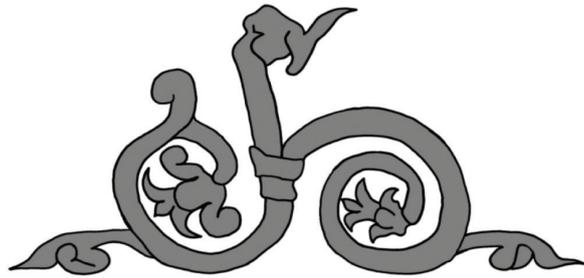


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A new Bronze Age wagon model from Szombathely-Motel

Mária Bondár

*To Gábor Ilon, with the greatest affection,
on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday*

Abstract: In 2002, Gábor Ilon uncovered no more than two settlement features at the Szombathely-Motel site, one of which yielded decorated Bronze Age pottery sherds and two enigmatic clay fragments, which he tentatively identified as coming from figurines. It has been recently suggested that the two decorated fragments in question, whose function is not obvious at first glance, might originate from wagon models. In order to determine their one-time function, I reviewed the possible Bronze Age types that could be considered, most of which can be assigned to the Wietenberg culture. I excluded figurines and altars, and after a rigorous examination of the more recently discovered wagon models – that have exclusively been found in the eastern half of the Carpathian Basin – I was able to reconstruct the fragments as one possible variant of miniature wheeled vehicles.

Keywords: Early Bronze Age, figurine, altar, wagon model, Carpathian Basin.

Introduction

In his book published in 2004, Gábor Ilon described two enigmatic clay fragments, which he tentatively identified as figurine fragments, that had come to light during the pre-development excavations conducted in the area of the Car Motel of the Minerva residential estate in Szombathely¹. The possibility that the two fragments actually came from another type of object than figurines was recently raised.

On June 12, 2014, during the conference of the Hungarian Archaeological and Art Historical Society held in Szombathely, we visited the exhibition of the Szombathely Museum, where the two “figurines” and the fragment of a wagon wheel dated to the Copper Age brought to light from Feature 10 uncovered during the pre-development excavation of the Metro store in Szombathely were exhibited in the same case². Gábor Ilon assigned the latter to the early Copper Age on the testimony of the finds from the longhouses and a burial of the late Lengyel culture uncovered in the area. The three finds were displayed at the “Pre-Eminently Local” exhibition presenting a selection of the prehistoric finds from Szombathely. The objects are currently displayed in the museum’s permanent exhibition. Chatting with Marcella Nagy while walking through the exhibition, she remarked that the Szombathely “figurines” could perhaps be interpreted as part of an object resembling the Bronze Age wagon model from Nemesnádudvar³, and she later made a drawing of her idea of a reconstruction (Fig. 5/1).

In this study, I shall describe the finds recovered from the two excavated features at the Szombathely-Motel site, followed by a discussion of their date and the possible interpretation of the two objects hitherto identified as figurine fragments.

The site and its finds

Several pre-development excavation campaigns were conducted prior to the construction of the Minerva residential estate in Szombathely. In June 2002, the area of the Car Motel to be built north of the Metro store was investigated during a few days (Fig. 1/1). According to the brief description in

¹ Ilon 2004, 45, pl. XXIII/7–8.

² Ilon 2004, 29, pl. VI/1.

³ Bondár, Székely 2011, Fig. 3, pl. 3

the field diary, the Motel would be built by SOFT-POINT Kft. on plot no. 15824 in 2002, an area lying east of the Peugeot car salon, that had been investigated by Csilla Farkas in 2001, and north of the Metro store. Gábor Ilon found two features during his excavation on the site of the planned motel⁴, of which Feature 2 yielded a more substantial number of finds. He published a selection of the more distinctive ones⁵, among them the two unusual clay fragments that he tentatively identified as figurine fragments⁶.

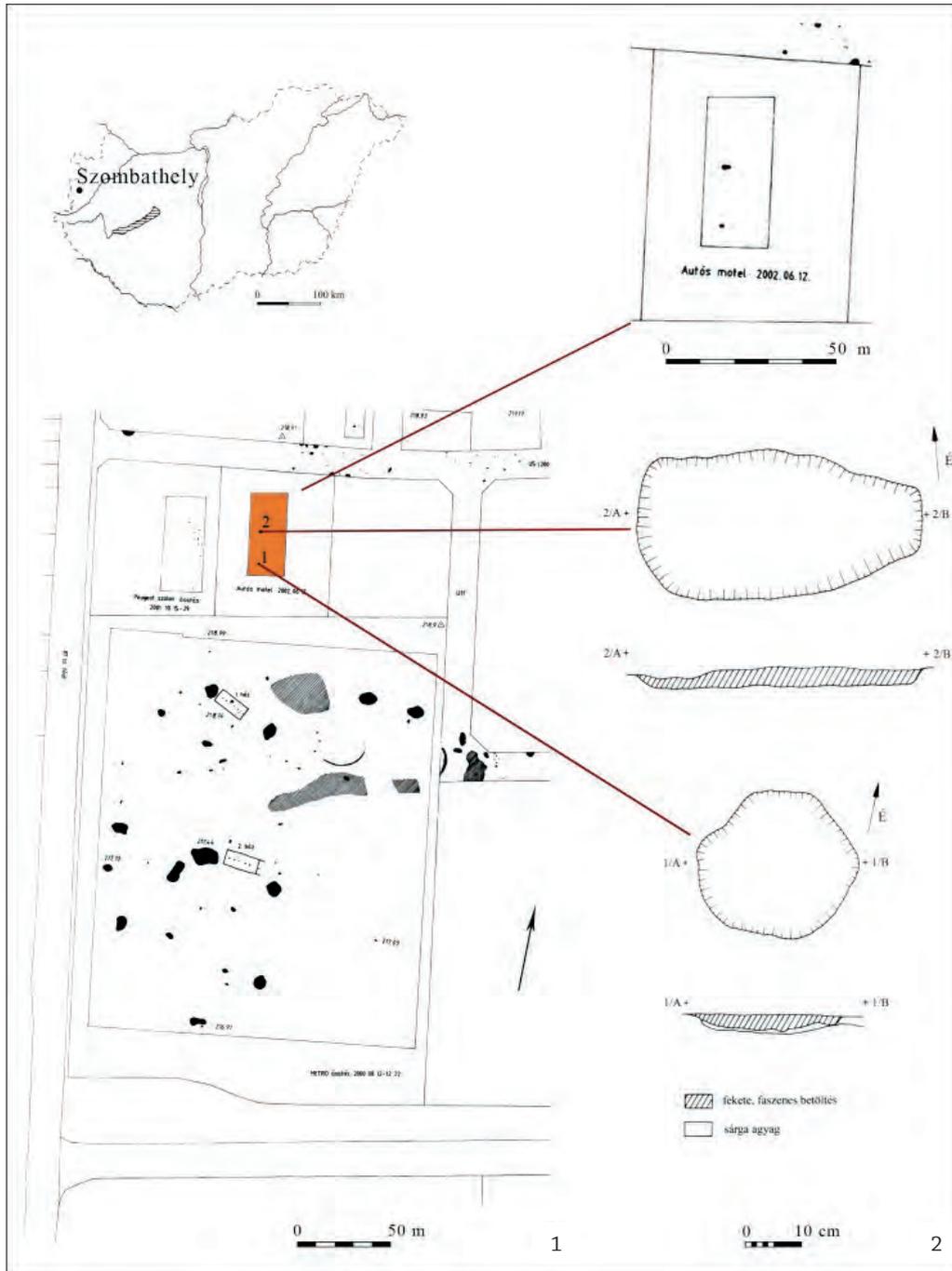


Fig. 1. Szombathely-Motel. The site. Detail of Ilon 2004, Appendix 2. 1. Plan of the 2000–2003 excavation at the Metro store and the Minerva residential estate (drawn by Gábor Vámos); bottom: area of the Metro store, upper left: area of the Peugeot car salon, with the brown area marking the location of the planned Motel, June 12, 2002); 2. Plan and section of the features uncovered in the area of the Motel (drawn by Károly Cékus and Hajnalka Binder).

⁴ Ilon 2004, 279, Appendix 2, 1 (Car Motel).

⁵ Ilon 2004, pl. XXIV/1–6.

⁶ Ilon 2004, 45, pl. XXIII/7–8.

Description of the features

Pit 1

A small, rounded, irregular pit. Greatest length 1.8 m, greatest width 1 m, depth 12 cm. The fill was made up of black charcoal and yellow clay underneath (Fig. 1/2). It yielded a few indistinct vessel fragments.

Finds: Small brownish and dark grey body sherds made from clay tempered with mica. Seven fragments. Early Bronze Age.

Pit 2

Shallow pit of irregular elliptical form. Greatest length 3.6 m, width 0.5–1.3 m, depth 12 cm. The fill was black soil mixed with charcoal (Fig. 1/2). The pit contained a fairly large amount of pottery sherds and animal bones.

Finds: following the mechanical scraping, the undecorated body sherds of brownish and dark greyish vessels made of clay tempered with mica (twenty-two pieces), handles from larger pots (four pieces) and a pot fragment with coarsened surface were found lying on the surface above the pit. The finds from the pit included fifteen undecorated, indistinct body sherds.

The following distinctive finds came to light from the pit:

– Rim fragment of a dark grey pot (?) decorated with a flattish rib resembling a band under the rim. Two joining pieces (Fig. 2/1 = Ilon 2004, 46, Pl. XXIV/5).

– Body fragment of a light brownish pot with smoothed neck and lightly scored belly, and a flat knob handle on the shoulder (Fig. 2/2 = Ilon 2004, 45, Pl. XXIV/2).

– Fragment of a reddish-brown-greyish storage jar with a flattened, grooved knob handle on the shoulder (Fig. 2/3 = Ilon 2004, 45, Pl. XXIV/3).

– Greyish body fragment from the area near the vessel base (perhaps a foot-ring), with two lightly incised, occasionally interrupted parallel lines around the vessel and barely visible textile impressions on the worn surface (Fig. 2/4).

– Undecorated rim fragment of a light brown, thin-walled jug (Fig. 2/5).

– Greyish body fragment with impressed decoration, joined from four fragments (Fig. 2/6 = Ilon 2004, 46, Pl. XXIV/6).

– Rim and neck fragments with parts of the shoulder of a greyish-brown, dark grey mottled jug with cylindrical neck made from finely levigated clay tempered with mica and quartz, decorated with a slightly zig-zagging bundle of three lines retaining some of the original lime encrustation under the rim and a bundle of lines immediately above the prominent shoulder. The neck is joined from three fragments. Other fragments could also be fitted into the vessel, which provided some idea of its ornamentation (Fig. 3/1 = ILON 2004, 46, Pl. XXIV. 1). Two joining fragments and a non-joining third one allowed the reconstruction of a design of recurring motifs created from bundles of lines of different lengths and directions on the vessel shoulder. The finely incised lines retain remnants of the lime encrustation.

– Body fragments of a reddish-brown pot (?) made from clay tempered with mica. The upper part was smoothed and additional layer of clay was smeared on the belly while it was still damp (Fig. 3/2; Fig. 4/1).

– Fragment of a grey, thick-walled wagon box topped with a flat knob, decorated with four parallel incised lines following the outline of the curved edge. The lines probably enclosed a field with an impressed dot in each corner. The inner side is plain and a small portion of the base survives. The bundle of lines continues in straight lines above the base (Fig. 3/3 = Ilon 2004, 45, Pl. XXIII/8).

– Fragment of a light brown wagon box with the centre of upper edge raised into a flat knob, decorated with a bundle of four incised lines following the outline of the raised edge. There are two impressed dots under the bundle of lines. The inner side is plain. The wagon model's other parts have not survived (Fig. 3/4 = Ilon 2004, 45, Pl. XXIII/7).

In his publication of the finds, Gábor Ilon dated the finds from Feature 2 to the Early Bronze Age, listing the findspot among the Early Bronze Age 2 sites, although he did not assign the finds to a specific culture⁷ because none of the finds provided a secure chronological anchor for dating.

⁷ Ilon 2004, 45–46.

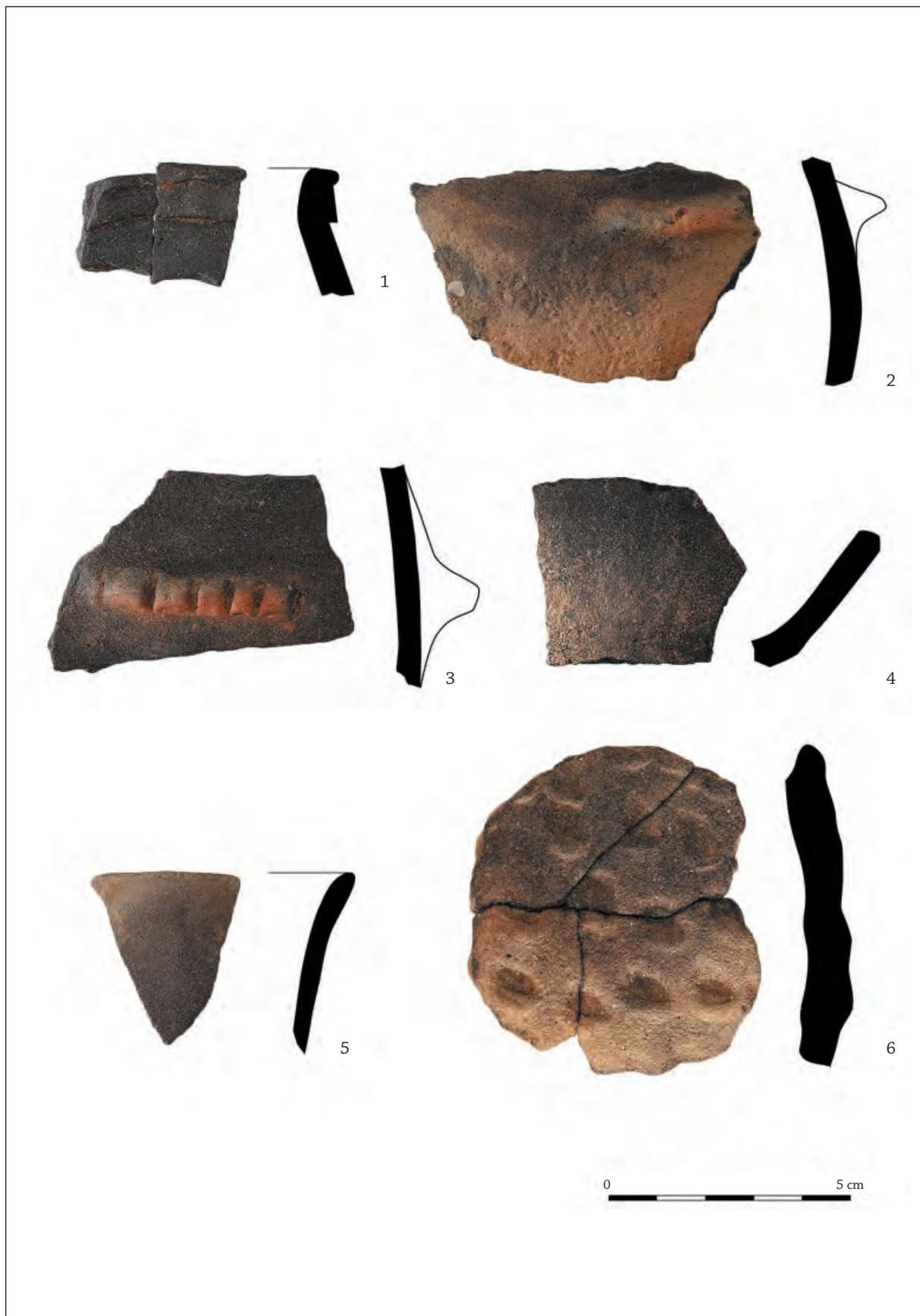


Fig. 2. Szombathely-Motel. Finds from Feature 2
(photo by Péter Hámori, drawing and computer graphics by Magda Éber).



Fig. 3. Szombathely-Motel. Finds from Feature 2
(photo by Péter Hámori, drawing and computer graphics by Magda Éber).



Fig. 4. Szombathely-Motel. Finds from Feature 2
(photo by Péter Hámori, drawing and computer graphics by Magda Éber).

The region's Bronze Age and the difficulties of dating

Little is known about the Early Bronze Age of Szombathely and its broader area. According to Mária Károlyi's brief overview, prehistoric research in County Vas was, aside from the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age finds, a "neglected stepchild" of archaeological scholarship. Previous studies on the region's Early Bronze Age invoked the Zók-Somogyvár group and the Makó group of the Zók culture as the dominant cultural complexes⁸. Few sites have been archaeologically explored and published find assemblages are few and far between. Mária Károlyi published a few Early Bronze Age vessels and their fragments from the Szombathely area (grave pit at Jáki út-Körmendi út, Terézia P. Buócz's salvage excavation, 1961)⁹, a selection of finds from the five Early Bronze Age burials she had uncovered in the Csepreg grave pit¹⁰, and the late Beaker (Gáta group) finds collected during the field survey conducted in the area in summer 1971¹¹, alongside stray finds from Perenye, Velemszentvid, an unknown site in County Vas, Rábakovácsi, Szombathely and Simaság¹², including the three metal artefacts found at the latter site¹³.

The major problems in the Early Bronze Age of north-western Transdanubia were addressed by András Figler in a 1992 conference paper, based on his own excavations at Táp-Borbapuszta, Gyórszemere-Tóthtag and Kajárpéc-Pokolfadomb¹⁴. In his view, the region was occupied by the Makó

⁸ Károlyi 1972, 167.

⁹ Károlyi 1972, Fig. 1–3, Pl. I–III.

¹⁰ Károlyi 1972, Fig. 4–8, Pl. IV/1–6, 8–20, Pl. V/1–2.

¹¹ Károlyi 1972, Fig. 9–15.

¹² Károlyi 1972, Pl. V/7, Pl. VI.

¹³ Károlyi 1972, Pl. VI/68.

¹⁴ Figler 1994.

culture at the onset of the Early Bronze Age, followed by the Somogyvár-Vinkovci culture preserving some Makó traditions in the Early Bronze Age 2. The Early Bronze Age 3 saw the appearance of the Okka-Sarród group evolving on a Beaker substrate in the Fertő-Hanság region and of the early Kisapostag group preserving some Somogyvár elements emerging from a Corded Ware substrate east of the Hanság¹⁵. András Figler outlined a similar occupation pattern for the Győr area¹⁶.

Gábor Ilon reviewed the Bronze Age settlement history of the broader region (Alpine foreland, Slovakia and northern Transdanubia) and presented the findings of the excavations preceding major construction works conducted in the broader Szombathely area in his book published in 2004¹⁷. The natural resources, the geographic environment, the areas suitable for arable farming and stock-breeding, and the potential for mining ores as well as the far-ranging trade and cultural contacts of the communities settling in the area are reflected in the finds from their settlements and burials. There is evidence for the presence of the Vučedol, the Makó and the Somogyvár-Vinkovci cultures in the region and Gábor Ilon has argued that the boundary between the Vučedol and the Makó cultures lay somewhere in the Szombathely area. Cultural impacts from the Vučedol-Laibach group have been documented, as has the archaeological legacy of Beaker groups arriving from the Alpine region¹⁸. Settlements and burials of the Gáta-Wieselburg culture characterise the final phase of the Early Bronze Age and the onset of the Middle Bronze Age, while the presence of the Veteřov culture can be assumed in the area at the end of the period¹⁹.

There have been major advances in Bronze Age studies during the past two decades: the assessment and publication of larger settlements and cemeteries, comprehensive monographs on a particular culture, and the volumes containing the papers of thematic conferences have greatly contributed to the synchronisation of regional chronologies and to research designs focusing on new aspects in the study of Bronze Age assemblages and of the social organisation and economic strategies of the period's societies. The international research projects and the growing number of AMS dates as well as the new reliable typologies of metal finds led to the discardment of the chronology published in 1992²⁰, which was regarded as the *par excellence* reference system until very recently. Viktória Kiss has recently discussed the different chronological systems that had been proposed by Paul Reinecke, Amália Mozsolics, István Bóna, Rózsa Kalicz-Schreiber, András Figler, Wolfgang Neugebauer, Joseph Maran, François Bertemes and Volker Heyd, and Elisabeth Ruttkay, alongside an overview of the main contentious issues in the relative and absolute chronology of the Central European Bronze Age²¹, and attempted to correlate the different chronological schemes with each other and with the new research findings. She summarised her findings in a new chronological scheme for Central Europe, the eastern Alpine region, Transdanubia and Central Hungary²². Another comprehensive study covered the sequence and chronology of archaeological cultures in the major regions of Central Europe and Hungary, illustrating the settlement of successive cultures with a series of maps²³; however, the chronological chart differs somewhat from the scheme proposed by Viktória Kiss.

One point that emerges clearly from the above brief review is that there are still many blank spots in region's colourful cultural tapestry regarding the finer details of chronology, the archaeological cultures and the typology of the finds, this being the reason that the cultural attribution of the finds, including the two unusual fragments, from Feature 2 of the Szombathely-Motel site is no easy task.

Gábor Ilon assigned the finds in question to the Early Bronze and listed Szombathely-Motel among the sites of the Early Bronze Age 2, although he did not assign the finds to a specific culture²⁴, in part owing to the small number of finds that included few distinctive pieces, and in part because even the few decorated fragments cannot be typologically associated with a specific archaeological culture.

The manufacturing technique and the fabric of the pottery fragments recovered from Feature

¹⁵ Figler 1994, 28.

¹⁶ Figler 1996, 7.

¹⁷ Ilon 2004, 44–71.

¹⁸ Ilon 2004, 46.

¹⁹ Ilon 2004, 47.

²⁰ Bóna 1992, 40–41, chronological chart.

²¹ Kiss 2012b.

²² Kiss 2012a, Fig. 9; Kiss 2012b, Fig. 3.

²³ Fischl *et al.* 2015, Fig. 1, Fig. 3–4.

²⁴ Ilon 2004, 45–46.

2 would fit into each period of the Early Bronze Age. The single vessel that could provide a typochronological anchor is the vessel adorned under the rim, on the neck and the shoulder (Fig. 3/1), which supports this broad date. Its ornamental technique, at least at first glance, is attested in several archaeological cultures (Furchenstich/Retz-Gajary, Vučedol, Makó, Beaker, Kisapostag, Encrusted Pottery and Corded Ware cultures). However, the design is not as deeply incised as on Vučedol vessels, while the design itself has little in common with the ornamental schemes of the preceding Middle Copper Age Furchenstich/Retz-Gajary culture, as can be most clearly established from S. Dimitrijević's study²⁵. The same holds true for the vessels of the Beaker complex²⁶, whose ornamental technique differs substantially from that of the vessel fragment from Szombathely.

The jug from Szombathely can best be likened to the similar vessels of the Ljubljana culture²⁷. A vessel, possibly a jug, with a similar ornamentation can be cited from Koroncó-Bábota, which was assigned to the Zók-Vučedol or Laibach-Mondsee culture when it was first published²⁸. The list of comparable pieces virtually ends here.

The decorated jug from Feature 2 is not adorned with the usual deeply incised, Furchenstich-style or corded decoration. The vessel was ornamented with an implement resembling a many-pronged fork while the clay was still damp. The design is made up of recurring motifs arranged into triangles and squares. A bundle of three parallel lines encircles the neck under the rim and a bundle of four lines above the shoulder. The even distance between the lines clearly indicates that the lines had not been incised individually, but had been made using a many-pronged or many-toothed implement. The potter employed a three- and a four-pronged implement for drawing the design, which was added to the vessel's neck and before firing. Instead of creating deep lines, the potter drew the pattern with one fluid dynamic move, in the same way as a pattern is added to the chocolate coating of cakes. Given that potters still use similar wooden implements²⁹, we can assume a similar practice in prehistory, even though the fork- or comb-like implement made of some organic material did not survive the millennia in the soil.

The few other pottery finds from Feature 2, whose decoration cannot be linked to a particular culture, does not enable a more precise dating of the finds. Concurring with Gábor Ilon, I too would assign the pit to the second half or the close of the Early Bronze Age on the testimony of the decorated jug.

Discussion

From what type of object do the "figure fragments" come?

The two fragments recovered from Feature 2 (Fig. 3/3–4) have no exact counterparts and it is therefore difficult to determine the original object they had been part of. Several possibilities can be considered in view of their form and ornamentation.

Figurine?

Gábor Ilon described the two objects as figurines and published their drawing³⁰. Some of the currently known Early Bronze Age figurines are plain³¹, but their majority is decorated. The incised or impressed patterns always symbolise clothing and jewellery. The best-known types are the so-called bell-skirted figurines wearing necklaces and richly ornamented costumes³². However, I did not find any pieces resembling the Szombathely fragments among them.

Three pieces can be cited from the corpus of figurines that bear some resemblance to the piece from Szombathely-Motel: the Kerameikos cemetery in Athens, Greece, yielded decorated human depictions (Fig. 5/2–4)³³, whose flattish head, neck and shoulder could be regarded as analogies to the

²⁵ Dimitrijević 1967, Taf. I-IV.

²⁶ Endrődi 1992, Fig. 84–85.

²⁷ Dimitrijević 1967, Taf. V/ 4.

²⁸ Gallus, Mithay 1942, Pl. XVII/8–9.

²⁹ Csupor, Csuporné 1998, 103, Fig. 225.

³⁰ Ilon 2004, 45, Pl. XXIII/7–8.

³¹ Bondár 1996, 218–220, Pl. 120–121.

³² Kovács 1972; Dumitrescu 1974, Fig. 389–395; Şandor-Chicideanu 2012, Pl. 2–3.

³³ Şandor-Chicideanu 2012, Pl. 4/1–3;

Szombathely fragments, but these are essentially bodies of revolution. One of the most typical shared traits of the period's figurines is that they can be revolved around an imaginary central axis and that they have a uniform surface. The two fragments discussed here do not represent this category. Their exterior side is decorated, their interior is plain, their surface differs and they were evidently made for two views (an exterior and an interior side), and the two fragments in question can therefore hardly be regarded as having been parts of figurines.

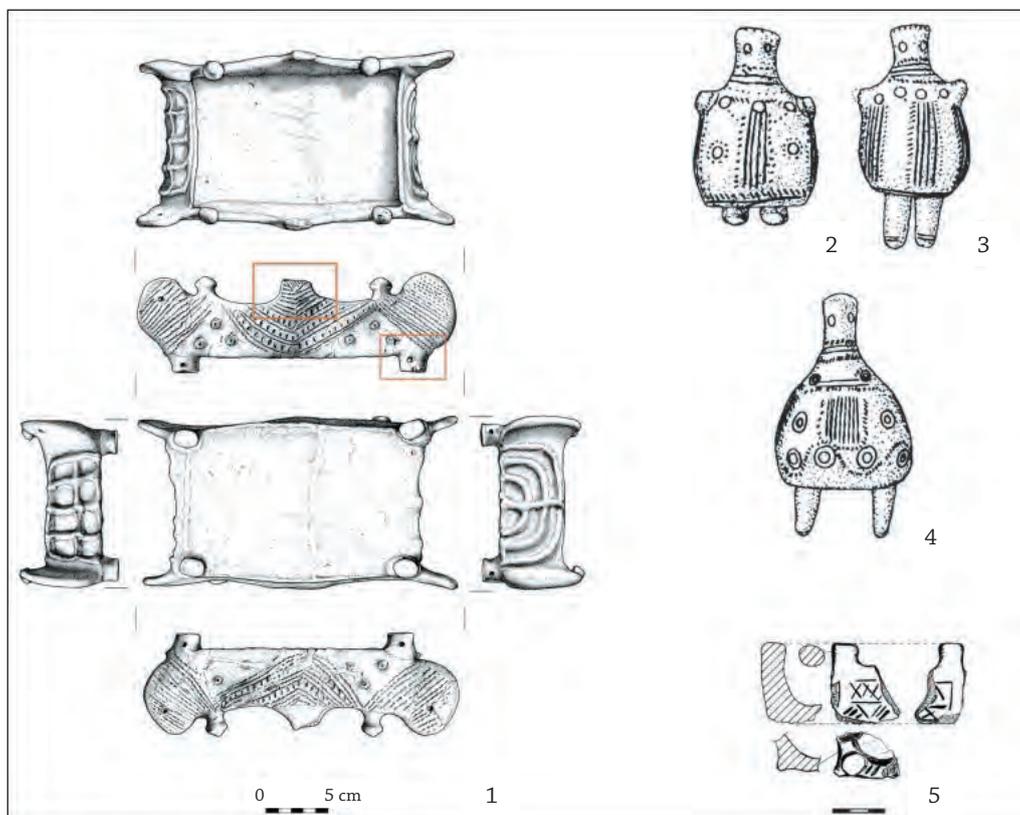


Fig. 5. 1. Nemesnáudvar, Bronze Age wagon model (after Bondár 2012a, Fig. 23, drawing by Ágnes Vida). The colour squares mark Marcella Nagy's interpretation of where the Szombathely fragments could be fitted; 2–4. Figurines from the Kerameikos cemetery in Athens (after Şandor-Chicideanu 2012, Pl. 4/1–3; 5. Altar fragment from Racoş/Alsórákos (after Costea, Székely 2011, Pl. 3/5).

Altar?

Objects interpreted as altars by prehistorians are known from almost every prehistoric period. Most are triangular or rectangular in shape and have a low, rimmed body. They are usually decorated and are often set on feet. They are frequently encountered in the Bronze Age too; similarly to wagon models, the highest number of altars is known from the Wietenberg culture. Pieces of an altar bearing some resemblance to the fragments from Szombathely have been recently published from Racoş (Alsórákos)³⁴. However, only the form of these fragmentary pieces (Fig. 5/5) can be likened to the enigmatic fragments discussed here: the edge was similarly drawn up above the rim to form a flat knob and it is decorated on the exterior side. It is the corner fragment of a rectangular object (height 2.8 cm).

Fragments of several other domestic altars have been brought to light at Racoş, a settlement that appears to have played a prominent role in the ritual life of the Wietenberg culture³⁵. The site also yielded a protome³⁶ and the ornamented wheel of a miniature wagon model³⁷. Zsolt Székely has recently published the fragments of a miniature wagon model from Racoş³⁸. The above finds can all be assigned to the Wietenberg culture.

³⁴ Costea, Székely 2011, Pl. 3/5.

³⁵ Costea, Székely 2011, Pl. 2/4–6, Pl. 3/1–5.

³⁶ Costea, Székely 2011, Pl. 3/6.

³⁷ Costea, Székely 2011, Pl. 3/7.

³⁸ Székely 2015, Pl. II/1, 3.

The finds from the Racoş site provide an excellent opportunity for comparing different artefact types, altars and wagon models among them, from the same settlement and period. A comparison of the miniature wagon and the altars from Racoş clearly shows that the altars from the site are flattish rectangular objects that bore decorative designs on their top and sides, while wagon boxes had higher bodies, terminated in flat knobs and only their exterior sides and wheels were ornamented. The fragments from Szombathely share more similarities with the wagon model.

The same holds true for the altar set on small feet and the wagon model brought to light on the tell settlement of Berettyóújfalu-Herpály-Földvár. The altar is a flat, table-like, decorated object³⁹, while the wagon model has a deep, unadorned wagon box⁴⁰. The two finds were both assigned to the Early Bronze Age 3 and parallels to both were cited from the Ottomány culture⁴¹.

The material from these two sites, whose finds enabled the comparison of objects vested with a special function of a particular culture, underpinned my conviction that the Szombathely fragments do not originate from altars.

Wagon model?

All of the wagon models known from the Carpathian Basin are unique, individual pieces⁴², and there are no two like wagon models even among the miniature four-wheeled vehicles of the same culture, making the reconstruction and dating of these models rather difficult.

Among the Bronze Age cultures settling in the Szombathely area, the heritage of the Makó, Beaker and Encrusted Pottery culture includes a few miniature wheel models, while the archaeological material of the Kisapostag culture lacks any finds of this type, and thus regarding wagon models, there are no parallels to the Szombathely fragments from the broader region that would enable a more secure dating.

Marcella Nagy suggested that the two ornamented fragments could be reconstructed as a wagon model resembling the one from Nemesnádudvar (County Bács-Kiskun): in her view, one of the two fragments could have originated from the middle part of the upper edge, the other from near the wheel (Fig. 5. 1). However, if the fragments are interpreted as coming from a wagon model, the original must be reconstructed slightly differently than her suggestion.

The Nemesnádudvar wagon model is a rectangular, flat object with a different ornamental design on each side, a neck-like projection rising above the rim in the middle of the long sides and symmetrically set onion-headed knobs near the corners. It is set on four feet, each perforated to hold the axle⁴³. Owing to its near-intact condition, its dimensions can be accurately specified: L. of long sides 26.3 cm, L. of short sides 14.9 cm, H. with the feet 8.8 cm, H. without the feet 6.6 cm.

The Szombathely fragments broke off from the original object's upper edge and we have no way of knowing how it continued. One fragment probably comes from the middle, raised part of the upper edge (Fig. 3/4, Fig. 6. 2; H. 3.38 cm, W. 4.7 cm), while the other, similarly knobbed fragment, probably comes from the left corner of the wagon box (Fig. 3/3, Fig. 6. 1; H. 4.24 cm, W. 3.75 cm). The curvature and the thickened part of the latter would suggest that it comes from a section that was quite close to the base of the wagon box. Regarding their height, the Szombathely fragments could be fitted into the virtually intact Nemesnádudvar model and could therefore originate from a wagon model of roughly similar size.

Taking the corner element as a starting point, the wagon model had a rectangular wagon box with ornamented sides and various decorative elements rising above the rim (Fig. 6/1). The bundle of four parallel lines under the flat knob follows the outline of the wagon box's edge as if framing the body. The bundle of lines was drawn while the clay was still damp using a similar implement as for the jug described in the above. There are two impressed dots under the bundle of lines positioned roughly in line with the edges of the knob. Another bundle of four lines runs above the base of the model, with an impressed dot where the upper and lower bundle meet. The tips of oblique lines have survived under the lower bundle of lines. The base of one fragment thickens in line with the knob, suggesting that

³⁹ Dani 2012, Fig. 6.

⁴⁰ Dani 2012, Fig. 7.

⁴¹ Balázs, Dani 2014, 10.

⁴² Bondár 2012, 68; Bondár 2012a, 66.

⁴³ Bondár 2012a, Fig. 13–14.

it came from a corner of the wagon box (Fig. 6/1). The ornamental design of the fragment from the wagon box's middle part (Fig. 6/2) is identical to that of the corner fragment.

Nothing has survived of the base of the Szombathely wagon model and thus we have no way of knowing whether it had pierced knobs on the underside or any other indication of axles as on the Nemesnádudvar model. The presence of axles is not a prerequisite for identifying an object as a wagon model. Although the Kaposvár model, dating from the Boleráz period, was set on four small feet⁴⁴, it can be securely assigned to the category of vehicle models on the testimony of the pair of draught animals that had been attached to its front side (which had sadly broken off).

In the light of the above, the two fragments from Szombathely can most plausibly be interpreted as coming from a wagon model. The reconstruction of the model (Fig. 6/3–4) was based on the above considerations.

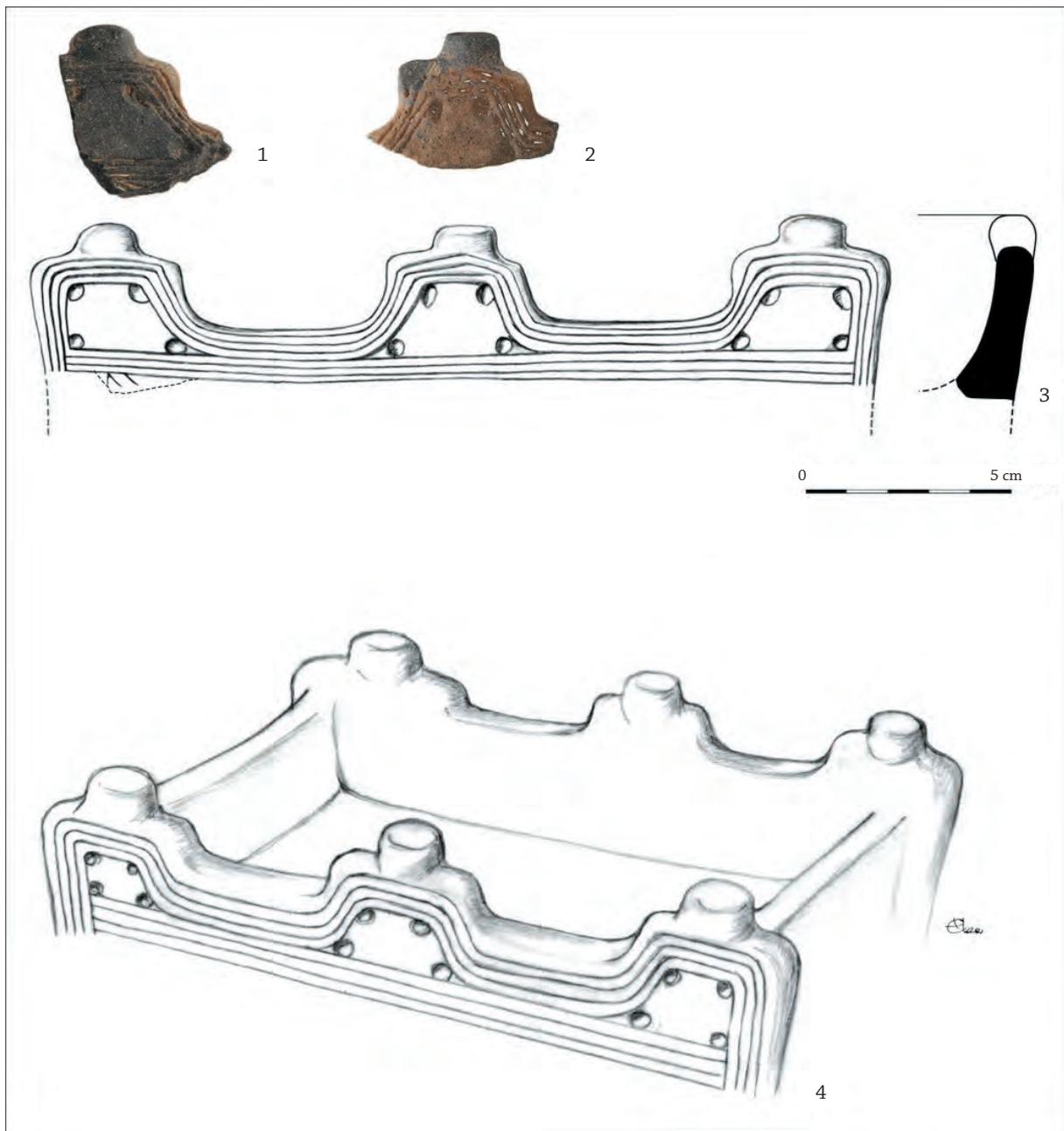


Fig. 6. Szombathely-Motel. The two unusual fragments from Feature 2 and their reconstruction as a wagon model (photo by Péter Hámori, drawing by Magda Éber).

⁴⁴ Bondár 2012, Fig. 14; Bondár 2012a, Fig. 14; Bondár 2012b, Fig. 1.

The significance of the Szombathely site

In my study on the Late Copper Age and Bronze Age wagons models published in 2012, I mapped the distribution of the then known pieces, from which one can see at a glance that seventeen wagon models of the Late Copper Age were found west of the Danube and one a single piece was known from the region east of the river⁴⁵. Various sites yielding wagons models in Slovakia and Austria add further details to this picture⁴⁶.

Curiously enough, an inverse distribution can be noted in the Bronze Age⁴⁷. The Early and Middle Bronze Age wagon models show a concentration east of the Danube, while only a single model is currently known from Transdanubia, namely the miniature vehicle model found at Börzönce, recovered from a well-documented, secure context⁴⁸. Although wagon models are mentioned from Vučedol⁴⁹ and Borinci⁵⁰, both sites of the Vučedol culture, variously dated to the Late Copper Age or the Early Bronze Age, I have been unable to locate their publication in the archaeological literature. The model from Borinci was mentioned in a letter written to Professor Albert Lanting, when he turned to various researchers and requested information about wagon models and miniature wheels for an article. A part of the finds from Vučedol was confiscated by the army, another part perished when the Vukovar Museum was deliberately razed to the ground alongside the city's other buildings in 1991 during the Yugoslav war⁵¹. Nothing more is known about these two Croatian wagon models at present.

There were no major shifts in the focal points of the distribution map following the recent publication of several new wagon models such as the one from Oarta de Sus Ghiile Botii/Felsővárca, found in a ritual pit of the Wietenberg culture⁵², the three wagon models of the Ottomány culture from Carei-Bobald/Nagykároly-Bobald⁵³, a piece from Tiszakeszi-Szódadomb, dated to the last third of the Early Bronze Age-onset of the Middle Bronze Age⁵⁴, two other models of the Ottomány culture from Bakonszeg-Kádár domb⁵⁵ and Berettyóújfalu-Herpály-Földvár⁵⁶, and the piece from Racoş/Alsórákos, assigned to the Wietenberg culture⁵⁷, all of which were found east of the Danube.

The dating of the new wagon models discovered in Hungary during the past two years has modified the typochronological attribution of a few pieces and has raised doubts regarding the date of others. For example, the fragment found at Tiszakeszi-Szódadomb during a field survey was dated to the EBA 3-Middle Bronze by Ádám Balázs and Klára P. Fischl⁵⁸, who noted that the fragment was best paralleled by the Pocsaj wagon model, another stray find. They pointed out that the Gyulavarsánd culture, to which the Pocsaj model had originally been assigned, is now generally identified with the middle phase of the Ottomány culture owing to the changes in archaeological terminology and relative chronology⁵⁹. The Novaj wagon model similarly lacks a well-defined context: it was donated to the Miskolc museum⁶⁰, and the site itself yielded finds of both the Hatvan and the Füzesabony culture, making its date uncertain. The miniature vehicle recovered from Grave 40, a child burial, excavated at Alsómislye (Nižná Myšľa), was assigned to the transitional Kostany-Ottományi period representing the turn of the Early and Middle Bronze Age instead of the earlier Füzesabony period⁶¹. Another model of uncertain date is a recently published fragment found at Berettyóújfalu-Herpály-

⁴⁵ Bondár 2012a, Fig. 19.

⁴⁶ Bondár 2012a, Fig. 37.

⁴⁷ Bondár 2012a, Fig. 33.

⁴⁸ Bondár 1990, Fig. 5; Bondár 2012a, Fig. 33/1.

⁴⁹ Durman 1988, Cat. no. 24.

⁵⁰ Bakker *et al.* 1999, 778.

⁵¹ Drenth, Bakker 2005–2006, 24, note 13.

⁵² Kacsó 2011, Fig. 206.

⁵³ Némethi, Molnár 2012, Pl. 19/125, 127, 129.

⁵⁴ Balázs, Fischl 2013, Fig. 2–3.

⁵⁵ Balázs, Dani 2014, Fig. 1.

⁵⁶ Balázs, Dani 2014, Fig. 3/1.

⁵⁷ Székely 2015, Pl. II/1, 3.

⁵⁸ Balázs, Fischl 2013, 27.

⁵⁹ Balázs, Fischl 2013, 27. I am greatly indebted to both authors for pointing out my use of an earlier chronological terminology in some cases.

⁶⁰ Balázs, Fischl 2013, 27.

⁶¹ Balázs, Fischl 2013, 27.

Földvár, described as coming from a “Pocsaj-type” wagon model⁶², but without specifying a closer date⁶³.

The date of the Szombathely fragments cannot be more accurately determined on typological grounds: at most, we can only note that they cannot predate the second half of the Early Bronze Age.

An absolute calendrical date is available for the Nemesnádudvar wagon model, based on the thermoluminescence dating of samples taken from the model and from the ornamented pottery found in the same pit, performed in 2010 by György Sípos (Department of Physical Geography and Geoinformatics, Szeged University). The TL measurement yielded a date of 2200–1450 BC for the feature and the wagon model⁶⁴, a period spanning the centuries from the later half of the Early Bronze Age to the Middle Bronze Age. A more precise date of the clay finds could not be obtained by the TL method.

The broad date of Feature 2 uncovered at Szombathely-Motel fits into this period – however, the chronological boundaries of the site’s occupation cannot be fixed more precisely. At the same time, the small wagon model from this site is yet another indication that miniature vehicle models had been made in the regions west of the Danube.

We have no idea why miniature vehicle models were made in some archaeological periods and not in others, why they were produced by some cultures and why they are lacking from others. It seems most unlikely that the use of wheeled vehicles would have sunk into oblivion since frequent finds of miniature wheels attest to the modelling of one part of this efficient device used for travel and transportation. At the same time, it would appear that wagon models were vested with some special significance in certain Bronze Age cultures only. According to Ádám Balázs and János Dani, “the creation of clay wagon models flourished in the Middle Bronze Age tell cultures, at the time of the Ottomány, late Ottomány (Gyulavarsánd), Wietenberg, Füzesabony and Hatvan cultures”⁶⁵.

It is a fact that following the Late Copper Age, wagon models appeared in greater number during the period characterised by the tell cultures, mostly in the regions east of the Danube, in the distribution of the tell cultures. However, we can hardly claim a cognitive correlation between tell settlements and wagon models – one resounding counterevidence comes from the models made during the Late Copper Age, a period which lacked tell settlements in the Carpathian Basin. It seems unlikely that the wagon models of the Bronze Age were made because these vehicles played a particularly outstanding role in the life of the stratified settlement mounds occupied for long periods. Although there were no settlements that gradually accumulated into mounds either in Transdanubia or on the Hungarian Plain during the Late Copper Age, the various communities living in the northern and western half of the Carpathian Basin often portrayed their vehicles as miniature clay models, while their brethren in the easterly regions did not. Thus, the rationale behind the creation of miniature wheeled vehicles remains unknown for the time being.

Conclusion

Feature 2 uncovered at Szombathely-Motel yielded two ornamented fragments whose function and origins were not obvious at first glance. In order to determine the type of object they came from, I reviewed the artefact types that could potentially be considered, concluding that figurines and altars can both be excluded. At the same time, a reconstruction as a wagon model, first proposed by Marcella Nagy, seemed quite likely, and after exploring this possibility, I made one possible reconstructed version of the miniature wagon model.

The finds from Feature 2 contained few decorated vessel fragments that would have enabled a more secure dating on typochronological grounds. Wagon models are in themselves unsuitable for a more precise dating within the Early Bronze Age because all were individual, unique creations. The same holds true for the ornamented jug fragments recovered from the feature: although the design on the vessel and the decorative technique seem to be distinctive enough, they cannot be fitted into the ceramic types current during the Early Bronze Age, suggesting that the wagon model fragments

⁶² Balázs, Dani 2014, Fig. 3. 1.

⁶³ Balázs, Dani 2014, 11.

⁶⁴ Bondár, Székely 2011, 546–547, Fig. 5.

⁶⁵ Balázs, Dani 2014, 12.

and the jug are perhaps cultural markers of a yet little known archaeological period in north-western Transdanubia.

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I would here like to thank Gábor Ilon, the excavator of the site, for kindly allowing me to publish these finds, for putting at my disposal the drawings and the field documentation, and for enabling the loan of the finds. I am grateful to Marcella Nagy for calling my attention to this interpretation of the finds from Szombathely.

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Abbreviations

Acta Ant et Arch Suppl	Acta Antiqua et Archaeologica Supplementum. Szeged.
AAC	Acta Archaeologica Carpathica. Krakow.
ACMIT	Anuarul Comisiunii monumentelor istorice. Secția pentru Transilvania. Cluj.
ActaArchHung	ActaArchHung Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae. Budapest.
AEM	Archäologische Epigraphische Mitteilungen aus Österreich-Ungarn.
AIIA Cluj	Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie. Cluj.
AMP	Acta Musei Porolissensis. Zaláu.
ATF	Acta Terrae Fogarasiensis. Făgăraș.
ATS	Acta Terrae Septemcastrensens. Sibiu.
Agria	Agria. Annales Musei <i>Agriensis</i> . Az egri Dobó István Vármúzeum évkönyve. Eger.
AnB S.N.	Analele Banatului. Timișoara.
ArchÉrt	Archaeologiai Értesítő. A Magyar Régészeti és Művészettörténeti Társulat tudományos folyóirata. Budapest.
ArchJug	Archaeologia Iugoslavica
Arh. Pregled	Arheološki Pregled. Arheološko Društvo Jugoslavije. Beograd.
AM	Arheologia Moldovei. Iași.
AMN	Acta Musei Napocensis. Cluj-Napoca.
ArchRozhl	Archeologické Rozhledy. Praga.
ASMB	Arheologia Satului Medieval din Banat. Reșița 1996.
BAM	Brvkenthal Acta Mvsei. Sibiu.
BAR Int. Ser.	British Archaeological Reports. International Series. Oxford.
BCMI	Buletinul Comisiunii Monumentelor Istorice.
BerRGK	Bericht der RömischGermanischen Kommission, Frankfurt a. Main.
BHAB	Bibliotheca Historica et Archaeologica Banatica. Timișoara.
BMB. SH	Biblioteca Muzeului Bistrița. Seria Historica. Bistrița Năsăud.
BMÉ	Bihari Múzeum Évkönyve
BMI	Buletinul Monumentelor Istorice, București.
BMN	Bibliotheca Musei Napocensis. Cluj-Napoca.
BMMK	A Békés Megyei Múzeumok Közleményei. Békéscsaba.
BMMN	Buletinul Muzeului Militar Național, București.
BThr	Bibliotheca Thracologica. Institutul Român de Tracologie, București.
CAH	Communicationes Archaeologicae Hungariae. Budapest.
Carpica	Carpica. Muzeul Județean de Istorie și Arheologie Bacău. Bacău.
CAMNI	Cercetări Arheologice. Muzeul de Istorie al R. S. România/Muzeul Național de Istorie. București.
CCA	<i>Cronica cercetărilor arheologice (din România)</i> , 1983–1992 <i>sqq.</i> (și în variantă electronică pe http://www.cimec.ro/scripts/arh/cronica/cercetariarh.asp).
CRSCRCR	Coins from Roman sites and collections of Roman coins from Romania. Cluj-Napoca.
Dacia N.S.	Dacia. Revue d'archéologie et d'histoire ancienne. Nouvelle serie. București.
Danubius	Danubius – Revista Muzeului de Istorie Galati. Galați.
DDME	A Debreceni Déri Múzeum Évkönyve. Debrecen.
DolgCluj	Dolgozatok az Erdélyi Nemzeti Érem- és Régiségtárából, Klozsvár (Cluj).
DolgSzeg	Dolgozatok. Arbeiten des Archäologischen Instituts der Universität. Szeged.
EphNap	Ephemeris Napocensis. Cluj-Napoca.
FADDP/GMADP	Führer zu archäologischen Denkmälern in Dacia Porolissensis/Ghid al monumentelor arheologice din Dacia Porolissensis.

FolArch	Folia Archaeologica. Budapest.
Forsch. u. Ber. z. Vor- u. Frühgesch. BW	Forschungen und Berichte zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte in Baden-Württemberg.
GPSKV	Gradja za proučavanje spomenika kulture Vojvodine. Novi Sad.
GSAD	Glasnik Srpskog Arheološkog Društva. Beograd.
HOMÉ	A Herman Ottó Múzeum Évkönyve. Miskolc.
HTRTÉ	Hunyadvármegye Történelmi és Régészeti Társulat Évkönyve
JAMÉ	A nyíregyházi Jósa András Múzeum Évkönyve. Nyíregyháza.
JahrbuchRGZM	Jahrbuch des RömischGermanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz.
Lohanul	Lohanul. Revistă culturală științifică. Huși.
MCA	Materiale și Cercetări Arheologice. București.
MCA-S.N.	Materiale și Cercetări Arheologice-Serie Nouă. București.
MA	Memoria Antiquitatis. Complexul Muzeal Județean Neamț. Piatra Neamț.
MFMÉ	A Móra Ferenc Múz. Évkönyve. Szeged.
MFMÉ StudArch	A Móra Ferenc Múzeum Évkönyve, Studia Archaeologica. Szeged.
MN	Muzeul Național. București.
Opuscula Hungarica	Opuscula Hungarica. Budapest.
OTÉ	Orvos- Természettudományi Értesítő, a Kolozsvári Orvos-Természettudományi Társulat és az Erdélyi Múzeum-Egylet Természettudományi Szakosztálya.
Palaeohistorica	Acta et Communicationes Instituti Archaeologici Universitatis Groninganae.
PamArch	Památky Archeologické. Praha.
Past and Present	Past and Present. Oxford.
PIKS/PISC	Die Publikationen des Institutes für klassische Studien/ Publicațiile Institutului de studii clasice. Cluj-Napoca.
PBF	Praehistorische Bronzefunde. Berlin.
PMÉ	Acta Musei Papensis – Pápai Múzeumi Értesítő.
PZ	Prähistorische Zeitschrift. Berlin.
Rev. Muz.	Revista Muzeelor, București.
RIR	Revista Istorică Română.
RMM-MIA	Revista Muzeelor și Monumentelor. seria Monumente istorice și de artă. București.
RMMN	Revista Muzeului Militar Național. București.
Ruralia	Ruralia. Památky Archeologické – Supplementum. Praha.
RVM	Rad Vojvodjanskih Muzeja, Novi Sad.
SCIV(A)	Studii și Cercetări de Istorie Veche. București.
SCN	Studii și Cercetări Numismatice. București.
SlovArch	Slovenská Archeológia. Nitra.
SIA	Studii de Istoria Artei. Cluj Napoca.
SIB	Studii de istorie a Banatului. Timișoara.
SKMÉ	A Szántó Kovács János Múzeum Évkönyve, Orosháza.
SMIM	Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie. București.
SMMA	Szolnok Megyei Múzeumi Adattár. Szolnok.
SMMIM	Studii și Materiale de Muzeografie și Istorie Militară. București.
Starinar	Starinar. Arheološki Institut. Beograd.
StCl	Studii Clasice, București.
StComBrukenthal	Studii și comunicări. Sibiu.
StudArch	Studia Archaeologica. Budapest.
StudCom	Studia Comitatus. Szentendre.
StudUnivCib	Studia Universitatis Cibiniensis. Sibiu.
StudCom – Vrancea	Studii și Comunicări. Muzeul Județean de Istorie și Etnografie Vrancea. Focșani.
StudŽvest	Študijne Zvesti Arheologického Ústavu Slovenskej Akadémie Vied. Nitra.
Symp. Thrac.	Symposia Thracologica. București.
Tempora Obscura	Tempora Obscura. Békéscsaba 2012.
Tibiscus	Tibiscus. Timișoara.
VAH	Varia Archaeologica Hungarica. Budapest.

VMÉ
Ziridava
ZM
ZSA

A Vas megyei Múzeumok Értesítője
Ziridava. Arad.
A Vas megyei Múzeumok Értesítője
Ziridava Studia Archaeologica. Arad.