

# VARIATIONS ON CONTINUITY IN LIGHT OF THE GRAPHEMES OF REGÖLY

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**ABSTRACT:** When examining continuity in the Carpathian Basin, it is particularly justified to highlight the line of the Iranian ethnic groups, especially as the names of Hungary's largest rivers may be attributed to them; we can follow the continuity of some of the geographical names from the Iron Age. Continuity prevailed not so much in the territorial or ethnic sense, but mainly through the presence of common traditions, ethnic bases or elements of civilisation, i.e. in the frames of cultural continuity. In the background, there are peoples with Iranian roots coming from virtually the same cultural sphere – mostly from similar ethnic groups which were not necessarily genetically related – breaking away in recurring waves and settling in the Carpathian Basin and in other parts of Europe at various times. The results of modern genetic, linguistic and other analyses are frequently conflicted due to the traditional approach built on local ethnic continuity and to the continuous cultural and often ethnic over-layering. It will be possible to interpret these analyses more accurately, adjusted to their higher resolution of information, if we take into consideration that the survival of the same ethnicity is not absolutely necessary in a specific territory for the continuous presence of certain cultural elements and if we also take account of the new waves of settlers coming from the same culture.

**KEYWORDS:** Pannons, graphemes, cultural continuity, Iranian effects, Rovash<sup>1</sup> scripts

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Until the last few years, writing in the Carpathian Basin was generally believed to have started in the Roman Age when the provinces were organised. Other than a few stray and uncertain traces, no authentic data on the Pannonian indigenous population were known to researchers. In addition to the numerous script fragments believed to be forgeries, Bence Fehér assumes that a few Pannonian word fragments surviving on an Azalus inscription dated to the late 1<sup>st</sup> century in Latin script are indeed related to the indigenous population.<sup>2</sup> Pot fragments with runiform script with clear links to the Pannonians were only discovered authentically in archaeological excavations a few years ago.

In 2011–2012, in an excavation of a tumulus dated to the last third of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC on the Regöly, Strupka-Magyar estate, we found many customs and object types that were unknown before in the Carpathian Basin.<sup>3</sup> In addition to Etruscan and Hallstatt parallels, the complex connections between archaeological phenomena and finds pointed much more strongly to the southern branch of Cimmerians that set out from Middle Asia and crossed the Caucasus Mountains in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, to visit the regions of Urartu and Phrygia, which were under Median control. It was this detail that drew our attention to the fact that the settlement area of the Sigynnae – who declared themselves to be of Median origin and were mentioned by Herodotus – in the Tisza-Maros spring region<sup>4</sup> was in fact, according to the source, beyond the Danube in its southern part that reached the Venetics.<sup>5</sup> This is the area

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1 The Hungarian word for runiform script.

2 Fehér 2019, p. 5.

3 The excavation was led by Géza Szabó, assisted by Mária Fekete; the finds are kept in the Wosinsky Mór Museum of Szekszárd. Szabó & Fekete 2011; 2014.

4 Trogmayer 1983.

5 Herodotus V.9: "... I can learn of no men dwelling beyond the Ister save certain that are called Sigynnae and wear Median dress. Their horses are said to be covered all over with

where the Regöly site is located and where later Roman sources mentioned the Pannonians as the indigenous population before the Celts. In several cases, we noticed notch marks on the ceramic fragments discovered. The form of some of these suggested they might be graphemes. One of the pieces we examined is a 3.5x4 cm fragment of the shoulder of a thin-walled pot decorated with a groove and a smoothed grid underneath, enamelled on the outside and burnt to a dark grey colour at a relatively low temperature (Photo 1). A sign consisting of three lines, engraved subsequently with a sharp tool, can be seen on it (inventory number: 2014.3.11.7.). Another find that is relevant to our topic is a 6x7 cm partially incomplete fragment of the bottom of a small, well-burnt dark grey bowl of very fine silt, with an omphalos base and thin wall, polished with graphite glaze on the outside, the inside and its base – probably a phiale – and glued together from several pieces (Photo 2). The bottom was shaped in a way that the inner side of the 3.5cm diameter and 8mm deep omphalos is round, but on its outer side it resembles a curved rectangle. A sign consisting of three lines, engraved subsequently with a sharp tool, can be seen on the bottom of the pot (inventory number: 2014.3.13.107.). Our third object is a 2.5x4cm fragment of the bottom of a bowl of a very fine silt and is extremely thin, with a wall of only 2mm in some parts, polished with black graphite on the inside and brown on the outside with graphite granules and enamelled on both sides and on the bottom, probably a phiale (Photo 3). A sign consisting of three lines, engraved subsequently with a sharp tool, can be seen on the bottom of the pot. In two cases, the line is not perfectly straight and there is a minor deviation of the line (inventory number: 2014.3.20.236.).

Under the microscope, we can see clearly how the bottom of the lines' groove is uneven: it is made of alternating sections of roughly half a centimetre which are deeper on one end and shallower on the other. Where the sections meet, often smaller breaks can be seen in the side walls. To experiment, we

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shaggy hair five fingers' breadth long, and to be small, blunt-nosed, and unable to bear men on their backs, but very swift when yoked to chariots. It is for this reason that driving chariots is the usage of the country. These men's borders, it is said, reach almost as far as the Eneti on the Adriatic Sea. They call themselves colonists from Media ..."

drew lines with the tip of a knife on ceramic fragments. We found that holding the tool continuously on the ceramic fragment, we managed to draw the lines if we pressed stronger at every half-centimetre. A check under the microscope confirmed that the deeper parts were where the sections started, often accompanied by breaks, then the line's groove was shallower. Based on our observations, one can determine the direction of the engraving of the lines even on archaeological findings. In the case of the Regöly finds, there is no suspicion of forgery. For the sake of testing, we compared the excavated items and the experimental pieces. Based on observations under the microscope, the old and the recent engravings could easily be distinguished.

At our request, Gábor Hosszú analysed the finds. He believes there could be signs of letters among the engravings of the pot fragments from Regöly, but unfortunately nothing more could be determined about them because they are fragmented, and the phonemes corresponding to the graphemes are unknown. The parallel of the sign found on the grooved shoulder fragment (find No. 2014.3.11.7) and the formal parallels of the sign seen on the other finds (Nos. 2014.3.13.107 and 2014.3.20.236) are presented in Table 1. The parallel of the shoulder fragment sign is Cypriote-Greek (Paphos), while the shapes similar to the other two signs have parallels among Latin (epigraphic cursive), Lepontic, Gallic-Etruscan, Camuni, Carian, Lycian, ancient Greek, Lydian, SE Iberian, NE Iberian, Phoenician, ancient Aramaic, official Aramaic, Cypriote-Greek (early) and Celtiberian scripts. Analysing the notches from Regöly and similar, roughly contemporaneous ones found in Velem-Szentvid, Gábor Hosszú concluded that if an Italian import of these objects can be ruled out, then their makers knew a script that had the same origin as the Italian.<sup>6</sup> In the case of the finds in Velem-Szentvid along the Amber Road, a great deal of archaeological evidence points to strong, direct relations with Italy, but the same does not apply to the material found in Regöly where similarities are rather indirect and based on shared preliminaries.<sup>7</sup> For these purposes as well, it is very important

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6 I express my gratitude to Gábor Hosszú for his definition and continuous support and advice as a colleague.

7 Fekete & Szabó 2015.

that the possible parallels of the graphemes studied point both to Italy and Asia Minor.

We found parallels for the set finds discovered in the mound exposed on the Regöly, Strupka-Magyar estate in 2011–2012 and dated to the last third of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC mostly in areas where the Cimmerians were present (Photo 4). According to our information based on historical knowledge, one branch of the Cimmerians transited the Caucasus Mountains around 720 BC, invaded Urartu, and destroyed the country's northern and western parts. According to the testimony of specific finds that cover Europe's eastern and central regions, they were probably among the first intermediaries, besides the Greeks, of objects and cultures of the ancient East.<sup>8</sup>

The outer part of the Regöly mound was built of tamped clay, a practice previously unknown in Europe. Explorers of the field of graves at the ancient Phrygian capital Gordion noticed that the wooden-stone sepulchral chamber was not surrounded by soil, but a very hard layer of clay.<sup>9</sup> In Regöly, the tamped clay layers of the mound were observed up to the height of the sepulchral chamber. Interestingly, similarly to the MM mound, the inner walls of the sepulchral edifice consisted of rectangular beams bolted together.<sup>10</sup> In the roughly 13x13m central part of the Regöly mound, six lines each of nine columns, that is a total of 54 columns supported the roof. Parallels of this are noticed in the ancient East, in the flat-roof peristyle constructions in Altintepe, Persepolis, Godin Tepe, Hasanlu and Nush-i Jan.<sup>11</sup> Parallels and origins of many object types among the finds discovered in the Transdanubian region also point to Asia Minor. Among these, it was rather characteristic of the period and easy to see the use of the bronze bucket, the cist (Photo 5). The main characteristic of the cists discovered among the Regöly and the nearby Kurd treasures, the wall ribs running around, but also the pot type and its manufacturing technology were unknown and unprecedented in Europe in the early Iron Age. These

8 Брумяко 2005; Harmatta 1966; Ivantchik 1999; 2001.

9 Young 1981, pp. 2–4, 84, 191.

10 Young 1981, pp. 81, 88.

11 Stronach 1985; Stronach & Roaf 1978; Tourovets 2014, Fig. 2–4; Curtis 2014.

bronze buckets made with a special technology and the kettles assembled from serially manufactured parts with a double-cross suspension tab closely connected to them<sup>12</sup> were found at sites of the Hallstatt D period in Hungary<sup>13</sup> (Vaskeresztes, Debrecen) Italy<sup>14</sup> (Bologna-Arnoaldi, Central and Northern Italian finds), Austria<sup>15</sup> (Hallstatt Graves 574, 660, 769), the Czech Republic<sup>16</sup> (Býčí Skála), Poland<sup>17</sup> (Bobrowice, Kluczewo, Przedmiescie, Woskowice Male) and Slovenia<sup>18</sup> (Sveta Lucija / Most na Soci, Novo mesto Kandija-Nekropole, Novo mesto Malensek-Tumulus, Smarjeta, Dolenjske Toplice, Vace, Bohinj, Bitnje).<sup>19</sup>

For the complex connections of the Regöly finds, it is particularly important that illustrations of cylindrical-shaped bronze buckets were present in many forms as early as the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC in the ancient East, and have been widely used in Asia Minor from the Bronze Age to this day.<sup>20</sup> The reliefs of the feast held in 879 BC to inaugurate the Kalhu palace show how servants served to the guests drinks from the mixing bowl using small lion head buckets.<sup>21</sup> These buckets, often made of gold or silver with a lion, deer or buck head at their ends, were present in graves and treasure finds in Iranian regions (Photo 6) just as in the Gordion MM mound.<sup>22</sup> The buckets of Gordion also had ribs running around on the sides.<sup>23</sup> On the helmet of Sarduri I (760–743 BC) kept in the Hermitage, a specific sacral representation can be seen: the angel-winged priests gather the fruit of the tree of life in the cists they hold in their hands; they

12 Wosinsky 1885; 1896, pp. 519–533; Patay 1990, pp. 126–127.

13 Gozzadini 1887; Stjernquist 1967, II. Karte 1.

14 Prüssing 1991, pp. 325–327.

15 Parzinger et al. 1995, pp. 337–338.

16 Gedl 2001, Taf. 24–25, pp. 30–32.

17 Jereb 2016, pp. 180–200. Slovenia returned a surprising number of 21 cists in this region which according to Herodotus was populated by the Venetics.

18 Szabó 2009; Szabó & Fekete 2011, p. 39, Table 5; Prüssing 1991, pp. 69, 72; Parzinger et al. 1995, T. 39.

19 Gyöngyösi et al. 2019.

20 Bilgi 2004, pp. 86, 103; Özdem 2003, pp. 276–279.

21 Raczky et al. 2013, p. 30, photos 10–11; Botta & Flandin 1849, I. p. 76.

22 Bilgi 2004, pp. 110–111.

23 Young 1981, pp. 62–63; Szabó 2013, Fig. 12.

might be picking the cone-line fruit of the plant used for the ritual yellowish soma drink cooked in kettles. Similar scenes can be seen on many reliefs of the Kalhu palace. The fixed-structure ritualistic representations draw attention to the fact that their use is always based on a complete set of customs, lifestyle and worldview.<sup>24</sup> The closest parallel of the Regöly finds are the cylindrical cists with ribbed walls. Their importance and widespread use in the ancient East are shown by their presence even on reliefs in the Apadana of Persepolis. It is obvious in the audience scene that the people standing being King Darius are holding ribbed-walled buckets in their hands (Photo 7). The form is completely identical to that of the finds in Regöly and, as already mentioned, in Kurd, Vaskeresztes, Slovenia, Hallstatt, Býčí Skála, Poland, Bologna, etc.<sup>25</sup> The special form of the cists, the appearance and spread of the related customs and rituals in a relatively short timeframe in European areas suggest a close and direct ethnic connection with the ancient East that points well beyond trade. Based on this data, we concluded that in Regöly they buried one of the tribal leaders of the people known in ancient sources as the Sigynnae, the indigenous Pannonian population during the Roman Age. The new eating and drinking customs, the burial and construction traditions observed in the explored tumulus point to a cultural background unknown until now in the Carpathian Basin, that may have links to early Iranian people and the Mazda religion.<sup>26</sup> The signs with inscriptions in Regöly and their ties can be understood and assessed precisely on this historical and cultural background. The observations made in the Regöly excavations, the archaeological phenomena and objects together attest to a process that was well known along the coasts in Greek colonisation, but a parallel to this occurring inland was almost entirely unknown.<sup>27</sup> However, in the light of more recent data, we can and must reckon with the appearance of literacy even in our area, no later than from the last third of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, including everything it entails.

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24 Fekete 2018.

25 Fekete & Szabó 2017a, Abb. 8.

26 Fekete & Szabó 2015.

27 Kimmig 1983; Szabó & Fekete 2011.

The historical background which can be sketched on the basis of the archaeological phenomena, observations and the finds of the Regöly excavation, and which is supported by scientific tests, also shed new light on a significant part of the remnants of early European scripts. Much more frequently than with Hungarian finds, the cists presumably manufactured in a Slovenian centre and the situlae discovered in cemeteries there have graphemes on them, and even larger or smaller inscriptions, such as the vessel found in Storčjan.<sup>28</sup> Gábor Hosszú believes that based on the signs the inscription is related to the Venetic and Raetic scripts. Of the Italian scripts, Venetic, its descendant Raetic, and the Leponti (near Lugano) are directly related and closely connected to Etruscan. The Etruscan script, however, is related to Lemnian, Lydian and Phrygian, but it is not clear how. Some believe the ancient Greek script emerged in Southern Anatolia, perhaps in the region of Cilicia. Anatolian alphabetic scripts (Carian, Lycian, Lydian, Phrygian) probably originated there, indirectly via ancient Greek intermediation or perhaps partially even directly.<sup>29</sup> The relationship of the scripts mentioned acquires a whole new meaning in the light of the connections and historical background we can draw based on the parallels of the Regöly finds, and allows for seeing a much more logical system of relations between them than previously. This becomes particularly important for assessing remnants of early scripts in the Carpathian Basin, including in the case of Pannonian word fragments in the Azalus inscriptions we have mentioned. For example, János Harmatta believes the Lepontic-style inscription engraved on a pot found in Tokod in an Azalus context is authentic,<sup>30</sup> while based on András Mócsy's opinion<sup>31</sup> most archaeologists believe it to be a forgery. Indeed, it is difficult to take any position without detailed analyses of provenance, but we must note that precisely András Mócsy's arguments pointing to an extremely careful and deliberate forgery<sup>32</sup> are the ones that give food for thought in the light of the historical background of the Pannonian finds in Regöly; the notches

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28 Jereb 2016, p. 57, T. 103.

29 Hosszú 2017, pp. 227, 231.

30 Harmatta 1974.

31 Mócsy 1976.

32 Mócsy 1976, p. 102.



must be re-examined with equipment. Interestingly, it is easier to assess the notch marks noticed among Scythian finds in the Great Plain, collected by Bence Fehér, than the Transdanubian material. He noticed that a smaller part of the objects had groups of signs of 3–4 elements. He assumes they could be text which is impossible to decipher due to the scarcity of data. However, most signs are single-element marks engraved subsequently under the handle of the pot; the author understands these as symbols that could refer to the pot's serial number within a set or its content.<sup>33</sup> Although analysing the finds in the Great Plain he rules out the tamgha of nomadic cultures as a possibility, we must note that similar signs in the materials of the steppe are often believed to be tamgha.<sup>34</sup>

Ruling out the possibility of import from Italy, as mentioned before, the inscription finds of Regöly with their Asia Minor background also reveal how some phenomena that could not be connected earlier due to lack of data, despite the signs of kinship, could still have connections or kinship to scripts that originate in the same source as the Italian one and the proto-cuneiform script reconstructed so far. There may be a historical background which cannot be understood in most of the current, basically linear historical models. It is not without reason that Gábor Hosszú analysed the evolution of graphemes using computer-aided palaeography, one of the branches of applied information technology, and seeing the 3D development model appearing, he only commented discreetly: the historical background is sometimes incomplete.<sup>35</sup> However, the possible connections that present themselves regarding the Regöly finds, also possibly associated with the Cimmerian movements in the Gordion region, and particularly the graphemes, cover exactly the areas that the computer, based on the plain input data, identified as being close to the Phrygian script, regardless of historical situation and geographical location. Otherwise, this also has a surprising significance that points in an entirely

33 Fehér 2019.

34 The finds of the steppe provide rather similar formal parallels to the inscription signs found in Regöly (Ярыгин 2019).

35 Hosszú 2017, p. 179, Figure 4.

different direction, of particular relevance to later runiform notch marks. Leonid Marsadolov noticed that in the Altaic region at the turn of the 7<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> century BC many phenomena appeared that had previously been noticed in burial mounds in the region of the Phrygian capital Gordion. In his opinion, the descendants of the Cimmerians that invaded Gordion migrated, fleeing the local wars, from the Middle East to the Altai Mountains where they formed the famous Kurgans of Pazyryk. Marsadolov speaks practically of the same starting point and causes that drove the settlers of the Kapos west, and, on its eastern branch, can be followed up to Pazyryk (Photo 4) – setting up the foundations of many subsequent cultural and ethnic influences in the Altaic region.<sup>36</sup> It is not irrelevant that it was at this time that certain characteristic rites appeared in both areas (under the influence of the Mazda religion), such as tumuli without skeletons or ashes at the Pannonians and in the Sargat culture.<sup>37</sup>

The connections that appear in the light of recent research and cover thousands of kilometres, the system of traditions with a common origin that can be linked to Iranian people, its survival and subsequent development on other paths raise many questions and shed new light on others. Of these, I would like to draw attention to a few opinions and new approaches to continuity which have only emerged recently, on many sides, based on the Regöly tumulus finds that are possibly related to Iranian people. Analysing continuity in the Carpathian Basin, it makes sense to point out the thread that is linked to Iranian ethnic groups because it is precisely the name of one of Hungary's largest rivers that can be tied to them, and it is from that time that we can follow the continuity of some of the geographical names. The name of the Danube is believed to originate from *don* 'water',<sup>38</sup> while of the Tisza is from the ancient Iranian words *sikvan* 'strong' or *taka* 'flow'. Hungarian researchers have long assumed the name-givers were a population that spoke an Iranian language, was related to the Scythians, and moved to the west.<sup>39</sup> Parallels of early Iron-Age and Scythian-Age finds in

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36 Marsadolov 2000.

37 Szabó & Fekete 2017; Kroll 2000.

38 Абаев 1949, pp. 38, 162, 196.

39 Trogmayer 1983, pp. 95–97; Szádeczky-Kardoss 1953, pp. 109–111.

the Great Plain clearly confirm this. The connections of the Regöly tumulus that point to the steppe through Asia Minor<sup>40</sup> also link the Pannonian-populated significant southern part of the Transdanubian region, believed previously to have ties with the Hallstatt culture,<sup>41</sup> to an Iranian ethnic and cultural sphere.<sup>42</sup> According to István Tóth, the strong survival of the Pannonian local population of the Transdanubian region and its influence was also palpable in the Celtic and Roman Age.<sup>43</sup> This can be seen on the Roman lead votive plaques, whose representations are accurate reflections of the beliefs of the indigenous Pannonian population.<sup>44</sup> These customs have survived to this day and be seen in Iranian people where pot shape, certain meals, drinks, bones, numbers, and things that outsiders often see as insignificant, have specific meanings. The same can be said about the Sarmatians, also an Iranian people that settled in the Great Plain in the Roman Age. In their context, Valéria Kulcsár and Eszter Istvánovics suggest the possibility of survival and ethnic continuity, which in their opinion could have influenced Hungarian ethnogenesis as well. This could also be confirmed by the Alanian words found next to some Oghur and Slavic words on the mostly Hungarian inscriptions of the Nagyszentmiklós treasure and some of the representations.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, our most beautiful masterpieces of goldsmith

40 It is important to emphasise that before learning of the materials in the tumulus discovered in Regöly, Strupka-Magyar estate, it had not even occurred that there might be a possibility of direct Minor-Asian ethnic relations of the Carpathian Basin with the cultural background that has ties to the early Iranian people and the Mazda religion. Szabó & Czuppon 2014.

41 According to the traditional viewpoint, it is the Etruscan in Italy, and the Hallstatt culture in other parts of Europe, with strong orientalising influences of local origin. That orientalising might have a more significant role than previously assumed was already pointed out by Svend Hansen (Hansen 2011; 2017).

42 At the same time, those who settled in the south from the Bakony – assimilating the indigenous population of the southern Alpine Hallstatt culture of the early Iron Age, found here in the last third of the 7th century BC – have general European traits (Kürthy et al. 2013).

43 Tóth 2003; 2009; 2015.

44 Boruzs & Szabó 2009; Szabó 2017; 2018; 2018b.

45 Hosszú & Zelliger 2014. For example, the “heavenly rapture” scene of the Nagyszentmiklós treasure acquires an entirely different meaning in the light of the wedding between the antlered doe and eagle seen on the Sassanid bowl kept in the Hamadan Museum, pointing to the cultural and ethnic background of the Turul bird legend.

work from the Conquest Age, the decorations of the flat pouch plates and discs, can be understood precisely in the context of Iranian culture.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, the wondrous stag of the Hungarian origin legend can also be traced from the Caucasian Bronze Age.<sup>47</sup> The spread of finds of palm-leaf decorations inside the Carpathian Basin and their archaeological context point to the fact that some of the conquering Hungarians (and their very leaders) were of Iranian origin. But it is not only the large time gap between the Sarmatians and the conquering Hungarians, but also the intermediary period of our land with “hiatuses” full of migrations and amalgamation and assimilation that makes it unlikely that the remainder of the Sarmatians could have survived for almost a thousand years. An example from a later time, but nevertheless similar from many points of view, is a good indicator of how misleading it can be to evaluate parallels supported by archaeological parallels, as well as anthropological and genetic test results, in a traditional view of history that works essentially with linear development models. The Jassic settlement in the 13<sup>th</sup> century brought another significant Iranian influence to the Carpathian Basin.<sup>48</sup> In addition to their specific economic, social, cultural traditions, they preserved their own language for a long time, as attested by a list of words written in Digor dialect on the back of a charter dated 1422.<sup>49</sup> Features characteristic of Alanians essentially appear as an ethnic, cultural and linguistic unit in medieval Hungarian materials. It is only thanks to the relatively well documented historical and charter data that we have, almost from the very beginnings, information on the circumstances of their settlement and their independence within the Hungarians. So in the case of the Jassics it is easy to delimit the time period and area where the archaeological finds specific to their homeland and the appearance of traditions can be expected. In light of the archaeological finds in the Carpathian Basin, customs observed in their Caucasian relatives, the Ossetians, in almost unaltered form from the Bronze Age until the present and descriptions of the Nart sagas<sup>50</sup> clearly

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46 Szabó 2018a.

47 Szabó 2019; 2019a.

48 Selmeczi 1992; 1996; 2005; 2007; 2012.

49 Németh 1959; Абаев 1960.

50 Нарты 1991.

point to how the people of the Regöly tumulus, the Scythian-Age and Sarmatian tribes, and some of the conquering Hungarians, to the Jassics, were essentially connected by a common cultural background. However, the evident survival of customs of Iranian origin, as reflected by geographical names we have from the Pannonians and observed in archaeological finds in many areas, does not necessarily entail the survival of the population, as we have seen in the case of the Jassics. Continuity did not take place in a territorial and ethnic framework, but primarily in the presence of the common traditions, ethnic bases, elements of civilisation, in the framework of cultural continuity. In its background are people of Iranian origin who broke from practically the same cultural sphere – from ethnic groups that were mostly similar, but not necessarily genetically related – in repeated waves and settled in the Carpathian Basin and other parts of Europe at different times. For thousands of years, the migrations triggered by similar causes – war conflicts that made life impossible, epidemics, natural disasters – have followed essentially the same patterns: on routes determined by the starting place, to certain destinations that were preferably suitable for pursuing the old ways of farming.<sup>51</sup> With a traditional approach based on local ethnic continuity, the regular cultural and often ethnic overlapping repeatedly causes inconsistencies between the findings of modern genetic, linguistic or other analyses. It will be possible to understand these analyses more accurately in the context of more detailed information, if we take into account that the continuous presence of certain cultural elements in a specific area does not necessarily require the survival of the same population, and if we reckon with the newer waves of settlers who come from the same cultural background. The finds, which, just like the Regöly inscription marks and their carrier objects, are difficult to decipher, can be understood successfully if we examine them not only in an ethnic context, but also a cultural one. If we depart from essentially linear development models and approaches, and we highlight the process dynamics, we might find points of reference for a better understanding and more accurate

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51 It is probably no coincidence that the place where the most important Pannonian centre was formed in the late 7th century BC was the same place where almost a thousand years later one of the princesses of the Alanians was buried (Mészáros 1972).

assessment and explanation of the Iron Age and Roman period, but also later runiform notch marks in the Carpathian Basin. A more detailed exploration of the cultural and ethnic context of the graphemes engraved on the Pannonian ceramic fragments of Regöly could provide an important starting point in this endeavour.

PHOTOS



Figure 1: A) Grapheme engraved on the shoulder of a remaining vase



B) Traces of parallel finishes running around the inner side of the ceramic fragment can be seen (Regöly, Strupka-Magyar estate, inventory number: 2014.3.11.7.).  
(Photo: Géza Szabó)





Figure 2: A) Grapheme engraved on the bottom of a smaller bowl (phiale?)



B) Omphalos protruding into the inner side of the bowl (Regöly, Strupka-Magyar estate, inventory number: 2014.3.13.107.). (Photo: Géza Szabó)



Figure 3: A) Grapheme engraved on the bottom of a thin-walled bowl (phiale?) (Regöly, Strupka-Magyar estate, inventory number: 2014.3.20.236.). (Photo: Géza Szabó)



Figure 3: A) Grapheme engraved on the bottom of a thin-walled bowl (phiale?) (Regöly, Strupka-Magyar estate, inventory number: 2014.3.20.236.). (Photo: Géza Szabó)





Figure 5: Cists, ribbed-walled bronze buckets with false-twisted handles in the treasure found in Kurd, an exhibition of the Hungarian National Museum (Photo: Géza Szabó)



Figure 6: Ribbed-walled bronze bucket with false-twisted handles in the MM mound of Gordion, an exhibition of the Museum of Anatolian Civilisations in Ankara (Photo: Géza Szabó)



Figure 7: A–B) Audience scene in the reception hall of the palace of Persian King of Kings Darius I (522–486 BC) in Persepolis; a ribbed-walled bucket held by the attendants can be seen (Photo: Géza Szabó)



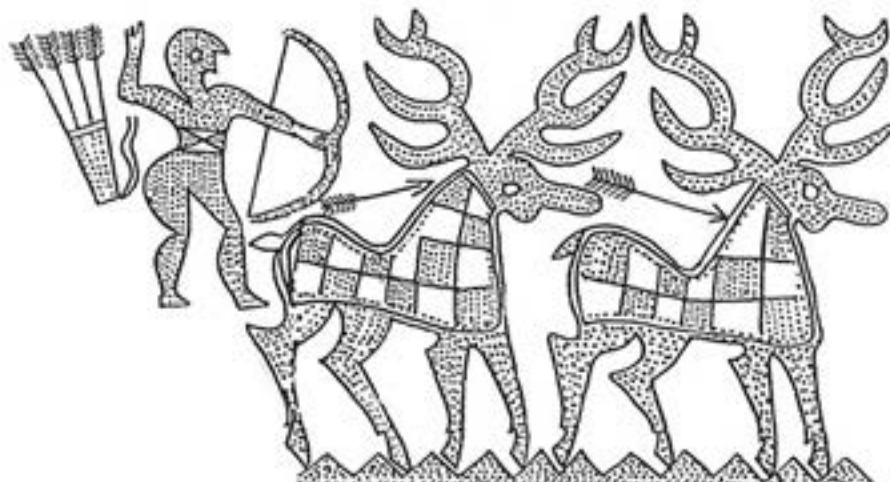


Figure 8: Representation of the chase of an antlered doe and wondrous stag on a plate belt of the Caucasian Koban culture, dated probably to the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC (Southern Ossetia, Tli Grave 350, based on Texov 2002)



Figure 9: Chase of the antlered doe in the Hungarian wondrous stag legend, by Gyula László (based on László 1982)





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