.

40 EKF 2004.

41 MKF 2005; HKF 2007.

42 FILEP 2020, 19–32.

43 TÖRÖK 2000, 141–142; DÉTSZY 2002, 353–355.



Fig. 2. The project site on the cadastral map from 1866

2. kép. A beruházási terület az 1866. évi kataszteri térképen

Early Modern Period, encompassing the area east of Old Market Street, south of the Vízi Kapu (lit. Water-gate) and inside the eastern city wall. Because of the central setting of the site, the first two trial trenches opened during stage one revealed more archaeological

layers, than expected.⁴⁴ The entire excavation yielded more than 2000 archaeological features and over 500 M30 crates of finds. This vast material is still being processed, thus only preliminary results shall be presented here.

44 HEGYI-NÁDAI 2018.

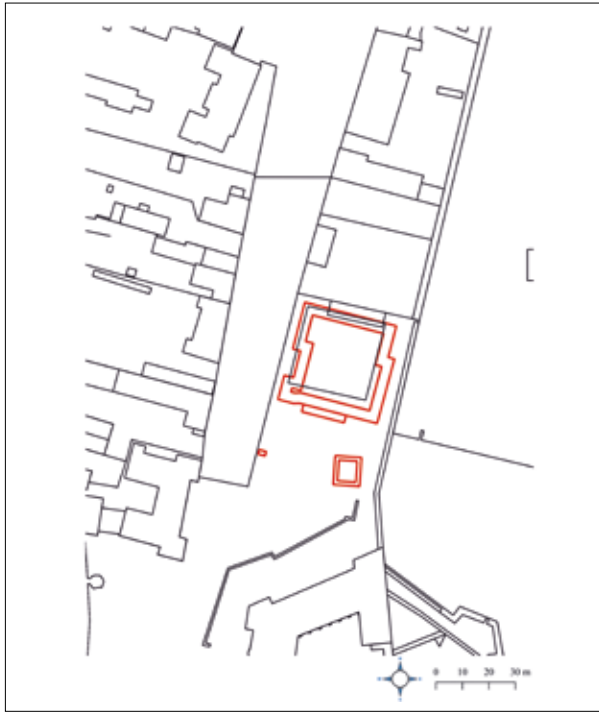


Fig. 3. Borders of the large-scale excavation area
3. kép. A nagy felületű feltárási terület határai

After shearing away the topsoil and modern layers, 18th century features were discovered at 30–50 cm depth. We discovered nine dwellings built by different methods, throughout various epochs. Five dwellings were uncovered during stage one of the excavation, and further four dwellings during stage two, alongside numerous pits, postholes, garbage pits and other archaeological features. An aboveground dwelling from the 18th century (SNR 306) was discovered first, as some of its walls were already detected in trial trenches. It was located in the southern half of the area excavated in stage one. The N–S oriented shorter wall of the house was facing the street, its longer side was 17+ metres long and it was oriented W–E. It is likely identical to the edifice observed on the 1776 map. Only sections of its walls survived, the rest were quarried for material



Fig. 4. A 17th century cellar
4. kép. 17. századi pince



Fig. 5. Detail of a Late Medieval dwelling
5. kép. Késő középkori ház részlete

in later eras. Its walls were ca. 70 cm thick, comprised of rhyolite quarry stones set in clay. The dwelling likely consisted of three rooms. Traces of a mortar floor were documented.

A cellar from the 17th or 18th century (SNR 300) was found north of the previous dwelling (SNR 306). Both structures were oriented similarly, the shorter side of the cellar was facing the street. It was partially excavated, a 9 m long and 5 m wide section was uncovered; its full extent is unknown. Its walls were 70 cm thick and survived up to 2.5 m height. A vaulted chamber occupied the western part of the building, framed by partition walls.

A 17th century stone house (SNR 1339) was discovered north of the previous dwelling (SNR 306) (Fig. 4). The two houses ran parallel to each other, and were built alike. The walls of the stone house (SNR 1339) stood 2.5 m high. Its N–S wall was approximately 6 m long, with two wall sections joined to its northern and southern ends perpendicularly. These latter wall sections were each 8 m long. This building was also only partially excavated. The walls of its cellar were built of rhyolite quarry stones set in clay. It had a window on

its eastern wall. The floors in both SNR 300 and SNR 1339 were hard packed clay.

Traces of a composite 16th century cellar were uncovered in the northeastern end of the area excavated, inside the eastern city wall. The cellar was quadratic, its entrance faced south. The jambs of its door comprised of rhyolite quarry stones set in clay. Postholes were documented inside the cellar, indicating an interior wooden structure. The southern part of the cellar was outfitted with a window, similarly to SNR 1339.

Multiple semi-sunken wattle-and-daub and wooden houses from the 15th–16th century were discovered in the southern and western parts of the area excavated. Three parallel longhouses, built 1–2 m apart were identified in the southern part of the site (SNR 200; SNR 1061; SNR 984). The border of the site transected all three dwellings, thus their full dimensions are unknown. The southwesternmost building (SNR 984) was 7 m long and 1.2 m wide. Its floor was observed at 72 cm relative depth. 40–50 cm thick layers of hard packed clay constituted its floor and walls. An orderly row of andesite rocks was laid along the bases of the walls for additional support. Numerous burnt daub pieces were

recovered from a rubble layer in the fill of the dwelling, with charred pieces of timber and burn marks beneath it. The easternmost dwelling (SNR 200) was 4.2 m long and 1.7 wide. This dwelling was sunken 56 cm into the ground. Similarly to the previous house, its floor and walls were composed of 40–50 cm thick layers of hard packed clay, and a rubble layer of burnt daub was documented within the edifice. Charred beams and planks were unearthed beneath the rubble layer (Fig. 5). The middle dwelling (SNR 1061) was 7.2 m long and 2.1 m wide. It was sunken 68 cm into the ground. Several intact wooden planks and fragments of timber beams were recovered from its fill. Two further wooden houses dated to the 14th century were discovered in the western part of the area excavated, near previously discussed dwellings (SNR 266; SNR 1535), with their shorter sides facing the street. The houses were intersected by both subsequent stone buildings, and the borders of the excavation. They were more than 10 m long and 6 m wide. Traces of fire were observed in one of the buildings. The traces of a partitioned wattle-and-daub dwelling from the Árpád Age (SNR 1524) were ob-



Fig. 6. Copper Age burial site with skeleton in crouched position

6. kép. Rézkori zsugorított csontvázas sír

served towards the centre of the area excavated. It was transected by one of the 14th century dwellings.

Apart from buildings, more than 400 pits, postholes and various other archaeological features were documented. Their detailed analysis exceeds the scope of the present study, thus the following brief conclusions shall be put forth. Most of these features are Late Medieval or Early Modern, considerably less are Early Medieval and there are scarcely any features predating the Middle Ages, with the exception of a few prehistoric ones. No features were recovered from the Migration Period and the Hungarian Conquest Period. The discovery of 21 Copper Age burial sites came as a surprise, as this marks the first archaeological evidence of human settlement in the area from this period (Fig. 6). Preliminary analyses revealed that the poorly preserved graves belonged to the Hunyadi-halom variant of the Baden culture.

Finds

Several tens of thousands of finds were recovered from the excavation, which are still being processed. The present study will provide a preliminary overview of the current state of research. Unsurprisingly, most finds are pottery sherds, ranging from prehistory until the Early Modern Age. The most sherds came from Early Modern pots, pitchers, jugs and other types of contemporary vessels. Most common shapes include storage pots, cups, pitchers with globular bodies, pitchers with handles jutting from a collar, various bowls, pots,



Fig. 7. Small pot from the 14th–15th century

7. kép. 14–15. századi kis méretű fazék

and cooking vessels. Glazing was the prevalent surface treatment method, most pieces were glazed with lead, tin, or a composite glaze of alternating yellow and green polygons, and slipped vessels were also common (Fig. 7). Early composite glazeware, Hutterite–Haban pottery and slipped pieces were also recovered. There are numerous vessels with reduced fabrics, although not as many as lead or tin glazed pieces. Most of the Early Modern vessels can be dated to the 17th–18th centuries, and less to the 16th century. Numerous Late Medieval and Árpád Age sherds were collected, mostly

cooking ware and storage vessels. White pottery pieces from the 12th–13th century were also recovered, alongside sherds from bowls, pots and pitchers of the Hunyadi-halom variant of the Baden culture. Plenty of stove tiles and dish-shaped stove inserts were collected, most of them Hutterite–Haban wares and Baroque pieces from the 17th–18th century. Glazed and unglazed Hutterite–Haban stove tiles with various patterns, and stove tile fragments similar to those discovered at Csalogány Street were recovered, alongside tiles from the workshop of Mihály Miskolci. Numerous Late Medieval, unglazed dish-shaped stove inserts were recovered (Fig. 8).

Animal bones constitute the second most numerous find group, recovered mostly from contemporary domestic garbage pits. Preliminary analysis reveals that porcine, bovine, ovine, and caprine bones were most prevalent. In several instances, the complete skeletons of horses and dogs were found in anatomical order.



Fig. 8. Stove tile stamped with the name “Maria” (photo by Eszter Duong Li)

8. kép. Mária-feliratos kályhacsempe (fotó: Duong Li Eszter)



Fig. 9. Golden signet-ring set with agate stone (photo by Eszter Duong Li)

9. kép. Kőberakásos arany pecsétgyűrű (fotó: Duong Li Eszter)



Fig. 10. XV kreuzer of Leopold I, Holy Roman Emperor (photo by Eszter Duong Li)

10. kép. I. Lipót korabeli XV krajcár (fotó: Duong Li Eszter)



Fig. 11. Early Modern lead seal (photo by Eszter Duong Li)

11. kép. Kora újkori ólomplomba (fotó: Duong Li Eszter)



Fig. 12. Staircase to cellar SNR 58 (photo by Borbála Hegyi)
12. kép. Az SNR 58-as számú pince lejárata (fotó: Hegyi Borbála)

Several bone objects were also recovered, including carved knife handles, belt end fittings, combs, crochet needles and pipes.

Various metal finds were collected, mostly iron objects, domestic and agricultural instruments, less bronze and silver artifacts, and a single golden signet ring set with an agate stone engraved with a crest (Fig. 9). Numerous coins from the 17th–18th century were recovered (Fig. 10). The earliest mint was a copper coin of Béla III of Hungary. Textile seals, spurs, utensils, knives, daggers, cannonballs, and musket balls were also found (Fig. 11). A goldsmith's anvil from the 18th century was uncovered in Trench No. A5. Bronze plates, wrought iron nails and a fragment of a 17th century book fitting were also recovered.

Fragments from glass vessels and 18th century glass window shards were also recorded, alongside base and sidewall shards from square wine bottles, including some painted ones. A biconical bottle, and base and rim fragments from cups were also recovered. Base shards

from cups adorned with circular impressions and glass fiber appliqués from the 14th–16th century were also discovered. A sherd from an 18th century goblet was unearthed, alongside a bottle with circular impressions on its side from the 16th–18th century.

It is worth noting, that excavations resumed at the site in 2022 within the framework of the National Palace and Castle Programme. A preliminary archaeological excavation was conducted on the 7 × 8 m large area of a fire safety water tank. At 32 cm relative depth, the walls and floors of a partitioned 17th–18th century dwelling came to light, a previously unexamined part of the house excavated by Zsuzsa Lovag (SNR 1–2). The walls of a later dwelling were identified in the SW corner of the trench, alongside a hatchway with stairs made from reused stone window frame (SNR 58) (Fig. 12). We hope that in the following years, the results of recent excavations shall provide valuable new information on the history of Sárospatak and a better understanding of life in the castle and the city.

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Régészet a város alatt

Rövid beszámoló a 2019–2021-es sárospataki ásatásokról

A Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum Rákóczi Múzeuma 2015-től kezdődően jelentős forrásokhoz jutott, hogy létrehozzon egy új látogatóközpontot és látványraktárt. Az új épület közvetlenül a Rákóczi-vár közvetlen szomszédságában került kialakításra, mintegy 1300 m²-es területen. Ennek kapcsán 2019 augusztusától kezdve több szakaszban a Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum Régészeti Örökségvédelmi Igazgatóság (MNM RÖG, ma MNM NRI) végzett megelőző feltárásokat, amely három egymás melletti, de valójában egy települési környezethez kapcsolódó lelőhelyet érintett: Sárospatak-Víztároló (ID 36054), Sárospatak-Várnegyed (ID 64402) és Sárospatak, Keleti városkapu előterének, a Vízi kaputól az ÉNY-i sarokbástyaig terjedő szakasza (ID 41005). Tekintettel arra, hogy a feltárás teljes körű feldolgozása még várat magára, itt most az ásatás előzetes eredményeit ismertetjük. A feltárások során több mint 44 szelvény nyitottunk meg, és több mint 2000 jelenséget, valamint ezekhez kapcsolható több ezer tételnyi leletet tudtunk feltárni. A számos beásás, gödör, kút vagy szeméttároló gödrök, vermek mellett több különböző szerkezetű és periódusú épületet is megfigyeltünk. A feltárás során túlnyomó többségben kerámialeletek kerültek elő, melyek a kora újkortól egészen az őskorig igen változatosnak voltak mondhatóak. A különböző kerámiák mellett a másik igen nagy leletegyüttest a különböző állatcsontok jelentették. Emellett számos fémtárgy is napvilágra került. Mindent összevetve annyi bizonyos, hogy a feltárás Sárospatak településtörténetéhez nagyon jelentős adatokat szolgáltathat majd a jövőben.