***La nécropole celtique à Sajópetri – Homoki-szőlőskert,* sous la direction de Miklós Szabó, assisté de Zoltán Czajlik et Károly Tankó, avec la participation de Éva Bózsing, Dóra Erős, Katalin Gherdán, László Gucsi, Jean-Paul Guillaumet, Jenny Kaurin, Stéphan Marion, Patrice Méniel, Rita Mohai, Ferencz Molnár, György Szakmány et Lőrincz Timár. Paris, L'Harmattan 2018, 438 p. (335 Figs. in text) + 61 Pls. + 4 general plans. ISBN 978–2–343–16991-0.**

Following the publication of the monograph of the La Tène settlement at *Sajópetri – Hosszú-dűlő* in 2007[1], the other monograph dealing with the cemetery has raised considerable interest. One reason is that in very few cases from the Carpathian Basin the archaeological investigations had targeted both the settlement and its corresponding cemetery[2]. The burial ground from Sajópetri is located at around 1 km south of the settlement, so they are most likely connected. This is also confirmed by the similar chronology of both sites.

The monograph is divided into two main parts. The first part, authored by M. Szabó and K. Tankó, consists of the archaeological analysis of the cemetery (*La nécropole celtique à Sajópetri – Homoki-szőlőskert*, p. 9–222), while the second part includes the interdisciplinary investigations, being coordinated by Z. Czajlik (*Études sur le nécropole celtique à Sajópetri – Homoki-szőlőskert*, p. 223–407).

The first part of the monograph has a number of chapters and sub-chapters.

The first chapter presents the history of research (p. 11–19). The cemetery was discovered during the systematic surveys conducted in 2002–2003 in the surroundings of the settlement at *Sajópetri – Hosszú-dűlő.* Systematic archaeological excavations were carried out in 2004–2006, leading to the discovery of a total number of 90 inhumation and cremation graves.

The second chapter (p. 21–134) contains the catalogue of the finds. All graves are systematically described, together with their inventories, and the catalogue is accompanied by a rich illustration consisting of drawings and colour photos. Aside from the funerary discoveries, the catalogue also includes a number of structures unearthed in the area occupied by the cemetery, some more likely dated to the La Tène period, but it is not clear whether they have any connections with the cemetery.

The following chapter discusses the funerary rites (p. 135–140). Among the 90 graves, 58 are cremations and 32 are inhumations. Two of these graves are double, while in two other cases an inhumation burial superposes a cremated one. This practice is rarely encountered in La Tène cemeteries from the eastern Carpathian Basin.

Some graves stand out due to their funerary rite. For example, the deceased from grave no. 78/152 was laid in a crouched position, pointing to the perpetuation of some practices belonging to the indigenous population, dating from the period predating the Celtic colonization. Another unusual practice was documented in grave no. 45/112. In this case, the deceased (a 30–45 years old woman with a "robust" skull, according to the anthropological analysis) was apparently decapitated and eviscerated, with the skull, ribcage and spine piled up near the right arm. The question is whether the violent treatment of the body is indicating that the deceased

[1] SZABÓ 2007. See also the review in RUSTOIU 2009.

[2] Among the few exceptions are settlement and cemetery from Ciumești, Satu Mare County, in north-western Romania: ZIRRA 1967, and ZIRRA 1980.

was an outcast living at the social "periphery" of the community, for example a witch[3]. As a matter of fact, there are also other archaeological traces of some magical practices in the cemetery at Sajópetri – Homoki-szőlőskert, which are not discussed by the authors. Among them is the presence of some prehistoric stone tools in graves nos. 72 and 82[4] or of a sapropelite bracelet placed in a cremation grave after the process of cremation (grave no. 6)[5].

Another magical ritual is suggested by the presence of a brooch on the abdominal area of the skeleton from grave no. 60. For example, in a female grave from the cemetery at Magyarszerdahely the belt was fastened with a brooch[6]. Still, in the aforementioned grave from Sajópetri the brooch was found with the pin unfastened. This particularity could suggest a magical ritual related to the belief in the ability of the brooches to close/open, which was also noted by W. Krämer in a study of the brooches depicted on ceramic vessels[7]. In these images, mainly made on fragments of vessels (though there are some exceptions), the brooches are always shown with the pin unfastened. Moreover, a relevant example is also encountered at Sajópetri, where the images of some middle La Tène brooches with knobs were incised on a beaker from grave no. 82 (Pl. 53/1), each with the pin unfastened[8].

The following chapters include the analysis of the funerary inventories: jewellery and costume accessories (p. 141–168); weaponry (p. 169–182); iron tools (p. 183–190); chariot fittings (p. 191–196); pottery (p. 197–210). Some of these artefacts are analysed in detail, so the respective chapters or sub-chapters are true specialized studies focusing on particular categories of finds. On the other hand, some of the aspects discussed by the two authors raise some interpretative issues, which are discussed below.

For example, two glass beads with a double human mask were discovered at Sajópetri in graves nos. 81 and 87. The authors mention that such beads were produced in workshops from the Greek colonies on the Black Sea coast, and they reached the Thracian environment in the Balkans already in the 4th century BC and then the Celtic one in the eastern Carpathian Basin during the 3rd century BC (p. 163–164). Therefore, they are asking "comment distinguer les fabrications pontiques et leurs imitations?" (p. 164). The answer is actually provided by the chronology of the contexts of discovery of the finds from the Carpathian Basin. A few years ago it has been noted that the earliest beads of this kind arrived in the region in question at the end of the 4th century – beginning of the 3rd century BC (see, for example, the finds from Pișcolt and Mukačevo – Gallis-Lovačka), just like in the northern Balkans. Then, when the Pontic workshops ceased to produce such beads (at the beginning of the 3rd century BC), they continued to be used during the La Tène C period in the eastern Celtic environment. This is suggesting a local production of the beads with human mask, imitating (copying) the earlier ones using a technique which was fairly simple[9]. The analysis of the chemical composition of the beads coming from earlier and later dated contexts could, of course, offer more information regarding the production characteristics of the local workshops. It is also worth noting that these local copies were produced during the flourishing period of the workshops from the middle Danube region which produced cobalt blue glass bracelets. In this context, the comparative chemical analysis of some relevant samples of glass bracelets would also help the interpretation.

In the chapter discussing the weaponry, M. Szabó observes that at Sajópetri the percentage of graves containing weapons is 13% of the total. This makes him to conclude that the

[3] See, for example, WALKER 1998.

[4] About similar practices, see RUSTOIU 2019, 51–53.

[5] For the magical use of bracelets in funerary contexts, see RUSTOIU 2019, 211–236.

[6] HORVÁTH 1979, 15–16, Pl. 11–12.

[7] KRÄMER 1996.

[8] For the use of brooches in magical practices, see RUSTOIU 2019, 45–47.

[9] RUSTOIU 2008, 57–62, Table 7; RUSTOIU 2011, 96–98, Fig. 5.

number is below the average percentage of similar graves from cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin, which is 15–25% (p. 169). The statistical analysis of the graves with weapons from a series of cemeteries in the eastern Carpathian Basin has shown that the cemeteries in which the percentage of such graves reaches 9–15% characterized some rural communities, for example those from Ciumești, Pișcolt, Apahida or Fântânele-Dâmbu Popii, whereas other communities, like those from Remetea Mare or Belgrade-Karaburma had another kind of social dynamic. The same analysis has also shown that these percentages can fluctuate from one phase to another in the same cemetery[10]. This proportional variation across time could reveal the internal social dynamics of the local elites, so this kind of statistical analysis would have also been useful in the case of the cemetery from Sajópetri.

Regarding the massive iron knives known as *Hiebmesser* in the specialist German-language literature, M. Szabó considers that they were used to cut meat, based on the available bibliography[11] and the contexts of discovery from Sajópetri (in some graves they were associated with the meat offering). However, in one case the knife was associated with the cremated human bones, while in another the knife was stuck vertically in the fill of the pit. Consequently, he considers that such knives were also used for close combat (p. 169). Even if in theory some kitchen tools could have been used in violent actions, it is more than clear that they were not intended to be used in this way, so this interpretation is erroneous. Both older studies (which are cited by the author) and more recent ones[12] are demonstrating convincingly that the knives in question were primarily used to cut meat. Their presence in graves should be interpreted from the perspective of their role as a symbolic marker of the social identity of the deceased. They are more likely signalling the involvement of the deceased in cutting and distributing meat in a convivial context.

Likewise, the presence of curved knives associated with the meat offering in the cemetery at Sajópetri, and in many other cemeteries from eastern Hungary and Transylvania, indicates a different style of consumption which most likely originates from the culinary and convivial practices of the indigenous populations predating the Celtic colonization. At the same time, the presence of both styles of butchering meat points to the cultural hybridization stemming from the cohabitation of the locals and the newcomers[13].

Lastly, it has to be noted that the female chain belts made of iron have been included in the chapter dealing with the weaponry (p. 180–181). They should have been included in the chapter discussing the costume accessories. Although these belts resemble the sword chains, their presence among the female costume accessories is common in the Carpathian Basin[14].

The subject of the tools and utensils identified in the funerary inventories from Sajópetri is discussed in the following chapter. This includes kitchen knives (the razors were also included in this category), curved knives, scissors and sickles. The analysis of their presence in cemeteries from the Carpathian Basin, including the one at Sajópetri, from the perspective of their symbolic role in marking certain individual and collective identities has recently been carried out in a doctoral dissertation[15]. It will hopefully be published soon, in order to clarify a number of issues regarding the presence of tools and utensils in Late Iron Age funerary contexts.

Among the utensils discovered in graves from the Sajópetri cemetery, one has a particular shape which could suggest its use as a medical instrument. Starting from this interpretation, the authors consider that there are sufficient arguments to identify the deceased as a druid,

[10] RUSTOIU 2006; RUSTOIU/BERECKI 2015.

[11] For example OSTERHAUS 1981; SCHÖNFELDER 2010.

[12] RUSTOIU 2016. See also the study authored by Stéphan Marion, Jenny Kaurin and Jean-Paul Guillaumet in the reviewed book.

[13] See further RUSTOIU 2014; RUSTOIU/BERECKI 2016.

[14] For the various types of female chain belts, see DIZDAR 2009.

[15] GEORGESCU 2020.

which is less convincing. In this context, it would be more helpful to revisit the more solid arguments, based on archaeological evidence, offered by A. Fitzpatrick for some discoveries from the British Isles[16].

It has to be noted that tools used by artisans are missing from the cemetery, despite the fact that the settlement at Sajópetri – Hosszú-dűlő was a regional manufacturing centre. This kind of grave-goods is quite commonly found in the cemetery at Ludas. Their absence again indicates that the manner in which the identity of the artisans was expressed in funerary contexts differed significantly from one community, cultural environment and period to another[17].

The chapter discussing the chariot fittings provides new data regarding the presence of this kind of discoveries in the Carpathian Basin[18]. The chronology of these finds from the region in question indicates that combat chariots were used for a longer period than in Central and Western Europe. The more likely reason could be related to the symbolic role played by these vehicles in the social contexts of the eastern Celtic world. The La Tène chariot recently discovered in a Getic funerary context at Sboryanovo again supports this hypothesis[19].

Lastly, the ceramic finds produced a consistent chapter in which the similarities between the forms recovered from the cemetery and those from the settlement, or from other sites in the same region, are discussed. The sub-chapter presenting the interdisciplinary analyses confirms that the vessels recovered from the graves were produced in workshops from the settlement at *Hosszú-dűlő*.

The last chapter of the first part of the monograph discusses the chronology and structure of the cemetery (p. 211–222). Chronologically, the cemetery evolves from the end of the LT B2a sub-phase / beginning of the LT B2b sub-phase until the LT C1, corresponding to the 3rd century BC. This chronology matches the dating of the nearby settlement. The internal chronology of the cemetery is characterized by two main phases, corresponding to the horizons 5 and 6 from the chronology proposed by R. Gebhardt[20], thus to the LT B2b and LT C1. These two horizons were preceded by (at least) two earlier dated graves, from the turn of the horizon 5 Gebhardt, which contain weapons in their inventories (one also containing chariot fittings). This situation is different from that observed in other La Tène cemeteries in the Carpathian Basin (for example at Mannersdorf in Austria[21] or Fântânele-Dâmbu Popii in Transylvania[22]) where the "founding burials" belonged to some women. Regarding the spatial evolution of the cemetery, the arguments provided by the authors for the delimitation of the three chronological areas (A – C) are unconvincing. Even a cursory examination of the plan of the cemetery in Fig. 173, combined with the general chronology of the graves, suggests the more likely presence of a "founding group" from which two other groups of graves evolved in the southern and south-western area of the cemetery, while another group appeared in the north-eastern area of the cemetery soon after the establishment of the community. Therefore, the cemetery at Sajópetri – Homoki-szőlőskert was used by two or three families for about a century. The DNA analysis of the inhumed skeletons could provide a clearer answer to this problem. This chapter ends with an extended discussion of the Celtic elites and the role of chariots in their identity

[16] See, for example, FITZPATRICK 2007.

[17] RUSTOIU/BERECKI 2019; RUSTOIU/FERENCZ 2020.

[18] Among the more recent studies on this subject, see FERENCZ 1997; BERECKI 2018; RUSTOIU 2019, 188–204. The distribution map on p. 192, Fig. 154, is incomplete. The authors chose to use the Hungarian names for the Romanian localities and not the official ones, so a reader from a third country would localize the discoveries with difficulty, not to mention the possible confusions.

[19] ANASTASSOV/GERGOVA 2017; GERGOVA/ANASTASSOV 2017.

[20] GEBHARD 1989.

[21] RAMSL 2002.

[22] RUSTOIU 2015.

constructs, M. Szabó reiterating a series of ideas from a previously published study on this subject[23]. Once more, it has to be said that the presence of some chariot fittings in graves could be related to some magical rituals, one relevant example being provided by the crescent-shaped linchpin discovered in a grave from the cemetery at Fântânele-Dâmbu Popii[24].

The second part of the monograph, coordinated by Z. Czajlik, consists of a series of interdisciplinary studies that are very useful for understanding some essential characteristics of the cemetery in question. Z. Czajlik provides an analysis of the topography and geomorphology of the area of the cemetery (p. 225–231); Z. Czajlik and Rita Mohai carried out the petrographic analysis of the whetstones recovered from the cemetery[25] (p. 233–246); É. Bózsing performed the anthropological analysis of the human remains (p. 247–272); P. Méniel performed the archaeozoological analysis of the animal remains (p. 273–319); S. Marion, J. Kaurin and Jean-Paul Guillaumet produced the statistical analysis of the grave-goods and of the manner in which they were associated in graves (p. 321–347); K. Gherdán, G. Szakmány, K. Tankó and Z. Czajlik carried out the comparative petrographic analysis of the pottery from the cemetery and the settlement, the main conclusion being that the vessels in question were produced in the same workshops (p. 349–371); K. Tankó and L. Gucsi produced a technological analysis of the manufacturing defects and use-wear traces of the ceramic from the cemetery (p. 373–379); and D. Erős and L. Timár carried out a metallographic analysis of the bronze anklets with hollow knobs.

The monograph is accompanied by a consistent bibliographic chapter (p. 409–438), followed by 61 plates containing illustrations of the funerary inventories and four large folded plates containing the general thematic plans of the cemetery. One has to also commend the outstanding quality of the graphic design of the book.

Still, a number of editing errors have been identified while reading the text. For example, the title of the chapter coordinated by Z. Czajlik listed on the Contents page is different from the one on p. 223, where it begins (on Contents page it begins on p. 225); on p. 75, Fig. 53 illustrates grave no. 45/112, while on the following page, Fig. 54 illustrates grave no. 45/113 (the correct one is no. 46/113); on p. 176, M. Szabó commends the contribution of M. Schönfelder to the study of spear butts from the Celtic environments, which originated from the Greek sauroters, though without citing the article[26] (there are other bibliographic omissions in some chapters); etc. Nevertheless, they are not diminishing the scientific value of the book.

It can be therefore concluded that the monograph of the cemetery at Sajópetri – Homoki-szőlőskert represents a very useful contribution to the understanding of the funerary practices from the eastern Carpathian Basin during the Late Iron Age. Its scientific importance is increased by the possibility of a comparative analysis using the monograph of the nearby settlement which was published more than a decade ago. This monograph, as well as the previously published books about the settlement at Sajópetri and the cemetery at Ludas, would allow a more detailed analysis of the characteristics of the La Tène civilization in the eastern Carpathian Basin. They are providing sufficient archaeological data for a subsequent study of the Late Iron Age communities from the region in question from the perspective of cultural anthropology.

Aurel Rustoiu

[23] SZABÓ 2014.

[24] RUSTOIU 2019, 188–204.

[25] The authors argue convincingly that the tools in question, which were usually discovered in graves together with various types of blades, were used as whetstones and not as touchstones.

[26] SCHÖNFELDER 2007.

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