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A NEW CARRIAGE GRAVE AND HORSE BURIAL FROM BELVÁRDGYULA (BARANYA COUNTY)[1]

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This study discusses the discovery and excavation of a particularly fascinating Roman Period burial representing a rare mortuary rite alongside its preliminary assessment. The burial was discovered by a local archaeology enthusiast on the outskirts of Belvárdgyula: the following excavation in autumn 2021 brought to light a grave pit containing a carriage with a horse team and the burial of a harnessed saddle horse. The carriage is noteworthy not only for its Bacchic bronze sculptural ornamentation and its structural elements but also because of the burial mode involving the partial deposition of carriage components and the yoke, enabling the reconstruction of the horse team. The horse burial provided yet another example of a Pannonian saddle horse interred with an openwork bronze harness fitting set. Both graves yielded a surprisingly high amount of organic remains (wood, leather, and textile) that have enriched our knowledge of the period's horse harnesses and team-drawn carriages. The burials uncovered at Belvárdgyula have added new details to our overall picture of the local native population of eastern Transdanubia, particularly regarding carriage graves, a distinctive burial type that differs markedly from the funerary rites of Roman-type interments.

Keywords: Baranya County, Belvárdgyula, Roman Period, saddle horse, horse burial, carriage grave, otherworld, local elite, Bacchus

One spectacular assemblage type of Roman Period Pannonia is represented by the burials containing the carriages of the local elite of indigenous background, a burial rite that differs markedly from Roman burial customs (Mráv 2009; Mráv 2016). The carriage and the draught horses were deposited in the grave pit as part of the mortuary paraphernalia indispensable for the journey to the otherworld. The local Celtic population believed that the deceased or their soul had to undertake a long journey to reach the otherworld, which they conceived of as lying in a remote region of the world, where the deceased would enjoy eternal happiness and an idyllic golden age provided by Bacchus for his followers. The truly wealthy strove to undertake this long and arduous journey as comfortably as possible, this being the reason for the deposition of their ornate carriages, which were both vehicles used for travel in daily life and symbols of a prominent social status. Carriage graves are rare in eastern Pannonia: some forty graves of this type have been found since the nineteenth century, although only a part of these burials was professionally excavated and documented with attention to the details of the burial rite. The two most recent carriage graves were discovered in Baranya County in two successive years – at Ellend in 2020 and on the outskirts of Belvárdgyula in 2021 – both lying in southern Transdanubia, a region from where only a single carriage grave was previously known, the one found at Kozármisleny (Kiss 1989). This study aims to report on the discovery and archaeological investigation of the Belvárdgyula grave, which has added a wealth of exciting and colourful new details to our continuously expanding knowledge of Pannonian carriage graves.

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THE DISCOVERY OF THE CARRIAGE GRAVE AND ITS ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

In 2020, Viktor Réger, a volunteer metal detectorist of the Janus Pannonius Museum of Pécs (henceforth abbreviated as JPM), discovered remarkable Roman Period metal finds on the outskirts of Belvárdgyula, some 1 km south of the settlement's centre. The horse teeth, the fragment of the horse bit with a rein ring, an openwork bridle mount, and a mask-ornamented decorative nail suggested that the area concealed a carriage and horse burial of the Roman Period.[4] Before starting with the actual excavation, a metal detector survey was conducted over the area, in the course of which a few iron carriage elements, another mask-ornamented decorative nail, many tegula fragments, and several Roman coins were found. Based on the scatter of the finds, we conducted an intense metal detector survey over a 20 by 40 m area; the anomalies showed a concentration over a 5 by 4 m area, where the deep search metal detector indicated the presence of large metal artefacts. We stripped away the soil of the upper plough zone layer by layer with a backhoe loader until a scatter of horse teeth appeared at a depth of 20 cm, after which we proceeded to excavate the area by hand until reaching the yellow loess subsoil, where a large light brown soil mark was clearly outlined. As the soil mark of the pit extended beyond the excavated area, we stripped away the upper humus level by machine until the entire soil mark of the roughly rectangular feature became visible (Feature 1, carriage grave). Simultaneously, we also removed the upper humus layer by machine in an area south of Feature 1, where the metal detector also indicated intense anomalies, and uncovered the soil mark of a smaller rectangular pit (Feature 2, horse burial) (*Fig. 1*). After a protective roof, a metal frame tent was erected over the assumed carriage grave, we began its excavation. The fill was removed by 5–10 cm layers, all of which were meticulously documented.

Fig. 1. Belvárdgyula. The soil mark of the carriage grave and the horse burial after the removal of the humus (photo by Zsombor Győrffy-Villám)

The two grave pits were dug into the upper, more gently sloping southern hill slope. Similarly to the Budaörs and Budakeszi carriage graves, we found no archaeological traces of a possible mound erected over the Belvárdgyula carriage grave and horse burial.

THE HORSE BURIAL

In addition to draught horses, the carriage graves of the local native elite often also contained saddle horses that were either interred in the grave pit of the carriage or were deposited in a separate grave pit near it. The Belvárdgyula horse burial represents the latter type. It must also be highlighted that not all horse burials can be assumed to have accompanied carriage graves. The custom of interring deceased or sacrificed

[4] The volunteer metal detectorist surveyed the location where the finds had been discovered and the adjacent areas under the direction of Gergely Kovaliczky, archaeologist of the JPM. As part of this survey, they georeferenced the findspot of the snaffle bit and the horse teeth with a hand-held GPS. In the case of the carriage components that were found immediately before the start of excavation, we can already rely on the coordinates measured by GNSS.

Fig. 2. Belvárdgyula. Orthophoto of the excavated horse burial (photo by Zsombor Győrffy-Villám)

Fig. 3. Belvárdgyula, horse burial. Openwork strap distributor disc from the left side of the saddle horse's chest (photo by Zsombor Győrffy-Villám).

saddle horses was much more widespread both geographically and socially than the aristocratic and costly rite of depositing carriages in graves.[5] Horse burials have been found across the smaller regions of all the Pannonian provinces; however, only a portion of these burials can be linked with the local elites. The other part of these horse burials, particularly the ones containing weapons used in the Roman army and those uncovered in the cemetery of a military fort, can be associated with active or discharged mounted soldiers. Obviously, there is some overlap between these two burial types, represented by the weapon burials of the Káloz carriage grave horizon.[6]

The grave pit of the Belvárdgyula horse burial was dug some 5 m south of the carriage grave. The roughly 193 cm by 75–100 cm large, east-to-west oriented grave pit was trapezoidal with rounded corners. One of the plough furrows disturbing the horse's burial had reached as deep as the animal's skull. One-half of a two-link horse bit with rein rings was discovered in this area in 2020. Buried in the grave pit was a saddle horse with its lavishly adorned harness (*Fig. 2*). The position of the horse's skeleton, especially the limbs, suggested that the animal's cadaver had been somehow shoved and squeezed into the pit.[7] Most of the harness ornaments remained in their original position on the skeleton, although the left cheek and the mounts of the bridle on that side had been strongly disturbed. The following tinned bronze mounts had adorned the bridle: domed box-shaped strap slides and strap distributors, two looped strap-ends, a trilobed-headed bronze button, and a rectangular button. The most spectacular harness fittings are undoubtedly the four bronze strap distributor discs, two of which were found by the haunches and two on either side of the breast. Their openwork decoration is made up of three S-shaped trumpet motifs set within a pair of concentric circles (*Fig. 3*). Although the openwork design has no exact analogy, several strap distributor discs decorated with a similar openwork pattern composed of three trumpet motifs have been published from Pannonian provinces (e.g., L. Sellye 1940, 237–240, XXX–XXXIII. táblák). A pair of trilobed-headed bronze buttons lay beside each disc, suggesting that two straps had passed through the discs. One particularly important observation was that yarn or a bundle of yarns had been threaded through the buttons, thereby enhancing the ornamentation of the harness straps. The decorative fittings of the Belvárdgyula horse burial enrich the corpus of openwork horse fittings of Pannonia: comparable sets – both complete and incomplete – have

[5] For an overview of Pannonian horse burials, cf. Palágyi–Nagy 2002, 70; Vörös 2010, 232–233; Márton 2019, 207–208. For more recent yet unpublished horse burials, see Mráv in preparation.

[6] Káloz; Várpalota-Inota, Tumulus 2; Budaörs, Grave 126: Mráv 2006, 53–64.

[7] We are grateful to archaeozoologist Annamária Bárány (National Archaeological Institute, Hungarian National Museum), who has undertaken the archaeozoological assessment of the horse skeletons recovered from the burials.

been mostly recovered from the horse burials of the Antonine Period.[8] Unlike some richly furnished horse burials, the Belvárdgyula burial did not contain any other grave goods.

THE CARRIAGE GRAVE

The carriage and the two draught horses (Horses 1 and 2) were deposited in a large, relatively deep and roughly trapezoidal grave pit (*Fig. 4*). The seat was removed from the wagon box and deposited first, after which the bodies of the two horses were dragged into the pit and arranged: Horse 1, yoked, was placed in the centre, while Horse 2, unyoked, was positioned in the grave pit's south-western quarter. Next, the front axle was aligned to the end of the draught pole and deposited upside down in the pit's northern end, while the rear axle and the rear bolster – probably together with the floor plate of the carriage box – were tipped into the pit's southern end, into the empty area in front of the seat. The construction made up of the rear axle, the rear bolster, and the carriage box was squeezed into a diagonal position owing to the smallness of the available space. The functional, structural elements, such as the front and the rear axle and the seat, were deposited independently of each other and with some distance between them. Additionally, many components of the carriage were not placed in the grave, suggesting that the carriage had been dismantled into its structural elements and buried with many parts missing and without particular attention to the careful arrangement of the carriage parts or the efficient use of the available space.

Fig. 4. Belvárdgyula. The excavated grave pit of the carriage grave with the horse team and the component of the four-wheeled carriage (orthophoto by Zsombor Győrffy-Villám)

The draught horses

The body of Horse 1 was dragged to roughly the centre of the grave pit and was laid on its belly, tilted onto its left side. Its head tipped onto the backrest of the seat and rested on the chin. The horse was deposited together with the yoke attached to the pole. The horse was yoked, as indicated by the U-shaped iron element of the yoke attached to the wooden pads by iron hooks found under the cervical vertebrae and the yoke collar that slipped over the top of the head in front of the forehead. A jointed iron bit with a pair of rein rings lay in its mouth.

Horse 2 lay in the south-western quarter of the grave pit, tilted onto its right side, with the withers against the pit's wall (*Fig. 5*). Owing to its high-held head and the erosion affecting the hill slope, its skull extended

[8] Openwork harness fitting sets have been brought to light from the following horse burials: Brigetio-Gerhát cemetery, horse burials 1 and 2 (Barkóczi 1946–1948, 169–176, Pls XXIX–XXXIII, cf. also Palágyi 1989, 130–131); Győr-Újlak utca STR-100 (Róbert Herbály's excavation, 2016, unpublished); Mözs-Kakasdomb (Gaál 1979, 34–36, 61–71); Nagykanizsa-Roman cemetery I, Grave 42 (Eke & Horváth 2010, 166–168); Seregélyes-Pálinkaház (Fitz 1959, 205; Fitz 1961–1962, 101; Bánki 1972, 80–81, Cat. no. 60); Tihany (Palágyi 1990); Velence (Marosi 1937, 26; L. Sellye 1940, 237–238, Pl. XXX). Aside from these horse burials, harness sets containing openwork strap distributor discs were also found in the carriage graves uncovered at Szomor-Somodorpuszta (Hampel 1892, 55) and Sárbogárd-Sárszentmiklós (Gaul 1890, 115, Pl. V. 6; Hampel 1892, 57; L. Sellye 1940, 238) and in an unprovenanced harness fitting set from a Transdanubian carriage grave (perhaps from Dunaújváros) whose finds reached the museum in a strongly incomplete condition (Hampel 1892, 61; L. Sellye 1940, 239). Horse burial 2 uncovered at Vajta–Kisvajta-dűlő, possibly also associated with a carriage grave, yielded a harness fitting set containing two openwork mask-decorated strap distributor discs (Fülep 1949, 42, Pl. XXVIII/7; Bánki 1972, 82, Cat. no. 61).

Fig. 5. Belvárdgyula, carriage grave. Body of horse 2 (unyoked) in the grave pit's south-western quarter (photo by Zsolt Mráv)

Fig. 6. Belvárdgyula, carriage grave. Textile remains from the thigh of horse 2 (photo by Kornélia Pápay and István Füzi)

into the upper plough zone and was destroyed. Textile remains were preserved on the harness fittings of the draught horses (*Fig. 6*).

The yoke

One major result of the investigation of the Belvárdgyula carriage grave was the excavation of the yoke (*Fig. 7*), which had quite certainly been attached to the pole when deposited in the grave. The underside and the sides of the wooden yoke collar were covered with lead sheets secured with bronze rivets. The pair of rein terrets represents the simplest type: round rings with a downward widening neck and semi-circular strap loop. The rings of the mounts attached to the yoke tip have an identical shape, the only difference being that their base has a projection. The closely spaced decorative dome-headed rivets accurately outlined the middle section and the two terminals of the yoke, which, on the testimony of these finds, had a pointed middle section while its terminals were recurved.

Fig. 7. Belvárdgyula, carriage grave. Horse 1 (yoked) and the yoke fittings (photo by Réka Neményi)

The carriage

The two axles and the presence of other components of specifically four-wheeled vehicles clearly indicate that a four-wheeled carriage had been deposited in the Belvárdgyula grave. The front axle was laid in the grave pit's northern end, parallel to the pit's northern wall. The two ends of the axle were covered with iron axle caps. Two almond-headed iron nails found with their heads downward were also part of the traction arm construction. These distinctive nails secured the connecting rod perpendicular to the two traction arms, which ensured the distance between the traction arms and that they remained parallel (Mráv 2005, 40).

One remarkable aspect of the Belvárdgyula carriage is that the remains of the decayed pole could be identified as a darker soil mark, which preserved its form and revealed that it had a forked end (Mráv 2005, 28–31) (*Fig. 8*). An oval draught pole band lay at the forking of the pole, whose function was to hold together three wooden elements: the pole itself and the separately made two pole-ends (Mráv 2005, 21–35). The pole had quite certainly been removed because the draught bolts ensuring that the horses' traction power

Fig. 8. Belvárdgyula, carriage grave. The draught pole with a forked end and the draught pole band (photo by Réka Neményi)

Fig. 9. Belvárdgyula, carriage grave. The bronze mount with the lion figure covering the terminals of the Y-perches, shown upside-down as found in the grave (photo by Béla Simon)

was transferred from the pole to the traction arms (Mráv 2005, 37–40) were not deposited in the grave. Of the iron fittings of the rear axle, only the left side clout and two iron plates secured with cotters above the axle arm survived in their original position. The plates were protective devices lacking collars that would have prevented mud whipped up by the wheels from lodging between the wheel hubs and the axle. The rear axle and the rear bolster were shoved into the grave pit upside down, as indicated by the fact that the bronze ornamental mount adorning the left arm of the Y-perch lay with its ornamented side downward (*Fig. 9*). The rimmed bronze mount was secured to the rear left end of the Y-perch with three baluster-shaped rivets. The back side of the rear bolster was the most profusely ornamented part of Roman four-wheeled vehicles (Mráv 2014, 134; Mráv 2016, 506, 518), which also holds for the Belvárdgyula carriage.

Regarding the carriage box, only so much seems certain that it was not suspended but fixed since there was nothing to indicate the use of iron stake braces or iron-clad wooden bolster stakes from whose hooked ends the carriage box would have been suspended. The suspension rings of the carriage box were also missing. The box was constructed from a row of wooden planks held together with perpendicular wooden rods. The bronze ornamental nails with satyr's heads were riveted to the two long sides of the floor plates.

The carriage seat was removed and laid separately on the grave floor. Its form, type, and dimensions could be reconstructed from the five vertical iron bars of the seat's armrests and backrest. Two had been attached to the front of the seat's armrests, two to the rear corners and one to the middle of the back rest (*Fig. 10*). The iron corrosion on the surface of the bars preserved the imprints of wickerwork, an indication that the seat rests had been of the wickerwork type (*Fig. 11*). These imprints provide the first archaeological evidence for the use of wickerwork seats on Roman Period carriages that have hitherto only been known from various depictions.[9]

Fig. 10. Belvárdgyula. The iron bars of the wickerwork seat, found in their original position (photo by Máté Szabó)

As mentioned in the foregoing, only certain structural elements of the carriage had been deposited in the grave pit: the front and rear axle of the undercarriage, the latter together with the bolster, and the floor plate and the seat of the carriage box. Lacking from among the structural components

[9] Zsolt Visy reconstructed the Kozármisleny carriage as having a wickerwork seat constructed around a metal frame (Visy 2013, 111, Fig. 18) and a similar reconstruction was proposed by Zsolt Mráv for the four-wheeled passenger carriage of Graves 1 and 2 of Környe (Mráv 2016, 510, Fig. 13/4).

were the iron supports of the front bolster, the pivoted front axle, and the reach pole,[10] meaning that these had not been placed in the grave. The lack of the massive king bolt and the draught bolt is not surprising because these were generally also missing in the case of graves containing carriages that had been previously disassembled (Mráv 2016, 514). In contrast, it is quite unusual that none of the four wheels had been placed in the grave, even though there was ample space for them.[11] In this respect, the grave uncovered at Belvárdgyula is a single Pannonian carriage grave lacking wheels. This is all the more curious because wheels make a vehicle a functional means of travelling. An animal-drawn carriage is useless without wheels. It remains a matter of speculation whether there was a practical rationale for leaving out the four wheels, namely that wheels were expensive components that could be re-used, and the descendants/heirs, therefore, decided to keep them instead of depositing them in the grave. Alternately, the grave may reflect yet another rather extreme example of the *pars pro toto* practice in Pannonia, without even caring whether the deposited carriage preserved its functionality or at least its most important outward traits. The two rationales could both have been in play simultaneously.

Owing to the lack of certain components, the Roman Period carriage from Belvárdgyula can only be partially reconstructed. Nevertheless, if we are curious about its one-time appearance, we can best conceptualise an elegant light carriage with a wide wheel gauge, which had a fairly small size and a fixed bodywork lacking sideboards with a wickerwork seat accommodating two persons (*Fig. 12*).

Fig. 11. Belvárdgyula, carriage grave. One of the bars of the carriage's seat with the imprint of the wickerwork photo by Zsolt Mráv)

Fig. 12. Intercisa (Dunaújváros). Depiction of a family travelling on a carriage and the saddle horse accompanying them. The carriage drawn by a horse team buried at Belvárdgyula was a similar vehicle (Hungarian National Museum, photo by Ortolf Harl)

The carriage's decorative programme

The Belvárdgyula carriage has furnished additional evidence for one of the typical traits of Pannonian carriages: if the carriage was enhanced with bronze figural decoration, it was invariably drawn from Bacchic mythology. The visual programme of the Belvárdgyula carriage also reflects consistent Bacchic mythology. The decorative nails hammered into the side of the bodywork depicted young satyr masks (*Fig. 13*), while the outer side of the rear bolster was adorned with three discs bearing Bacchic masks in a triangular arrangement (*Fig. 14*). Leather remains were preserved on the reverse of the discs. There appears to have been a predilection for decorative schemes based on three bronze discs in the adornment of the rear side of Roman Period carriages, although these were usually arranged in a row on the seat's back frame (Mráv 2009, 85–86). In contrast, compositions made up of six or even more bronze discs dominated the decoration of the rear bolster: six

[10] The reach pole is a straight pole that connects the fore-carriage with the hind-carriage. This pole transfers traction power from the front axle to the rear axle.

[11] The deposition of the wheels in a separate pit can be excluded because neither the geophysical survey nor the deep search metal detector survey yielded anomalies near the carriage grave supporting this possibility.

Fig. 13. The satyr mask adorning one edge on the bodywork of the Belvárdgyula carriage (Janus Pannonius Museum, Pécs; photo by Márk Helesfai)

Fig. 14. Belvárdgyula, carriage grave. Arrangement of the bronze discs adorning the carriage's rear bolster (photo by Zsolt Mráv)

cast bronze discs were riveted onto the carriage from Grave 162 of the Budaörs cemetery (Mráv 2016, 506), while seven cast discs adorned the Kozármisleny carriage (Kiss 1989, 25, Abb. 34–35). All three discs applied to the rear bolster of the Belvárdgyula carriage bore masks of more elderly satyrs, the sileni, or of Silenus himself (*Fig. 15*). Silenus, the oldest satyr, who was also Bacchus's tutor, is often portrayed as a demonic or ridiculous deity seized by drunkenness or, more rarely, as a wise god knowledgeable about the truths of existence. Although Silenus generally appears as a bald old man in Roman Imperial Period art, his "younger version" with luxuriant hair is occasionally also depicted.[12] A recumbent lion figure with its head held high, holding a bull's head between its front paws, was secured to the rear, outward-curving end of the two outward curving Y-perches (*Fig. 16*). The densely incised lines on the neck imitating a mane are the single indication that the rather clumsily modelled large felid was intended

Fig. 15. Belvárdgyula, carriage grave. Mask of Silenus on a disc that adorned the rear bolster of the Belvárdgyula carriage (Janus Pannonius Museum, Pécs; photo by Márk Helesfai)

Fig. 16. Belvárdgyula, carriage grave. Figurine of a recumbent lion from the carriage's rear terminal of the rear Y-perch (Janus Pannonius Museum, Pécs; photo by Márk Helesfai)

[12] Regarding the Silenus mounts of the Belvárdgyula carriage, it is perhaps not mere chance that similar portrayals of Silenus with luxuriant hair are principally attested on the handles of bronze vessels and the handles of marble *kraters* and basins in the early Imperial Period (Grassinger 1991, 40–42, 324–325). It seems quite possible that the Belvárdgyula Silenus masks had been modelled on a bronze vessel's handle attachment.

to depict a lion. The lion tamed by Bacchus, often partaking in the ceremonial processions (*thiasos*), and the god himself often taking the form of a ferocious lion when facing his enemies (Horn 1972, 107–108) are possible reasons why the lion was included in the carriage's imagery, although it must also be borne in mind that the image of a lion with a bull's head or the head of another creature it had preyed drew from a long tradition in the art of Antiquity and it can also be traced in other cultures.[13]

Fig. 17. Belvárdgyula, Feature 3. Cremation burial with a bronze vessel and iron implements (orthophoto by Zsombor Győrffy-Villám)

The deceased associated with the graves

Regrettably, the carriage grave and horse burial uncovered at Belvárdgyula have not brought us closer to solving the greatest enigma relating to the Pannonian carriage graves, namely the lack of a human burial associated with these graves.[14] No burials were found in the immediate proximity of the Belvárdgyula grave pits that could be clearly associated with the carriage grave. It is possible that this grave or perhaps a family graveyard had lain somewhat farther from the carriage grave – in this case, we might plausibly consider the grave pit uncovered some 20 m from the carriage grave, that, in addition to an antler burr and a pork trotter, also yielded a bronze pan, an iron axe (*ascia*), and an iron knife (*Fig. 17*). However, neither can we exclude the possibility that the deposition of the carriages and the horse was part of a mortuary rite that was not always performed after the death of their owner as part of the funeral ceremony.

THE BROADER AREA AND LOCAL CONTEXT OF THE CARRIAGE GRAVE

Following the rescue excavation, we conducted a magnetometer survey in the carriage grave's broader area.[15] To date, we have surveyed a one-hectare large area north and west of the carriage grave, in the course of which we identified almost thirty archaeological features. While some of these features could perhaps be interpreted as graves, the anomalies were not strong enough to suggest an undisturbed carriage grave containing iron components.

We also know the location of the settlement that can be associated with the burial ground: a Roman Period site – a village or perhaps a villa – lying northeast of the graves.

THE REGIONAL CONTEXT OF THE BELVÁRDGYULA CARRIAGE GRAVE – THE LOCAL ELITE IN SOUTHERN TRANSDANUBIA

Southern Transdanubia has not abounded in lavishly furnished burials or carriage graves of the Roman Imperial Period that can be associated with the local elite. The first carriage grave came to light in 1969 at

[13] The paws of the two lions, often crowning the grave steles of the Middle Danubian provinces, often rest on the heads of various prey animals (Scholz 2012, 315–320. Some of the lion statues recovered from sanctuaries of Mithras hold a bull's head (e.g. the Fertőrákos *mithraeum* and *mithraeums* I and III of Carnuntum in Pannonia), symbolising the triumph of divine power over evil, the latter represented by the bull. In a Mithraic context, the lion was a symbol of the Sun (Mastrocinque 2017, 60–61). The lion and the bull's head appear on four coins minted under Gallienus. The scene perhaps refers to Odaenathus's victory over the Persians (Manders 2012, 297–298).

[14] For a discussion, see Mráv 2016, 520.

[15] We would here like to thank Zsombor Győrffy-Villám and Róbert Lóki, who conducted the survey.

Fig. 18. Kozármisleny. The carriage grave was uncovered in 1969 (photo by Attila Kiss)

Kozármisleny, east of Pécs (Kiss 1989); until recently, this was the single grave of this remarkable funerary rite in Baranya County. Only the grave pit into which the four-wheeled carriage and its horse team were deposited is known from the Kozármisleny burial (*Fig. 18*). The Kozármisleny carriage is one of the most outstanding vehicles known from Pannonia, in part owing to the magnificent Bacchic imagery of its figural ornamentation and in part owing to the superb artistic quality of its sculpted decoration. Several decades elapsed before the discovery of the next carriage grave in Baranya County in 2020, when the archaeologists of the Janus Pannonius Museum of Pécs uncovered a grave containing a two-wheeled

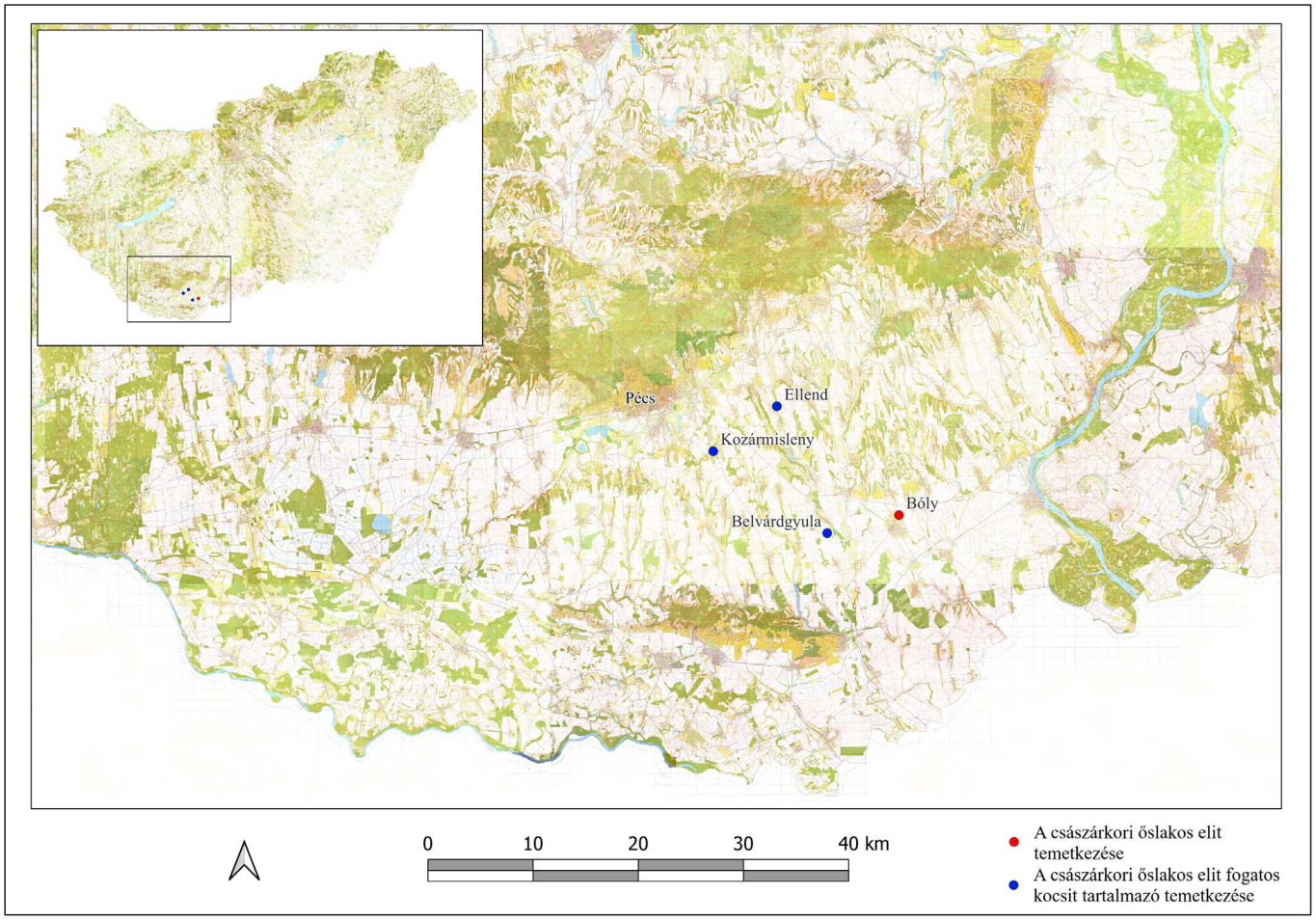

Fig. 19. Burials of the local elite in south-eastern Transdanubia (map by Réka Neményi)

carriage, two draught horses, a saddle horse, and two hunting dogs on the outskirts of Ellend.[16] Similarly to the carriages from Sárbogárd-Sárszentmiklós and Zsámbék (Mráv 2011), two *beneficarius* insignia mounts had been applied to the Ellend carriage, indicating that, in addition to being a member of the local elite, its owner had served as a junior officer in the governor's office of Pannonia Inferior (Mráv 2011, 32–39, 43–46). Together with the Belvárdgyula grave, the number of Roman Period carriage graves known from

[16] The excavation was led by Gergely Kovaliczky.

Baranya County rose to three. Together with the two recently found carriage graves, a new group of these graves can now be outlined in south-eastern Transdanubia in addition to the north-eastern and southern Pannonian group identified previously. The presence of the local native elite in eastern Baranya County is also indicated by a lavishly furnished burial from the later second century found in the Bóly area in 2020 (Kovaliczky 2022, 39–52). In addition to a gold finger-ring inset with an *intaglio* depicting an eagle, the cremation burial yielded a toiletry set made up of the bronze vessels of a hand-washing and a bathing set, strigils, and a folding iron chair, all of which had been deformed on the funerary pyre.[17] It remains a matter of speculation whether any relevance can be attached to the fact that richly outfitted burials reflecting the presence of a local elite in Baranya County are distributed in the southern Baranya Hills east and south-east of Pécs (*Fig. 19*) or whether this merely reflects our current knowledge and the unpredictable nature of archaeological discoveries.[18]

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[17] For a discussion of the role of iron folding chairs in bathing and personal hygiene and their function in the burials of the local elite, see Mráv 2013.

[18] Viktor Réger, who can be credited with the discovery and identification of the Belvárdgyula carriage grave, has also made other major contributions to archaeological research in Baranya County by identifying several significant sites and finding assemblages. We are also grateful to the participants of the preliminary field survey and the salvage excavation: archaeologists Zsombor Győrffy-Villám (JPM), Máté Szabó (ELRN) and Ildikó Talabér (JPM), field technicians Márk Haramza (JPM), Gábor Nagy (JPM) and Béla Simon (JPM), and volunteer metal detectorists Zoltán Hendinger, Tamás Máté and István Megyeri. The conservation of the metal finds has been undertaken by conservator Kristóf Kiltau (JPM), while the study of the textile and leather remains is conducted by conservator Pápay Kornélia (JPM). The examination of the textile and leather remains with a polarising microscope is still in progress, and the results will be published later.

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